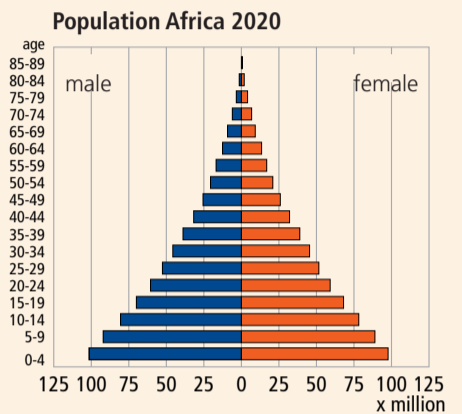
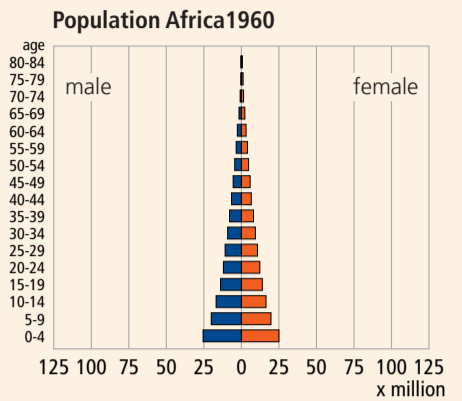


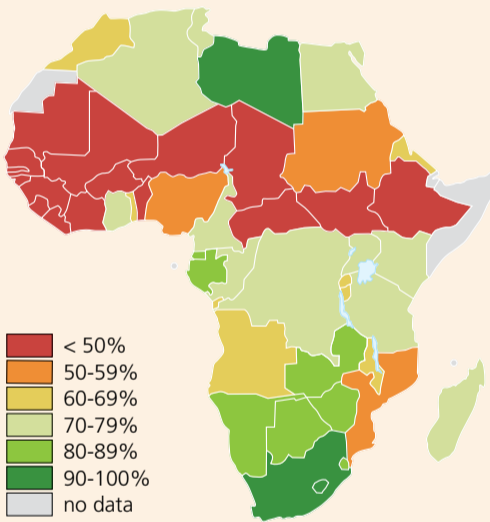
The graph shows that Africa's population has been growing fast between 1950 and 2020: from slightly more than 200 million in 1950 and close to 300 million in 1960 to more than 1.3 billion in 2020. It also shows that 1960 was indeed a watershed year ('The Year of Africa'): before 1960 only 30% of Africa's population lived in politically independent countries. At the end of 1960 this percentage had increased to 68. Making this graph meant taking a few politically sensitive decisions about the years of independence. For South Africa we used 1994, the year in which Nelson Mandela became the first President after free democratic elections. For South Sudan we took its year of independence, 2011 (so before 2011 it was regarded as an internal colony of Sudan). And we used the approach of the African Union towards the Western Sahara, regarding it as an independent country from 1975 onwards, despite the fact that in practice it is part of the Kingdom of Morocco. The graph clearly shows that for many Africans living now (most of them young), the colonial period is long ago; something belonging to the stories of their grandparents.



Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/demographics/demographics-of-africa/#population-pyramid>

Both in 1960 and in 2020 Africa's population composition really shows a pyramid, although the base in 1960 was even more extreme than in 2020, showing a gradual (but slow) shift to lower fertility levels.

Adult literacy rates Africa 2016



Source Adult literacy rate: <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs45-literacy-rates-continue-rise-generation-to-next-en-2017.pdf>

Although Africa is still lagging behind all other continents, social indicators show major improvements and rapid changes between 1960-1990 and 1990-2020, with faster change during the last thirty years than during the first thirty years. Within Africa there are major differences, though, as the map of adult literacy clearly shows: the highest literacy rates can be found in South Africa and Libya, and the lowest rates in a belt from West Africa to Ethiopia, and also with low figures in Mozambique, Angola, and Morocco. And almost everywhere there is a better performance among men than among women.

