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**African-Americans**  
**From White Supremacy To Black Presidency**

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## Dedication

*I dedicate and address my deep gratitude to my parents, my family, a very close person to my heart MED for being my strength , my dear cousin Karima and my friends with I shared great moments .*

*My thanks also go to all the people who have, near or far, contributed to the realization of this research work.*



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## Abstract

In this research work, the attempt is to trace the African Americans' journey towards the presidency of the US, a journey that started from the abyss of slavery to the head of the White House. For almost a century, Afro-Americans have strongly struggled to reach their rights as American citizens. They suffered from racism and segregation ; they were even killed and tortured by white racist groups just because they asked for freedom and equality. Hence, the aim of this dissertation is to try to answer the questions how did the African Americans reach the American presidency? And what are the stages they undertook ? African Americans improved their social and economic standing significantly since the Civil Rights Movement and recent decades have witnessed the expansion of a robust,they got access to higher education, employment and representation in the highest levels of American government. However, African-Americans had been deprived of their share in the U.S. politics for about half a century. Then by the legal changes that occurred from 1965 till 1975, they started not only registering but also qualifying for elective offices. Since then, African-Americans have quickly advanced, and soon began to elect leaders from their own community. They arrived to this level of success by the succession of movements Civil Rights Movement, N.A.A.C.P, S.C.L.C. ,... ; They suffered racism and Reagan,s policy. With the beginning of the new century, they managed to attain high ranking positions including the highest one but the way to the White House was, certainly, not covered with flowers. It had been full of thorns on which millions of innocent Black people were hanged, raped or burned only because they were Black.

**Key words:** African-Americans, Black, Civil Rights Movement, White House, slavery, racism, politics.

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## General Introduction

Africans were sold and traded into bondage and shipped to the American South from 1619 until 1807 when slave importation was formally outlawed but this was widely disregarded. By 1860 there were 3.5 million enslaved African Americans across the country. Slavery was a controversial issue in American society and politics. The election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 as the president of the United States was one reason for the secession of the Confederate States of America which led to the American Civil War 1861- 1865. Indeed, the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862 declared all slaves in the confederacy to be free under United States law, however, it did not immediately free a single slave. African Americans remained faithful to Abraham Lincoln and his party, they used to be elected as delegates to the Republican National Convention and as members of the Republican National Committee . They figured largely as members of the Republican Party between 1900 and 1932. However, when Reconstruction ended in 1877, Southern white landowners reinstated a regime of disenfranchisement and racial segregation and with it a wave of lynching and other vigilante violence. The desperate conditions of African Americans in the South that sparked the Great Migration of the early 20th century, combined with a growing African American intellectual and elite in the Northern United States led to radical movements and organizations whose aim was to fight all kind of violence and discrimination against African Americans. Among such organizations, there was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Black Power, the Free Speech Movement, the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and so many others which led a series of legal battles to overcome the miserable conditions of African Americans and especially Jim Crow segregation.

African Americans' political achievements and their arrival to the White House, one may notice, was not just a coincidence because to be an ordinary American citizen sharing the same duties and rights with whites had been a dream, a dream that had been waiting for January 20,2009 to be true. A date marked in the African Americans' mind whose super hero is the 44th. However, in the early 1960s, Robert Kennedy predicted the election of a black man over the next 40 years. Hope or prophecy, his declaration, even with a little delay, ended up becoming a reality.

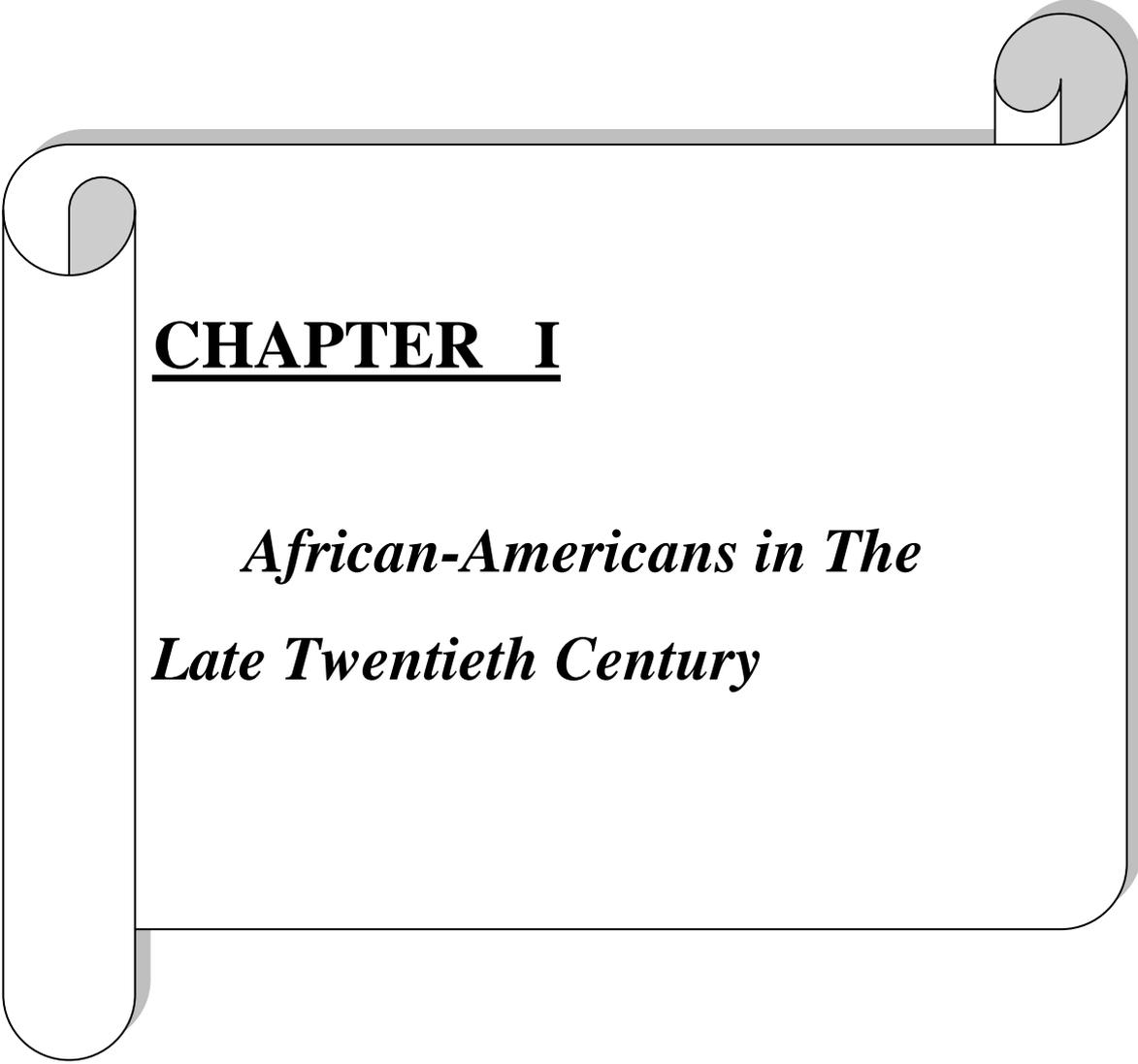
The choice of African American s political participation in the United States of America in the late 20th century and early 21st century as a theme of my sense that writing a paper on

emergence of the black political elite would enable us to understand how African Americans have managed to be at the current position and explain why they had to wait until the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century to hold important political positions, that is to say « African Americans, from the white supremacy to black presidency » .

