

Explaining the Declining Black American Total Fertility Rates, 1992-2022: The Paradox of Human Capital Theory, Related and Relevant Factors, Implications, and Recommendations

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Abstract

This paper examines the declining total fertility rates of Black women in the United States. The paper finds total fertility figures declined for all women from 2.046 children born per woman in 1992 to 1.657 in 2022; 1.978 to 1.568, respectively for Whites; and 2.416 to 1.639, respectively for Blacks. The paper explains the paradox of human capital theory, whereby college or university degree attainment, which is supposed to result in increased numbers of total fertility rates for Black women in the United States, instead contributes to their decline in childbirth during this period. Other related and relevant factors presented for this phenomenon include: more Black females aged 16 and over than their male counterparts, Black women preferring marriage first before having children, fear of sexually transmitted infections (STI), low immigration rates of Black people to the United States, high cost of living, both Black males and Black females enlisting in the United States military in large numbers and at a young age, family planning, and substantial numbers of Black males in jails and prisons. Some of the implications presented for this phenomenon include: the slow growth, stagnation or future potential decline of the Black population in the United States, and potential future decline in the number of Black voters and Blacks in elected office, including the United States Congress and state legislatures. Some recommendations presented for managing this phenomenon include: lobbying the United States federal government to increase the immigration of Black people (especially young Blacks) to the United States, and Black Americans should adopt Black children from Africa and the Black World.

Keywords

Total Fertility, Decline, Black Women, Childbirth, Human Capital, United States, Educational Attainment, Population Decline, Adoptions, Immigration, Wealth Decline, Political Influence, Social Impact

1. Introduction

In the past three decades, the trend of declining total fertility rates has been universal. It is happening in low-, middle- and high-income nations or countries across the world. It is happening in homogeneous and heterogeneous nations or countries. By 2020, for example, the average total fertility rate in the world was 2.42 children born per woman. In 2024, the rate was 1.4 in Japan; 1.58 in Canada; 1.63 in the United Kingdom; 1.55 in China; 2.03 in India; 1.26 in Italy; 1.3 in Spain; 1.87 in Saudi Arabia; 1.52 in Russia; 1.22 in Ukraine; and 1.9 in France (Compiled from the [CIA World Factbook, 2024](#)). According to the United Nations Population Division, a society needs a rate of 2.1 children born per woman to maintain its population ([Kaba, 2010a](#): p. 107). In the United States, declining total fertility rates are being experienced by almost all the groups that make up the society. This is even the case for two groups that have traditionally experienced relatively high total fertility rates: Blacks and Hispanics ([Martin et al., 2013](#); [Osterman et al., 2024](#)). Of the many factors contributing to this phenomenon, some are universal, while others are country specific. Or within countries are group specific. For example, in Japan, Greece, Italy and Spain, one factor contributing to this phenomenon might be the relatively high proportion of people aged 65 and over by 2024: 29.5%, 23.6%, 23.6%, and 20.9%, respectively (Compiled from the [CIA World Factbook, 2024](#)). While in Russia and Ukraine, war might be a contributing factor to this phenomenon ([Salisbury, 1999](#): p. 5). Likewise, within countries, while there might be universal factors contributing to this phenomenon, other factors might be group specific. For example, [Salisbury \(1999\)](#) presents factors that contribute to the birth rates of Whites in the United States: “Photoperiod... the effect of antibiotics on ovulation... contraceptive practice... the differential rates of contraceptive use and failure by income grouping... birth desires and intentions... seasonal effects of temperature on the frequency of intercourse... birth expectations... routine activity theory... preconditions of marriage... demographic transition theory... the undefined seasonal effect of temperature... the effects of vacations and holidays... variations in coital frequency... and the effects of variations in sperm volume, quantity and quality...” (p. 5). [Salisbury \(1999\)](#) adds that other explanations that have been provided for this phenomenon include age, ethnicity, race, education, length of marriage, urban versus rural residence, job status, region of country, income of husband, and age at marriage (p. 5).

This paper examines the declining total fertility rates within the Black population in the United States from 1992 to 2022. The paper begins by presenting data

on the trends in total fertility rates from 1992 to 2022, of the total population of the United States, including the Black population. Next the paper presents explanations of the paradox of the human capital theory and total fertility rates. It also presents related and relevant factors responsible for the declining total fertility rates in the Black population of the United States. Next the paper presents the implications of this phenomenon. Finally, the paper presents some recommendations for managing this phenomenon.

2. Data and Characteristics on the Total Fertility Rates in the United States with a Focus on Black Americans

Lundquist et al. (2009) point out that in the post-World War II era, childlessness was more prevalent among White women than their Black female counterparts in the United States. However, starting in the 1970s, both the White and Black total fertility rates started to become similar. This is especially the case with educated Black and White women: "...college-educated women of both racial groups are 5% to 10% more likely to be childless at any given point during that period than are women of all educational levels" (pp. 741-742).

