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2010

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Amadu Jacky Kaba, *Seton Hall University*

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# Educational Attainment, Population Increase and the Progress of African Americans

by

Amadu Jacky Kaba, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Seton Hall University, New Jersey

## Abstract

This paper claims that African Americans are making consistent progress in college or university enrollment and degree attainment. These gains in educational attainment have led to a substantial proportion of African Americans to rise in many important sectors of society, such as business, the military and politics. However, there is a concern that unlike the Asian and Hispanic populations in the United States, proportionally, the African American population is not increasing as rapidly. This slow annual growth of the African American population may have both economic and political implications in the years and decades to come.

## Introduction

By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, African Americans have come from extremely difficult experiences of enslavement and Jim Crow to make remarkable progress in the economic, social and political life of the United States. Although the data continue to show that relative to other racial/ethnic groups a higher percentage of African Americans continue to live in poverty, a strong majority of them are not in poverty anymore (Kaba, 2008a).

The main factor behind this progress of the African American population is higher education attainment. This is especially the case with young African Americans, who experience less discrimination and prejudice compared with their parents, grandparents and great grandparents before them. Even a significant number of relatively older African Americans who were once beaten and shouted at for attempting to attend schools are now going to college to study for various types of academic degrees.

There is a concern, however, that compared with the Asian and Hispanic populations, proportionally, the African American population is not growing or increasing as fast. Among the factors contributing to this slow growth of the African American population is that unlike in Africa, in recent years the average African American female in the United States has been going for years at a time not meeting the officially recommended total fertility rate (average number of children born per woman) of 2.1 children per woman, and also relatively high abortion rates for African American females when compared with women in other racial groups in the United States. These trends may have both economic and political implications for the African American population in the years and decades to come.

This paper examines statistics showing the progress of African Americans in higher education enrollments and degree attainment. The paper goes on to present statistics that illustrate that the African American population is not growing as fast or rapidly, and the factors responsible for this trend. Finally, the paper discusses the economic and political implications for this slow growth of the African American population.

## Higher Education Enrollments and Degree Attainment of African Americans

The higher education enrollment rates of African Americans have increased by over 2.2 million students from 1970 to 2007. In 1970, there were 378,000 African Americans enrolled in higher education institutions in the United States (Franklin and Moss, 1994, p.9). According to the U.S Census Bureau, as of October 2007, of the 17.956 million students enrolled in colleges and universities in the U.S., African American (or in combination with another race) accounted for 2.630 million (14.65%). Of those 2.630 million African Americans, 1.553 million (59%, but 8.65% of all students) were African American females.[1] In 2007, apart from Asian males and Asian females, proportionally, more African American females were enrolled in college than Whites and Hispanics. For example, in 2007, out of 13,977,000 Asians (or in combination with another race) aged 3 and above, 1,204,000 (8.6%) were enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities: 592,000 (8.8%) out of 6,706,000 for males and 612,000 (8.4%) out of 7,271,000 for females.

For African Americans (or in combination with another race), it was 2,630,000 (7%) out of 37,323,000; 1,077,000 (6.2%) out of 17,348,000 for males and 1,553,000 (7.8%) out of 19,975,000 for females. For whites (or in combination with another race), it was 14,114,000 (6.1%) out of 233,241,000; 6,169,000 (5.4%) out of 115,137,000 for males and 7,945,000 (6.7%) out of 118,104,000 for females. For Hispanics (of any race), it was 2,172,000 (5.1%) out of 42,715,000; 880,000 (4%) out of 21,952,000 for males and 1,292,000 (6.2%) out of 20,763,000 for females.[2]

## Degree Attainment

By 2008, the total number of African Americans with college or university degrees is relatively high. This is due primarily to more young African Americans having the opportunity to enroll in higher education institutions. For example, according to the *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education,* by the year 2008 in the United States, 1,874,000 African American females and 1,341,000 African American males (for a total of 3,215,000) had obtained a bachelor's degree; 669,000 African American females and 409,000 African American males (for a total of 1,078,000) had obtained a masters degree; 62,000 African American females and 88,000 African American males (for a total of 150,000) had obtained a professional degree; and 65,000 African American females and 71,000 African American males (for a total of 136,000) had obtained a doctorate.[3]

