Rwanda at 60

Dietz, A.J.; Ehrhardt, D.W.L.; Berckmoes, L.H.

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africanstudies centre leiden

Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Political history

Most of current Rwanda used to be a Kingdom, un-der King Kigeli Rwabugiri, before the Conference of Berlin in 1884 when European powers decided that Rwanda would become part of German East Africa. In 1916, Belgian troops from Belgian Congo conque-red the area. After the First World War (from 1922 onwards) Belgium became the 'mandate' holder for the League of Nations, and later the 'trustee' for the United Nations for both 'Ruanda' and 'Urundi' (later: Burundi). Under colonial rule, social relationships in Rwanda changed to become more rigid, unequal and exploitative. On 1 July 1962 both Rwanda and Burun-di became politically independent. At the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s, the processes of decolonisation and so-called 'social revolution' led to radical change, resulting in the overthrow of the Tutsi oligarchy and starting the cycles of mass violence.
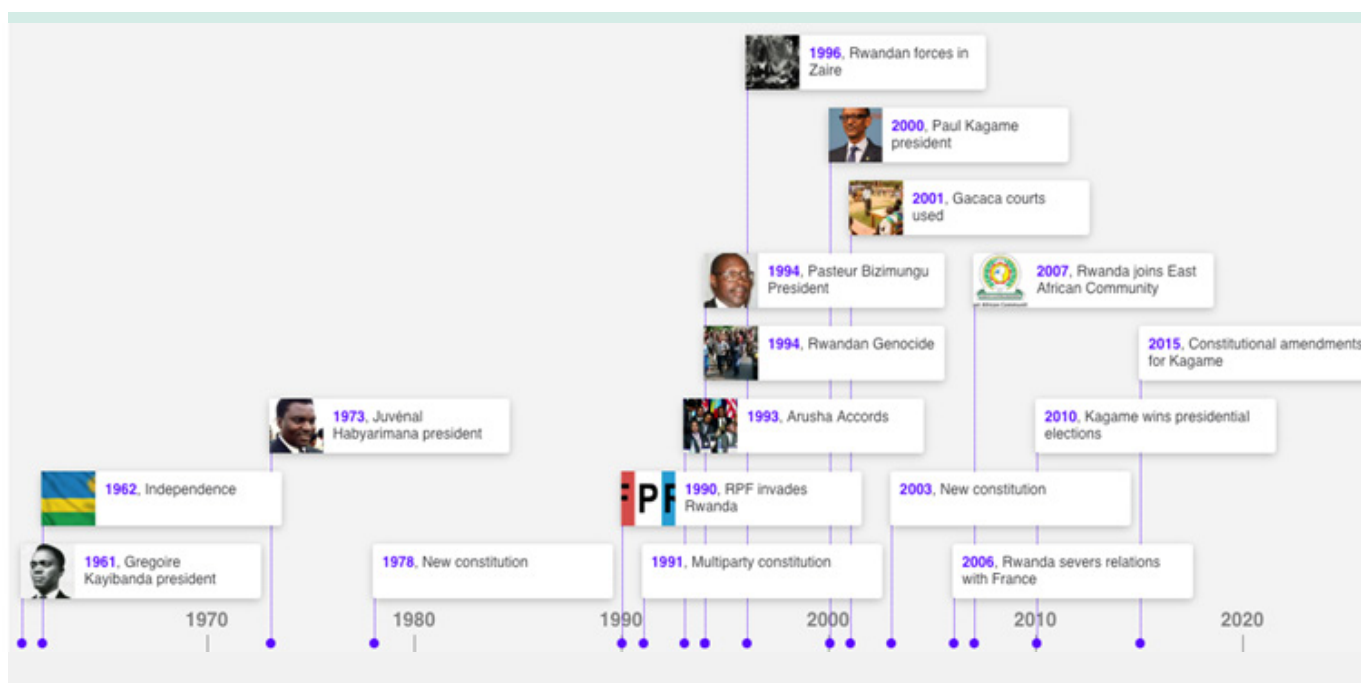
Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

