

Affirmative action perspective through the strategy of workplace to overcome systemic barriers

Gledia Hajrulla^{*}, Desantila Hajrulla¹, Taqo Stojani², Hajrulla Sh³

^{*}Department of Political Science and International Relations /Faculty of Law, Epoka University, Albania

¹Department of Business/Faculty of Economics, Researcher, Albania

²Department of Political Science and International Relations /Faculty of Law, Epoka University, Albania³

(didilhas@gmail.com)

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Abstract – This article seeks to explore the various facets of affirmative action with an emphasis on its role in fostering workplace diversity. By offering a comprehensive account enriched with historical context, an outline of arguments, and illustrative examples, we invite an informed reflection on the nuances of affirmative action within modern society. The primary intention of affirmative action is to offset the effects of past discrimination and to create a level playing field for those who have been disadvantaged by historic injustices. At its core, affirmative action is intended to create an environment of fairness. The goal of affirmative action is to provide equal access to education, employment, and other opportunities to people who have been traditionally excluded. It is a set of initiatives, including programs, and procedures, that are designed to promote access to education, employment, and business opportunities for people historically excluded and underrepresented groups.

Keywords – workplace, affirmative action, internationalization, barriers, employment

I. INTRODUCTION

The goal of affirmative action is to provide equal access to education, employment, and other opportunities to people who have been traditionally excluded. It is a set of initiatives, including programs, and procedures, that are designed to promote access to education, employment, and business opportunities for people historically excluded and underrepresented groups. Affirmative action has been a controversial topic since its inception in the 1960s. It refers to policies that seek to rectify the effects of past discrimination by providing special privileges to people from historically oppressed groups. The primary intention of affirmative action is to offset the effects of past discrimination and to create a level playing field for those who have been disadvantaged by historic injustices. At its core, affirmative action is intended to create an environment of fairness and to ensure that individuals are judged based on their individual merits and accomplishments, rather than on their race, gender, or other characteristics. Through the use of affirmative action, individuals have the opportunity to access occasions that were previously unavailable to them due

to systemic discrimination. This is important in order to create a fair and equitable society, in which everyone has an equal chance to succeed.

On the one hand, some people argue that affirmative action policies are a form of reverse discrimination, while on the other hand, others contend that affirmative action is a necessary corrective measure to address the long history of discrimination against minorities and historically disadvantaged groups and to ensure that individuals are judged based on their individual merits and accomplishments, rather than on their race, gender, or other characteristics. Finally, it will examine the arguments against affirmative action, including the idea that it leads to reverse discrimination and that it undermines the notion of a merit-based society..

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1 Literature Review

The concept of affirmative action has long been a subject for fervent debate, discussion, and litigation. Rooted in a desire to overcome past discrimination and promote diversity, affirmative action policies aim to provide equal opportunities to underrepresented groups. The term itself was first coined by President John F. Kennedy in 1961 with Executive Order 10925, which demanded that government contractors "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and employees are treated without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin." Thus, the movement for a fairer and more equitable society began its shift from the streets to the structural policies that govern institutions.

Through the following decades, affirmative action policies evolved, often reflecting the political and social climate of the times. Expansion during President Johnson's tenure to include education and other sectors was a significant milestone. Over time, however, these policies would be narrowed by Supreme Court decisions, which scrutinized their implementation, seeking to balance the need for diversity with individual rights. They expand the number of members of historically marginalized groups in places where they have been prevalent (Resendez,2002). Because they provide personnel inside an organization the responsibility of keeping an eye on the problem, these programs also help organizations identify persistent social injustices. This is accomplished by methodically gathering pertinent data, looking for tendencies in the data collected, figuring out what caused the pattern, and resolving the issue (Crosby, Iyer & Sincharoen, 2006).

This literature review will explore the topic of whether affirmative action is a fair way to address historical injustice. First, it will provide an overview of the development and implementation of affirmative action policies in the United States. Second, it will discuss the arguments in favor of affirmative action, including the idea that affirmative action is needed to compensate for centuries of institutionalized discrimination and to ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to succeed. Finally, it will examine the arguments against affirmative action, including the idea that it leads to reverse discrimination and that it undermines the notion of a merit-based society.

2.2 The origin of affirmative action

Despite differing approaches, the underlying principle remains consistent: fostering a more inclusive society where past injustices no longer dictate future opportunities. The origin of affirmative action in the United States can be traced back to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination in employment and education. Since then, affirmative action policies have been implemented in various forms, including the use of quotas, preferential hiring, and the consideration of race and gender in college admissions. This policy was implemented in the United States in the 1960s, and has since been a controversial topic in the public eye. The history of affirmative action begins in the 1960s with President John F. Kennedy's Executive Order 10925, which prohibited discrimination in the workplace based on race, creed, color, or national origin. This order paved the way for Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which added gender to the list of protected classes. Title VII enabled the federal government to "take

affirmative action” when it came to employment decisions, in order to remedy discrimination and ensure equal opportunity for all. Furthermore, supporters contend that creating a level playing field for minorities in hiring and promotion practices is not only a moral imperative but also a beneficial strategy for organizations seeking a wide array of talents and perspectives.

