Standstill: A Research Study on the Prime Factors Associated with the Slow Growth Rate and Stagnation of the Black Population in America

The Harvard community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you. Your story matters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citable link</th>
<th><a href="http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:37799747">http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:37799747</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terms of Use</td>
<td>This article was downloaded from Harvard University’s DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <a href="http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA">http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Standstill: A Research Study on the Prime Factors Associated
with the Slow Growth Rate and Stagnation of the Black Population in America

Kerlyne Cenafils

A Thesis in the Field of Legal Studies
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

Harvard University
March 2018
Abstract

Blacks have been the forefront of many evolutionary landmark decisions that stimulated equal opportunity for various types of minorities across the United States. This has resulted in employment and economic growth for minority businesses, as well as the establishment of many black artists, entrepreneurs and political leaders. Over the course of time, however, those numbers have stagnated, and subsequently, declined.

This thesis examines the slow growth and stagnation of the black race in America. To fully understand this social issue, it is important to acknowledge its potential leading causes, which are (1) black imprisonment, (2) black on black crime, and (3) high abortion rates among black women. In addition, I examine the following subsidiary concepts throughout this research: national births for blacks, national deaths for blacks, trends in the black American population, as well as the number of foreign-born blacks living in America.

Although they make up just roughly 13% of the U.S. population, the black population is not developing as fast as other racial groups in America. As long as blacks continue to be imprisoned at higher rates than prisoners of other races, as long as the crime and homicide ratio among blacks remain high, and as long as black women continue to have the highest abortion rates compared to women of other races in the U.S., the black population will continue to experience a slow progression. And this research aims to prove just that.
Dedication

To the Harvard faculty for their guidance and patience, and above all, to my dearest family and friends for their unending love and support throughout this remarkable journey, thank you.
# Table of Contents

Dedication ......................................................................................................................... iv  
Introduction: Identifying the Cause of Black America’s Slow Growth Rate ...................... 1  
  Research Problem ........................................................................................................... 1  
  Background ...................................................................................................................... 5  
  Research Methods .......................................................................................................... 8  
Part 1: Abortion and Its Impact on the Black Population in America .............................. 10  
  Conclusions ....................................................................................................................... 14  
Part 2: Death Rates, Homicide and the Influence on the Black Population in America ... 18  
  Conclusions ....................................................................................................................... 24  
Part 3: Mass Incarceration and Its Impact on the Black Population in America .............. 25  
  Conclusion: The After Effect .......................................................................................... 33  
Bibliography ..................................................................................................................... 34
List of Figures

Figure 1. Factors the research focuses on ......................................................... 3
Figure 2. National live births and general fertility rates ................................. 11
Figure 3. National births for blacks ................................................................. 12
Figure 4. National births vs. national deaths for blacks ................................. 19
Figure 5. National black population ............................................................... 20
Figure 6. National foreign-born black population ........................................... 21
Figure 7. 2014 Percent of sentence male prisoners of state or federal correctional authorities by race................................................................. 27
Figure 8. Male incarceration rates per 1,000 by race and age group in 2010 .......... 30
Introduction

Identifying the Cause of Black America’s Slow Growth Rate

Blacks in America have endured and overcome many obstacles as a minority group. “In 1997, minority-owned businesses were one of the faster growing segments of the U.S. economy, generating $495 billion dollars in revenues and employing nearly 4 million workers.”¹ Sandra Colby and Jennifer Ortman suggest that “the Black alone population is projected to increase from 42 million to 60 million—an increase of 42 percent” and that “its share of the total population is projected to increase slightly from 13 percent in 2014 to 14 percent in 2060.”² While this may be true, this expected sluggish increase over the course of nearly fifty years is alarming. Colby and Ortman fail to acknowledge the following factors that impact this slow progression when making these predictions: mass imprisonment among black minorities, black on black homicide, and abortions among black women.

Research Problem

This thesis considers the causes responsible for the slow progression of the black population in America. And so, the subsidiary questions are as follows: what are the leading factors contributing to the stagnant progression of the black population in


America? Are there any specific contributing factors that have a greater impact on the stagnant progression for the black population than others? Are the factors outlined above accurate or sufficient measurements of this stagnation?