**Figure 1: Political timeline Rwanda since independence**

Rwanda's first post-independence president, Grégoire Kayibanda, led the Parti du Mouvement de l'Eman-cipation du Peuple Hutu (Parmehutu) which pushed explicitly for the right of the majority group (Hutu) to rule Rwanda. Hundreds of thousands of Tutsi fled Rwanda and the political position of Tutsi in the country dwindled. Regional tensions produced a coup in 1973, after which Major General Habyari-mana was to become the head of state – and later its elected president. Habyarimana ruled the country for 21 years, overseeing the increasing tensions between Hutu and Tutsi and the invasion of the Tutsi-led Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) in 1990. Under pressu-re from the insurgency, multi-party elections became enshrined in Rwanda's constitution in 1991, and peace accords followed in 1993 in Arusha.

A year later, however, the murder of Habyarimana who, alongside his Burundian colleague Ntaryamira, was killed in a plane crash, triggered Rwanda's infa-mous genocide, in which Hutu militias led the coun-try into the killing of close to one million Rwandans – mostly Tutsi. Twice that number of people fled the country, many into neighbouring Zaire (from 1997 called the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)). The genocide led to several legal responses, including the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda but also gacaca courts, which were based on customary approaches to the law and dispute settlement. Beyond

the terrible aftermath within Rwanda, the genocide also triggered further violence in neighbouring countries, not least Zaire/DRC, as the Rwandan government has supported forces fighting Hutu groups within those countries.

A new constitution was created in 2003, allowing for multiparty elections, and the country's economy stabilised. Over subsequent years, President Paul Kagame (a former RPF commander) strengthened his grip over Rwandan politics; he was re-elected in 2010 and secured constitutional amendments in 2015 which allow him to continue seeking re-elections until 2034.

Political philately
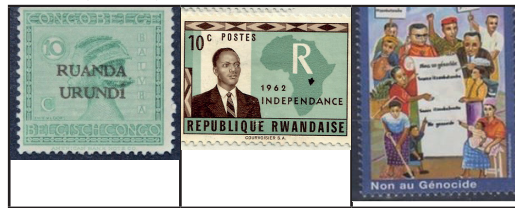
1. Ruanda-Urundi 1922-1962;
2. Republique Rwandaise 1962 onwards ;
3. 1999: after the genocide of 1994.

Conflict, state fragility, and travel risks

Almost 30 years after the genocide against the Tutsi, Rwanda takes pride in the stability of the country and important economic progress it has made. Nonetheless, concerns about possible relapse into violence and fragility continues, both among Rwandan and international observers. The Fragile States Index of the Washington-based Fund for Peace puts Rwanda in the 42d position of 'worst performers', with an overall score of 83.7 in 2022, which indicates a 'high warning' position (the worst score can be 120) (https://fragilestatesindex.org/excel/. The index consists of twelve variables, and for Rwanda the most worrying variables are 'group grievances' (9.3 out of 10), and 'factionalised elites' (8.0). The least worrying variables are the quality and performance of the security apparatus (5.5), the (lack of) external interventions (6.0), the economy (6.1), and the human rights situation (6.1). Yet also these 'best' scores are close to or in the 'warning' category. The travel advice of the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs in July 2022 is 'yellow', indicating a relatively safe environment for travellers, with some security risks. See: https://www.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/reisadvies/rwanda.