III. RESULTS

In addition, there are concerns regarding the fairness across generations – while seeking to remedy past discrimination, affirmative action might impose consequences on individuals who have no responsibility for historical inequities. Proponents of affirmative action assert that such policies are crucial in promoting workplace diversity. They argue that diversity enhances the quality of ideas, problem-solving, and represents an ethical commitment to equality. Affirmative action also serves as redress for historical injustices by providing marginalized communities with opportunities that have been systematically denied. The main argument in favor of affirmative action claims that it is a necessary tool to address the legacy of historical injustices and discrimination. Proponents argue that affirmative action is an effective way to level the playing field and to ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to succeed. They point to the fact that African Americans, Latinos, and other minority groups have been disproportionately affected by a history of prejudice and discrimination, and that affirmative action policies can help to right these wrongs. On the other hand, opponents of affirmative action argue that it is unfair and can lead to reverse discrimination. They contend that affirmative action policies favor certain races and genders over others, which undermines the notion of a merit-based society. Additionally, they argue that affirmative action policies can be used to punish individuals who are not responsible for historical injustices.

The contention that was at the heart of the Michigan instances was that affirmative action is necessary to ensure the heterogeneity of school systems and workforces (Miller 1997). Affirmative action's contribution to ensuring fair recruitment processes and decisions is a further justification. This position was included in the American Psychological Association's advisory opinion in the Michigan cases and has particular significance to public discussions (e.g., Crosby & Clayton 2004, Crosby et al. 2003).

Affirmative action, according to critics, is essential in order to diversify American companies and schools (Tierney 1997). The proof that affirmative action helps ethnic minorities get a chance to attend college up until recently included analyzing admission trends over time and was therefore, at best, speculative (Allen et al. 2003, Crosby & Clayton 2004). But in 1998, former Princeton and Harvard University presidents William Bowen and Derek Bok wrote the ground-breaking book *The Shape of the River* (Bowen & Bok 1998). Their work offered the first comprehensive quantitative analysis of the effects of affirmative action.

Yet, the contrasting viewpoints reflect a deeper societal struggle to reconcile a commitment to equal opportunity with the variable definitions of fairness and justice. As we explore affirmative action's various applications, these arguments underline the ongoing dialogue about how best to achieve a just and equitable society. The statistics revealed that African Americans were significantly less likely than whites to graduate law school or pass the examination and that they selected higher-tier law schools than whites with equivalent qualifications. Introductory credentials had a strong correlation with class ranking, which helped forecast graduation and the probability of passing the bar. Recognizing the historical significance of race-conscious admissions practices, according to Sander's findings, less African Americans graduate from law school and take the exam as an outcome of race-sensitive admissions practices than would be the case with race-neutral ones. Despite great strides towards equality in recent decades, many people still face systemic discrimination. Women and people of color are often passed over for promotions and job opportunities due to their gender or race. Affirmative action seeks to level the playing field by providing special privileges to these groups, such as preferential hiring practices and access to scholarships.

In the realm of higher education, affirmative action has manifested primarily through college admissions processes, where institutions consider race as one of many factors to create a diverse student body. Scholarships and funding earmarked for underrepresented minorities serve as additional measures to mitigate the financial barriers that could otherwise limit access to education for these groups. By providing additional resources to historically disadvantaged groups, affirmative action offers them a chance to overcome systemic barriers and achieve success.

Affirmative action is a mean to guarantee that everyone has a chance to contribute to their community. When people from all backgrounds have access to the same opportunities, they can bring a variety of perspectives to the table. This diversity of ideas and experiences can help foster an environment of innovation and progress and to level the playing field in order to give those who have been discriminated against a better chance of success. Career advancement initiatives also play a crucial role by providing mentorship and development opportunities specifically for employees from underrepresented backgrounds.

IV. DISCUSSION

Additionally, some university players have profited from unique admissions standards despite evidence that institutions may not make money off of their athletics departments (Bowen & Levin 2003).

As we navigate into the future, debates about the effectiveness and fairness of affirmative action continue to rage on. These discussions lead to policy adjustments and legal challenges that reflect the changing attitudes towards race, gender, and inequality. Some institutions attempt to find race-neutral alternatives to achieve diversity, while others reaffirm their commitment to traditional affirmative action methodologies.

