

The Changing Relationship between African Americans and White Americans from 9/11 to the 2012 Presidential Election

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On September 11th 2001, the Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda hijacked four airplanes and crashed two of them into the towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. The third plane fell outside the Pentagon, and the fourth fell into a field in Pennsylvania. At the time, the tragedy made American citizens united across their differences: race, gender, and class. However, this sense of unity was based on racial hatred of Arabic people. According to a Gallup survey, 57 percent of white Americans and 71 percent of African Americans supported Arab profiling (Chang). By contrast, in the 2012 presidential election, American citizens, once again, were deeply split across race, gender, and class. Overall, this essay analyzes the relationship between white Americans and African Americans over the past decade. It also examines how racial relationships in the United States are contingent on world politics. The first part of this essay will examine national unity in the aftermath of the September 11th terror attacks, and the second part will examine disunity among citizens around the 2012 presidential election in America. Finally, the third part will examine the comparison between the relationship between African Americans and white Americans from 2001 to 2012.

Part 1: The Replacement Makes the United States United

As a rule, a nation's enemy makes the citizens united, but that kind of solidarity is often weak. After the September 11 attacks, American citizens helped each other and showed their disgust of terrorism: "People rushed to donate blood, food, and money. Volunteers

clogged military-recruiting centers. American flags were in evidence everywhere” (Tindall and Shi 1115). On that occasion, former President George W. Bush addressed the nation in the following terms: “Every nation in every region now has a decision to make: either you are with us or you are with the terrorists” (Tindall and Shi 1118), and those words, in spite of their bellicose rhetoric, brought temporary solace to American citizens.

On the one hand, American citizens displayed national unity and patriotism; on the other hand, Arab Americans were excluded from the unity. American citizens showed hatred not only toward Al-Qaeda, the Islamic extremist group that orchestrated the terror attacks, but also Arabic people themselves. A majority of Americans approved the racial profiling of people who seemed to be from the Middle East even though it was discriminative because it allowed police officers to suspect people based on how they looked rather than any evidences.

However, judging people on their external appearance is unreliable. In the article “Eyes Wide Shut,” Jeff Chang mentions that a non-Arabic man got in trouble because of his external appearance. Sadeque (not his real name), a man from Bangladesh, was assaulted by white men while he was on a train. The attackers asked about the World Trade Center, but Mr. Sadeque could not understand what the attackers were saying. The men then assaulted Sadeque and no one on the train stopped them. In such a way, people of Arabic extraction were excluded in contrast to other races in America after the 9.11 attacks.

Before Arabic people were victims of discrimination in the aftermath of 9.11, African Americans and Latinos were the most ostracized ethnic groups. In America, white people form the majority, so other races often become the target of discrimination. Especially, African Americans have had a historical confrontation with white America. However,

according to a Gallup survey, 71 percent of African Americans approve Arab profiling. (Chang) There is always possibility to be a replacement. Not surprisingly, Arabic people started to be stereotyped as savage because of Al-Qaeda in the wake of the 9.11 terror attacks. This stereotype of Arabic people had spread by media. For instance, “24”, one of the most famous television series in the world, is no exception. The story of the fourth season is fight against terrorism. In the season, a Muslim character is described as intelligent but deceitful. The broadcasting company FOX pushed the fourth season with a threatening slogan, “They could be next door”. It implied that even Muslims have American citizenship; they could be a threat for America.

Those kinds of idea have a great influence on people. That is because media strongly influences people’s knowledge. For instance, in 2011, Students Teaching Against Racism in Society (STARS), a student organization at Ohio University, started a poster campaign that was named “We’re a Culture, Not a Costume.” This campaign’s purpose was letting students reconsider dressing up in another culture’s costume in an insensitive way. In the campaign poster, people hold pictures with people wearing other ethnic group’s costumes for the Halloween party, which is insensitive. Concretely, an Arabic man holds the picture of a white man who wears a thawb and has attached dynamite on his stomach. It reveals that Arabic stereotypes link to terrorism and the 9/11 attacks reinforces the stereotype. Arabic stereotypes had focused around savagery and violence even before September 11th 2001; moreover, the media supported those stereotypes. One of the most famous Disney movies, *Aladdin*, also uses stereotypes as Marvin Wingfield and Bushra Karaman show in “Arab Stereotypes and American Educators.” *Aladdin* starts with a song:

Oh, I come from a land,

From a faraway place,
Where the caravan camels roam,
Where they cut off your ear
If they don't like your face,
It's Barbaric, but hey, it's home.