My hypothesis states that the incarceration of black minorities, black on black homicide, and the rate of abortions among black women have slowed down and is impacting the progression of black minorities in America. I examine this hypothesis by analyzing the following major concepts in my research: national births for blacks, national deaths for blacks, trends in the black American population, the number of foreign-born blacks living in America, incarceration of black minorities, black on black crime, and the rate of abortions among black women over a specific period. The following figure illustrates the various topics that I mention, highlight, and further examine in my research.
When examining incarceration, specifically among black Americans, we learn on the surface that “African Americans are eight times more likely to be incarcerated than whites.” In the case of black on black homicide, in 2014, “90% of African-American

---

homicides were committed by African Americans.” And concerning abortions among black women, “Black women continue to have the highest abortion rate of any ethnic group, with a gruesome 483 abortions for every 1,000 live births.”

The sources used to test my hypothesis consist of research journal articles that specifically capture reviews and data on black imprisonment, black on black homicide, and abortions among blacks in America. In addition, I have consulted inter-governmental online sources, such as National Vital Statistics Reports, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, etc., which mainly provide statistical data surrounding the annual number of births and deaths by race in the United States. Some of these sources that I have consulted, as well as others, contain information about the leading causes of death for Americans, and for purposes of this study, blacks in America. The information from these sources will be crucial in determining whether the three original concepts are sound measurements that influence the slow advancement of the black population in America, especially compared to other races and ethnic groups.

---


Background

Historically, black people in the United States, whether American natives or foreign immigrants, have lived as a minority racial group. Comprising just roughly 13% of the American population to date, blacks have experienced a steady, yet slow population increase, rising just over two percent from 1960 to 2010. Many researchers predict that U.S. minority groups, specifically blacks, will continue to experience an increase in numbers over time. The reason for the stagnation in population growth for Black America, as predicted, lies with these key factors: high incarceration rate for blacks, black on black crime, which can subsequently lead to homicide, and abortions among black women. Measuring these factors alongside the population for black Americans as well as foreign-born blacks living in the U.S., and national births and deaths for black Americans over time helps to reaffirm my hypothesis.

For years, blacks in America have struggled as a minority group, but have, nonetheless made gradual progression in numbers over time. The United States population growth rate for each racial group has transformed in some regard over time. Studies suggest that blacks will continue to increase in numbers, and this theory is accompanied by the prediction that whites will, over time, become a minority group. Between the years 1960 to 2010, while the number of whites living in America decreased from about 89 percent to 72 percent, the number of blacks living in America increased.

---

from just above 10 percent to 12 percent during that period. Other minorities, such as Asians/Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders, exist in smaller numbers as a racial group compared to blacks living in America. Although this group exists as a smaller minority group than blacks, they have exhibited a greater population percentage increase than blacks. Between 1960 and 2010, the growth rate for the Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific group increased from under one percent to five percent.

Part 1 focuses on abortion, which has impacted many groups in the American society, specifically minority groups. The Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade was a major turning point for families across the United States, especially for one of our most vulnerable groups of people—black minorities. Nearly 80 percent of Planned Parenthood abortion facilities are in black or minority neighborhoods. For a long time, women of color have and continue to obtain abortions at higher rates than women of any other race in the U.S. “Between 2007 and 2010, innocent black babies were victimized in nearly 36 percent of the abortion deaths in the United States, though blacks represent only 12.8 percent of the population.”

New York is home to one of the largest black minority populations in the country, and the highest rates of abortion among black women occur there compared to those of other states. “The city’s Department of Health reported that in 2012, more black babies were aborted (31,328) than born (24,758)” which is “55.9 percent of black babies killed

---

9 Blackwell, “Aborting Black America.”
10 Blackwell, “Aborting Black America.”
before birth. Blacks represented 42.4 percent of all abortions."\(^{11}\) According to the National Right to Life’s source regarding just abortion’s impact on minorities, “the loss to these communities is more than just numbers or population. Abortion means the loss of black and Hispanic athletes, artists, political leaders, scientists, teachers, engineers, businessmen and businesswomen.”

In part 2, I focus on black crime and homicide, which has remained constant in the U.S. With drugs, other violent criminal activity and the rise of police brutality, black minorities are becoming more and more susceptible to death. Since this research focuses on the slow progression of the black population in the U.S., it is especially important to consider the ratio of blacks committing crime against other blacks that result in homicide and/or imprisonment, as “blacks were disproportionately represented as both homicide victims and offenders” based on data between 1980 and 2008.\(^{12}\) A closer look into America’s homicide trends between the years 1980 to 2008 suggests that most murders are intraracial, and that 93 percent of black victims were killed by other blacks compared to 84 percent of white victims being killed by other whites.\(^{13}\) In further detail, “the victimization rate for blacks (27.8 per 100,000) was 6 times higher than the rate for whites (4.5 per 100,000). The offending rate for blacks (34.4 per 100,000) was almost 8 times higher than the rate for whites (4.5 per 100,000).”\(^{14}\)

Part 3 focuses on mass incarceration as a system that plays a significant role with the state of black minorities living in the United States. Much like abortion, crime and

\(^{11}\) Blackwell, “Aborting Black America.”