Table 1 and **Table 2** below substantiate the claims made above. **Table 1** presents trends in total fertility rates in the United States for the years 1992, 2002, and 2012. According to **Table 1**, in 1992, the total fertility rate for women in the United States was 2.046 children born per woman; 1.895 for Asian and Pacific Islanders; 2.958 for Hispanics; 2.416 for Blacks; and 1.978 for Whites. In 2002, the total fertility rate for women in the United States declined to 2.021; 1.799 for

Table 1. Total fertility rates in the United States, 1992, 2002, and 2012.

Group	1992	2002	2012
All	2.046	2.021	1.881
Asian or Pacific Islander	1.895	1.799	1.770
Hispanic	2.958	2.711	2.190
Black	2.416	1.990	1.900
White	1.978	2.042	1.886

Source: Compiled from Martin et al. (2013: pp. 19-21, p. 29).

Table 2. Total fertility rates in the United States, 2022.

Group	2022
All	1.657
Non-Hispanic Asian	1.353
Non-Hispanic Black	1.639
Non-Hispanic White	1.568
Hispanic	1.970

Source: Compiled from Osterman et al. (2024: pp. 15-16).

Asian and Pacific Islanders; 2.711 for Hispanics; 1.990 for Blacks; and 2.042 for Whites. In 2012, the total fertility rate for women in the United States declined to 1.881; 1.770 for Asian and Pacific Islanders; 2.190 for Hispanics; 1.900 for Blacks; and 1.886 for Whites.

Table 2 presents total fertility rates in the United States in 2022. According to **Table 2**, in 2022, the total fertility rate for women in the United States was 1.657 children born per woman; 1.353 for non-Hispanic Asians; 1.639 for non-Hispanic Blacks; 1.568 for non-Hispanic Whites; and 1.970 for Hispanics.

3. The Paradox of Human Capital Theory and Total Fertility Rates, and Related and Relevant Factors

3.1. The Paradox of Human Capital Theory and Total Fertility Rates

Human capital theory has been utilized to explain why households, villages, towns, cities, countries, and continents are relatively successful when compared with one another. Human capital theory is explained as individuals, or the entities mentioned above with formal education or specialized skills tend to be more productive members of society or more successful relative to those without education or specialized skills. [Anderson and Bertaux \(2012\)](#) claim that: “The term human capital refers to human education, skills, and experience...” (p. 147). [Gill-Peterson \(2015\)](#) points out that: “...the theory of human capital is less preoccupied with innate capacities than with acquiring new skills. Education was hence the first target...” (p. 187). [Hong and Pandey \(2007\)](#) claim that: “The common interpretation of human capital theory is that failure of individuals to invest in certain personal qualities (i.e., higher education) results in poor economic outcomes later in life” (p. 19; also see [Kaba, 2015](#): pp. 116-117).

In the United States, for example, research shows that the higher the level of an individual’s education, the higher their professional employment category and salary or income. For example, [Kaba \(2024a\)](#) points out that of the 18.798 million Black women aged 18 and older in the United States on December 31, 2022, 3.18 million had at least a bachelor’s degree; 1.591 million had a master’s degree; 158,000 had professional degrees (such as MD or JD); and 281,000 had doctoral degrees (such as Ph.D. and Ed.D). For 15.987 million Black males aged 18 and over during that same period, the figures were 2.367 million, 862,000, 128,000, and 161,000, respectively (p. 132). Black women and women in general in the United States are among the most highly educated people in the workforce, and higher proportions of them are also in professional and managerial positions, which is the top job category in the workforce. For example, of the 140.516 million people aged 25 and over in the civilian labor force in the United States in 2021, 60.827 million (43.3%) had at least a bachelor’s degree: 29.965 million (40%) out of 74.939 million for men; 30.863 million (47.1%) out of 65.577 million for women; 2.510 million (29.7%) out of 8.440 million for Black men; and 3.532 million (38.1%) out of 9.283 for Black women. In 2021, of 152.581 million people aged 16 and over in the civilian labor force in the United States, 42.4% were in

management, professional, and related occupations; 38.5% out of 80.829 million males; 46.9% out of 71.752 million females; 47.7% out of 54.476 million White females; 39.6% out of 9.851 million Black females; 38.7% of 63.814 million White males; and 27.6% out of 8.875 million Black males (Kaba, 2024b: pp. 75-76). Black American women are also the majority within their race of full-time faculty in colleges and universities in the United States. For example, of the 58,968 full-time Black faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the United States in 2022, women accounted for 33,696 (57.1%), and men accounted for 25,272 (42.9%) (Kaba, 2024a: p. 123).