Thus, Wingfield and Karaman comment, “the film immediately characterizes the Arab world as alien, exotic, and ‘other’” (Wingfield, Karaman). Arab Americans see this film as perpetuating the tired stereotype of the Arab world as a place of deserts and camels, of arbitrary cruelty and barbarism” (Wingfield, Karaman). Those actions whereby ethnic minority people try to correct wrong explanation by media is not for withdrawal the insulting explanations. They try to stop reproduction of wrong images of ethnic minorities. Eventually, what people see influences what people recognize; furthermore, what people recognize influences how people act. Not only what people see, but also words have an adverse effect on people's recognition.

In the article, “What Part of ‘Illegal’ Don't You Understand?” Lawrence Downes argues that the political term “illegal” obstructs people's calm judgment. “‘Illegal’ is accurate insofar as it describes a person's immigration status. About 60 percent of the people it applies to entered the country unlawfully. The rest are those who entered legally but did not leave when they were supposed to.” According to Downes, “Since the word modifies not the crime but the whole person, it goes too far. It leaves its target diminished as a human, a lifetime member of a presumptive criminal class.” In this case, Latinos, in particular, suffer from the terminology. The Latino population has increased by 53 percent over the past decade, and they competed for unskilled jobs with many African Americans and poor whites. The U.S.

Supreme Court upheld the anti-illegal immigrants law called Arizona Senate Bill 1070, which allows police to arrest immigrants who do not carry the required documents by only the polices' own judgment. Before the 9/11 attacks, African Americans and Latinos had been discriminated against more strongly than Arabic people had because of the above two reasons: the problem of recognition and the terminology. People show solidarity when one ethnic group becomes their enemy, but each of them has the potential to become the enemy for the other groups. In other words, behind America's solidarity, there is always a replacement. For instance, during World War II, Japanese Americans were interned in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, thus becoming other Americans' common enemy.

America's solidarity always arises from hatred and groundless fear; for example, white people may find themselves in a disadvantaged position because of Affirmative Action. For the purpose of protecting citizens from fear, citizens and even the Nation try to eliminate the fear: it is always nonwhite people. After the 9.11 terror attacks, many people accepted the racial profiling of Arabic people and people who seemed to be from the Middle East; however, no one suggested the necessity of racial profiling of white people after the terror attacks by white Americans. Tim Wise makes that very point in *Between Barack and a Hard Place: Racism and White Denial in the Age of Obama* (2013), noting that racial profiling of whites did not occur after "the bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal Building by Tim McVeigh and Terry Nichols in 1995, or after two decades of bombings by the Una-bomber, Theodore Kaczynski, or after the Olympic Park bombing of 1996 in Atlanta, carried out by Eric Rudolph, or after the more than 200 bombings or arsons at family planning and abortion clinics in North America since the mid-1970s" (72). By contrast, Wise continues, "persons of Arab, Persian, North African, or South Asian descent, and the others presumed to be terrorists

because of the color of their skin, their accents, or the their perceived religious beliefs, are currently facing such hostile treatment.” (72).

Half of a century has passed since the establishment of the Civil Rights Act and still, white Americans have many more advantages than other ethnic groups. However, the United States of America has chosen Barack Obama, a president with a father from Kenya and a mother from Kansas: Obama is African American. Therefore, he is often called “the post-racial president.”