This research will reply to my question how did the African Americans reach the American presidency ? What are the stages that they undertook ?

The hypothesis is that a law is passed in the United States putting an end to slavery. However, blacks, formerly slaves, are still not recognized as persons equal to whites. They try to have their rights recognized by non violent means, by forming associations, participating in demonstrations and by using the boycott. They started to liberalize themselves step by step, then, they reached politics and arrived to the White House.

Barack Obama realized what was unthinkable in the America of George Washington , Abraham Lincoln, or even in that, younger, of John F. Kennedy or George W. Bush. After 232 years of history, the United States elected its first black president. Hence, I have chosen some of those movements to introduce the first chapter of my research and to show the effects of the Civil Rights Movements, and I will devote a whole part for Reagan's Conservatism and its influence on the Black society. Then, in the second chapter I will be dealing with racism, terrorist attacks and its incidents on Black . Finally, the arrival of the African American to the White House as President will be presented in the third chapter , and showing some light on the Whites' reaction about Barack Obama election and presidency



**CHAPTER I**

*African-Americans in The  
Late Twentieth Century*

## **Introduction**

The black population, present on American soil even before the birth of the United States in 1776, had to wait until the second half of the 19th century to get out of its condition of slavery. The struggle of those called African-Americans was then long to obtain equal rights. In 1896 the decision of the United States Supreme Court Plessy v. Ferguson legitimizes racist legislation through the separate but equal doctrine. The civil rights movement, between 1955 and 1968, will allow the inclusion of equal rights in law and the end of segregation.

In this chapter I will be dealing with two major issues : the development of the Civil Rights Movement from the standpoint of African American resistance to segregation and the formation organizations to fight for racial, economic, social, and political equality, its important legacy, and then the African-American community's situation under Reagan Administration politically, socially, and economically, and to see their reaction on that.

### **1.1.The Civil Rights Movement and The Demand For Reform:**

African Americans were placed in an inferior position because of the social, political, and economic system “segregation”, disqualified, and was enforced by custom, law, and official and vigilante violence, and to free themselves they organized a lot of Movements.

#### **1.1.1.Important Movements :**

The white Americans became consciouss of the severty and importance of the Civil Rights Movement until the mid-1950s and 1960s, when what appeared to be a sudden Black discontent against racial discrimination created a new awariness of age-old African-Americans. The Civil Rights Movement in the United States has been a long effort to bring equality, thus ensure African-Americans' social and political rights was the essential objective of this movement. However, to serve this aim the existence of revolutionary organizations has been something obvious. There were many movements such as S.C.L.C.(Southern Christian Leadership Conference), CORE (Congress Of Racial Equality), C.C.C.O. (Coordinating Council of Community Organization), and the N.A.A.C.P. (the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) etc...The movement for Black Power in the United States

appear during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. Black Power is a slogan which describes the aspirations of many people of African-American descent for national self-determination. One can notice the relevance of those kinds of associations to bring hope to this suffering community. The creation of the Black Power Movement had a great impact on the psychological status of African-Americans in general. The term describes a conscious choice for Blacks to feed and improve their own models of value and life rather than looking at others. The Black Power Movement had been translated into a growing voting bloc that African-Americans exercised in several specific ways in electoral politics.

The number of African-Americans of voting age increased from 10.3 millions to 13.5 million and that was between 1964 and 1972. This of African-American potential voters productively increased due to the combination between the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the registration campaigns of S.N.C.C., CORE, and the N.A.A.C.P. In the late 1960s and early 1970s an expanding number of Blacks in the United States, particularly African-American youth, celebrated their blackness and their historical and cultural ties with the African continent. However, with the political consciousness, African-Americans no longer approved the term Negro. Black as a group identifier was embraced by the Black Power Movement, they had repudiated only two decades earlier, but they proclaimed, « Black is beautiful » (Robert, 1993).

Civil Rights Protests were already declining in significance within the larger African-American freedom struggle by the time of Selma to Montgomery. Indeed, mass mobilizations in African-American communities often took the form of racial rioting that did not respond to centralized direction. During the mid-1960s, Black Nationalists insisted that they, instead of established Civil Rights leaders spoke for the masses. But few who led mass protest movements, and that led them to gain national notability.

Another movement, the Free Speech Movement in 1964 under the informal leadership of the student Mario Savio. It was a student protest which began on the campus of the university of California, Berkeley. The demand was to recognize students' rights to free speech and to lift the ban on political activities in the university. To register African-American voters in the South, the Free Speech Movement is a reason for students' protesting for that. To attract Southern black college students whose positions were confined within the narrow limits imposed by the Southern segregation systems, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (S.N.C.C.) appeared. The S.N.C.C. was also aware of the power of the African-

American vote, that is why launched a campaign in the 1960s in the South to register Blacks. (John, 2017).

Further, the New Left Movement, stood as an important movement at that time. The origin of the name was from an open letter written in 1960 by sociologist C. Wright Mills entitled «Letter to the New Left» for a New Leftist ideology, more personalized issues such as opposing alienation, authoritarian and other ills of the modern affluent society and moving away from traditional “Old left“ focus on labor issues. The organization that really came to symbolize center of the New Left was the student for a Democratic Society (S.D.S.). The S.D.S. mobilized anti-Vietnam War, pro-Civil Rights and Free Speech concerns on campuses.

Certainly, these organization have provided to the attainment of important gains which comonly promote African-Americans’ life. It is clear it did not bring a great and total change but, it was better than nothing.

### **1.1.2.Important Gains:**

Slavery was officially abolished by the Civil War, but discrimination against Blacks did not be stoped, they continued to endure the devastating effects of racismThe famous incident of Rosa Parks, on December, 1955, in Alabama, a black woman found a seat on the bus since at that time there were segregation laws stated that blacks must sit in desingnated seats at the back of the bus, but Parks complied. A white man got on the bus and could not find a seat in the white section, the bus driver ordered Parks and three other blacks to let their seats. Parks refused and was arrested for that. After that, Parks found herself named “mother of the modern day Civil Rights Movement “(Brian, 2020).