However, these educational and professional achievements by Black women and women in general, tend to influence their total fertility rates. Shiu (2017) points out that: “Fertility decline has been depicted as arising after the onset of modern growth around 1800, and linked to changes in child mortality, demand for children, women’s work, public schooling, child labor, and other factors” (p. 354). Brand and Davis (2011) point out that: “Higher education influences women’s career aspirations, labor market involvement and experiences, familial roles, and fertility” (p. 863). DeCicca and Krashinsky (2023) note the impact of educational attainment on the birth rates across the world in the past five decades, with birthrates declining as the educational attainment of women increases, especially in developed countries. The authors then claim that: “...there may be a causal relationship between female education and lifetime fertility” (pp. 471-472). In the United States, Lundquist et al. (2009) note that important changes in the makeup of families over the past five decades have resulted in the decline in total fertility rates and the increase in childlessness of women, and that women have experienced: “...growing social, political, and economic emancipation...” (p. 742). Among the reasons provided for this phenomenon for women in general are: “...the postponement of marriage, lower marital rates, increases in divorce rates, widespread availability of effective contraception and abortion, and postponement of childbearing within marriage” (p. 742; also see Blau et al., 2013; Tamura et al., 2016).

An explanation of the paradox of the human capital theory as it relates to total fertility is that educational attainment, especially a bachelor’s degree or higher is supposed to be important to Black women and women in general because it puts them in a position to provide their children or future children with the necessary resources to become highly educated or to acquire specialized skills. Bandelj and Spiegel (2023) note that: “In the past few decades, there has been a significant rise in educational investment in children. Economists frame this effort as human capital development, whereby, according to human capital theory, education increases future productivity and wage returns in adulthood” (p. 809). One reason is that, as mentioned above, when one acquires a bachelor’s degree or higher in the United States, one tends to have managerial and professional positions. These professional positions correlate with higher incomes and medical insurance because in the United States, professional jobs come with very good medical insur-

ance. Higher incomes put women and their partners in the position to be able to provide for children, including supporting their college education. On the other hand, these accomplishments would also require women to hold off having children because they want to climb up to the highest levels in their professions. This is the case for Black women in particular: the higher the level of their education, the fewer children they have, which has resulted in the current situation. According to [Lundquist et al. \(2009\)](#), attainment of college or university degrees by women has always been connected to childlessness. The authors add: "...that high socioeconomic status should be a strong predictor of childlessness for both groups of women [Black and White], but more strongly so for Blacks than for Whites" (p. 744).

In addition, Blacks go deep into debt to pay for their education in the United States, especially for Black women. For example, they earn more doctoral degrees than their male counterparts, accounting for 58% of the 3,389 doctorates earned by Black Americans in 2022, and their male counterparts account for 42 percent ([Kaba, 2024a](#): p. 121). The cumulative (undergraduate and graduate) median debt for 2511 (available data) Blacks who earned doctoral degrees in 2022 was \$100,000: \$45,000 for 22,523 Whites; and \$45,000 for 3196 Hispanics ([Kaba, 2024a](#): p. 119). This means that these Black female doctoral degree earners must work for many years to pay back their college student loans, which could delay marriage and childbirth. According to [Lundquist et al. \(2009\)](#): "...the minority group status hypothesis... predicts lower fertility among minority groups as a strategy for social and economic integration and advancement" (pp. 743-744).

On the other hand, a significant number of those Black women who lack college degrees may not have children because of that fact, even though the opposite might be assumed. In the United States, research continues to show that it is increasingly becoming apparent that individuals want to get married before they have children, but it is those who have a bachelor's degree or more who are likely to get married or even have more children because they can afford to do so. [Lundquist et al. \(2009\)](#) point out that: "Black women's investment in human capital increased significantly throughout the late 20th century, ostensibly reducing such correlations between poverty and childlessness" (p. 743). [Parker and Stepler \(2017\)](#) report for the Pew Research Center that in 2015, of people aged 25 and over in the United States, 65% of those with a bachelor's degree were married; 55% of those with some college education; and 50% of those with a high school diploma or less. It has been found that poor individuals who lack the resources to be involved in various organizations or activities are likely to resort to making love or having sex because it is one of the limited opportunities that they have for fun, which may result in pregnancy and childbirth. However, for the poor within the Black American population, this is not the case. [Salisbury \(1999\)](#) points out that: "When the income to consumption requirements ratio of an individual or family remains low or decreases to levels below 1, the theory of compensatory validation would predict sexual activity and desires for intimacy would remain consistent or

increase” (p. 4). [Salisbury \(1999\)](#) adds that: “When a low score or deprivation in other domains occurs, it is hypothesized the intimacy domain serves as a primary source of compensation for deficiencies in well-being in other domains” (p. 4). [Lundquist et al. \(2009\)](#) note that: “...in contrast to the way childlessness among (predominantly White) women today is often depicted, Black childlessness in the mid-20th century was framed as involuntary and attributed to the effects of poverty and discrimination, including poor health care, malnutrition, disease, and coercive sterilization” (p. 743). [Lundquist et al. \(2009\)](#) add that the social characteristics model: “...argues that higher minority group fertility levels result from their marginalized socioeconomic status” (p. 743).