\(^{13}\) Cooper, “Homicide,” 3.

\(^{14}\) Cooper, “Homicide,” 3.
homicide, imprisonment has contributed to the numerical shift in the black population over time. Many of these offenders who go away to prison do so for considerably long amounts of time, which causes separations between families, joblessness, but among other things, exclusion from the rest of society. When we observe trends among the black American population over time, it is important to distinguish between that number and the number of blacks who are serving time in prison. Recent studies show that at the end of 2014, 2.7 percent (2,724 per 100,000) of black male residents were serving sentences of at least one year in prison, compared to 1.1 percent (1,090 per 100,000) of Hispanic male residents and 0.5 percent (465 per 100,000) of white male residents.\(^\text{15}\) Overall, the imprisonment rates were 3.8 to 10.5 times greater at each age group for black males than rates for white males, and 1.4 to 3.1 times greater than rates for Hispanic males.\(^\text{16}\)

**Research Methods**

My research begins with a close analysis of the rate of the black population, inclusive of foreign-born blacks, in America over a specific period. I analyze this against the population growth rate of other races, mainly white and Hispanic, and compare the trends in the population across all races. As I have already established in my research, the population rate for blacks in America has altered, but just slightly, compared to that of other races.

Next, I examine the trends in the U.S. black population against some of the major factors that appear to have a significant impact on its slow progression. The evidence in my preliminary research shows that black minorities tend to be at the top of list

\(^{15}\) Carson, “Prisoners,” 15.

\(^{16}\) Carson, “Prisoners,” 15.
concerning these three categories—the trends in abortion for black women, black on black homicide, and the mass incarceration of black minorities in America. My analysis of these factors will determine if they are sound indicators of the stagnate progression of the black population.

I focus on the trends of these factors over time, specifically between the years of 1960 to 2010. In addition, I use data that I have gathered to project the American population by race, specifically with the black race, over the next several decades, which helps to determine what the fate of black America could look like. Figure 1 illustrates the factors my research focuses on that will determine the outcome of my hypothesis.
Part 1
Abortion and Its Impact on the Black Population in America

Abortion has been, and is currently, controversial issue in America. Since its legal inception in 1973, overall, abortion rates increased before experiencing a decline over time. If we examine this more closely, we will see that this observation does not hold true in all cases, specifically for all races. According to Rachel Jones, et al. and her research on the trends in abortions in the United States, “all race and ethnic groups experienced declines in abortion rates over the past 30 years, but the rate of black, and to a lesser extent Hispanic, women remains higher than that of non-Hispanic whites.”¹⁷

While examining this topic, in addition to the concepts I previously outlined, I focus largely on the years 1960 to 2010. I structured my research this way, mainly to capture trends, if any, that may have been influenced by the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision. Below is a depiction of the national average of live births from 1960 to 2010.

As shown above, the national birthrate experienced a decline during *Roe v. Wade* before increasing again around 1980. Reasonably, we can assume that the legalization of abortion may have influenced the continual decline of the birthrate in the United States. When the Supreme Court voted in favor of Roe, the increased rate of abortion in the U.S. appears to have significantly impacted many groups of women, and some more than others. For decades, particularly since the *Roe v. Wade* decision, black women have accounted for the highest number of abortions compared to women of other races in America. “Since 1973, the year the Supreme Court made abortion legal in the United States, at least 13.8 million black, Hispanic, and other minority babies have been aborted in the U.S.”

---

18 The National Right to Life, “Abortion’s Impact on Minorities.”
Jones implies that “the US abortion rate peaked soon after 1973.” This observation is valid based on the information in the following graph, which depicts the national births for blacks between 1960 and 2010 based on data obtained from the National Vital Statistics Reports.

Figure 3. National births for blacks

As you can see, the birthrate for blacks declined, especially post Roe v. Wade, before beginning its increase nearly thirty years later, which likely speaks to the increased rate of abortions during that specific time. Jones goes on to say that “by 2004, 37% of abortions were obtained by black women” which is greater than the number of abortions obtained by white women (34%), Hispanic women (22%), and women of other races.