## Younger African Americans and Higher Education Attainment

Younger African Americans are progressing well in terms of college or university enrollment and degree attainment. Due to African American females, proportionally, there are more African Americans than whites (or in combination with another race) aged 16-17 enrolled in colleges and universities in the United States. For example, in 2007, out of 1,464,000 African American (or in combination with another race) 16-17 years old, 32,000 (2.2%) were enrolled in higher education institutions; 12,000 (1.6%) out of 733,000 for African American males and 20,000 (2.8%) out of 731,000 for African American females. For whites (or in combination with another race) out of 6,867,000 aged 16-17 in 2007, 137,000 (2%) were enrolled in higher education institutions; 58,000 (1.7%) out of 3,518,000 for white males and 79,000 (2.3%) out of 3,349,000 for white females.[4]

For degree attainment, there are now thousands of young African Americans earning their doctorates from ages 18-24. In an August 19, 2009 article entitled "Passion for Engineering Fuels 14-Year-Old ASME Member," Mel Torre tells a story of an African American teenager named Tyamo Okosun, who at age 14 was "…accepted into the Ph.D. mechanical engineering program at Purdue's [University] West Lafayette campus this fall, [2009] where he plans to advance research in the aerospace industry."[5] These stories are now becoming very common. Among young Americans aged 18-24, African Americans are earning doctorates at relatively high rates. For example, Table 1 shows data extracted from an April 27, 2009 U.S. Census Bureau report titled: *"*Educational Attainment in the United States: 2008.*"* The report presents degree attainment rates of Americans from high school diplomas to doctorates as of 2008. The report presents data for professional degrees, but this category includes degrees in law, divinity, medicine and others. Therefore, it is difficult to extract the medical degrees from the total professional degrees. Table 1 examines data for individuals in the U.S. aged 18-24 with doctorates in 2008.

As of 2008, there were 28,398,000 people in the U.S. aged 18-24, which included 14,392,000 (50.7%) males and 14,006,000 (49.3%) females. In 2008, there were 14,000 people in the U.S. aged 18-24 with doctorates, and within this population 11,000 (78.6%) were females and 3,000 (21.4%) were males. There were 22,056,000 whites alone aged 18-24, which included 11,267,000 (51.1%) males and 10,789,000 (48.9%) females. Of the 6,000 doctorates (42.8% of the 14,000 doctorates) whites earned, males and females each had 3,000 (21.4% each of the 14,000 doctorates). For non-Hispanic whites alone, 17,525,000 were aged 18-24. There were 5,000 non-Hispanics whites with doctorates (35.7% of the 14,000 doctorates), 3,000 (21.4% of the 14,000 doctorates) for males and 2,000 (14.3% of the 14,000 doctorates) for females.

There were 4,112,000 African Americans alone aged 18-24, which included 1,973,000 (48%) males and 2,138,000 (52%) females. Of the 4,000 doctorates earned by African Americans alone (28.6% of the 14,000 doctorates), females accounted for all of them. There were 1,173,000 Asians alone, with 593,000 (50.5%) males and 580,000 (49.5%) females. There were 4,000 (28.6% of total) of them with doctorates, with females accounting for all of them. There were 5,011,000 Hispanics (of any race); 2,629,000 (52.5%) males and 2,382,000 (47.5%) females, and all 1,000 doctorates were earned by females (Table 1).

## Table 1

Individuals aged 18 to 24 in the United States with Doctorates by Sex and Race: 2008