3.2. Related and Relevant Factors Contributing to the Declining Total Fertility Rates of Black Females in the United States

3.2.1. Social

One factor that has contributed to the declining total fertility rates of Black women in the past three decades is that there are more Black females aged 16 and over than their male counterparts, illustrating that there are millions of younger Black males below the age of 18, which means that they are legally categorized as children in the United States. For example, in 2007, there were 15.696 million Black females aged 16 and over and 12.888 million Black males aged 16 and over in the United States ([Kaba, 2010a](#): p. 113). In 2022, there were 2.811 million more Black women aged 18 and over than their male counterparts: 18.798 million versus 15.987 million ([Kaba, 2024a](#): p. 120). In 2019, there were 79.0 Black men for every 100 Black women; and 91.8 White men for every 100 White women ([Kaba, 2024c](#): p. 302). In addition, compared with White women, Black women tend to avoid marrying younger men. [Fry \(2024\)](#) presents opposite sex marriage figures for the year 2022 in the United States and finds that for White couples, in 38% of the marriages, the husband is older. However, the figure is 43% for Blacks, where the husband is older.

Low immigration rates of Black immigrants to the United States from Africa, the Caribbean and other parts of the Black World, might also contribute to this phenomenon since more of them might tend to have children. The study by [Hernandez \(2012\)](#) of immigrant children in the United States finds that in 1990, there were 363,000 children from birth through age 10 with Black parents in the United States, accounting for 6.7% of 5,434,000 Black children. From 2005-2009, that figure increased to 813,000 (12.4%) of the 6,548,000 Black children in the United States (p. 3). According to [Tamir \(2022\)](#), in 2010, 3.5 million (8%) of the Black population of the United States was foreign-born.

Whether authorized or unauthorized, immigrants from Africa are under-represented. [Moslimani and Passel \(2024\)](#) point out that the 47.8 million foreign-born population in the United States in 2023, accounted for 14.3% of the total population. [Moslimani and Passel \(2024\)](#) add that of all immigrants in the United States in 2022, 10.6 million or 23% were from Mexico; another 27% of all immigrants were from Latin America, excluding Mexico; 28% from Asia; 12% from

“Europe, Canada, and other North America”; 5% from Sub-Saharan Africa; and 4% from the Middle East and North Africa. According to Batalova (2024), in 2021, among unauthorized immigrants in the United States, Mexicans have a very high majority, with 7.4 million or 66%; Asia, 1.2 million or 11%; South America, 1.1 million or 9%; Europe, Canada, or Oceania, with 780,000 or 7%; the Caribbean, with 436,000 or 4%; Africa, with 321,000 or 3 percent.

Another factor is that persistent racism and the killings of Black people in the United States by law enforcement individuals and others, might cause Black women and Black couples to be in fear of having children because they do not want to see their children suffer or be killed (Davis Moss, 2023; Kaba, 2010a: pp. 115-119; Nuru-Jeter et al., 2009; Jones & Shorter-Gooden, 2003: p. 61). It is quoted in Kaba (2010a) that: “...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. 118).

Another factor is that a significant number of both Black males and Black females of childbearing age in the United States enlist in the military, where they may not be ready or prepared to have children. For example, in 2019, Black women accounted for 28.92% of enlisted women in the United States military and Black men accounted for 16.94% of enlisted men (“Distribution of Active-Duty Enlisted Women and Men in the United States Military in 2019, by Race and Ethnicity,” 2024). Also, “from 2015 to 2017, 2.3% of Black men, 0.7% of Black women, 0.2% of White women, and 1.4% of White men, were serving in the United States military” (Kaba, 2024a: p. 121). Black men who enlist in the United States military as teenagers may have specialized skills but because of pressure from society, Black women may want a man with a college degree because of prestige (“2020 Demographics,” 2020: p. 8).

Another factor is that a significant number of Black males are in jails and prisons in the United States and Black females do not want to marry someone with a criminal record (Kaba, 2010a: p. 114). According to Lundquist et al. (2009): “Compared with White women, Black women face reduced availability of marriageable same race men because of their higher unemployment, incarceration, and mortality rates” (p. 743). Raley et al. (2016) note that: “Black men were also much more likely to die or be incarcerated, and this (combined with low rates of interracial marriage) depressed the number of men available for black women to marry” (p. 5). In 2020, of the 1,182,166 “sentenced prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities” in the United States, Black males accounted for 375,400 (31.8%), and Black females accounted for 14,100 (1.2%) (Carson, 2021: p. 22). Black women aged 18 and over account for 7% of the population of the United States, and Black men aged 18 and over account for 5 percent. According to Caraballo et al. (2023): “From 1999 to 2020, the mean age-adjusted mortality rate among White males and females was 930.7 and 667.7, respectively,

whereas among Black males and females it was 1214.9 and 816.3, respectively. There was a total of 997,623 estimated excess deaths among Black males and 628 464 excess deaths among Black females over the study period” (p. 1665).