Moreover,the African-Americans became more conscious of their intuitive rights, and this was obvious for all Americans by advocating of a certain number of Acts:

#### **1.1.2.1.The Civil Rights Act of 1957:**

One of the most important acts signed by Eisenhower in 1957. In this act was mentioned that no one should discriminate against any American citizen for the purpose of

denying him of his right to vote and in case someone engages himself in a process to deprive another citizen his right to vote because of religion, color skin, etc... The Attorney General can act in the name of the United States to institute preventive measures. The District Court of the United States was also asked to defend those who claim their right to vote when the latter had already exhausted all the legal remedies provided by law. All African-Americans have the legal right to practice and protect their right to vote. The Eisenhower Administration pressured Congress to consider new civil rights legislation, to show a commitment to the Civil Rights Movement and to minimize racial tensions in the South.

### **1.1.2.2.The Civil Rights Act of 1960:**

This Act was passed in 1960. Title III from this act focuses especially on ending fraud and the falsification of election records. In case any officer of election does not comply with this new regulation, he shall be fined 1000\$ or imprisoned one year or both imprisonment and the fine. However, title IV maintained the role of the Attorney General to institute litigation on behalf of African-Americans. The protection of the voting records was the most striking objective of this Civil Rights Act but nothing was done to really help African-Americans enjoy their rights to vote and qualify as candidates.

### **1.1.2.3. The Civil Rights Act of 1964**

On February, 28, 1963 Kennedy urged the enactment of the Civil Rights Act. The whole Act banned discrimination in all places and called for equal access to public facilities and it was considered as the most effective Act since 1870. It prohibits unequal application of registration procedures. It also allowed the Attorney General or defendant state officials to request trial by a three-judge Federal Court. Moreover, this Civil Rights Act directed the Census Bureau to compile voting and registration statistics based on race, color, and national origin whenever recommended by the Civil Rights Commission. Voters could not be asked about party affiliation or past votes.

#### **1.1.2.4. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 :**

There were only 71 litigation cases registered by the department of justice under the three Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, 1964. Literacy tests and other devices still stood as obstacles in front of African-Americans. On March, 15, 1965 President L.B.Johnson outlined in his Selma speech, a Voting Rights Act to be passed by Congress: «This bill will strike down restrictions in all elections, Federal, State and Local which have been used to deny Negroes the right to vote » (Johnson, 1965).

He signed the Act on August, 6, 1965 and the main provision of this Act was that outlawed the requirements for voting in states and counties where less than half of the voting age population was registered on November1, 1964 or had voted in the 1964 Presidential Election and where literacy tests were in use. The Congress renewed the Act in 1970, 1975 and 1982. One can observe that the declaration of these Acts had not turned the life of African-Americans from the utmost to the other but it had brought some progress, a progress that reached its in some occasions and fell down on others, especially during Ronald Reagan Administration.

The consequences of the Civil Rights Movements had been tragic for two of their leaders. On February, 1965, Malcolm X was assassinated (the former Nation Of Islam leader and Organization of Afro-american Unity founder). And on April, 1968, civil rights leader and Nobel Peace recipient Martin Luther King was assassinated also in his hotel room's balcony.

#### **1.2.Reaganism And The Black Society:**

The real legacy left by Reagan is not the legacy that seemed to be that of the White House, during eight years period.

## **1.2.1.Racial Paradox :**

### **1.2.1.1.Racial Advancement:**

In the 1980s, and after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, the number of African-Americans elected officials increased, the number enrolled in colleges and universities quadrupled. And the size of the African-Americans middle class significantly expanded. Politically speaking, African-Americans were elected mayors of the largest cities of the nation such as Kurt Schmoke in Baltimore, David Dinkins in New York City, and Harold Washington in Chicago. Also, Jesse Jackson, Civil Rights leader received millions of votes as a Democratic presidential candidate in 1984 and 1988. Apparently, the big irony within the modern racial paradox is that African-Americans born after the Civil Rights Movements began to have difficulties identifying the realities of the transformation of white racial etiquette. No white politician, corporate executive or religious leader at that time used the term "Nigger" in public. African-Americans being adults or mature in the 1980s have never experienced Jim Crow segregation. They could not express how it feels to be denied the right to vote, because their electoral rights were guaranteed by law. They have never participated in street demonstrations, boycotts, and picket lines. Americans were, to some extent, unable to distinguish between ethnicity and race and to apply these terms to structural realities of American political authority and social institutions. Du Bois observed nearly a century ago, *"It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder"* (Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, p. 2).

One can see, that since legal desegregation was founded, racial discrimination and conflict decreased. But with Reagan's Antagonism toward colored people, these practices emerged again.

### **1.2.1.2.Reagan's Conservatism:**

When Ronald Reagan rose to public prominence."The ideological glue" of Reaganism was racism. After his speech delivered in Philadelphia most African-American leaders were

frightened by covert appeals to racism. However, under Reagan, the impact of Reaganism was felt across the African-American community as a series of devastating shocks. Between 1969 and 1974, the total number of African-American families below the poverty line rose from 1.3 million to 1.5 million. Hundreds of racially motivated acts of harassment and violence occurred throughout the country and thousands of African-American students were victimized by intimidation or physical abuse by Whites who were too young to remember racial segregation (Washington, 2006).

In purely racial terms, the Reagan Administration attempted to communicate its opposition to political reforms such as affirmative action, without employing vulgar racist rhetoric or programs that specifically discriminated against blacks, latinos or other racial minorities. The Administration accomplished this feat through the manipulation of racial symbols, as well as by eliminating specific federal agencies that had been created to safeguard Civil Rights and equal opportunity.

## **1.2.2. African-Americans and Politics:**

### **1.2.2.1. Political Participation :**

As the liberal criticism of the Reagan administration's civil rights records mounted, conservatives attempted to recruit African-American middle class leaders to join the Republican Party. A core of African-American administrators and attorneys was appointed into the administration, including Thelma Diggin, the liaison of the Republican Party's National Committee to the National Black Voters Program; Presidential assistant Melvin Bradley; vice president George Bush's assistant Thaddens Garret; and Arthur Teele, a wealthy Florida attorney named to administer a four billion-dollar budget as director of the Urban Mass Transit Administration ran as Republican candidates for Congress in Massachusetts, Michigan, and Illinois, Georgia and Maryland.