---


(8%). In that year, black women had the highest abortion rate at 50 per 1,000.\textsuperscript{21} She iterates her theory by drawing this conclusion: women obtaining abortions are more likely to be women of color.\textsuperscript{22}

A recent study on the births in the United States shows that live births were lowest for mothers of Non-Hispanic black origin. In the year 2007, and from 2013 to 2015, the birth rates for Hispanic and Non-Hispanic white women exceeded that of Non-Hispanic black women each one of those years. The overall birthrate for women of all races and origins in the U.S. in those years reached nearly 4 million. And of those 4 million births, white women were experiencing an overall rate of 2 million during those years while Hispanic women were averaging roughly 1 million births. Black women came in last place and averaged fewer than 1 million births for those years.\textsuperscript{23}

As research suggests, the overall rate of abortion began decreasing around the 1980s. However, women who have the largest disproportions with abortion tend to be women of color. The following statistics are examples of those disproportions. In their research on the fertility and abortion rates in the United States, Brady Hamilton and Stephanie Ventura point out that the rates for non-Hispanic white women declined by 38\% between 1990 and 2000. During that same period, the rates for non-Hispanic black and Hispanic women declined by 9\% and 10\%, respectively.\textsuperscript{24}


\textsuperscript{22} Jones, “Trends,” 128.


Although the U.S. experienced an overall decline in abortion rates beginning around 1980, black women continue to have the leading number of abortions compared to women of other races. In other studies, researchers echo the racial disparities surrounding the high abortion rates among women of color. “In 2008, the abortion rate for non-Hispanic White women was 12 abortions per 1,000 reproductive-age women, compared with 29 per 1,000 for Hispanic women, and 40 per 1,000 for non-Hispanic Black women.”

Conclusions

Why are black women, who comprise fewer than 13% of the U.S. population, having the most abortions compared to that of women of other races? It appears that high abortion rates among black women are more than just an issue that contributes majorly to America’s overall declining black population. It is an issue that is perpetuated by social inequalities and racism. During the 1930s, Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, opened her first abortion clinics in inner cities. She believed “colored people are like human weeds and are to be exterminated.” And according to Kenneth Blackwell’s article on the black abortions crisis in America, “79 percent of Planned Parenthood’s abortion facilities are in a black or minority neighborhoods.” New York City has one of the highest black populations in the U.S., and in 2012, more black babies

---


26 Blackwell, “Abortting Black America.”

27 Blackwell, “Abortting Black America.”
(over 55%) were aborted than born. And to reiterate, black women in the U.S. have higher rates of abortion than women of higher socioeconomic status and White women.\textsuperscript{28}

Another factor that researchers have considered when determining the reasons for the high abortion rates among black women is the rate of unintended pregnancies among blacks. In fact, unintended pregnancies are the main contributors to abortion. According to Dehlendorf et al., blacks, Hispanics and women with lower socioeconomic status tend to have the highest rates of unintended pregnancies. Significant disparities exist with pregnancy rates among different races. The rate of pregnancies for non-Hispanic white adolescents between the ages of 15-19 is 44 per 1,000 while that number nearly triples for adolescents of non-Hispanic black origin at a whopping 124 pregnancies per 1,000.\textsuperscript{29}

The use of contraception also comes into play when determining the factors associated with the high abortion rates among black women. Blacks have the highest rates of unintended pregnancies, aside from Hispanics and women of low socioeconomic status. And according to the National Survey of Family Growth, between 2006 and 2010, “17.2% of Black women and 10.4% of Hispanic women at risk for pregnancy were using no contraceptive method, compared with 9.5% of non-Hispanic White women.”\textsuperscript{30} While non-Hispanic white women had roughly a 10% rate of contraceptive failure in one year, Hispanics had a 15% contraceptive failure rate. Blacks had the highest contraceptive failure rate of 21%.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{28} Dehlendorf, “Disparities,” 1772.
\textsuperscript{29} Dehlendorf, “Disparities,” 1773.
\textsuperscript{30} Dehlendorf, “Disparities,” 1773.
\textsuperscript{31} Dehlendorf, “Disparities,” 1774.
Relationship types seem to play a major role in the overall birth rates for women. Recent studies in 2015 show that the U.S. birth rate for unmarried women aged 15-44 was 43.5 births per 1,000, which was down 1% from 2014. Since its peak of 51.8 births in 2007 and 2008, the rates have consistently declined. More specifically, the birth rates to unmarried women in 2015 alone by race remained unchanged, except for that of non-Hispanic black women. The percentage of births for unmarried black women was nearly 1% from 2014 to 2015. In 2011, the percentage of abortions among unmarried women was higher for non-Hispanic black women (92.2%) compared to that of non-Hispanic white (84%) or Hispanic women (82.6%). Additionally, a report on U.S. abortions by race, ethnicity age group of women who obtained an abortion in 2011 shows that black women had the largest number of abortions in nearly every age group between 15 and 40 years. In their research on Race-Ethnic Differences in the non-marital Fertility Rates in 2006 to 2010, Yujin Kim and R. Kelly Raley suggest that black singles were more likely to be sexually active than whites and Hispanics. When comparing sexual activity among single women, Kim and Raley find that 5% of white women use no contraception, compared to 17% of Hispanic women and 18% of black women.