Demography

Rwanda's population increased almost 4.5-fold between 1960 and 2020, from 2.9 million in 1960 to 13.0 million in 2020, mostly through high fertility rates and longer life expectancy for both males and females (also because of rapidly improving child and infant mortality figures). Population growth figures have been very erratic: from very high (4-6%/annum) between 1974 and 1989, and again between 1997 and 2001 (with even 9% in 1998), to negative during the period before and during the genocide of 1994. Between 1990 and 1995, before and during the genocide, Rwanda lost 1.5 million inhabitants (7.3 million in 1990 down to 5.8 million in 1995), due to violent deaths, refugee outmigration and expulsion, somewhat compensated by immigration of Rwandese former refugees living in Uganda. However, in 1999 the population had recovered (up to 7.5 million), partly as a result of return migration of refugees who had fled to the DRC and elsewhere. And after 2000 population numbers further increased to the current level of 13.6 million in July 2022. Currently, the average growth rate is between 2 and 3 percent per year. Total fertility was around 8.2 children per woman in 1960; afterwards it diminished, with currently 4.1 births per average woman in Rwanda during her lifetime – much lower than most of its neighbours. As a result of these demographic developments Rwanda has a very skewed population pyramid, with many more young people than adults and elderly people. The median age changed from 16.3 years old in 1960 to 20.0 years old in 2020, with the lowest figures in 1985 (15.2 years). Urbanisation has always been very low, but is on the increase, and currently 18% of the population lives in cities. The urban population increased 23 times between 1960 and 2020. UN demographers expect that Rwanda's population will increase to 23 million in 2050, with 28% in cities. The country already has a very high population density (currently 525 inhabitants per km²), but if the predictions hold that will increase to close to 1000 inhabitants per km² in 2050. The total land surface is 24,670 km².
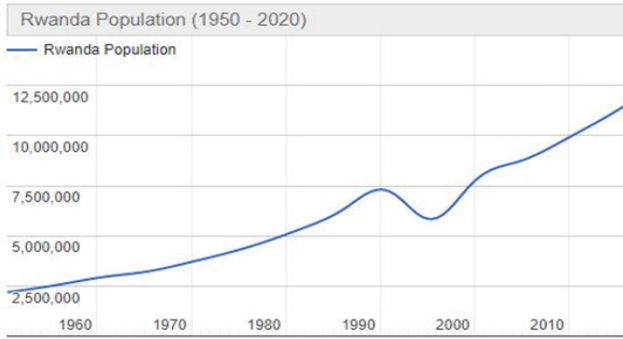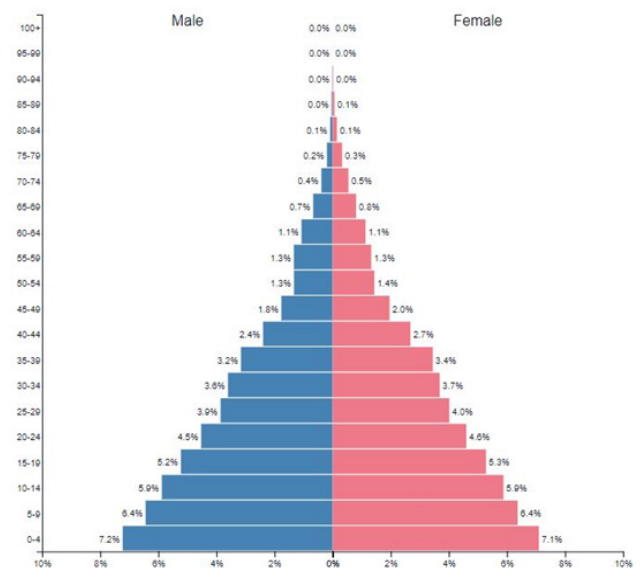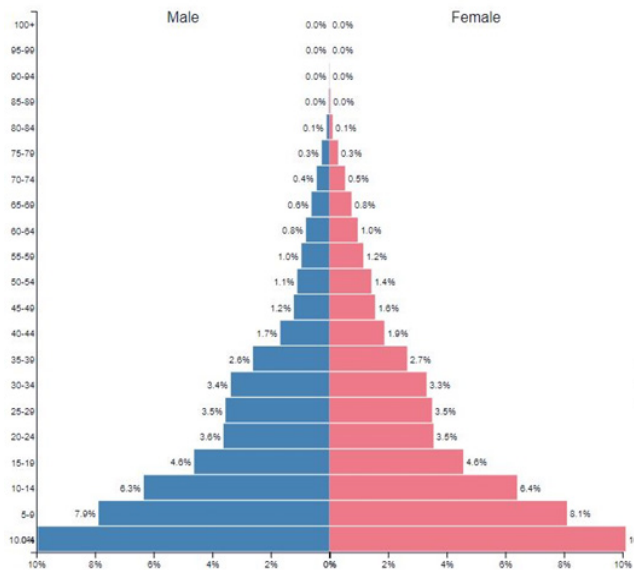
**Rwanda Population,
1950 – 2000**
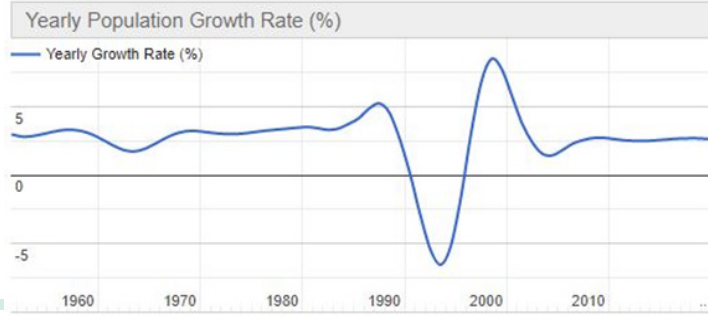
**Yearly Population
Growth Rate (%)**
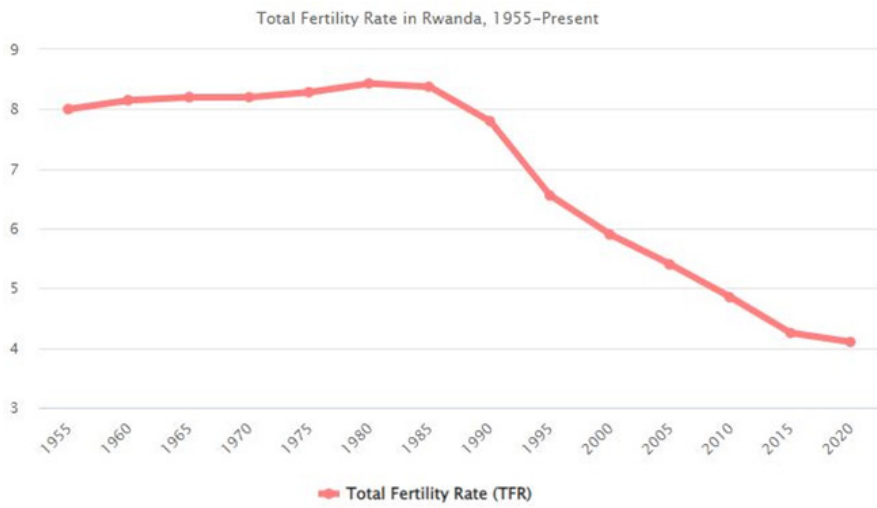
**Totaly Fertility Rate
in Rwanda,
1955 – Present**