### **1.2.2.2. African-Americans' Reaction:**

Despite the efforts to create a political base for conservatism within the African-American community, the vast majority of Blacks from all social classes continued to reject

Reaganism. One extensive African-American opinion poll in January 1986 indicated that most of African-Americans believed that Reagan's policies had held them back, others stated that his policies had made no differences, while, the majority agreed with the statement that "Ronald Reagan was a racist". African-Americans stated that they desired a larger government with many services, while, most of white Americans favored the Reagan inspired philosophy of "Smaller government with fewer services"(Manning, 2007).

### **1.2.3. Reagan's Policy Effects on Blacks:**

Reagan made clear his views toward blacks. He put into effect a number of policies that had strong negative impacts on the lives and aspirations of many African-Americans.

#### **1.2.3.1. Violence:**

The reaction to the struggle for multi-cultural democracy in the 1970s gave the historical opening for Klansmen to employ intimidation by any effective means of violence conceivable against the grandchildren of former slaves. In May, 8, 1980, Klansmen shot an African-American man in the face in Carbon Hill in Alabama. The incidents of violence, an almost endless list of brutalities which touched the lives of millions of African-Americans. Although the upsurge of random racist violence characteristic of the late 1980s decreased slightly in the following years, public officials felt more comfortable expressing opinions openly and without reservation. In New Orleans in 1986, for example, Jefferson Parish Harry Lee announced that local police would target probable criminals who have « no business in the neighborhood. If there are some young Blacks driving a car late at night in predominantly white areas, they will be stopped » (Manning, 2007, p. 202).

In the summer of 1985, a series of incidents occurred throughout the United States; in Mount Lebanon, Pennsylvania, crosses were burned on the lawn of a black family in Boston, white teenagers attacked three Vietnamese youth and murdered one African-American male in a racist attack (James, 1972).

Although, neither Reagan Administration nor Republican officials punished these types of racial violence, the example of Reagan himself inspired and perpetuated these manifestations of racial hatred. After Reagan's election, for example, one white teacher said to his colleagues

“Now that Reagan was president, I guess we can say “Nigger” without going to court” (Manning, 2007, p.207).

Reagan still making racist remarks about African delegates to the United States Nations, calling them “ monkeys “. Recently the Nixon Presidential Library released an October 1971 phone conversation, “ To watch that thing on television, as I did, to see those, those monkeys from those African countries- damn them, they are still uncomfortable wearing shoes!” Reagan tells Nixon (the 37th president of United States) who erupts in laughter (Tim, 2019).

Rosa Parks said about racism: « Racism is still with us. But it us up to us to prepare our children for what they have to meet, and, hopefully, we shall overcome » (Rachel, 2020).

### **1.2.3.2. Social Inequality:**

The concept of equality was among the expected rights as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. The principle that every American should exercise certain political rights, such as the freedom to run for public office. But equality in social and material terms goes for beyond the confines of the political process. Within the Reagan Administration, inequality as a political concept was defended as absolutely essential to continued economic growth and productivity. Many conservatives believed that unequal distribution of wealth was part of the natural order of humanity.

The consequences of social and economic policies that favored accelerating inequality were profound and long lasting. A generation before, during the Republican Administration of Dwight Eisenhower, the wealthiest Americans were taxed at the rate of 91 percent; under Reagan’s tax reforms of 1986, the highest tax rate was only 28 percent. For African-American community, there were very practical consequences from the federal government’s deliberate policies of social inequality in healthcare, housing and public services. Therefore, under the Reagan Administration, minorities groups and African-Americans in particular, were socially and economically disadvantaged.

### **1.2.3.3. Political Alienation :**

The 1980s provided two outstanding examples of African-American political resistance. They could never forget the demise of the rigid racial segregation laws throughout the United States. Randall Robinson, civil rights commissioner Mary Frances Berry and District of Columbia representative Walter Fauntroy staged with other activists a small symbolic demonstration in front of the South African embassy in late November 1984. Throughout the 1980s, the majority of white Americans, considered as racial group, found it difficult if not impossible to vote in large numbers for any African-American candidate, regardless of his qualifications, education, or previous political experience. When white Democrats were forced to choose between an African-American Democrat, who clearly articulated their class and political interests, and a white Republican who favored cooperate interests, the majority of whites consistently defected to the white conservative.

The decade of the 1990s, represented for the majority of African-Americans a transitional period in which the nation moved away to an increasingly uncertain and unequal racial future. The presidential administration of George Bush was partially responsible for these race relations. Although Bush was certainly more liberal than his Republican predecessor, Ronald Reagan on racial policies, Bush continued to promote the same strategy. But after 4 years in office and running for reelection, Bush tactically decided to distance himself from other candidates by making modest appeals to the African-American electotate.

### **Conclusion**

With the beginning of the twenty-first century things wre different, African-Americans have witnessed the spark of light and the string of hope that Matin Luther King had seeded in the souls of African-Americans began to have its first fruit.

## **CHAPTER II**

### ***African-American in The Early Twenty-First Century***

## **Introduction**

« The black man needs the white man to free him from his fear, and the white man needs the black man to free him of his guilt » (Martin Luther king, 1966).

In this chapter, I will tackle the status of the African-American community in the beginning of the twenty first century (nowaday), with a short focus on some important events that have either helped to increase or decrease discrimination (conferences, attacks) and shedding light on the African-American political representation.

### **2.1. A New Era of Racism and Freedom :**

With the beginning of the twenty first century, challenges were compounded with the experiences of class, gender, and immigration, the African-Americans continued to fight equality, ethnicity, and social justice. So many shifts, have taken place at the local level. “In the late 1980s, few African-American state legislators represented predominantly white districts”, said David A. Bositis, the senior political analyst at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies who conducted the most recent study of African-American state legislators.

By 2001, that number stood at 92, according to Tyson King Meadows and Thomas F. Schiller, political scientists at the University of Maryland Baltimore county, who analyzed statistics from the Joint Center and other sources. In 2007, “the figure was 189”, Mr. Bositis said (Angela, 2003, p. 81).

About 45 percent African-Americans in states like Georgia, Indiana and North Carolina. But practically a quarter represent communities where African-Americans make up 20 percent or less of the population, including districts in Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan and Tennessee. Such change, however, does not always come easily. In Tennessee Representative Nathan Vaughn, in 2002 he was first elected to the legislature from a district that is 97 percent white, remember reaching his hand to a white man during one of his campaigns. Mr. Vaughn said that the man refused to take it, mentioning a racial epithet and saying he would never vote for a black man. As we can see examples are many and those are some, so African-Americans did not have come to power easily (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2005).

In Iowa, another example is Helen Miller, an assistant majority leader in the State House of Representatives, was advised by a supporter not to include her photograph in her campaign flyers to avoid alienating voters. Mrs. Miller became the first black legislator from her district in 2002 by ignoring that advice.