| | Population | Doctorate | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Category | 18-24 Years | Number | % of Total |
| White Alone (Both Sexes) | 22,056,000 | 6,000 | 42.8 |
| Male | 11,267,000 | 3,000 | 21.4 |
| Female | 10,789,000 | 3,000 | 21.4 |
| | | | |
| Non-Hispanic White Alone (Both Sexes) | 17,525,000 | 5,000 | 35.7 |
| Male | 8,904,000 | 3,000 | 21.4 |
| Female | 8,620,000 | 2,000 | 14.3 |
| | | | |
| African Americans Alone (Both Sexes) | 4,112,000 | 4,000 | 28.6 |
| Male | 1,973,000 | - | 0 |
| Females | 2,138,000 | 4,000 | 28.6 |
| | | | |
| Asian Alone (Both Sexes) | 1,173,000 | 4,000 | 28.6 |
| Male | 593,000 | - | 0 |
| Female | 580,000 | 4,000 | 28.6 |
| | | | |
| Hispanic (of any race) (Both Sexes) | 5,011,000 | 1,000 | 7.1 |
| Male | 2,629,000 | - | 0 |
| Female | 2,382,000 | 1,000 | 7.1 |
| | | | |
| White Alone or in Combination (Both Sexes) | 22,634,000 | 6,000 | 42.8 |
| Male | 11,575,000 | 3,000 | 21.4 |
| Female | 11,059,000 | 3,000 | 21.4 |
| | | | |
| African American Alone or in Combination (Both Sexes) | 4,337,000 | 4,000 | 28.6 |
| Male | 2,093,000 | - | 0 |
| Females | 2,245,000 | 4,000 | 28.6 |
| | | | |
| Asian Alone or in Combination (Both Sexes) | 1,331,000 | 4,000 | 28.6 |
| Male | 668,000 | - | 0 |
| Females | 663,000 | 4,000 | 28.6 |
| | | | |
| All Races (Both Sexes) | 28,398,000 | 14,000 | 100 |
| Male | 14,392,000 | 3,000 | 21 |
| Female | 14,006,000 | 11,000 | 79 |

Source: *"*Educational Attainment in the United States: 2008*."* 2009, April 27. U.S. Census Bureau.
Note: a dash (-) represents zero or rounds to zero.

The African American male college enrollment proportion increased significantly from 4.8% in October 2004 to the 6.2% in 2007 cited above. Among the factors contributing to the increase of African American males in college enrollment is that in recent years they have been leaving the U.S. military. For example, in 2001, there were 199,600 African Americans in the Ready Reserve U.S. Military. In 2007, it declined to 156,600, a difference of 43,000 (21.5%).[6] It is noted that of the 202,601 African Americans in the military in 2000, women accounted for 60,780 (30%) (Kaba, 2005a: 13). Another factor that might be contributing to the increase of African American male enrollments is that some in state and federal prisons are enrolling in college (Erisman and Contardo, 2005; "Partnerships Between Community Colleges and Prisons," 2009). According to the study of Erisman and Contardo (2005), in 2003-2004, of 14 state prison systems and the U.S. federal prison system enrolled 85,491 prison inmates in higher education institutions in the United States (p.16). There is also the factor of African American foreign students from Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and elsewhere. In the case of Africa, for example, there are more African immigrant males than females in the United States (140.1 males for every 100 females in 2000) ("Profile of the U.S. Foreign Born Population," 2001: 27). According to the Institute of International Education (USA), there were 37,796 African students from sub-Saharan Africa in the U.S. during the 2007/2008 academic year.[7] Let us now turn to the concern about the relative slow growth of the African American population.

## Slow Growth of the African American Population

The need for the African American population to continue to grow is extremely important because without numbers they stand to lose most of the gains that they have made since the 1970s. But the numbers show that the African American population is not growing rapidly or substantially as the Asian or Hispanic populations. In a report entitled "New Progressive America" (March 2009), Ruy Teixeira notes that African Americans' "…share of the overall population is growing very slowly" (p.4). The African American foreign born population is not very large and most of them are not citizens. For example, as of 2000, of the 35.5 million African Americans, 2.2 million (7.8%) were foreign-born ("Profile of the U.S. Foreign Born Population," 2001: 24). Also, in 2000, of the 881,300 African immigrants in the United States, 563,135 (63.9%) were not citizens,[8] meaning that they are ineligible to vote in U.S. elections.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the African American population (or in combination with another race, and the same classification applies to the other groups to be mentioned) increased by 9.8% from 2000 to 2007; 6% for whites; 26.3% for Asians. For Hispanics (of any race), it increased by 28.9% from 2000 to 2007.[9] Let us now turn to the main factors responsible for the relatively slow increase of the African American population.

## Factors Causing the Slow Growth of the African American Population

The two major interrelated factors that are causing the slow growth of the African American population are (1) the average African American woman is beginning not to meet the recommended total fertility rate (children born per woman) of 2.1 children born per woman and (2) relatively high abortion rates for African American females.