Part 2: Separated Citizens After the 2012 Presidential Election

Nine years after the 9.11 terror attacks, Barack Obama was elected president of the United States of America. However, this election revealed the disunity among citizens in the nation. Exit polls by the *New York Times* showed it very clearly: as far as race is concerned, on the one hand, 59 percent of white Americans voted for Mitt Romney, the rival candidate from the Republican Party; on the other hand, 93 percent of African Americans, 71 percent of Hispanics, and 73 percent of Asians voted for Obama. As far as income is concerned, low-income groups voted for Obama, whereas high-income groups voted for Romney. As far as age is concerned, younger voters supported Obama, whereas older voters supported Romney. Moreover, there is a close correspondence between the president map and The Civil War divisions’ map: the conservative South supported Romney, and the reformist North supported Obama. In other words, the United States has been separated like 1860s. Actually, Obama was chosen as a president twice; moreover, about 41 percent of white Americans voted for Obama, which is a lot. Just half a century has passed since the African American Civil Rights

Movement, and yet, a non-white candidate has become the president of the United States—which is not a small achievement for a nation often accused of being a racist nation. Therefore some people have started to believe that the United States has entered a post-racial era. However, in actual, no one can say the United States has overcome the long-term racial problem.

Of course Obama has gained the support of many different kinds of ethnic groups, but it does not mean that the United States is beyond racial problems. Contrariwise, the fact that Obama has become the President of the United States makes it more difficult to clearly pinpoint discrimination. That is because Obama's success, the fact that an African American has become a president, seems to demonstrate that the United States is no longer a racist nation. Actually, racial problems are not over. In fact, quite recently, on February 26, 2012 in the gated community of Sanford, Florida, a 17 year old African American high school student named Trayvon Martin was shot by George Zimmerman, a neighborhood watch volunteer of Hispanic and Caucasian ancestry, because Zimmerman thought Martin, who was just walking in the neighborhood, looked suspicious. That incident occurred in 2012 and it is not a thing of the past.

Moreover, according to a Gallup survey 2011, 60 percent of African American people think African American people are not given good job opportunities. In 1963, African American people answered the same survey and the result was that 74 percent of them thought they did not have good job opportunities. In other words, the African American employment problem has not improved so much in the five decade following the Civil Rights movement. In fact, a lot of African American people became hopeful for the future when the first African American president in the history of the United States was elected. According to

Lydia Saad, as a result of a survey, 79 percent of African American people believed that race relations will get better because of Obama's presidency. In comparison to African American, 58 percent of Non-Hispanic White people think race relation will get better, by all accounts, 61 percent of National adults believe that. Saad argues that, "Black Americans are particularly optimistic about Obama's long-term impact" (Saad).

African American people get hope not only about race relations but also their social positions. African Americans' opportunities to have a job have often been usurped just because of their ethnicity. The fact that the United States could elect to the highest position in the nation an African American is impressive enough to let non-white people have hope: if they wish, they can become anything in the United States regardless of skin-color. However, Obama's success could cause invisible racial problem rather than fulfill people's hope. The fact that an African American has become the president of the United States could be used as evidence that the United States has entered a post-racial era. Yet, African American people are still the victim of discrimination on a regular basis. Discrimination could manifest itself in the form of a police checkup based on race, employment and educational problems. Speaking of police checkups, according to CBS News Poll, 56 percent of African American people answered they have been treated unfairly by police officers, Whereas only six percent of white American have had a similar experience.¹ Even though African American people face those difficulties, many white Americans may not feel that discrimination is a serious matter in the United States. According to the same CBN News Poll, 60 percent of white Americans think that it is about equal for both African American and white American to get ahead in today's society. And 50 percent of African American people think that white American have a better chance to get ahead in today's society. Moreover, 40 percent of African American

people think discrimination against them happens a lot in their society while only 15 percent of white Americans share the same opinion.