Mike Carbone, a white retired councilman from Keene, N.H., Who supported Mr. Roberts and Mr. Obama, said that when some people walked into the voting booth, racism still influenced them. “ In this small town here, you will hear people say, ‘ I would not vote for that black man”, Mr. Carbone said (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 2005).

“ But this man can talk and talk sense”, he added, referring to Mr. Roberts, who is running for re-election. “We are in changing times. You have got to break the barrier somewhere”.

Some African-American lawmakers caution that white support for blacks at the local level may not necessarily translate into backing for Mr. Obama. But political analysts believe that experience with African-American leadership at the local level may have already helped some white voters feel comfortable supporting Mr. Obama in the Democratic Primaires.

Mr. Bositis, of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, said that the trend might have consequences beyond the presidential election. State legislative seats are usually steppingstones to higher positions, and these new politicians, he said, may well become the next generation of African-American governors, Congressional leaders and more. “then that substantially increases their horizons in terms of their political futures”(JCPES, 2005).

### **2.1.1. World Conference Against Racism :**

In August-September 2001, an entirely new epoch of African-American history began with two significant events: the United Nations had organized in Durban, South Africa, the “World confrence against racism” and the second event is the terrorist attacks on Newyork City and the Pentagon on September 11. This part will be devoted to the first event.

The decision to hold a world conference in 2001 was taken in 1997 by the United Nations General Assembly. It is a series of international events organized by UNESCO to promote struggle against racism. Four conferences have been organized so far in 1978, 1983, 2001, and 2009. It focused on action-oriented and practical steps to eradicate racism. Evaluating the

fight against racial discrimination and its future, increasing the level of awareness about racism and its consequences, these were the main objectives of the consequences. The European Commission played an active part in the preparations for the world conference. On one hand, it attended the preparatory conference entitled “ All Different – All Equal: From Principle to Practice” held at the Council of Europe. On the other hand, it contributed EUR 3.7 million to non-governmental organizations, the least developed countries (to ensure their participation). It aims to demonstrate the success of the fight against racism.

The most striking is the coincidence of African-Americans’ protest against racial segregation within the United States in the late 1990s with the crystallization of demands by African nations for “African Renaissance” championed by South African president Thabo Mbeki. Both movements had in common a historically-grounded renegotiation between political Representatives of people of African descent and Western capitalist nation-states over the obvious alienation of Black people and the suppression of Blacks' human rights. Throughout 2000-2001, there was a series of UN sponsored regional conferences and discussions on the living legacy of Racism all over the world. The “World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance” was held in Durban, South Africa, on August 31-September 7, 2001. This stance of meeting was of great importance to the African-Americans as a whole as it shed light on their political and social status. It is certainly through that kind of conferences that the voiceless group can have a voice and I think that this certainly makes others become aware of their existence in all fields. Further steps need a lot of patience and confidence in order to fulfil their goals and attain self determination. In this conference (a full week of workshops and dialogues) roughly 11,500 delegates, observers and participants were in attendance, the United States had the largest delegation, numbering over three thousand, of whom almost two thousand were African-Americans. This conference was a good motivation to many African-American activist groups to think more creatively about founding effective political coalitions inside the United States. This conference surely helped the Black community in its search for identity. But African-Americans’ satisfaction had not persisted for a long time. The second event that effected race relations in a rather negative way was the 9-11 attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon (Winnie, 2001).

### **2.1.2. The “Al-Qaeda” Terrorist Attack:**

On the other hand, within the same period of time, to reduce American support for many governments, a terrorist attack against the United States operated by Al-Qaeda, which is an international Islamist extremist terrorist network founded in the late 1980s by Osama Bin Laden, founder and 1st General of Al-Qaeda and his major component of ideology was the concept that civilians from enemy countries, including women and children, were legal purposes for jihadists to kill. The belief that U.S. foreign policy has oppressed, killed, or otherwise harmed Muslims in the Middle East, motivated the Al-Qaeda leader, condensed in the phrase, “They hate us for what we do, not who we are”. Nevertheless, bin Laden calling upon Americans to convert to Islam, and blamed the U.S. for its secular form of governance. He was killed in a U.S. military operation on May 1, 2011. The aim has been to overthrow governments in the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world. The United States support was viewed by Al-Qaeda as a major obstacle to creating a global under Islamic authority. African-Americans had to face the impact of that attack and most importantly ethnic and religious hatred of the whites. As a result of this event, there was a kind of “Ethnophobia” in the U.S. (Gaetano, 2009).

#### **2.1.2.1. The pentagon and Newyork City Attacks:**

There was the one event that transpired over the course of just two hours, but has driven huge changes in American lives ever. African-Americans, Americans and people of the entire world were alerted by the catastrophic events of September, 11, 2001. It was believed that the Al-Qaeda “terrorist” group, a network of radical Islamic fundamentalists, operated a series of attacks in Newyork City and Washington by four commercial airplanes, two planes struck and destroyed the world trade center in low Manhattan, and a third airplane struck and destroyed a section of the Pentagon. It is thought that the Flight was headed to the Capitol building, the center of American legislative government. Americans were shocked by the brutality of these violent criminal acts. The Twin Towers, as the centerpieces of the World Trade Center, symbolized globalization and America’s economic power and prosperity, and the Pentagon, as the headquarters for the U.S. Department of Defense, represented as a symbol of American military power. The terrorists set their sights on symbolic targets since they did not have the capacity to destroy the United States militarily. The World Trade Center

alone, nearly three thousand innocent people died some were found over one thousand feet downward. By attacking these symbols of American power, Al-Qaeda would promote widespread fear throughout the country and roughly weaken the United States' standing in the world community, eventually supporting their political and religious goals in the Middle East and Muslim world. As in previous times of war, the vast majority of Americans, regardless of their political affiliation, immediately rallied behind the president, demanding military retribution against the "Islamic terrorists". George Bush characterized the "evil doer" as insane, and for days following the attacks promised to launch a global "crusade". The following steps that the United States planned to follow have had a great harm on the Black minority as an ethnic group.

#### **2.1.2.2. The Impact of The Incident on Blacks:**

Like other Americans, African-Americans were morally and politically outraged by Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks. Yet they were deeply troubled by the immediate rising feeling of patriotic fervor and national chauvism. Numerous acts against individual Muslims and Arab Americans took place. Behind this mass increase of American patriotism, there was Xenophobia and ethnic and religious intolerance that could potentially reinforce traditional white racism against all people of color. They questioned the Bush Administration's legal measures that severely restricted Americans' civil liberties and privacy rights. For these reasons, many Black leaders sought to uphold Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, and challenged the U.S. rationale for its military incursions in both Afghanistan and later Iraq. Certainly the policy that Bush had used against ethnic minority either threatening or attacking people because of their ethnic or religious background had only helped the terrorists by dividing the country. I think that it is, to some extent, ironical to recognize that after 300 years of oppression and segregation and after taking a full place in the American society, African-Americans found themselves again forced to bear hatred and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion or nationality. It seems that this community had to suffer all the time and not to enjoy freedom and liberty for a long time.