Population Pyramids of Rwanda, 1962 and 2022

	1960	2020
Population	2.9 milion	13.0 milion
Fertility rate	8.2 children per women	4.1 children per women
Life expectancy (males)	42 years	68 years
idem (females)	45 years	72 years
Median age	16.3 years	20.0 years
Infant mortality (<1 yr)	140/1000	23/1000
Under-5 mortality	242/1000	30/1000
Urbanisation rate	3%	18%
Urban population	0.1 million	2.3 million
Rural population	8.1 milion	10.7 milion

Source: Worldometers

Demographic statistics, Rwanda as a whole, 1960 and 2020

Human Development Index, Rwanda as a whole, 1990 and 2018

Human Development Index data exist since 1990, with annual UNDP updates. In 1990, Rwanda's Human Development Index started at a level of 0.248 (the range is between 0 and 1). The HDI consists of a health index, an income index and an education index, while UNDP also provides data about life expectancy, and some other indicators. The incre-

ase in the HDI between 1990 and 2019 (from 0.248 to 0.543) can be attributed to improvements in all components: health, education and income, and can also be seen in the data for life expectancy. The most significant growth took place in health. Average income levels per capita (in US$ of 2011, PPP) currently are estimated to be 7,676 $/capita, which is only 12% better than in 1990.