Being in poverty, having a high school education or less, or not being married has not resulted in Black women having many children, despite what might be assumed by the public. In addition, Black women tend to mostly marry within their race. According to [Lundquist et al. \(2009\)](#), “Historically, nonmarital childbearing has been more common among Blacks than Whites and less stigmatized in the Black community...” (p. 743). [Lundquist et al. \(2009\)](#) add that: “...college-educated Black women have difficulty finding marital partners, yet consciously forgo nonmarital childbearing because of racial stigmas associated with single parenting” (p. 744). Compared with women in other racial groups, the marriage rate for Black women tends to be lower. For example, in 2021, 36.8% of Black men in the United States were married; 32.4% of Black women; 54.7% of White men; and 52.6% of White women ([Kaba, 2024a](#): p. 115; also see [Dill, 1983](#): p. 140). It is noted that in 2019, 38% of Black men and 33% of Black women were married ([Kaba, 2024c](#): p. 302). According to [Lundquist et al. \(2009\)](#): “The ratio of single men to single women dramatically differs by racial group and is linked to reduced Black marriage rates... To the extent fertility decisions are influenced by marriage prospects, the relatively lower availability of marriageable men may affect Black childlessness differently than White childlessness” (p. 743).

[Kaba \(2010a\)](#) points out that of the 464,000 Black/White married couples in the United States in 2007, 338,000 (72.8%) had a Black husband and 126,000 (27.2%) had a White husband (p. 113). [Livingston and Brown \(2017\)](#) point out that 18% of Black newlyweds in the United States were in interracial marriages; 11% for Whites; 27% for Hispanics; and 29% for Asians; 10% for White women; 28% for Hispanic women; 12% for Black women; 36% for Asian women; 12% for White men; 26% for Hispanic men; 24% for Black men; and 21% for Asian men (p. 6; also see [Kaba, 2011a, 2012a](#)).

In addition, according to [Lundquist et al. \(2009\)](#), women get married later in life, and many want to get married before they have a child. Black women tend to want to be married before they have children, partly due to their religiosity ([Hope et al., 2024](#)). However, the later a woman waits to get married, the fewer children she would have because of age. When divorces are added to this situation, it further contributes to this phenomenon (pp. 743-744). According to [Lundquist et al. \(2009\)](#), “Increasing age at first birth is linked to the incidence of age-related infertility” (pp. 743-744). [Lundquist et al. \(2009\)](#) also add that: “Marriages are starting later and ending earlier as a result of the prevalence of divorce. Early divorce is likely to cut short reproductive plans, and the general threat of divorce may also make childlessness more appealing. Divorce has risen for all groups, but Black rates of marital dissolution are more than twice those of Whites” (p. 743).

3.2.2. Economic

Another factor that might also cause the declining total fertility rate of Black

women in the United States is the very high cost of living and prevalence of poverty in the country, especially in urban communities where most Black people reside (Hess et al., 2022; Heston, 2023). It is quoted in Kaba (2010a) that: “Mothering Black children involves the usual parental tasks of providing for the child’s basic needs and supplying nurture and guidance...” (p. 118). Gill-Peterson (2015) points out that: “If the child as the Symbolic anchor of reproductive futurism typical of Fordism has been eclipsed by the precarious and volatile conditions of contemporary capitalism—a capitalism that does not need the slow, sheltered fantasy of childhood as deferral of labor” (p. 183). Meeker (1977) points out that: “In an agrarian setting children provide not only the satisfaction supplied by children in urban areas, but they may also take an active part in the production of goods and services that enter into the household’s utility production function” (p. 401).

3.2.3. Health

The relatively high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate within the Black male population in the United States in the first decade of the twenty-first century has been cited as a factor for the declining total fertility rates of Black females. In discussing the declining total fertility rates among Black women in the United States, Kaba (2010a) cited HIV/AIDS as a contributing factor. The explanation is that in 2003, there were 4.7 HIV/AIDS related deaths per every 100,000 of the total population in the United States. However, the figures were 31.3 deaths for Black males and 12.8 deaths for Black females. Within the Black community in the United States, Black females tend to date or marry mostly Black males, so they might not know how a Black male might react if they ask him to get tested before sexual intercourse, or they might not want the Black male to feel offended if asked to go get tested for sexually transmitted infections (STI) before making love or trying to have a child. If the Black males refuse to get tested, then the females will not have sex with them. As a result, this might reduce the chances of Black females having children (p. 113). For example, Hoffman et al. (2008) find that Black women born in the United States were more likely than Black women from the Caribbean “...to be extremely confident in their ability to discuss STI [sexually transmitted infections] screening with their regular partners” (p. 2042; also see Duck, 2009).