As the Justice Department began to arrest and hold without trials hundreds of Muslims and Arab Americans, Islamic groups urgently appealed to the NOI, NNACP and the congressional Black Caucus for assistance. Approximately 40 percent of the United States' Islamic

population was African-American, and hundreds of native-born Blacks, because of their religious affiliations also found themselves under surveillance or were arrested even though they had no link to terrorist groups . The Reverend Jesse Jackson openly condemned the police practice of ethnic religious profiling declaring that the United States needed to focus on building of understanding and building a just peace, instead of restiring to warface to root out terrorism. A new racial domain was being constructed in the twenty first century America, exiling most Blacks and other racialized groups to an increasingly marginalized status behind a “color-blind”, racially neutral regime of mass confinement, mass unemployment and political disfranchisement. The National “War on Terror” only reinforced the authoritarian dynamics of intolerance and exclusion upheld by white power (Manning, 2007).

### **2.1.2.2. Political Representation:**

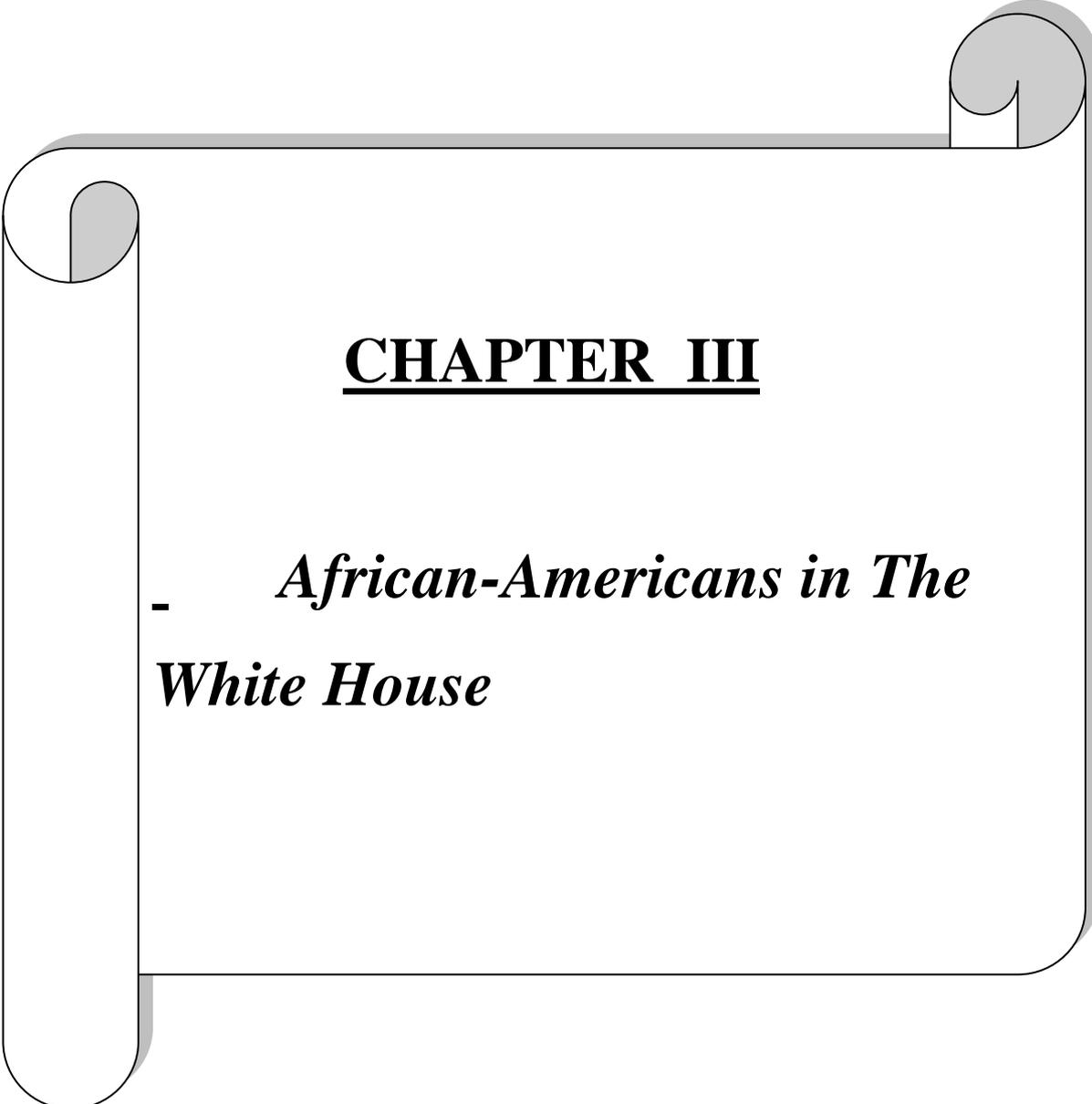
African-Americans are more involved in the American political process than other minority groups in the United States, this is clear in the high level of voter registration and participation in elections. In 2004, African-Americans collectively achieve higher levels of education than any other immigrants in the United States. African-Americans also attain the highest level of congressional representation of any other minority group in the United States. In the 2004 Presidential Election, Democrat John Kerry received 88% of the African American vote compared to 11% for Republican George W. Bush. In the November, 2006 elections, Black voters played a critical role in the outcome of many of the most closely-contest races, especially those for the United States Senate. Joint Center voting rights and political expert Dr. David Bositis has analyzed the behavior and significance of African-American voters in the 2006 midterm elections, as well as the changing number and profile of Black candidates for federal and statewide offices and their performances at the polls. They urged all County Officials to know what your State and County have done to implement major election reform under “Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA)”. According to them, this is America’s Twenty first century opportunity to strengthen Democracy at home and help remove barriers to voting that have suppressed African-Americans and Hispanics/Latinos in general.

The newest edition of Black Elected Officials reports 9,040 BEOs, a more than six-fold increase. Growth over this period is especially impressive at the State level. In five southern

States, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas, the total increase between 1970 and 2000 was over tenfold. In 2000, Mississippi and Alabama together had more black elected officials (1,628) than the entire nation had in 1970. In 1970, the 10 states with the highest number of BEOs collectively had 821, However, in 2000 the top 10 states had 5,887 (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies,2006).

## **Conclusion**

These events let the African Americans continue fighting for equality and social justice, but over time they have raised their standard of living, and justice arrived slowly until the African Americans became among the important politicians in United States and black political representation have focused on the degree to which African American politicians can impact the everyday living conditions of African Americans.