	1990	2019	2019/1990
Health Index	0.206	0.754	X3.7
Income Index	0.337	0.464	X1.4
GNI/capita *	6.838	7.676	X1.1
Eduction Index	0.218	0.458	X2.1
Mean years of schooling	1.8	4.4	X2.4
Expected years of schooling	5.7	11.2	X2.0
Life Exp[ectancy	33	69	X2.1
Total HDI Index	0.248	0.543	X2.2

Source: https:// globaldatalab.org

* GNI/capita in US $ of 2011, PPP.

Rwanda: HDI composition and life epectancy, data fot 1990 and 2018

International migration

IIn 2019 588,000 people who were born in Rwanda lived outside the country (only 4.4% of Rwanda's total population of 13.2 million people inside and outside the country during that year), of whom 457,000 elsewhere in Africa (255,000 in the DRC and the others mainly in Burundi, and Congo Republic, in that order), and 131,000 outside Africa (95,000 in North America and 35,000 in Europa (mainly in Belgium and France; UN migration report 2019).

In 2019 Rwanda had around 540,000 immigrants, according to the UN demographic statistics. The registered immigrants mainly came from the DRC, Burundi, Uganda, and Tanzania, and many of them are children of Rwandese refugees who later returned to Rwanda with their parent(s) or caretaker(s) (UN Migration Report 2019). The migration history of Rwanda reflects the political turmoil in that country and the region:

Year	Outmigration (stock of outmigrants)					Immigration (stock of immigrants				
	Total	DRC	BUR	UG	TANZ	Total	DRC	BUR	UG	TANZ
1990	548	23	222	214	69	160	63	26	34	16
1995	2060	1133	160	132	604	216	90	38	48	24
2000	318	86	66	71	50	347	164	53	79	36
2005	286	82	57	74	13	423	197	69	93	44
2010	331	124	53	70	5	427	207	65	93	43
2015	596	280	64	74	1	514	234	134	92	42
2019	588	255	71	79	1	540	249	138	96	46

Migration statistics Rwanda 1990-2019, in thousands

Trade statistics, Rwanda: exports and imports, 2018

In 2020, Rwanda exported products for a total value of $ 902 million, and services for a total $ 493 million, and imported products and services for a total value of $ 2,215 million (products mostly from China, Kenya, India, the UAE, and South Africa in that order), resulting in a very negative trade balance. Leading import products were medicaments and blood, radio and tv apparatus, iron and steel structures, and fish, in that order.

The most important export products and most important export destinations in 2020 were:

Main export products (value in $ million)		Main export destinatins (value in $ million)	
Gold	644	UAE	594
Coffee	66	Turkey	54
Tea	55	China	38
Special ores	46	USA	31
Tin ores	20	Pakistan	28
Total export value	902		

Although small-scale gold production in Rwanda existed for quite some time, commercial gold production really started in 2013, and started to grow rapidly from 2016 onwards. In 2019 Rwanda produced 2.9 million kg of gold, and gold became by far the most important export product, with the UAE by far the main export partner country. Also special ores, and concentrates (like niobium, tantalium, ranadium and zirconium) have become important. The traditional agricultural export products like coffee and tea have lost their dominance.

Protected areas and Forests

Rwanda currently has three national parks (including a UNESCO-MAB Biosphere reserve, that has a protected status since 1925: the Volcanoes National Park, with its mountain gorillas), five forest reserves (including mountain forests) and four other protected areas, with 17% of the country's area having a protected status (http://www.parks.it/world/RW/index.html) According to another source, Protectedplanet, currently 231,000 km² hectares are protected land areas (9% of Rwanda's total land area; and this source mentions 9 protected areas: https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/rwa). Rwanda had 480,000 hectares of forests in in 2020; 20% of Rwanda's land area. However, since 1990 Rwanda has lost 162,000 ha of its forest cover (https://rainforests.mongabay.com/20rwanda.htm).

