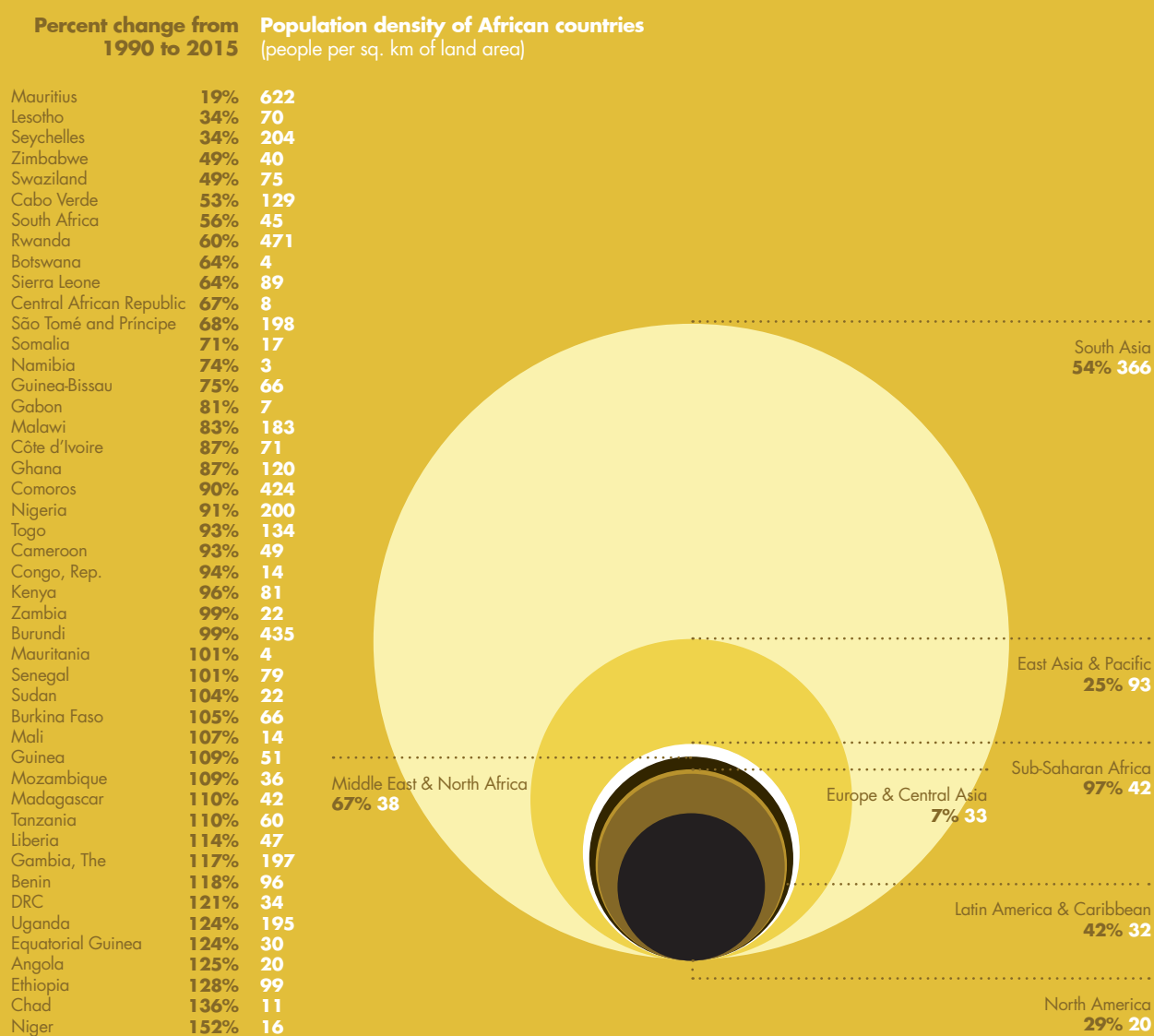FIGURE 4.3.

GROWTH IN POPULATION DENSITY

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.

Percent change from 1990 to 2015		Population density of African countries (people per sq. km of land area)
Mauritius	19%	622
Lesotho	34%	70
Seychelles	34%	204
Zimbabwe	49%	40
Swaziland	49%	75
Cabo Verde	53%	129
South Africa	56%	45
Rwanda	60%	471
Botswana	64%	4
Sierra Leone	64%	89
Central African Republic	67%	8
São Tomé and Príncipe	68%	198
Somalia	71%	17
Namibia	74%	3
Guinea-Bissau	75%	66
Gabon	81%	7
Malawi	83%	183
Côte d'Ivoire	87%	71
Ghana	87%	120
Comoros	90%	424
Nigeria	91%	200
Togo	93%	134
Cameroon	93%	49
Congo, Rep.	94%	14
Kenya	96%	81
Zambia	99%	22
Burundi	99%	435
Mauritania	101%	4
Senegal	101%	79
Sudan	104%	22
Burkina Faso	105%	66
Mali	107%	14
Guinea	109%	51
Mozambique	109%	36
Madagascar	110%	42
Tanzania	110%	60
Liberia	114%	47
Gambia, The	117%	197
Benin	118%	96
DRC	121%	34
Uganda	124%	195
Equatorial Guinea	124%	30
Angola	125%	20
Ethiopia	128%	99
Chad	136%	11
Niger	152%	16

South Asia
54% 366

East Asia & Pacific
25% 93

Sub-Saharan Africa
97% 42

Middle East & North Africa
67% 38

Europe & Central Asia
7% 33

Latin America & Caribbean
42% 32

North America
29% 20

Source: World Bank World Development Indicators (2015).