Actually, some illustrious newspaper published articles insisting that the United States has entered a post-racial era. In *Between Barack and a Hard Place: Racism and White Denial in the Age of Obama* (2013), Tim Wise contends: “The day after Obama’s victory, the Wall Street Journal editorial page intoned: ‘One promise of his victory is that perhaps we can put to rest the myth of racism as a barrier to achievement in this splendid country.’” (31) If people believe that the United States has entered post-racial era, racial problems would be worse: when people find the lower class is mostly formed with African American people, people would think it is because of lack of African American people’s effort without considering discrimination against them. And people may think that now the country often accused of being a racist nation have an African American president, therefore it cause their laziness that they cannot improve their education, social position, and their life. People who believe it could not be generous enough to accept the government pours a huge amount of tax into an affirmative action for “lazy” African American people. Actually, 57 percent of African American people prefer to increase affirmative action programs, but 36 percent of white American people prefer to maintain the status quo or 33 percent of them prefer to decrease the affirmative action (Ludwing).

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, the author of *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America*, mentions that white Americans who are against Affirmative Actions are discursive:

The four story lines I analyzed, “The past is the past,” “I did not own slaves,” “If (other ethnic groups such as Italians or Jews) have made it, how come blacks have not?” and “I

did not get a job because of a black man,” help whites discursively since they provide “evidence” to solidify their viewpoints. For example, if whites object to the idea of affirmative action or reparations, they can insert “The past is the past” or “I did not own any slaves” story lines to strengthen the apparent reasonableness of their argument. If the issue at hand is explaining black’s states in America, the story lines of “If (other ethnic groups such as Italians or Jews) have made it, how come blacks have not?” is very appropriate. Finally, because the story line of “I did not get a (job or promotion) because of a black man” seems personal... it has become a powerful rhetorical weapon to win arguments... (Bonilla-Silva 145)

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a politician and sociologist, wrote memo that said, “The time may have come when the issue of race could benefit from a period of “benign neglect”... The subject has been too much talked about... We may need a period in which Negro progress continues and racial rhetoric fades” (Kristol). Moynihan mentioned it in 1969, the time the United States was barely coming out of the Civil Rights Movement. Since the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, elimination of discrimination against African Americans had been discussed for a long time. Especially in 1969, the hiring minorities plan, called Philadelphia order, had been established. Because of this plan, contractors needed to hire a required number of African American people by required dates. Those kinds of affirmative actions were established and the rectification of discrimination against African Americans was discussed; therefore, Conservatives were fed up with race issues. And also Moynihan said “Congressman vote for everyone more readily than they vote for any one.” (Wise 25) That is to say, facing racial problem is unwelcome for especially white American people even though it is one of the big issues in the United States. As Moynihan mentioned, even a politician regards African American’s blackness is not their identity but the problem that the United States need to transcend.

A TV host of MSNBC, Chris Matthews was exposed to criticism from African American people by his remarks in his TV program: “[Obama] is post-racial, by all appearances... I forgot he was black tonight for an hour. You know, he’s gone a long way to become a leader of this country.” (Washington) Matthews perhaps tried to eulogize President Obama unquestionably with these words, but he actually implicated that Obama’s success was because of he overcame his blackness. And Matthews would not have said, “I forgot he is black” if Obama had not made a remarkable achievement. Matthews received criticism, but he did not withdraw his words. Far from that, Matthews said, “I’m very proud I did it and I hope I said it the right way” and he also mentioned “he grew up in the racially fraught 1960s.” (Washington). Considering his remarks, Matthews actually did not try to insult President Obama and African Americans. In comparison to what Matthews had seen in 1960s, the situation for minorities had improved even the United States had the first African American. Therefore, he praised President Obama with expressing racial transcendence without doubting it could be racial expression and denying African Americans’ identity.

An associate professor of history at North Carolina State University, Blair L.M. Kelly said, “When you say we’re going to transcend race, are white people called on to transcend their whiteness? When (black people) transcend it, what do we become? Do we become white? Why would we have to stop being our race in order to solve a problem?” (Washington) If transcendence of race is regarded as transcendence of racial issue, it proves that white supremacy is still popular in the United States. To be accepted by society, minorities need to whitewash their color: they need to pretend to be white Americans.