Family planning is an important contributing factor to the declining total fertility rates of Black women in the United States. Koning et al. (2022) point out that: “Many studies show that, jointly or separately, expansion of education and increased reach of family planning programs fueled the bulk of fertility changes observed in the 1970s-1990s” (p. 2). Daniels and Abma (2020) point out that in 2017-2019, 65.3% of women in the United States aged 15 to 49 were using contraception: 69.2% of non-Hispanic White women; 61.4% of non-Hispanic Black women; 60.5% of Hispanic women; 71.2% of those with less than high school diploma; 70% of those with a high school diploma or GED; 71.3% for those with some college, but no bachelor’s degrees; and 69.1% for those with a bachelor’s degree or higher; 38.7% for those 15 to 19 years old; 60.9% for those 20 to 29 years old; 72.3% for those 30 to 39 years old; and 74.8% for those 40 to 49 years old (p.

1). Notice that the figure of 70% for females with a high school diploma or GED who use contraception is about the same as those with a college degree (69.1%) and about five percentage points higher than the average for all females aged 15 - 49 (65.3%) (also see [Eisenberg et al., 2009](#)).

In 2007, out of 62.097 million women aged 15 to 44 in the United States, 1.210 million had an abortion (19.5 for every 1000 women): 668,000 out of 48.480 million (13.8 for every 1000) White women; and 448,000 out of 9.288 million (48.2 for every 1000) Black women (“[Table 101. Abortions—Number and Rate by Race: 1990 to 2007](#),” 2012). According to the study by [Kortsmit et al. \(2023\)](#), of females aged 15 - 44 years in the United States in 2021, there were 394,757 abortions in 33 geographic areas, with Black women accounting for 163,863 (41.5%, a rate of 28.6 abortions for every 1000 women); White women accounted for 119,352 (30.2%, a rate of 6.4 abortions for every 1000 women); Hispanic women accounted for 85,983 (21.8%, a rate of 12.3 abortions for every 1000 women); and the group categorized as “Other” accounted for 25,559 (6.4%, a rate of 9.2 abortions for every 1000 women) (p. 6 & 19; also see [Kaba, 2012b](#): p. 137). Some reasons for these high contraception and abortion figures include societal pressures and healthcare access ([Dehlendorf et al., 2010](#); [Reardon & Longbons, 2023](#)).

Despite its many implications, including cardiovascular diseases ([Akil & Ahmad, 2011](#)), obesity has also been cited as a contributing factor to declining total fertility rates. [Dag and Dilbaz \(2015\)](#) note that: “Overweight and obese women are at a high risk for reproductive health. The risk of subfecundity and infertility, conception rates, miscarriage rates, and pregnancy complications are increased in these women. They have poor reproductive outcomes in natural as well as assisted conception” (p. 111). According to [Fryar et al. \(2020\)](#), the age-adjusted prevalence of obesity among adults aged 20 and over in 2017-2018 was 39.8% for non-Hispanic White women; 56.9% for non-Hispanic Black women; 17.2% for non-Hispanic Asian women; 43.7% for Hispanic women; 44.7% for non-Hispanic White men; 41.1% for non-Hispanic Black men; 17.5% for non-Hispanic Asian men; and 45.7% for Hispanic men (p. 7).

4. Implications

There are many interrelated political, economic and social implications as a result of the declining total fertility rates of Black American women in the past three decades. A major political implication is that slow growth, stagnation or decline in the Black American population will be very costly because the group will lose seats and top positions in the United States Congress, state legislatures and national and state cabinets and agencies. In the United States, Blacks tend to reside together in the same communities, districts, and counties. In national elections, seats are allocated based on districts ([DeFina, 2007](#); [South et al., 1998](#); [Williams & Collins, 2001](#)).

It is reported that “...the 188th United States Congress, which took office in January 2023, comprised 60 (11.2%) Black members out of 535 total members”

(Kaba, 2024a: p. 122; Kaba, 2012b; also see Kaba & Ward, 2009). However, with a declining population, those figures could also decline. Also, the impact of their overall votes in national and state elections will decline. For example, in the 2024 United States presidential election, Black women accounted for 7% of all voters and 92% of them voted for the Democratic candidate, Kamala Harris; and Black men accounted for 5% of all voters, and 77% of them voted for Kamala Harris (Guskin & Chen, 2024). Barack Obama was elected president and Kamala Harris was elected vice president because of the influence or clout of the Black American population. This means that the Democratic Party, which benefits from almost nine out of every ten Black votes in national and state elections, will be impacted significantly. This is especially the case since many Republican state governments in the United States disenfranchise Blacks (“Voting Laws Roundup. July 2021,” 2021; Stephanopoulos, 2021).