Agricultural Rwanda

Crop Area (in 1000 hectares), and total production (in 1000 tonnes), 1961 and 2020, in the order of the crop areas in 2020:

Crops	1961		2021		2020/1961	
	Area	Prod.	Area	Prod.	Area	Prod.
Beans(dry)	131	87	648	439	4.9	5.0
Maize	38	28	294	449	7.7	16.0
Cassave	21	125	192	1280	9.1	10.2
Sweet Potatoes	60	452	180	1276	3.0	2.8
Sorghum	112	101	169	170	1.5	1.7
Bananas	–	–	166	1119	+++	+++
Plantains	99	987	106	913	1.1	0.9
Potatoes	19	97	104	859	5.5	8.9
Pumpkins	7	42	50	258	7.1	6.1
Soybeans	0.5	0.2	48	24	96.0	120.0
Groundnuts	2	2	36	16	18.0	8.0
Rice paddy	–	–	30	117	+++	+++
Taro/Cocoyam	3	10	29	188	9.7	18.8
Other vegetables	13	60	25	229	1.9	3.8
Tea	0.3	0.2	21	34	70.0	170.0
Other fruits	0	2	20	144	+++	72.0
Coffee (green	18	11	17	20	0.9	1.8
Peas (dry)	42	29	17	14	0.4	0.5
Leeks	4	–	15	3	4.8	+++
Tomatoes	–	–	13	91	+++	+++
Wheat	1.5	1.2	12	13	8.2	10.7
Millet	4	3	11	5	2.8	1.7
Sugarcane	–	–	8	112	+++	+++
Eggplants	–	–	8	83	+++	+++
Yams	0.1	1	6	62	61.0	62.0
Pyrethrum	1	0.4	5	1.3	5.0	3.3
Tobacco	0.8	0.7	4	5	5.3	7.0
Total	578	2.039	2.234	7.924	3.9	3.9

2020/1961: red = 2020 is below 1961; green: 2020 is more than 4.3 times the 1961 figures (that is: more than population increase in Rwanda from 2.998 million to 12.952 million between 1961 and 2020); black: in-between. Source: Faostat data.

Rwanda's land area is 2.5 million hectares, and its crop area increased from 23% to 91% of its land area between 1961 and 2019, an expansion of 387%, and one can say that almost all Rwanda's land area is currently in use for agricultural purposes (although some products, like beans, will be cultivated together with other crops, and there can be cases of 'double counting'). Production increases are the same as the area increases, which sugggests that overall yield levels stagnated. However, Rwanda experienced a major shift in crop choices: towards a dominant maize and beans production (and both with yield increases), more cassava, bananas, and potatoes, and relatively less sorghum, plantains, and sweet potatoes. The most spectacular production increases can be noted for bananas, rice, soybeans, tea, and many different vegetables and fruits.

If we look at the total food value of cereals, beans, roots, tubers and plantains (ignoring all other food crops for this calculation) , in terms of food production values Rwanda can currently barely feed its population (total food value for these crops in 2020: 2100 Cal/day/capita, of which 43% came from cereals, and 57% from roots, tubers and plantains&bananas). In 1961 the food situation was better: with a total food value for these crops of 2240 Cal/day/capita, of which 68% came from roots, tubers and plantains. However, food production figures don't tell the whole story: there is food wastage between production and consumption, and some food is being used for animals, for beer production, and as seed for the next year. The numbers of all live animals, measured in stock units, expanded considerably for pigs, chicken, and goats: all more than Rwanda's population increase; but the expansion of cattle and sheep was less significant and in total, Rwanda's livestock units increased 3.9 times, less than the 4.3 times of population increase between 1961 and 2020. Per capita, the numbers of live animals in the country (measured in livestock units) diminished from 0.13 to 0.11, indicating a relatively unimportant element of food production. However, in terms of income, the increase in chicken and pigs as well as goats can be seen as a major boost, and women in particular will have benefited from the expanded sales of chicken and eggs.