Actually, after Obama has become the president, a racial issue is not over yet. If people look away from this fact and claim that the United States has entered a post-racial era

already, no one can say that citizens accept other races but ignore ethnic minorities' identity. Ethnicity is not a problem that should be transcended and solved. The neglect of racial difference to solve the racial issue is called "color-blindness." (Bonilla-Silva 3) In *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva compares two types of racism: one is named Jim Crow racism, the old racism, and the other is color-blind racism, the new racism. According to Bonilla-Silva, "Jim Crow racism explained blacks' social standing as the result of their biological and moral inferiority, color-blind racism avoids such facile arguments" (2). And "Color-blind racism became the dominant racial ideology as the mechanisms and practices for keeping blacks and other racial minorities" (3).

In color-blind racism, there is little obvious assault like what Ku Klux Klan did in the past. Color-blind racism is looking away from any harmful effects from discrimination against non-white people and just claiming all races are equal in the United States. That makes white privileges and non-white discriminative treatment invisible. In Jim Crow Law era, people obviously realized non-white and white American people had been separated. But in color-blind racism, they just believe there is no separation and they have equal opportunities. President Obama is non-white, however, he could not work to correct this type of racism. That is because he does not choose "'unbending idealists' like abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass, and 'wild-eyed' prophets like John Brown" that Obama "is 'left with Lincoln' as a hero and role model" (Wise 35). Nevertheless, many ethnic minorities supported President Obama. When President Obama was elected first time in 2008, also minorities voted for Obama: 95 percent of African Americans, 67 percent of Latinos, and 62 percent of Asians supported him. If President Obama had chosen an African American leader as his role

model, he would have not gained white Americans' support that much. That is because a lot of American citizens are fed up with racial problems; like Moynihan implied, and think people need to move forward from the past.

Obama's policies aim for unity among citizens and correcting a gap between rich and poor. He established new healthcare system called Obamacare, which is "allowing coverage for pre-existing conditions, not letting insurers cancel policies. And he also supports path to legalization for undocumented immigrants that includes learning English and paying fines."² When Obama was elected first time in 2008, he ran for the election with the slogan "Yes, we can." The "we" included not only white Americans but also African Americans and other ethnic minorities. Contrary to his policy, a breakdown of the 2012 presidential election voters shows that American citizens have been deeply split across race, gender, and class.

Part 3: The Reason for Racial Conflict in the United States

Comparing the relationship between white Americans and African Americans from 2001 to 2012, there have been big changes. Since the first African slaves were captured and sent to Virginia mandatory in 1619, African slaves had been treated in a dehumanizing way by white slave owners: for slave trade, slaves were shipped by large cargo which had almost no room to move, and too many slaves died before arriving at America because of infectious disease and lack of oxygen. Owners had treated slaves as their possession, not human beings. After Thomas Jefferson had penned the Declaration of Independence, which guaranteed equality under the law, African Americans were still treated like slaves. The slaves could not live by themselves because they were not rich enough and did not have the base of living.

In the Jim Crow era, African Americans were not allowed to use even the same public accommodation as white Americans because of the “separate but equal” policy. For instance, bus seats were separated and African Americans who took seats in a middle section should give their seats if white Americans would like to have seats. Rosa Parks did not give a seat to a white American, so she had been arrested. Thus, African Americans stood up to solve the problem of the treatment of African American as the Civil Right Movement.

Even though discrimination has been banned by the Civil Right Act, no one can say there is no discrimination in the United States. Especially, African Americans and white Americans have been in conflict since the United States was born. However, after the 9/11 terror attack occurred and they faced a common enemy, they united with other ethnic groups and supported the government to fight against the terror groups. In the article, “Racial Profiling: Eyes Wide Shut,” Sin Yen Ling, a legal fellow with the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, says “Maybe for the first time, Blacks and Latinos are seeing themselves eye to eye with whites” (Chang). Probably American citizens at that time were more concerned with their National identity as Americans than their ethnicities. According to a Gallup survey before the terror attacks occurred, President Bush’s approval rating had been around 50 percent, but it jumped up to 90 percent after the attacks.² When different people have the same concerns, they get the citizens except Arabic Americans had the same enemy, terror group.