The scenarios I have just outlined are some valid reasons for discrepancies in the abortion rates for women of different races in the United States. In 2000, black women


represented 13.7% of the U.S population and obtained a total of 416,218 abortions compared to that of 263,911 for Hispanic women, who comprised of 12.8% of the U.S. population. That year, black and Hispanic women accounted for 31.7% and 20.1% of abortions performed, respectively. As previously mentioned, many factors have contributed to the discrepancies outlined above—mainly those surrounding the staggering rates of abortion among black women. These factors include, but are not limited to, the rate of unintended pregnancies among black women, the decision in Roe v. Wade that legalized abortion, racial conspiracy and low socioeconomic status. It is evident in the results of this study that these factors have the greatest detrimental impact on black women and are the major contributors that perpetuate high abortion rates among black women. Ultimately, this causes a shortage of black communities nationwide.

35 The National Right to Life, “Abortion’s Impact on Minorities.”
Death Rates, Homicide and the Influence on the Black Population in America

The death and homicide rates for the black population in America have frequently outnumbered those of other races. As we will see later when we examine race and homicide in America, and more specifically, the homicide trends over the last thirty years, we will learn the following information: blacks tend to have the highest number of victimization and offender rates, and most of blacks who are victims of homicide are killed by other black people.

In 2014, the U.S. reported approximately 2,626,418 deaths or an overall average rate of 724.6 deaths per 100,000. Disparities between the non-Hispanic black and non-Hispanic white populations persisted. The death rate for the non-Hispanic black population (849.3 per 100,000) was 1.2 times greater than the death rate for non-Hispanic whites (725.4 per 100,000). The difference in the death rates between the black and white populations was greatest between 1988 and 1996. Between those years, the black population experienced death rates that were 1.4 times greater than that of the white population. And since then, although the disparity for the death rates between these two groups has narrowed, blacks continue to suffer a greater loss, with their death rates having declined by 16.5% compared to the death rates of whites, which declined by

---

Below is a graph that shows the comparison between the black national birth rates and the black national death rates from 1960 to 2010.

![National Births vs. National Deaths for Blacks](image)

Figure 4. National births vs. national deaths for blacks

It appears that although the national birth rate for blacks fluctuated, the national death rates for blacks simultaneously experienced a steady increase during that time.

The comparisons of the life expectancies among different racial groups contribute to the awareness of the downfall of the black community in America. The projected life expectancy at birth for the nation was approximately 78.8 years from 2012 to 2014.

Although the rate of life expectancy for blacks increased from 75.5 years in 2013 to 75.6

---


years in 2014, the life expectancy rate for the white population was 79.0 years, which was a difference of 3.4 years compared to that of the black population.\textsuperscript{39}

Other concepts I included in my research while determining the future of the black community in America were with the existing national black population and national foreign-born black population between 1960 and 2010. As you will notice in the graphs below, the rates for both populations increased over time. In order to better understand the impact that the existing population for both groups over the course of fifty years could have on the future of the black community in America, it is important that we compare these rates against those of other racial groups.

![National Black Population](image)

Figure 5. National black population\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{39} Kochanek, “Deaths,” 7.

Please note that the chart above does not include data beyond the year 2009. As you can see in the illustrations above, the rates for the black residents in the U.S., both foreign-born and American, increased over time. In 1960, the total resident population in America was about 150,697 million. And by 2010, that number grew to 308,746 million. Of those populations, whites comprised of approximately 159 million in 1960 and 245 million by 2010 compared to blacks, which comprised of approximately 18.9 million during 1960 and 42 million in 2010. Additionally, by 2010, the Hispanic population grew to approximately 50 million. Blacks have consistently had the lowest numbers among the three racial groups, and the following information offers a likely explanation.