There are now examples showing that the total fertility rate for African American females is lower than that for white females. For example, a January 7, 2009 U.S. National Vital Statistics Report shows that in 2002, 2003 and 2004 the total fertility rate was lower for African American females than for white females. In 2003, it was 1.999 children born per woman for African American females and 2.061 for white females. In 1990 the rate was 2.48 for African American females (Martin et al., 2009: 33-34). In Africa, the average total fertility rate in 2006 was 4.68 children born per woman (Kaba, 2007: 79).

Then there is the very delicate and important subject of abortion. There is a gradual and emerging consensus from President Barack Obama to Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, to academics (including writings in Feminist journals) and many other important Americans across the political and religious spectrum who are now arguing that efforts must be made to substantially reduce abortions in the United States. President Obama discussed this issue in a major graduation speech he delivered at the University of Notre Dame on May 17, 2009.[1] Saad (2009, May 15) reports for the Gallup Poll that: "A new Gallup Poll, conducted May 7-10, finds 51% of Americans calling themselves "pro-life" on the issue of abortion and 42% "pro-choice." This is the first time a majority of U.S. adults have identified themselves as pro-life since Gallup began asking this question in 1995."[11] In 2004, for example, there were 48,758,000 White females aged 15 to 44, and 674,000 had abortions, with 13.8 abortions per every 1,000 of their population. For African American females, there were 9,116,000 aged 15 to 44 and 453,000 had abortions, with 49.7 abortions per every 1,000 of their population. For all females in the U.S. aged 15 to 44 there were 1,222,000 who had abortions, with a rate of 19.7 per 1,000 females. The 453,000 abortions for Black females is 37.1% of all abortions in the U.S. in 2004.[12] Are there potential causes for this low total fertility rate and high abortion rates for African American females that are leading the African American population not to grow substantially? Let us now examine some factors that might be at play.

## Factors Causing Low Total Fertility and High Abortion Rates for African American Females

There are several interrelated factors that might be causing both low fertility and high abortion rates for African American females. One factor that might be causing the low fertility rates of African American females is HIV/AIDS. This disease is more prevalent among African American males than African American females. While more African American males tend to date and marry outside their race, African American females who are more in numbers than their male counterparts, tend to almost exclusively date and marry within their race. For example, according to the U.S. Census, in 2007, there were 464,000 Black/White married couples in the United States. Of that total, 338,000 (72.8%) had an African American husband and a white wife, and 126,000 (27.2%) had a white husband and an African American wife.[13] As of 2007, there were 15, 696,000 African American females age 16 and over and 12,888,000 African American males aged 16 and over.[14] According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 21.3 million African American females (or in combination with other races) and 19.46 million[15] African American males, a difference of 1.84 million. According to Kaba (2008a):

> In the USA for example, in 2003, there were 4.7 HIV/AIDS deaths of all ages (age adjusted) per 100,000 of the population; 7.1 for males and 2.4 for females. For whites males it was 4.2; 31.3 for black males; 1.1 for Asian, Pacific Islander males; 9.2 for Hispanic males; and 3.4 for non-Hispanic white males. For white females it was 0.9; 12.8 for black females; 2.7 for Hispanic females; and 0.6 for non-Hispanic white females (p.314).

The above HIV/AIDS statistics have prompted African American females to now demand that their African male counterparts who are courting them go and get tested for HIV/AIDS and if those males refuse to do so, the females then would refuse to have sex.

This makes it a challenge for African American females to have children because for the most part sexual intercourse must happen for the opportunity to have children. The works of Duck (2009) and Hoffman et al. (2008) focus on this important subject. For example, among the findings of Hoffman et al. (2008) is that: "US-born Black women were more likely than were Black West Indian women to be extremely confident in their ability to discuss STI [sexually transmitted infections] screening with their regular partners" (p.2042).

According to Duck (2009):

> This paper reports on a study of the effects of the sexual, racial and status identity on health and health seeking behavior among a cohort of African American men. Focus groups and structured interviews were conducted to explore the attitudes of a cohort of African American men about their masculinity and its relationship to their health related behaviors. Their narratives indicate that being sexually active is an important component of masculinity…. A diagnosis of HIV/AIDS, for example, was information they said they would avoid by not being tested for AIDS. Evaluating this behavior within the framework of hegemonic masculinity suggests that the behavior is irrational (p.283).