Before the 9/11 terror attacks, there were some conflicts between the United States and other countries. For example, After the attack on Pearl Harbor, World War II occurred. Deborah J. Schildkraut, the author of “The More Change... American Identity and Mass and Elite Responses to 9/11”, compares the editorials of the *Los Angeles Times* between the 13

weeks following Pearl Harbor and the 11 weeks following the 9/11 terror attacks. “The data show that in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, nearly 32 percent of the editorial paragraphs advocated ethnic-profiling or promoted an ascriptive conception of American identity, compared to zero after 9/11.” As far as incorporation among citizens is concerned, “20 percent of the post-9/11 paragraphs highlight incorporationism in some form, versus only two percent of the WWII-era discourse” (Schildkraut 2002).

Of course the United States had some confrontation with other countries; however, the 9/11 terror attack was distinguished from other confrontations: accordingly, American citizens tried to unite beyond ethnic differences more than after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Moreover, when President Obama was elected the second time in 2012, citizens were separated. Actually, when Obama was elected at the first time in 2008, the exit poll showed citizens were separated also. Same as in the 2012 election, non-white Americans, low-income groups, and younger voters supported Obama. However, voters in the 2012 election were more deeply separated: as far as income is concerned, a four percent increase in high-income groups making \$50,000 or more voted for Obama’s rival candidate. As far as race is concerned, Hispanics who voted for Obama increased by four percent, and Asians who voted for Obama increased by 11 percent.³ While only 11 years have passed, the relationship between African Americans and white Americans has changed; united in 2001, and separated in 2012. Considering of this changing relationship, racial difference is not what actually matters: threat and convenience matter.

First, the history of the United States could be seen as a history of threat. When the first white settlers acquired land in America, they persecuted Native American under the pretext of manifest destiny. While white settlers kept expanding their territory, a lot of Indians

were killed. After African slaves started to get freedom in the aftermath of the Emancipation Proclamation (1863), the Ku Klux Klan was founded under the pretext of disciplining African Americans. The Ku Klux Klan was an extremist group; however, many white Americans hoped that African Americans would not get freedom and thus implicitly supported the KKK even if they did do so openly.

These two cases show that persecuting and discriminating against other races is caused by white people's fear that "others" will attack them. Second, discrimination is sometimes a matter of political convenience rather than a matter of racial differences. For example, Adolf Hitler claimed Aryan supremacy and argued that the Aryans constituted the most respectable race while other races were inferior. However, as soon as Germany and Japan signed the Tripartite Pact during World War II, Hitler changed his opinion and called Japanese people honorary Aryans in order to make his ideology consistent.

Moreover, the treatment of non-white people is changing not only out of political necessities, but also because of low-income citizens' necessities. Especially, the lower class white Americans who are called "White trash" often work as unskilled labor. Thus the lower class white Americans need to fight with many immigrants or non-white people to make their living. These lower class white Americans easily loath their non-white rivals for economic competition rather than just racial or cultural differences. Nanami Shiono, the author of *Roma No Machikado kara*, says the following of lower class white Americans: "Poor white people who cannot keep a distance from refugees change into racists sooner than higher class people." Actually, the number of hate groups has been increasing since 2000. When the economy of the country is depressed and the government makes policies that aim at the minorities rather than white people, the number of hate groups tends to grow. According to

SLPC, Southern Poverty Law Center, 1007 hate groups were established in 2012. It is almost 70 percent increase since 2000. A neo-Nazi leader's comment was taken up: "When the economy suffers, people are looking for answers... We are the answer for white people."⁵ The facts show that an economic crisis may favor a rise in discrimination against non-white people.

To sum up, discrimination against non-white people is not just because of skin color or racial differences: people's fear and political convenience also matter. Therefore, African Americans and white Americans could be united after the 9.11 terror attacks even though they had always been in conflict. If skin color and racial differences were the sole reason for this conflict, they could have never been united under the same National identity. Especially, what makes people's fear increase is the reproduction of stereotypes about non-white people. In many cases, the media gives out information that helps perpetuate stereotypes about non-white people. Even if African Americans' stereotypes such as poverty, savagery, and laziness are fading away, people continue to believe in such stereotypes because the media keep using them.