---


Race and homicide has been a longstanding issue in the United States. Amid high rates of abortion among black women, racial tensions, and with police brutality on the rise, the death rate for blacks continues to grow. In 2013, over 300 blacks were killed by police. While it appears that black lives in America are threatened by racial profiling and police brutality, blacks are primarily responsible for deaths among other blacks. As Rudy Giuliani points out, black criminals are responsible for 93 percent of violent deaths among blacks. Approximately between 6,000 and 8,000 blacks are murdered every year.\textsuperscript{43}

A review of the National Vital Statistics Reports shows that cancer and heart disease were two of the major leading causes of deaths for Hispanic, Non-Hispanic White and Non-Hispanic black individuals in the United States in 2013 by over 20 percent. Additional trends across all racial spectrums also included the following: kidney disease, Alzheimer’s disease, stroke and diabetes. Noticeably, however, homicide ranked eighth as a contributing factor for the leading causes of death at 2.7 percent, and only for black individuals. This category is not included as one of the leading causes of deaths for White and Hispanic individuals.\textsuperscript{44} Likewise, based on available data from 1980 to 2008, blacks outnumbered individuals of other races as both homicide victims and offenders.

An examination of the long terms trends and patterns of the homicide victimization rates beginning from 1950 to 2010 shows the following information: from 1962 to 1979, the homicide rate doubled, and then peaked in 1980; the rate fell and rose again at the beginning of the 1990s, before experiencing a decline from roughly 1992 to

\textsuperscript{43} Blackwell, “Aborting Black America.”

Although most murders were intraracial from 1980 to 2008, the black on black homicidal ratio (93 percent) outnumbered that of whites (84 percent). As highlighted previously, the victimization rate for black homicides was 6 times higher than the rate for whites. The victimization rate for blacks reached a high of 39.4 homicides per 100,000 in 1991 and fell to about 20 homicides per 100,000 nearly a decade later in 1999 before stabilizing. Cooper fast forwards to the year 2008 and highlights the following: the homicide offending rates for blacks (24.7 offenders per 100,000) was 7 times higher than the rate for whites (3.4 offenders per 100,000). And like the black victimization rate, the offending rate for blacks peaked at a high of 51.1 offenders per 100,000 in 1991. Subsequently, the offending rates for blacks reached a low of 24 per 100,000 in 2004 and increased to 28.4 offenders per 100,000 in 2006 before declining again to 24.7 offenders per 100,000 in 2008.

As we continue our research on high abortion rates among black women, black on black crime and mass incarceration, we find that generally, black people make up most of United States victims. Over 50 percent of people killed in the United States every year since 2010 were black people. And between the years 2014 and 2015, the number of black victims increased by 15 percent. A review of the FBI cases in 2015 that listed a victim’s racial information reveals that 52.3 percent of those victims were black compared to white victims (43.5 percent). While researching Race and Homicide in America, Matthew Cella and Alan Neuhauser share that although most homicide victims are killed by people of their own race, in 2015, 8.6 percent of black victims were killed by other races.

---

45 Cooper, “Homicide,” 2.
46 Cooper, “Homicide,” 11.
by whites. Since 2001, the amount of black-on-black homicides averaged about 91.9 percent.\textsuperscript{47}

Conclusions

For several years, it appears that researchers and social scientists have encountered challenges with establishing sound reasoning behind criminal behavior. Many suggest that high rates of crime, especially among minority groups, are caused by, but not limited to the following: growing up in single-parent household; living in areas, specifically urban or low-income areas, where crime is likely to be more prevalent; truancy, which ultimately results in increased dropout rates; inactivity and joblessness; drug and gang activity. Eventually, these factors make individuals, especially minorities, susceptible to incarceration, which is discussed in the following section.

Part 3

Mass Incarceration and Its Impact on the Black Population in America

The high imprisonment and incarceration rates play a significant role in the stagnation America’s black population. In 1983, the incarceration rate in America was about four times higher than in western Europe, and approximately twenty years later, the discrepancy had only widened.\(^{48}\) The following section focuses on decades of the impact of mass incarceration and how it plays on the vulnerabilities of minorities who tend to be undereducated, living in urban or low-income communities with high crime rates, and individuals with prison records.