Social indicators Africa 1960, 1990 and 2020	1960	1990	2020
Median age (years)	18.7	17.6	19.7
Total fertility rate (children per woman)	6.6	6.2	4.4
Life expectancy males	41	50	62
Life expectancy females	44	54	66
Deaths under age 5 per 1000	259	166	63
Deaths under age 1 per 1000 (infant mortality)	155	101	42
Urban population (million)	53	200	588
Urbanization rate	19	32	44
Adult literacy rate SSA %	20	52	65*

* 2016: m72/f57

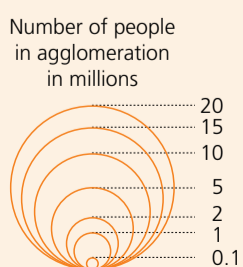
Population composition Africa 1960 and 2020
age and gender, absolute and relative figures

	1960		2020					
	male	female	male	female				
	million	%	million	%				
Children	61	22	60	21	274	20	267	20
Youth	36	13	36	13	183	14	181	13
35-65	39	14	41	14	192	14	198	15
Senior	4	1	5	2	21	2	26	2
Total	141	50	142	50	670	50	671	50

The table not only shows the tremendous growth in population numbers in all categories, but also the slow but gradual shift to a more balanced population in age categories. The overall gender balance was and is almost complete. The dependency ratio (children and seniors compared to the 'working age' population) was and is high, but decreasing: 0.85 in 1960 and 0.79 in 2020.

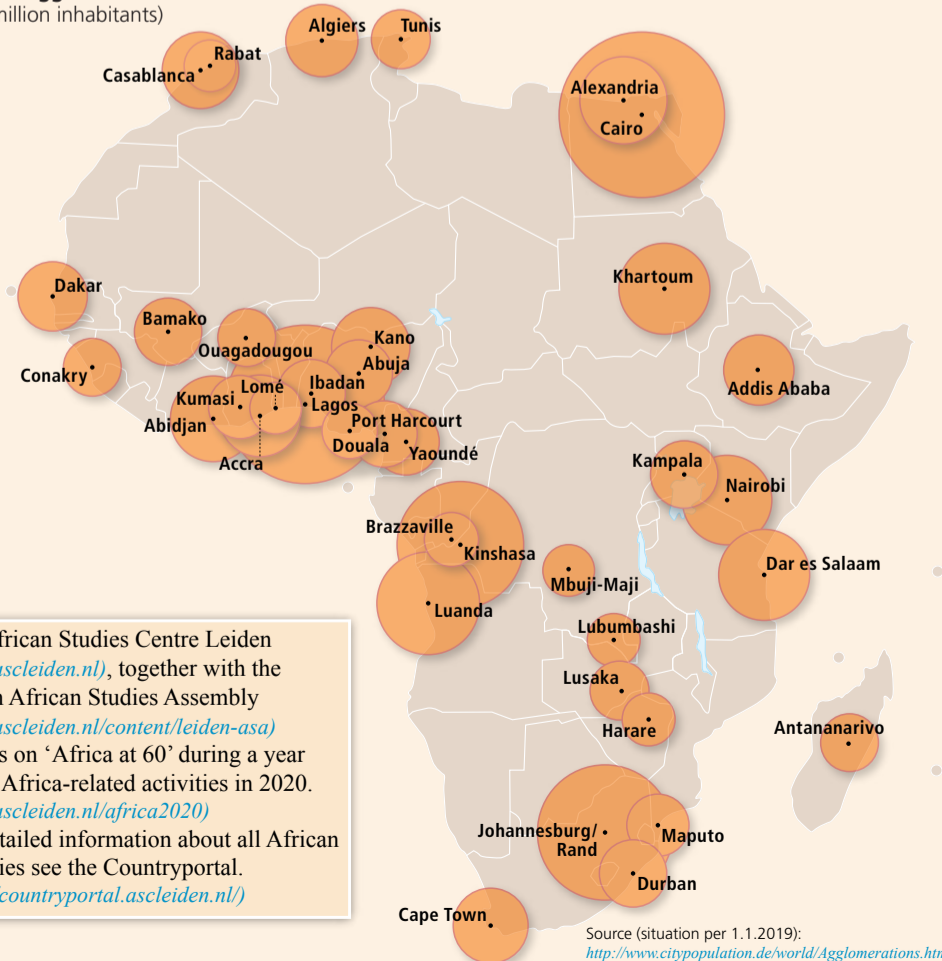
Source Tables: Worldometers

African agglomerations 1960



Source: Wikipedia, populationstat.com and Macrotrends.net

African agglomerations 2019
(> 2 million inhabitants)



The African Studies Centre Leiden (www.ascleiden.nl), together with the Leiden African Studies Assembly (www.ascleiden.nl/content/leiden-asa) reflects on 'Africa at 60' during a year full of Africa-related activities in 2020. For detailed information about all African countries see the Countryportal. (<http://countryportal.ascleiden.nl/>)

Source (situation per 1.1.2019): <http://www.citypopulation.de/world/Agglomerations.html>