**CHAPTER III**

- *African-Americans in The  
White House*

## **Introduction**

African-Americans have raised their standard of living, have improved their economical status and have better education and work opportunities. There are 38.1 million African-American in U.S. While, at the time of American Civil War, every seventh American was an African. They have come a long way from slavery to the inauguration in 2009 of Barack Obama the first black president of the United States. So, will having a black president made a Difference? In this chapter We will see the presidency of Barack Obama and the reaction of White Americans about this election, also the example of an African American (black) woman in United States.

Justice arrives slowly for oppressed people. If the dominant institutions of society attribute little value to their lives, families and communities, justice can be delayed but certainly there comes a day when each gets his right. Southern Democrats in the United States Senate, for decades, had the power to block all legislative remedies that the Civil Rights organizations had sought. Meanwhile, thousands of African Americans across the South, as well as other sections of the country, were lynched, hanged or burned alive often with the presence of crowds of white people participating or witnessing the events. In June 2005, United States Senate finally voted to issue a formal “apology for lynching” (Sheryl, 2005). This represented the first time in the United States history that the Congress had acknowledged, in a formal resolution, the historic crimes committed against people of African descent in the United States. After this recognition, things seem to work better and another time hope reappeared and by the year 2008 this hope was mixed with a strong will to form a challenge that Barack Obama has turned it concrete. Of course, that achievement is not a god-given one but rather it is the fruit of a well organized campaign and a strong confidence in himself as an American and not an African-American candidate. There are many examples of successful African-American politicians, and I have selected a man and a woman to clarify this.

### **3.1. Barack Hussein Obama :**

Barack Obama (born August 4, 1961) is the 44th President of the United States. He is the first African-American to hold this office. Obama was the junior United Senator from Illinois from January 2005 until November 2008, when he resigned following his election to the presidency. Obama is a graduate of Columbia University and Harvard Law School, where

he was the first African-American president of the Harvard Law Review. He worked as a community organizer in Chicago prior to earning his law degree, and pursued as a civil rights attorney in Chicago before serving three terms in the Illinois Senate from 1997 to 2004. He also taught constitutional law at the University of Chicago Law School from 1992 to 2004.

In July 2004, Obama wrote and speechified the Keynote address at the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston, Massachusetts. He spoke about changing the United States government's economic and social priorities, while questioning the Bush administration's management of the Iraq War and speaking about obligations to American soldiers. He blamed heavily partisan views of the electorate and asked Americans to find unity, saying, "There is not a liberal America and a conservative America, there is the United States of America". Though it was not televised by the three major broadcast news networks, a combined 9.1 million viewers saw Obama's speech, which was a highlight of the Convention and elevated his status as a star in the Democratic Party. Obama was sworn in as a senator on January 4, 2005. Obama was the fifth African-American Senator in the U.S. history and the third to have been popularly elected. He was the only Senate member of the Congressional Black Caucus. CQ Weekly, a nonpartisan publication, characterized him as a loyal Democrat based on analysis of all Senate votes in 2005, 2007. The National Journal ranked him as the most liberal senator based on an assessment of selected votes during 2007, in 2005 he was ranked sixteenth most liberal, and in 2006 he was ranked tenth. In 2008, Congress.org classified him as the eleventh most powerful senator, and the politician was the most popular in the Senate, enjoying 72% approval in Illinois. On February 10, 2007, Obama announced his candidacy for President of the United States in front of the Old State Capitol building in Springfield, Illinois. The choice of the announcement site was symbolic because it was also where Abraham Lincoln delivered his historic "House Divided" speech in 1858 (Michael, 2007).

In 2008, Democratic Senator Barack Obama defeated Republican Senator John McCain to become the first Black American elected to the office of President of the United States, was sworn in as a president on January 20, 2009. Ninety-five percent of African-American voters voted for Obama. He also received overwhelming support from young and educated whites, and a majority of Hispanics, picking up a number of new states in the Democratic electoral column. In November, Obama won the presidency with 52.9% of the popular vote to McCain's 45.7% and 365 electoral votes to 173. In his victory speech, delivered before thousands of his advocates in Chicago's Grant Park, Obama declared that "change has come to America". During this inauguration speech, Obama summarized the situation by saying,

"Today I say to you that the challenges we face are real. They are serious and they are many. They will not be met easily or in a short span of time. But know this, America: They will be met". Thence started the transition period from the Bush to Obama administration. Barack Obama has been compared to Abraham Lincoln who abolished slavery and Ronald Reagan who helped bring down the Soviet Union. Barack Obama served half a term as junior Senator, spending two years campaigning full-time. Outside of being a community organizer, his greatest accomplishment is a novelty, he is a highly educated Black Man. In his first 100 days in office, Obama did several works by cutting taxes for working families and small businesses, he undertook a complete overhaul of America's foreign policy and reached out to improve relations with Europe, China, and Russia. So, the election was undeniably about Race. Barack Obama was elected to a second presidential term defeating Republican Mitt Romney, by reassembling the political coalition that boosted him to victory four years before, and by remaking himself from a hopeful uniter into a determined fighter for middle class interests. He had to cope with new challenges, and the first challenge was that he gave the light to a covert operation in Pakistan to track down the infamous Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden. Americans feel very proud because they elected a black man. However, when anyone is asked why they voted for Obama, all people can say it is because he offers "hope" and "change". Barack "the Magic Negro", as he is called, is with no doubt Martin Luther king's dream. It has been hard and painful for African Americans to move from slavery to presidency. The long road has been strewn with hurdles and obstacles (David, 2007).

### **3.2. Condoleezza Rice :**

Condoleezza Rice, an African, born in the heart of still-segregation Dixie, she was brought up to believe that the sky was the limit as far as her future was concerned. Rice credits her parents for instilling in her the notion that there were no real limits on what she could do with her life, if she could dream it, she could do it. Although she grew up in the segregated South, she and her siblings were taught that they could achieve anything if they believed in themselves. Once she proclaimed; "Our parents really did have us convinced that even though I could not have a hamburger at Woolworth's, I could be president of the United States"(The New York Times, 2006).