An economic implication as a result of the declining total fertility rates of Black women could be stagnation or reduction in their overall wealth. The Black American population is one of the wealthiest groups in the world. This wealth is primarily due to its population growth and educational attainment. Research shows that over the past three decades, the higher the population of Black Americans, the higher their net worth. For example, in 1992, the Black population in the United States was 31.4 million, accounting for 13% of the total population (“Statistical Brief: Blacks in America-1992,” 1994). In 2022, that figure increased to 50.1 million, accounting for 15% of the total population of the United States (Kaba, 2024b: p. 69). The net worth of the Black population on December 31, 1992, was \$1.09 trillion. On June 30, 2022, that figure increased to \$4.98 trillion (“Distribution of Household Wealth in the U.S. since 1989,” 2024).

The declining total fertility rates of the Black American population means that the group will continue to pay relatively high taxes but with fewer children and their members to enjoy the benefits such as free public K-12 education. In the United States, both the state and federal governments spend substantial amounts of money on public K-12 education. For example, the average spending per student in public schools in the United States increased from \$14,358 in fiscal year 2021 to \$15,633 in fiscal year 2022. The states/entities with the top five highest per student spending in 2022 were: New York (\$29,873), the District of Columbia (\$27,425), New Jersey (\$25,099), Vermont (\$24,608), and Connecticut (\$24,453) (Anesta, 2024).

One social implication of the declining total fertility rates of Black women is a reduction in the influence of Black Americans on social media and related platforms where they advocate on behalf of Black people and other vulnerable groups. Part of the explanation for this claim is that a very large Black American population becomes the source of the opportunity for more entertainers, college educated professionals, professional athletes, etc. For example, the study by Kaba (2024c) finds that 48 of the 100 honorees of the 2011 Root Magazine’s most influential 100 young Black Americans aged 25 to 45, had a net worth of \$8.448 billion

in 2024 (p. 298). Kaba (2024c) adds that their social media influence is one of the important criteria utilized to select members of the Root 100: “Nominators submitting the names of potential candidates are asked to provide Twitter websites and other online websites that show some form of activism” (pp. 302-303). Writing about this same group of prominent Black Americans, Kaba (2024a) points out that: “By 2024, these Black entertainers, movie stars, professional athletes, and others on social media are among the most influential people on social media networks in the world with tens of thousands and millions of followers or subscribers” (p. 123; also see Chapa & Khan, 2024; Molina-Rogers, 2021).

5. Recommendations

The implications presented above illustrate that it is utterly important for the Black population in the United States and the Black World to come up with concrete strategies to manage this issue. One recommendation is for the Black population in the United States and the Black World to lobby for a significant increase in the number of Black immigrants from Africa and the Black World. This strategy should focus on young Blacks from Africa and the Black world who want to immigrate to the United States. According to Kaba (2020), of the 1.341 billion people in Africa in 2020, 533.5 million (39.8%) were under 15 years old; and 18.1% were 15 to 24 years old (p. 231).

This brings us to another important related recommendation: that Black Americans must adopt children from Africa and the Black World in significant numbers. Although the United States immigration system is very strict, a very high majority of Black Americans are native-born, meaning that they are in a good position to adopt children. For example, in 2019, 90% of Black Americans were native-born (Tamir, 2022). Black American women or couples in good financial standing who have passed childbearing age could use adoption as a good option.

In fiscal year 2023, of the 1275 international adoptions by parents from the United States, 220 (17.3%) were from 19 African countries: Nigeria, 62; Morocco, 26; Cameroon, 17; Liberia, 17; Burundi, 16; South Africa, 15; Ghana, 12; Sierra Leone, 12; Uganda, 11; Malawi, 10; the Democratic Republic of Congo, 5; Tanzania, 4; Burkina Faso, 3; Zambia, 3; Algeria, 2; the Republic of Congo, 2; The Gambia, 1; Guinea, 1; and Zimbabwe, 1. Two Black Caribbean countries had double digits: Haiti, 80, and Jamaica, 20 (“FY 2023 Annual Report on Intercountry Adoption,” 2023: p. 14 & 18; also see “Black Families Adopting from Overseas,” 2007). Castner and Foil (2022) point out that children adopted domestically and internationally accounted for 2.3% or 2 million of all children in the United States in 2010. There were 762,092 White adopted children and 251,002 Black adopted children in the United States in 2010 (p. 3). Castner and Foil (2022) also point out that in September 2019, White children accounted for 44% of 423,997 children who were not formally placed in the foster care system in the United States and 23% of Black children; 21% of Hispanic children; 8% of children who are two or more races; 2% of American Indian/Alaska Native children; and 1% of Asian chil-

dren (pp. 3-4). These international adoption figures for Africa illustrate that Western Africa and Middle Africa combined accounted for 132 (60%) of the 220 children adopted by parents from the United States: Nigeria, 62; Cameroon, 17; Liberia, 17; Ghana, 12; Sierra Leone, 12; the Democratic Republic of Congo, 5; Burkina Faso, 3; the Republic of Congo, 2; The Gambia, 1; and Guinea, 1.