By implementing affirmative action policies, employers can demonstrate that they are committed to creating an equitable workplace. In the political sphere, affirmative action has influenced the representation of minorities in elected offices and government services. Quotas and reserved positions are controversial yet at times an effective strategy in amplifying the voices of those historically marginalized. Throughout various sectors, affirmative action interplays with societal values and goals, evolving to meet the need for equity and representation.

Equal to this, India's constitution-makers and tribunals have adopted positive policy measures to guarantee an equitable society and eradicate the social injustices of segregation and discrimination. Consequently, constitutional protection has paved the way for stronger coverage and development of many disadvantaged classes in terms of education, public service careers, and promotional chances.

While affirmative action policies are a reasonable system to mark historical injustices, they can also have unintended consequences. Affirmative action policies may lead to reverse discrimination against white males, who are often seen as the primary beneficiaries of preferential treatment. There is a risk that it could even lead to increased social tensions (Lynch 1992). Here are numerous instances where affirmative action policies have successfully created more inclusive environments. Universities with diverse student bodies often report richer educational experiences for all students, and businesses that prioritize diversity in their workforce recognize the innovation and broader market appeal it brings. These success stories offer tangible benefits that can inspire further commitment to affirmative action policies.

Affirmative action critics frequently criticize the practice as unjust, arguing that it undermines the United States' valued concept of meritocracy by centering hiring decisions on demographic factors instead of capacity and performance (Thernstrom & Thernstrom 1997, Zuriff 2004). Supporters adopt a distinctly different position. At the most fundamental level, they question why many other widespread behaviors that undermine the meritocracy are not criticized but affirmative action is picked for criticism. Universities, for instance, develop extensive justifications as to why legacy students are three to four times more likely to get admitted than other applicants (Guerrero 1997, Rhode 1997). Consequently, rather than being based on

meritocracy, staffing decisions in workplace settings are frequently made based on habit (Crosby et al. 2003) or commercial needs.

Depending on how the method and the concept are presented or interpreted, different people have different perceptions affirmative action. Outreach programs and other "friendly" types of affirmative action are preferred to "strict" versions, such as schemes that use gender or ethnicity as a deciding component in recruitment choices (Kravitz 1995; Kravitz & Klineberg 2000, 2004; Kravitz & Platania 1993; Nosworthy et al. 1995). Affirmative action is generally disliked more by those who believe it to be a quota system, a structure of gender or ethnic favors. Individuals who have been convinced that affirmative action takes into consideration quality are more likely to agree with the policy than other people. In principle, a technique is ranked higher when it is thought to be impartial. Aberson (2003) discovered that when the justifications for the program were given, both individuals of color and white people enhanced their approval for it. Few scholars have studied how various defenses or justifications affect people's perceptions of affirmative action.

Nevertheless, these policies are not without controversies. High-profile legal cases in the United States, such as Fisher v. University of Texas, capture the ongoing conflict surrounding the application of affirmative action in college admissions. Such cases highlight the fine line between providing opportunities to underrepresented groups and adhering to the principles of individual assessment based on merit.

Opponents of affirmative action believe that it is an unfair form of reverse discrimination and that it should not be used to prioritize certain groups over others. Ultimately, the decision to use affirmative action rests with the government and employers, who must balance the need to promote fairness with the need to prevent potential abuses. Despite the debate surrounding affirmative action, it is clear that it is still a necessary tool for addressing the effects of historical injustices. While it may not be perfect, affirmative action can help to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity for success and can help to create a more diverse and equitable society. Affirmative action is a necessary step to combat the legacy of historical injustice. It is a fair way of addressing the disadvantages that certain groups have faced in the past, and it is often the only way to ensure that those who have been systematically oppressed can have the same chances as everyone else.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, alternatives to affirmative action, such as socioeconomic-based admissions or hiring practices, are being touted as potentially more fair methods of achieving diversity without overtly considering race or gender. Such alternatives, however, also come with their own set of challenges and implications, necessitating in-depth research and pilot programs to assess their viability.

Although some may argue that affirmative action can lead to reverse discrimination, the evidence suggests that it is an important and effective instrument for achieving greater equality. Affirmative action policies may not always be enough to help corporations and colleges reach their diversification and inclusion objectives.

In summarizing affirmative action, we reflect on a complex landscape characterized by divergent views and constant evolution. Through this blog post, we have explored the historical roots, the myriad arguments, and the real-world applications of affirmative action. Whether these policies stand as a remedy to past discrimination or a challenge to meritocratic principles depends largely on where one stands in the ongoing debate.

For readers, the discourse extends an invitation to engage in constructive dialogue, deepen understanding, and potentially influence the course of affirmative action in the future. The pursuit of true workplace diversity is far from a finished journey, but through continued evaluation and thoughtful conversation, progress can be made.

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