Growing up in Birmingham, Alabama, a city torn apart by racial pressures in the 1960s was an important lesson for Rice. Although her parents tried their best to insulate her from some of the more virulent hatred at large in that city, even their best efforts could not shut out reality completely. She began her career as an academic, joining the faculty of Stanford University as professor of political science. In 1981 she developed strong interest in political affairs of former Soviet Bloc, comparative study of military institutions, and international security policy. Rice was named by President George H.W. Bush to serve as director of Soviet and East European affairs on the National Security Council in 1989, her duties involved interpreting for Bush the international significance of events occurring within the Soviet Bloc. She guided Bush to help him prepare for his summit meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev in Malta, Washington, D.C., Paris, and Helsinki. Rice was later promoted to senior director of Soviet and East European affairs and named a special assistant to the president for national security affairs. She continued to work as consultant to national and state governments as well as the public sector (1991-2000). In 1991, Rice returned to her teaching position at Stanford, even though she continued to serve as a consultant on the former Soviet Bloc for numerous clients in both the public and private sectors. Late that year, California Governor Pete Wilson nominated her to a bipartisan Committee that had been formed to draw new state legislative and congressional districts in the state. Serving with Rice, the youngest member of the panel, were a number of retired state judges, including a former justice of the state supreme court. Rice was selected in 2000 by incoming President George W. Bush to serve as his National Security Advisor. In addition to her responsibilities at Stanford and her continuing work as a consultant on matters of Russian and Eastern European affairs, Rice has served as a director on a number of corporate boards, including Chevron, Transamerica Corporation, and Charles Schwab Corporation. She was a board member of the University of Notre Dame, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the International Advisory Council of J.P. Morgan, and the San Francisco Symphony board of Governors. Carla Hills, former special trade representative, has served with Rice on the board of Chevron, and she is clearly an admirer who feels that Rice's experience at Stanford should serve her well in the future. "I think her experience as provost in Stanford has given her an interesting window on budgeting and management that is really quite extensive", Hills told ABC News. Of Rice's management style, Hills said, "I would say she is firm, which is maybe a nicer word for tough, and that is because she does her homework and knows her position" (Michael, 2007).

During the presidential race of 2000, Rice served not only as one of Bush's team of foreign policy advisers but also as a member of Bush's campaign response team. Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, Rice has been featured prominently as a government official, dealing with the "war on terrorism". As Bush's National Security Advisor, Rice occupied a lofty position of influence, one that has never before been occupied by a woman. Rice made history yet again in 2005, when she was confirmed as the first ever African-American female Secretary of State.

In the State, Rice maintained her uniquely close bond with the president, a relationship that made her one of the most powerful secretaries of state in years.

By early 2008, Rice's diplomatic efforts had lowered tensions between the United States and many of its allies, repairing some but not all of the damage the Iraq war had caused. She put together an international coalition to use United Nations sanctions to pressure Iran to give up or restrain its nuclear program, while those in the Bush administration, such as Vice President Dick Cheney, who reportedly advocated military strikes against Iran. Under her, the State Department negotiated an agreement with North Korea that led it to shut down its main nuclear reactor in July of 2007. She spent much of 2007 in the Middle East, pressing Israel, the Palestinians, and Arab Nations to engage in the peace negotiations, a reversal from the Bush Administration's early reluctance to get deeply involved in the issue. Her efforts led to the November of 2007 summit in Annapolis, Maryland, at which Bush, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, and Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas outlined a plan to negotiate a peace accord by the end of 2008. Rice's political achievement was rich. It seems that she does not suffer from segregation or feeling of alienation or inequality because of her color instead she acted in a way that any other white woman cannot do. Rice is an ideal example in the Black community that has overcome the sense of self-hatred and inferiority that had pursued people of dark skin for more than one century. Rice, Obama and other braves have challenged the reality and given birth to a new era in the American social order where all citizens are supposed to be equal (Michael, 2007).

### **3.3. White's reaction about Obama's presidency :**

November 4, 2008, the whole world with eyes on the United States. John McCain, Vietnam War veteran and Republican candidate confronts Barack Obama, the Democratic

candidate. Millions of Americans go to the polls to elect the successor to George W. Bush, who will become their 44th president. With a record voter turnout of 63% of registered voters, Barack Obama wins the election with more than 9 million votes ahead of his opponent John McCain. Its slogan "Yes, we can" hits the bull's eye. The victory is clear and without burr. This success is due to his victories in the key states of Ohio and Florida which make the difference. In addition to these two "swing states", Obama overturned other traditional Republican strongholds like Indiana, Virginia and North Carolina. Barack Obama wins in all age groups, except for those over 65, and benefits from a greater mobilization of young voters, 68% of 18-25 year olds vote in his favor. It won the suffrage of 67% of Latinos and 95% of African American, only a minority of whites voted for Obama, who owed his victory only to the unprecedented mobilization of the black and Hispanic minorities. It has since instilled "a sense of hope, integration and in some cases, reconciliation," observes Marc Morial, president of the National Urban League, another civil rights organization.

For Mark Potok, the reaction of racist circles reflects "real despair". "The fact is that these people lost," he says. "They will no longer be able to turn history back. Our country will become an authentic multiracial democracy and they can do nothing about it" (Mark, 2007).

After Barack Obama's media victory early on, events showed that while American voters largely ignored the candidate's race, skin color remained important to a small group of militant racists.

## **Conclusion**

"It can be seen as a contradiction that after the election of an African American president, the country is witnessing hundreds of attacks against African Americans," admits Jack Levin, a sociologist and criminologist at Boston University. "But there is no contradiction, because racism is still part of this country, even if there is definitely less than that," he said.

## General Conclusion

There had been slavery for thousands of years, but u.s. slavery was a peculiar capitalist and particularly inhumane institution: people as property, no rights as human beings. African American history has come a long way, from centuries of slavery and segregation to the civil rights movement and beyond. Despite the gains made by blacks over the decades, American history has left wounds, which are not all healed. But it took a long time for successive generations of Americans who wanted to play their part - through protests and struggles, on the streets and in court, through civil war and through civil disobedience, and always at the cost of great risks, bridge the gap between the promises of our ideals and the reality of their times.

The United States indeed carries the weight of a heavy past: Ku Klux Klan, racial segregation, assassinations of presidents or political figures favorable to the rights of blacks, and, of course, slavery, abolished there is hardly more than a century. My research encapsulates the sometimes devastating and sometimes triumphant history of African Americans in each era.

The civil rights movement involved a change of attitude on the part of whites. And studies show that things are moving: white people think that black people should be treated in the same way as them. They live together, marry them. If the majority of Americans voted for Barack Obama, it means that he attracted a substantial part of the white electorate. But in parallel, his election agitated another fraction of the white population, which remains conservative and racist. On November 4, 2008, the 44th President of the United States was elected. A black enters the White House. Obama was right to say Yes we can. By his victory, he will mark the history of the American nation: he will, ever, be the first black president of the United States. If each American presidency comes with its share of particularities, none has upset the body image of the presidential institution as much as the presidency of Barack Obama. Eight years after the election of George W. Bush Jr., seven years after the attack of terrorists against the towers of the World Trade Center, five years after the start of the war in Iraq,

Obama's Yes We Can slogan had its share of positive effects.

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