The massive number of African American males in jails and prisons in the U.S. and the negative stigma associated with incarceration (having a criminal record) is also a potential factor causing the low fertility rates or even high abortion rates for African American women (Kaba, 2008a; Currence and Johnson, 2003). For example, in June 2006, out of 2,042,100 people in local jails, state and federal prisons, African American males accounted for 836,800 (41%) and of the 203,100 females, African Americans accounted for 68,800 (34%) (Kaba, 2008a: 330). Kaba (2008a) quoted Currence and Johnson (2003) as pointing out that: "...Recent studies also suggest that single mothers are reluctant to marry or live with fathers of their children, if the father has a history of incarceration…,Thus, the stigma of incarceration significantly reduces the social status of a young man and signals his undesirability to possible marriage partners" (p.318).

Most African American females tend to be very religious and may not want to associate with a potential African American male partner with a criminal record and would also not want to have sex without a relationship or marriage due to their deep religious beliefs. According to a January 30, 2009 report released by The Pew Forum, at least 87% of African American women and 78% of African American men in the United States were affiliated with Christian churches and that "African-American women also stand out for their high level of religious commitment. More than eight-in-ten black women (84%) say religion is very important to them, and roughly six-in-ten (59%) say they attend religious services at least once a week. No group of men or women from any other racial or ethnic background exhibits comparably high levels of religious observance."[16]

Lack of jobs for African American males, which is connected to high incarceration rates, is also a potential cause for the low fertility and high abortion rates for African American women in the United States (Jordan-Zachery, 2007; Renna and King, 2007;Button et al., 2006; Kaba, 2005b; Pager 2003; Grodsky and Pager, 2001: Western and Pettit, 2000). There are African American women who may not want to give birth when the father of the child is jobless or holds a job with very low wage because it makes it difficult for them to take care of the child or children.

For example, Jordan-Zachery (2007) points out that: "Evolutionary psychologists suggest that human mating strategies have evolved over the years, with women concentrating on men who are willing to and able to invest in their children. Men who fit this description are marriageable…" (pp.85-86). Jordan-Zachery (2007) presented a table illustrating civilian labor force participation rates, unemployment rates, and poverty rates for the total population and for African American males in 13 U.S. cities and two states: Atlanta, GA, Baltimore, MD, Chicago, IL, Cincinnati, OH, District of Columbia, Detroit, MI, Houston, TX, Kansas City, MO, Miami, FL, Mississippi, Newark, NJ, New Orleans, LA, New York, Oakland, CA, and Philadelphia, PA. For all of these cities and states, the unemployment rates in 2002 for the total population was in double figures for only one of them, but it was in double figures for African American males for 13 of them (p.93).

According to Kaba (2005b), as of March 2000, higher proportion of African American females than African American males 16 years and over were in the top job category in the civilian labor force, in the United States, Managerial and Professional (25.2% vs.17.7%), but higher proportion of African American males were in the lowest job category, Operators, fabricators, and laborers (28.5% vs. 9%) (pp.39-40). The gender gap within the African American population in educational attainment already noted above is a major contributing factor.

Poverty might also be a contributing factor to the low fertility and high abortion rates of African American females. A higher proportion of African American females than other groups and sub-groups are in poverty in the United States. For example, of the 36,997,000 people in poverty in 2004, African American females accounted for 5,167,000 (14%), even though African American females make up 7% of the total population; 3,833,000 (10.4%) for African American males (Kaba, 2008a: 316-317).

## Psychological Factors

There might also be a psychological reason for the low fertility and high abortion rates of African American females. This is due to the issue of race and the legacy of enslavement and ongoing racism particularly against African American males, but also among African American females. There might be African American females due to the visible continuous suffering of African American children from new born babies, who do not want to see their babies born only to suffer and die at a young age in a country where an African American male can be killed at any time or sent to prison where they work for pennies an hour for corporations and other influential businesses. Native Americans share a similar experience. According to Zinn (2003), when the Spaniards first came to the Caribbean, it did not take long before they put the Native inhabitants into forced and harsh labor to mine gold, where they worked at long distance from their families for many months at a time and both the males and their female counterparts suffer great brutalities.