The previous sections of this research indicate that blacks are the most at-risk racial group when it comes to issues surrounding abortion, crime, and homicide. In addition to falling victim to these factors, blacks are consistently the most vulnerable group when it comes to matters surrounding imprisonment. In his research on punishment and inequality in America, Bruce Western emphasizes throughout that “Blacks have been more likely than whites to go to prison, at least since the 1920s” and that “African Americans are eight times more likely to be incarcerated than whites.”\(^{49}\) Occasionally, other researchers suggest that there are more black men alone behind bars than there are enrolled in a college or university. And alongside this belief is the impression that blacks who are incarcerated tend to be undereducated, as Western often theorizes in his work.


\(^{49}\) Western, *Punishment and Inequality in America*, 3.
As we have already established throughout this research, much like abortion, crime/homicide, incarceration targets certain groups of people. Western examines various types of inequality in incarceration by considering sex, age, race and education. Research shows that over 90 percent of individuals in prison and jail are men, over 60 percent of state prisoners are between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five, and rates of high incarceration tend to occur with less educated, unskilled, and financially disadvantaged minorities.  

Although African Americans make up the third largest racial/ethnic group in the U.S. after whites and Hispanics, recent studies continue to show that rates of incarceration in America are highest among black males. As E. Ann Carson puts it in her research, which focuses on statistics surrounding prisoners in 2014, roughly 6 percent of black men between the ages of thirty and thirty-nine were in prison. In contrast, 2 percent of Hispanic and 1 percent of white males of the same age group were in prison. At the end of 2014, 2.7 percent of black males were sentenced to more than one year in state or federal prison compared to 1.1 percent of Hispanic males and 0.5% of white males. A closer look at the incarceration rate at yearend 2014 shows that approximately 516,900 black males were in state or federal prison, which accounted for 37 percent of the male prison population. In comparison, white males came in second place, making up 32 percent of the male prison population while Hispanic males came in third, making up roughly 22 percent.  

As we continue to examine the variances among imprisonment rates by race, we find that blacks generally outnumber other races in nearly all categories surrounding the

---

50 Western, *Punishment and Inequality in America*, 15.

topic. When comparing rates of incarceration across all age groups for each race, we find that blacks still outnumber individuals of other raced in this area. In 2014, black males serving as inmates had the highest imprisonment rates within every age group compared to those of their counterparts. Blacks were 3.8 to 10.5 times more likely to be imprisoned than white males and 1.4 to 3.1 times more likely to be imprisoned than Hispanics at every age group. More specifically, black and white inmates between the ages of 18 and 19 had the largest difference in terms of rates of imprisonment. Black males between the ages of 18 and 19 outnumbered white males of the same age group in state and federal prison by over ten times. At the same time, more than 6 percent of black males between the ages of 30 and 39 were serving time in prison compared to just one percent of white males of the same age group. Below is a graph that depicts the percent of sentenced male prisoners under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities by white, black, and Hispanic origin in 2014:

Figure 7. 2014 Percent of sentence male prisoners of state or federal correctional authorities by race
Although black males did not necessarily outnumber other races in every age group, as illustrated above, they did account for over one-third (approximately 516,900) sentenced prisoners, which outnumbered the amounts for white male prisoners (453,500) and Hispanic male prisoners (308,700) in that year. 52

Although, as we have previously discovered, females are less likely to be imprisoned than males, the patterns for black females mirrors those of black males when comparing their rates of imprisonment against other races. Much like black male prisoners, black female prisoners tend to outnumber prisoners of other racial groups. In 2014, black females were serving behind bars at rates of approximately 1.6 to 4.1 times higher than white females. Black females between the ages of 30 and 34 had the highest rates of imprisonment (264 per 100,000), followed by Hispanic prisoners (174 per 100,000) and white prisoners (163 per 100,000) of the same age group. 53

As we examined earlier in this topic, the prison system appears to also target individuals who are less educated. Generally, individuals who drop out of high school are more likely to be incarcerated than those of whom graduate college. And among those groups of high school dropouts who are more likely to be incarcerated than those of whom are college-educated, blacks outnumber individuals of other races in that specific category as well. Research suggests that in 1980, black high school dropouts were about four times likely to be incarcerated than those who were college-educated. The difference doubled just two decades later in 2000, when one-third of black high school dropouts were incarcerated compared to one in twenty-five of blacks who were college-educated.