For example, the *New Yorker* came up with a controversial cover in 2008 before Obama was chosen as the first African American President: on the cover, a cartoon represented Barack Obama wearing a djellaba and his wife Michelle dressed like a terrorist. That is because Obama's father is Muslim, even though Obama himself denies that he is Muslim, and his middle name is Hussein, a name that reminds of the former dictator of Iraq, Saddam Hussein. Of course the United States was attacked by an Islamic terror group and the country was sensitive to terror. And the author of the cover picture, Barry Blitt, defended it saying, "I think the idea that the Obamas are branded as unpatriotic [let alone as terrorists] in certain sectors is preposterous. It seemed to me that depicting the concept would show it as

the fear-mongering ridiculousness that it is” (Pitney). However, that *New Yorker* cover led people to believe that being a Muslim meant being a terrorist. Of course, the cover of the *New Yorker* was a joke, but there is the possibility that many people took the cartoon at face value because the *New Yorker* is one of the most reliable and illustrious weeklies in the world. If people accept a cover picture full of stereotypes, people may keep believing that the stereotypes are true. While the reproduction of such stereotypes goes on, the stereotypes will never disappear from people’s mind.

Conclusion

Overall, the relationship between African Americans and white Americans from the 9/11 terror attacks in 2001 to the presidential election in 2012 produced big changes: Americans united to fight against terror groups and they were disunited in the 2012 presidential election. Moreover, the change among African Americans and white Americans shows that discrimination is not only due to skin color or racial differences but also to people’s fear and the manipulations of the elites.

In order not to mistreat innocent people and do racial profiling of Arabic people after the 9.11 terror attacks, People need to realize the fact that media do not necessarily give balanced information. Even an illustrious newspaper is not always reliable; for example, the *Wall Street Journal* mentioned that the United States was overcoming the myth of racism because American citizens elected the first African American president. Of course, the prime source of media information is often the people themselves and so, any information has the potential to be modified. Thus, people always need to see a piece of information from

different angles. Getting a more balanced view of other races could be the best solution to racial problems; however, it is not so easy for many people because a lot of citizens tend to cling to their own ethnic groups and distrust others. Accordingly, nothing is more convenient than media to get thorough knowledge of a situation. This is exactly why people should not swallow any piece of information without questioning it first. Otherwise, the history of violence between African Americans and white Americans will continue in the future until disparaging stereotypes of African Americans disappear completely.

Notes

- (1) "Race and Ethnicity: CBS News Poll. Aug. 7-11, 2013" Polling Report.com
- (2) "Barack Obama vs. Mitt Romney" Differen.com
- (3) "Presidential Approval Ratings – George W. Bush" Gallup
- (4) "President Exit Polls" *The New York Times*
- (5) "Stand Strong Against Hate" Southern Poverty Law Center (splcenter.org)

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要約

多民族国家であるアメリカでは深刻な人種問題が存在するが、建国当初から特に白人とアフリカ系アメリカ人との間の問題は顕著であった。しかし、2001年の9.11同時多発テロと2012年の大統領選挙の二つの局面におけるアフリカ系アメリカ人と白人との関係には大きな変化が見られる。9.11同時多発テロの際には、テロリストグループに対する敵対心から人種を超えて団結した一方、2012年大統領選挙の際には、人種だけでなく、性別や貧富の差などでアメリカ国民は分断された。これら二つの局面における白人とアフリカ系アメリカ人との関係を比べると、人種問題の本質には、肌の色や人種間の違いよりも、国の都合や恐怖心が関係することがわかる。