A primary reason for both Western and Middle Africa accounting for a high majority of these adoption figures is that a very high majority of Black Africans brought to the New World, including to the United States as enslaved people, came from those two regions. Today, West African immigrants also account for a high proportion of African immigrants in the United States. In addition, since the presidency of Bill Clinton up to the presidency of Barack Obama (except for the Donald Trump presidency), there have been positive people-to-people and government-to-government relations between Africa and the United States (Kaba, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007a, 2009a, 2010b; Mazrui & Kaba, 2016). Furthermore, as African countries and regions are gradually developing and becoming wealthier, increasing numbers of Black Americans are visiting various countries on the continent and many of them are settling down in capital cities/regions with temperate climates. Many of these Black Americans visiting or relocating to Africa are Christians in a continent that now has a Christian majority as of 2020. All these factors will increase the potential for the adoption of a significant number of children in Africa, most of whom are healthy and full of energy and potential (Kaba, 2009b, 2011c, 2016, 2019, 2022, 2024b, 2024d, 2024e, 2024f; Kaba & Kaba, 2020; Sackeyfio & Kaba, 2022: pp. 206-207).

In addition, young Black females and Black couples who want to have children but may be concerned about financial challenges should be assisted through adoption if that is what they choose or provide them with financial support from the Black Belt and Road Fund. Kaba (2024a) recommends that: "...the Black American population must establish a \$500 billion Black World Development Initiative—a Belt and Road initiative for the Black World. This initiative will create projects to improve the lives of Black people in the United States, Africa, the Caribbean, and other Black societies across the world." (p. 125; also see Kaba, 2007b). This recommendation is based on the fact that the Black American population is one of the most highly educated and wealthiest groups in the world (Kaba, 2009c, 2011b, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c).

Also, since reproductive health is now a challenge for Black females in certain states in the United States, a system should be set up to transport Black pregnant females four to eight weeks before childbirth to states with good medical reproductive health history with Black Americans to give birth to their children. This includes the fight against the forced sterilization of Black females and Black males in the United States. It has also been noted that Black females in the United States have been influenced indirectly or directly to accept having an abortion (Beal, 2008: pp. 171-174; Prather et al., 2016). These small steps will result in a significant or substantial increase in the Black population.

6. Conclusion

This paper began by explaining the declining total fertility rates in countries and societies across the globe, with developed countries experiencing more of this phenomenon. The paper points out that while there are universal factors causing this phenomenon, such as the attainment of a college or university degree for women, there are also country- or group-specific causes. The paper shows that in the United States, total fertility rates declined for the entire population and various racial groups from 1992 to 2022. For example, the total fertility rates in the United States declined for the overall population from 2.046 children born per woman in 1992 to 1.657 children born per woman; 1.978 to 1.568, respectively for Whites; and 2.416 to 1.639, respectively for Blacks.

The paper explains the paradox of the human capital theory, whereby college or university degree attainment, which is supposed to result in increased numbers of total fertility rates for Black women in the United States, contributed to their decline in childbirth. Other related and relevant factors presented for the declining total fertility rates of Black women in the United States include: more Black females aged 16 and over than their male counterparts, Black women preferring marriage first before having children, fear of sexually transmitted infections (STI), including HIV/AIDS, low immigration rates of Black people to the United States, racism and the killings of Black people in the United States, high cost of living, both Black males and Black females enlisting in the United States military at a young age, substantial numbers of Black males in jails and prisons, relatively high death rates of Black males, obesity, and family planning (high contraception use and high abortion rates),

Some of the implications presented for this phenomenon include: slow growth and future stagnation or decline of the Black population in the United States, potential decline in the number of Black voters and Blacks in elected office including the United States Congress and state legislatures, future stagnation or decline in the overall wealth of the Black population and decline in the influence of Blacks on social media platforms.

Some recommendations presented for managing this phenomenon include: lobbying the United States federal government to increase the immigration of Black people (especially young Blacks) to the United States, Black Americans adopting Black children from Africa and the Black World, and establishing a fund by Black Americans to provide support to Black couples or Black females who wish to have children but do not have sufficient financial resources.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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