52 Carson, “Prisoners,” 29.
53 Carson, “Prisoners,” 15.
All things considered, incarceration rates were approximately fifty times the national average for twenty and thirty-year-old blacks who were high school dropouts.\textsuperscript{54}

America experienced a “prison boom” which, as Western describes as “transforming young adulthood for black men.” Black men born in 1965 were more than twice as likely to go to prison compared to black men born twenty years earlier. Western examines the cumulative risks of imprisonment between 1979 and 1999 for white and black men, and highlights the following information: the risk of imprisonment for black men born between 1945 and 1949 who dropped out of high school was 17.1 compared to that of 4 for white men in the same category. Similarly, the risk of imprisonment for black men exceeded that of white men born between 1965 and 1969. The risk for each group was 58.9 and 11.2, respectively.\textsuperscript{55}

Despite being the smallest U.S. racial group when compared to whites and Hispanics, blacks consistently outnumber whites and Hispanics overall in terms of rates of incarceration. As Matt Vogel and Lauren Porter put it, “black/white incarceration disparities are the most pronounced, with black males being incarcerated at nearly seven times the rate of white males.” And much like the black incarceration rate outnumbering the white incarceration rate, the rates for Hispanics also outnumbered those of whites at nearly three times.\textsuperscript{56} And as TP Bonczar predicts, “if trends continue, one out of every three black males born in the beginning of the twenty-first century can expect to be

\textsuperscript{54} Western, \textit{Punishment and Inequality in America}, 18.

\textsuperscript{55} Western, \textit{Punishment and Inequality in America}, 26-27.

behind bars at least once during his lifetime, compared to 1 out of 6 Hispanic males and 1 out of 17 white males.” The variances among these three races remain consistent throughout nearly every age group. Below is a graph that illustrates the male incarceration rates per 1,000 by race and age group in 2010:

Figure 8. Male incarceration rates per 1,000 by race and age group in 2010

As shown above, the incarceration rates for blacks in 2010 significantly outnumbered the rates of incarceration for whites and Hispanics in every age group beginning from age 18 to age 55 and up. The image closely reflects that of a bell curve, with the highest level of incarceration rates for all groups peaking roughly at ages 30 and 34.

---


58 Vogel and Porter, “Toward a Demographic Understanding of Incarceration Disparities.”
Based on our examination of the high imprisonment rates for blacks, especially when comparing them against the rates for other races in the U.S., we find that the risk of imprisonment is tied to several factors that include, but are not limited to the following as previously discussed: sex, age, race and level of education. We learn that more men are likely to serve time in prison than women, and that incarceration rates are generally highest among men beginning between the ages of 20 to about 50, men who are black, and men who have dropped out of high school.

Conclusions

We have just learned that the rates of imprisonment are most prevalent among male individuals in their 20’s to 50’s, and high school dropouts. And, as we have established, black men consistently outnumber individuals of other races in every category of males who are incarcerated. Why are black men generally more vulnerable to incarceration than men of other races even despite being in these different categories? As Western points out, “rising economic inequality in America and the failure of urban labor markets to provide good jobs for young unskilled men in the 1970s and 1980s precipitated mass imprisonment in the 1990s.”  

60 In addition, “racial disparities emerge as early as the arrest stage (suggesting differential involvement), but remain pronounced throughout the criminal justice process.”  

Western, Punishment and Inequality in America, 53.

Vogel and Porter, “Toward a Demographic Understanding of Incarceration Disparities.”
therefore at risk for getting arrested and serving time in prison. Similarly, individuals who are less skilled and unable to find jobs are more likely to engage in criminal activity. And unfortunately, much of those scenarios tend to target minority groups, specifically blacks. Blacks serving time in prison have estranged or distant relationships with their families, which can also play a role in their ability to produce children. Ultimately, this delays their progression in American society.
Conclusion

The After Effect

In summary, by examining abortion, black on black crime and homicide, and mass incarceration collectively, we established that abortion rates are highest among women of color, over ninety percent of homicides committed against people of color are by people of color, and that mass incarceration targets less educated and unskilled black men. And because of this, other racial groups, specifically whites and Hispanics, are progressing at faster rates than blacks. As long as we continue to have occurrences like the one in New York, where more black babies are aborted than born in a year, as long as the black on black homicide rate persists, and as long as black men continue to make up a majority of individuals who are in prison, the struggle for advancement in America for blacks will continue.
Works Cited


Vogel, Matt, and Lauren C. Porter. “Toward a Demographic Understanding of Incarceration Disparities: Race, Ethnicity, and Age Structure.” Journal of