For example, Zinn points out that: "The Spaniards 'thought nothing of knifing Indians by tens and twenties and of cutting slices off them to test the sharpness of their blades'" (2003:6). On forced labor of the Natives, Zinn presents this quote:

> …mountains are stripped from top to bottom and bottom to top a thousand times; they dig, split rocks, move stones, and carry dirt on their backs to wash it in the rivers, while those who wash gold stay in the water all the time with their backs bent so constantly it breaks them; and when water invades the mines, the most arduous task of all is to dry the mines by scooping up pansful of water and throwing it up outside… (2003: 6).

Zinn adds that "While the men were sent many miles away to the mines, the wives remained to work the soil, forced into the excruciating job of digging and making thousands of hills for cassava plants" (2003:7). Zinn goes on to present the following quote:

> Thus husbands and wives were together only once every eight or ten months and when they met they were so exhausted and depressed on both sides…they ceased to procreate. As for the newly born, they died early because their mothers, overworked and famished, had no milk to nurse them, and for this reason, while I was in Cuba, 7000 children died in three months. Some mothers even drowned their babies from sheer desperation (2003:7).

Beal (2008) points out that although women have the right to have an abortion in the United States, there are reports that increasing numbers of African American females are being indirectly or directly influenced to have abortions (pp.171-174). Furthermore, there is the issue of medical sterilization of both African American males and females, which caused them to become infertile and thereby cause a stagnation or decline of the African American population. For African American males, Eisenberg et al. (2009) show results of their study claiming that: "About 11.4% of men aged 30-45 years reported having a vasectomy, representing approximately 3.6 million American men. Although 14.1% of white men had a vasectomy, only 3.7% of black and 4.5% of Hispanic men reported undergoing vasectomy" (p.1020). They add that among the reasons provided for having vasectomy are: "Having ever been married, fathering 2 or more children, older age, and higher income were the factors associated with vasectomy" (p.1020). According to Beal (2008): "The vasectomy which is performed on males and takes only six or seven minutes is a relatively simple operation. The sterilization of a woman, on the other hand, is admittedly major surgery. This surgical operation (salpingectomy)…must be performed in a hospital under general anesthesia" (p.172).

Might one suggest that the various difficulties that African American children are suffering in the U.S. might cause a psychological impact on African American females through deep 'fear', 'anxiety', hopelessness and 'mistrust' of society, which caused them to be so depressed that they choose to have an abortion? Since more males are born on average than females, more of them are lost to abortions (unlike nations in Asia such as China and India where studies show that more females are aborted, causing a sharp drop in their female populations, see Jha et al., 2006; Secondi, 2002), thus substantially contributing to the relatively smaller number of African American males in the country. For example, Kaba (2008b) found that among humans there are more males born at birth than females, but from the moment we are born, females begin to outlive males, thus by age 65 there are more of them. Statistically, regardless of geographic location, Black women give birth to more females than non-Black women. In 2008, while the average sex ratio at birth in the world was 1.06 males born for every 1 female, it was 1.03 in Black nations in Africa and the Caribbean. In the U.S., in 2002 there were 1,050 white baby boys born for every 1,000 white baby girls born and 1,030 African American baby boys born for every 1,000 African American baby girls born (pp.139-150).

As of 2005, for every 100,000 of their population, there were 1,437 deaths of African American baby boys under 1 year old in the United States; 640 for whites; and 464 for Asian or Pacific Islanders. For females the numbers were 1,179 for African American baby girls under 1 year old; 515 for whites; and 395 for Asian or Pacific Islander.[17]

On September 20, 2007 as seen on national television an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 people, with African Americans comprising over 90% of them marched in Jena, Louisiana to protest the harsh legal treatment of six African American high school students by white authorities. Taslitz (2008) presents this account of the Jena 6 incident:

> To opponents of the prosecution, the plight of Jena 6 is but one of the most overt recent examples of the usually more covert but routine racial disparities in the administration of American criminal Justice. Jena High is a mostly white school, and the schoolyard violence in question may have stemmed from a dispute over the "white tree," a large oak tree under which only white students sat. A black student had asked and received a school official's permission to sit under the tree. Shortly thereafter, students and school authorities found three hangman's nooses dangling from the tree. Several black students responded by sitting under the tree, leading to scuffles, followed by a school assembly at which local prosecutor, Reed Walters, spoke. At this assembly, alters allegedly said, specifically to the black students, "I can be your friend or your worst enemy. I can end your lives [and/or make your lives disappear] with the stroke of a pen (pp.3-4).