	1961	2020	2020/1961
Cattle	420	1333	3.2
Chicken	370	5633	
Goats	460	2693	
Pigs	52	1541	
Sheep	290	644	2.2
Livestock unites	378	1476	3.9

Livestock numbers (x 1000)

Urban Rwanda

Rwanda's urban population increased from only 76,000 people in 1961 (only 3% of its national population at Independence) to 2.3 million in 2020 (18%). The capital city, Kigali, is by far the biggest city, and its metropolitan area increased from only 34,000 in 1960 to more than 1.2 million people nowadays. Growth has been rapid for all smaller cities as well, although different sources give very different information for these smaller cities.
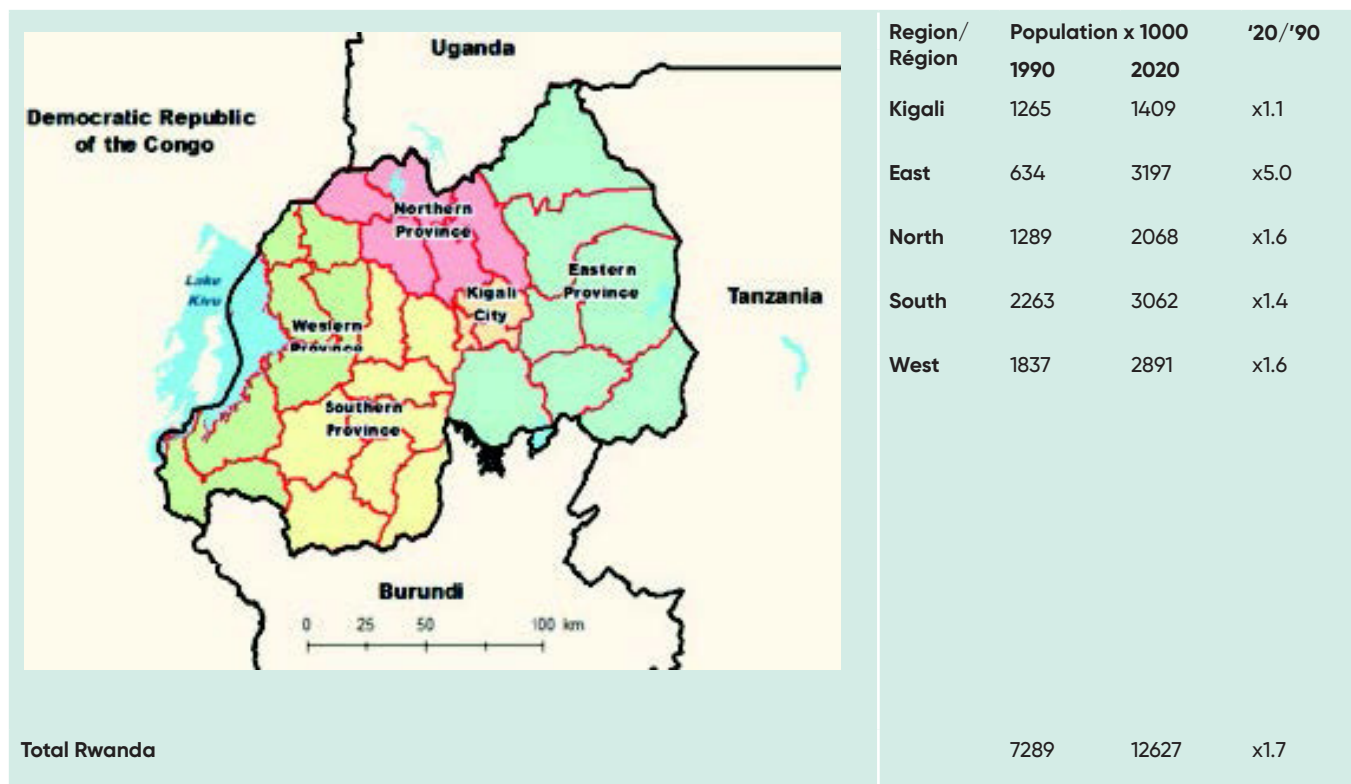
Cities (and region)	Population in thousands of inhabitants		
	Macrotrends: 1960, and 2022 (Metropol. area)	Citipopulation.de: census 2012	Worldometers, city, as given in 2022
Kigale	34>1,208	859	745
Butare		50	90
Gitarama/Muhanga		49	88
Musanze		..	87
Gisenyi		137	84
BYumba		34	71
Cyangugu		27	71
Ruhengeri		59	..