まず、9.11同時多発テロでは、テロリストグループに立ち向かうためにアメリカ国民は団結したが、同じアメリカ国籍を持つ者であってもアラブ系アメリカ人はその団結には含まれなかった上、同じアメリカ人から敵視された。その影響として、アラブ系アメリカ人に対して、いかなる証拠よりも外見や人種で人を判断し、取調べを行なうことができるレイシャルプロファイリングがアメリカ国民に受け入れられた。その結果、アラブ系ではない人々までもが取り調べを受けたり、酷い場合には暴力をふるわれたりすることがあった。このような信頼性の低い差別的な捜査方法が57パーセントの白人、そしてテロが起こるまでラテン系と並んで一番の差別の対象であったアフリカ系アメリカ人までもが71パーセントも支持した。このいきすぎたアラブ系アメリカ人排除には、メディアによるアラブ系への偏ったイメージの流布が関係している。例えば、FOXで放映されていたドラマ『24』のシーズン4は、テログループがアメリカの失墜を狙って連続時間差多発テロを行なうというストーリーであるが、「彼らは隣にいるかもしれない」という、「アラブ系＝危険」という偏見に満ち、人々の恐怖心を煽るようなキャッチコピーとともに宣伝された。このように国民同士の結束を強めさせる国民共通の敵として選ばれるのは、常に白人以外の人種である。過去に白人によるテロ行為があった際、白人に対するレイシャルプロファイリングが行なわれることはなかった。9.11同時多発テロによってアメリカ国民はアラブ系アメリカ人を除いて結束を深めることとなったが、それは同時に白人以外の人種は常に簡単に国民全体の敵となりうる立場にあることを示した。そのような環境の中、2008年にはアメリカ史上初めてのアフリカ系アメリカ人であるバラク・オバマが大統領として選ばれ、アメリカはついに人種差別大国から抜け出した、「ポストレイシャル時代」に突入したと多くの国民が信じた。しかし、実態はポストレイシャルとは程遠いものであった。

2012年の大統領選挙でオバマ大統領が選出された際、2001年の9.11同時多発テロの状況とは違ってかわって、アメリカ国民は人種だけでなく、性別や貧富の差などで分断された。2008年の大統領選挙で初めてオバマ大統領が選出された際も、得票結果をみると国民は分断されていたが、2012年の選挙結果では、分断がより顕著に現れている。大統領選挙の、どの州が誰を支持したか塗り分けられたアメリカ地図と、南北戦争の対立勢力で塗り分けられたアメリカ地図とは似通っている。その中でも41パーセントの白人はオバマ大統領に投票しており、オバマ大統領をポストレイシャルだとする主張もあった。しかし、アメリカがポストレイシャル時代に突入したとしてしまうにはいくつか問題点がある。まず、オバマ大統領が選出されてからも人種問題は起こっている上に、非白人の就職問題も相変わらず存在するという認識が人々の中にあることも調査で明らかになっている。そして、もしアメリカが人種差別大国を脱したという認識が広まってしまうと、確かに存在する人種問題を見えづらくしてしまう。例えば、アフリカ系アメリカ人が偏見や差別によって職を得られなかったとしても、差別が原因ではなく、アフリカ系アメリカ人の怠惰さが原因であるとされる可能性がある。こうして、差別などの人種問題に目を

限り、人種の違いを無視することで、一見多様な人種を平等に扱っているようにみせかける、「カラーブラインドネス」が、公民権運動時代のような露骨な人種差別にとって変わる、アメリカの新しい人種問題である。

2001年の9.11同時多発テロによってアメリカ国民が結束したことと、2012年大統領選挙で国民が分断されたことという11年の間で起こった大きな変化を比べると、人種問題の原因とされるのは肌の色や人種間の違いよりも、国の都合や恐怖心が大きな割合を占めている。例えば、9.11同時多発テロの際は、テロ組織に対抗するという必要性から結託し、アラブ系が攻撃してくるかもしれないという恐怖心からアラブ系を差別した。そして、人種に対する偏見を人々に持たせ続けるのは、メディアが原因の一端を担っている。メディアによる映画などでの人種に対するイメージが繰り返し広められることで、人々の認識に偏見として刷り込まれていく。メディアの情報を鵜呑みにし続ける限り、アフリカ系アメリカ人と白人の人種問題は消えないだろう。