Potential African American mothers in the United States might not want to see their beloved sons sent to prison to work for pennies an hour for corporations and local, state and federal governments in almost all white communities, thereby giving those communities an even better standard of living than they already have, due to such almost free labor. It is noted that major U.S. corporations and business use cheap prison labor and that in the state of Louisiana where the majority of prison inmates are African Americans, they are put to work and "…paid 4 cents to 20 cents an hour" (Kaba, 2005a:21).

During the funeral of the late Mrs. Coretta Scott King, wife of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on February 7, 2006, with the most important figures in the country and the world including current, past and future U.S. presidents, Dr. Dorothy Height, the 97 year-old Chair and President Emerita of the National Council of Negro Women, spoke and said that: "We've come a long way in the civil rights movement. We've made some great moves, but we have a long way to go…. Dr. King used to say it one way when he was talking about us, our different races. He said, the black man needs the white man to free him of his fear. And white man needs the black man to free him of his guilt. We both need each other. We all need each other."[18] Writing about the legacy of enslavement in the U.S. pertaining to forced romantic relationships between African Americans and whites, Firmin and Firebaugh (2008) note that: "Caucasian and African American Romantic relationships are not new and evidence suggests their occurrence from before the time of slavery. During slave times opposition between these two races was exacerbated by some slave owners raping African American women. Evidence also suggests that some Caucasian women used African American slaves as concubines" (p.782).

Writing on the issue of African American mothers' fear of the safety of their children in the United States, Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) note that:

> Black mothers are acutely aware of having to train their children to cope with discrimination. Mothering Black children involves the usual parental tasks of providing for the child's basic needs and supplying nurture and guidance, but in addition Black mothers are almost always involved in socializing their girls and boys to cope with the reality of racism, and they are often engaged in educating their girls about the dynamics of sexism. Racial/gender socialization is a central focus of many Black mothers, particularly if they are raising children in predominantly non-Black areas" (p.10).

Jones and Shorter-Gooden (2003) add that, "Sometimes they're coping with crippling fear and anxiety: if they say what they think or act they way that comes naturally, they will be rejected, excluded, even hated" (p. 61).

In the U.S., due to heavy work or job demands, compared with females in other racial groups, proportionally fewer children under 5 years old are under the care of their African American mothers. For example, in Winter 2002, of the 18,454,000 children under 5 years old in the U.S., 3.5% were under the care of their mother, but 1.8% out of 1,521,000 for African American mothers (Kaba, 2008a: 317). According to Kaba (2008a):

> In 2005, there were 73,523,000 children under 18 years old in the USA, with 67.4% living with both parents; 23.4% living with mother only; 4.7% living with father only and 4.5% living with neither parent. Also, for 10.1% of those living with mother only, the mother is never married….For blacks it was 11,295,000 under 18 years old; 35.1% living with both parents; 50.1% living with mother only; 4.9% living with father only; and 9.8% living with neither parent. For 32% of those living with mother only, the mother is never married (p. 315).

Due to the unpredictable nature of the survival and success of African American males in the United States, Dill (1983) points out that unlike white middle-class parents, African American working-class parents train their daughters to focus only on their educational attainment and not in getting married, because there is no guarantee that they would find eligible African American males to marry after college:

> …parents of women from working-class backgrounds stressed educational achievement over and above other personal goals. These women never viewed marriage as a means of mobility and focused primarily upon education, postponing interest in, and decisions about, marriage. In contrast, women from middle-class backgrounds were expected to marry and were encouraged to integrate family and educational goals throughout their schooling" (p.140).

On the issue of trust and racial groups in the United States, Bahry et al. (2005) point to research which claims that:

> Cross-national surveys demonstrate that trust is lower in heterogeneous countries….Research in the United States points to less generalized faith in others when local communities are diverse….Ethnic differences is thus assumed to generate a high level of in-group trust, but little or no confidence in others. Some research suggests that the relationship is actually zero-sum: the higher the trust in one's own group, the lower the faith in people outside it (p.521).