Major urban areas in Rwanda

https://www.macrotrends.net/cities/22404/kigali/population (with long-term historical information 1950-2021; this is the 'metropolitan area' of these cities; and for the census data in 2012: https://www.citypopulation.de/en/rwanda/cities/

Regional Inequality

Region/ Région	Population x 1000		'20/'90
	1990	2020	
Kigali	1265	1409	x1.1
East	634	3197	x5.0
North	1289	2068	x1.6
South	2263	3062	x1.4
West	1837	2891	x1.6
Total Rwanda	7289	12627	x1.7

map: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/c/c6/RwandaDists.png/350px-RwandaDists.png

Rwanda has 5 major administrative regions. The Globaldatalab website gives data for these five regions. Between 1990 and 2019 all regions experienced population growth; the highest growth happened in the Eastern Province. On the other hand, the population of the region of the capital city, Kigali, hardly increased. If we look at the regional data for human development, which for Rwanda exist since 1990, we see that improvements have taken place everywhere between 1990 and 2019. Both in 1990 and in 2019 the best conditions existed in Kigali for the HDI index as a whole, and also for education, and life expectancy. In 1990 and in 2019 the worst conditions existed in the Eastern Province. Regional inequality was already quite low in 1990 and further diminished towards 2019, with the exception of education.

Region	Subregional HDI			Life expectancy			Education index		
	1990	2019	19/90	1990	2019	19/90	1990	2019	19/90
Kigali	0.272	0.641	2.36	35	73	2.09	0.241	0.560	2.32
East	0.217	0.518	2.39	31	66	2.00	0.189	0.428	0.194
North	0.242	0.537	2.22	32	70	2.19	0.221	0.449	2.03
South	0.249	0.529	2.12	33	69	2.09	0.223	0.447	2.00
West	0.246	0.538	2.19	33	70	2.12	0.206	0.452	2.19
Total	0.248	0.543	2.19	33	69	2.09	0.218	0.458	2.10
Regional inequality	1.25	1.24		1.13	1.11		1.28	1.31	

If we compare 2019 with 1990, the human development index as a whole and the education situation has improved very much, with the fastest impro-vements in the Eastern province for the HDI as a whole, in the Northern Province for life expectancy and in the Kigali region for education.

Region	Income/capita (2011 US$ PPP)		
	1990	2019	'19/'90
Kigali	6,993	8,422	1.20
East	6,676	7,635	1.13
North	6,827	7,578	1.11
South	6,812	7,506	1.10
West	6,800	7,584	1.12
Total	6,838	7,676	1.12
Regional inequality	1.03	1.12	

The economic situation, as measured by the average income per capita situation, improved everywhere between 1990 and 2019, but not much. The highest growth was experienced in Kigali, that in both periods had the best performance. In 1990, the worst income situations existed in the Eastern Province, but that position shifted to the Southern Province towards 2019. Regional income inequality in Rwanda was very low in 1990 for African standards, but regional inequality in income levels became more pronounced during the period between 1990 and 2019, and particularly the gap widened between the region of capital city Kigali and all other provinces. Of course, these are average income figures and based on (rough) estimates. Regional inequality is not the same as income or wealth inequality. According to World Bank data the GINI-coefficient was relatively low in 1986 (28) but became quite extreme between 2000 and 2011 (between 47 and 53). In 2016 the Gini coefficient was estimated to be 44.

Further reading
Country Portal: http://countryportal.ascleiden.nl/rwanda
Africa2020: https://www.ascleiden.nl/africa2020

Country Information: Ton Dietz, David Ehrhardt, and Lidewyde Berckmoes
Country Portal: Harro Westra
African Studies Centre Leiden, October 2022

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