According to Nunn and Wantchekon (2008): "…data from US localities to identify three individual-specific factors that reduce trust: (1) a recent history of traumatic experiences (2) membership in minority groups that feel discriminated against (e.g. black and to a lesser extent, women), (3) low education and income" (p.1). Nunn and Wantchekon (2008) add that "An important dimension of the debate on determinants of trust is the role of historical factors….trust originates from shared values that are crucially shaped by cultural heritage" (p.1). Let us now examine potential economic and political implications for the slow annual growth of the African American population.

## Economic and Political Implications for the Slow Growth of the African American Population

There are potential economic and political implications for the slow growth of the African American population, especially after making enormous progress in higher education attainment. First, if an agreement is reached in the society and these abortion numbers are reduced substantially, the African American population could grow significantly.

Economically, more African American babies born will result in more wealthy African Americans because those who are alive today will transfer their wealth and knowledge that they have acquired. Since someone who is clearly identified as African American and male is president of the United States, this could help ease the deep fear that African American females have of the society and begin to have the trust and confidence that if they give birth to their children, those children have a chance to a better life for themselves and contribute to society and that they would not be destroyed or killed at an early age.

African American females appear to play a crucial role on this issue. More African American females may be born relative to other racial groups as the data above have shown, and they have more education and vote more in elections than African American males. Politically, it will impact African Americans because proportionally, its population is not growing rapidly like other minority groups such as Hispanics and Asians, meaning that African Americans could lose seats in state legislatures and the United States Congress, and the Democratic Party could also be impacted severely because at this moment in history, therefore it benefits from a vast majority of the African American vote.

In an article entitled: "African Americans and U.S. politics: The Gradual Progress of Black women in Political Representation" Kaba and Ward (2009) claim that among the factors causing more African American females than African American males to vote in U.S. elections is that there are more of them aged 18 and over and they are also more educated. In the U.S., to vote in presidential elections between the two major candidates, Democrat and Republican, one must be at least 18 years old. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2008, there were 224.7 million people in the United States.

Of that total, for both sexes African Americans accounted for 27.2 million[19] (12%), and that is exactly what the African American proportion of the total votes cast in the November 2008 presidential election. However, of the 27.2 million African Americans aged 18 and over in 2008, females accounted for 14.954 million (55%, but 6.6% of the 224.7 million total aged 18 and over). This means that the 7% total African American female votes cast in the November 2008 presidential election is .4% higher than their proportion of those 18 and over in the United States. In the 2008 Presidential Election, African American women led the way in voting for the winner, Democrat Barack Obama, with 96% of their vote, followed by African American males (95%). The only other group that had 4 out of every 5 of their members voting for Democrat Barack Obama in that historic election is Jewish Americans (83%).[2] As of January 2001, there were 9,101 Black Elected Officials in the United States. There were 43 members of the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus in the 109th U.S. Congress (Kaba and Ward, 2009: 32).

African American women are also playing a crucial role in females catching up and surpassing males in different indices in the United States. For example, Kaba (2008a) cited data that showed that among citizens African American females were responsible for females surpassing males in earned doctorates for the first time in U.S. history in 2002, and since then females have never looked back and have continued to have more doctorates than males every year. In 2002, of the 25,936 doctorates awarded to people in the U.S., females accounted for 51 percent. In 2002, among citizens in the United States, of the 20,720 doctorates awarded to whites, 10,291 (49.7%) were females. Of the 1,644 doctorates awarded to African Americans, 1,038 (63.1%) were females. Of the 1,233 doctorates awarded to Hispanics, 687 (56.5%) were females. Of the 1,364 doctorates awarded to Asians, 617 (45.2%) were females (p.322). In the U.S., educational attainment is correlated with income. For example, according to a 2002 U.S. Census Bureau report, over an adult's career, an individual with a high school diploma is expected on average to earn $1.2 million; $2.1 million for a bachelor's degree; $2.5 million for a master's degree; $3.4 million for a doctorate; and $4.4 million for a professional degree (Kaba, 2005a: 14).

## Conclusion

African Americans have made substantial progress in higher education enrollment and degree attainment to the point where there are instances where they surpass white Americans. These gains in higher education attainment are fueling the rapid progress of African Americans. There is a concern, however, that the African American population is not growing annually as rapidly as the Asian and Hispanic populations. This slow annual growth of the African American population could have potential economic and political implications in the years and decades to come. A stagnation or decline of the African American population could cause economic and political problems, including a stagnation or decline of African American elected officials or loss of seats in state and federal legislatures.

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