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Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action

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Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action

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John Summerhill Morris

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THESIS

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ATTITUDES TOWARD AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

BY

JOHN SUMMERHILL MORRIS

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ABSTRACT

This article reports the results of a survey of individuals from Paris, Illinois. The survey was conducted in 1999 regarding their attitudes toward affirmative action.

Based on the survey research, the findings indicate that knowledge of affirmative action is a primary determinant of attitudes toward affirmative action. In addition, misperceptions about affirmative action also appeared to be a strong indicator as well. This study has implications for supporters of affirmative action as well as for the presidential race for 2000.

On April 13, 1914 the Titanic departed from the port of South Hampton on her maiden voyage. At the time this ship was considered the most magnificent maritime vessel to have ever sailed the seven seas. Experts of the day suggested that the Titanic was invincible. In other words, unsinkable.

That fateful night the captain of the ship disregarded the warnings of impending ice fields and charted a course through the dangerous waters of the icy North Atlantic believing that his vessel was infallible. The Titanic never reached its final destination.

The United States is like the Titanic in one respect, its greatness. It is without question the greatest democracy in the history of modern civilization. This nations ongoing experiment in democracy is the beacon of hope for many around the world who aspire to have fundamental human rights. This republic's achievements in medicine, aerospace and communications are second to none. However, racism like a giant iceberg that lurks below the oceans surface, threatens to impede, if not destroy America in search of its final destination.

Racism has become difficult to unmask in recent years. This has been due in large part to the penalties and retributions of the law toward individuals who engage in racist activities. But many fear racism itself has not disappeared; it has only been replaced by a new racism, more indirect, more subtle, more procedural, more ostensibly non-racial (Petigrew, 1979, p.118).

There are issues that deal with race, such as affirmative action, that one can oppose without being accused of blatant racism. The phrase affirmative action, while capable of a fairly narrow definition, also serves as the line that divides people who have starkly different views on the nations most enduring problem- how American society should treat people of color (Taylor and Liss, 1992, p.30).

It is beyond the scope of this effort to discuss every issue of race. Therefore the purpose of this study is to examine attitudes toward affirmative action in Paris, Illinois. There were a number of reasons for selecting Paris, which will be discussed in more detail in chapter four. Furthermore I will attempt to determine why these particular attitudes are held.

Chapter one examines the many obstacles that African-Americans have faced in the past. It is impossible to understand developments of affirmative

action, without at least a cursory understanding of the discriminatory practices of the past (Shafritz et.al., 1992, p.208). Chapter two describes how affirmative action has evolved over the past four decades. Chapter three will be a review of the literature concerning attitudes toward affirmative action. This section will cover various theories of affirmative action attitudes, attitudes toward specific affirmative action programs as well as the influence of the media and its effect on attitudes toward affirmative action. Chapter four will concentrate on the methodology of the survey for the study. Two hundred interviews were conducted on a random basis in the city of Paris. It is hoped that the responses will add to the wealth of information concerning attitudes toward affirmative action. Chapter five will be a presentation of the results and analysis of the survey. Chapter six concludes with the implications of this study.

CHAPTER 1

ABUSES OF THE PAST

On July 4th, 1776, the Continental Congress ordered the printing of the Declaration of Independence. This document was the work of a committee appointed by Congress with Thomas Jefferson as the architect. The second sentence of this declaration stated that, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" (Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776). The next line states "that to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their powers from the consent of the governed" (IBID). The governed that this instrument sought consent from were white males. In fact this piece was written by white males at a time when women were held to a lower standard of humanity and African-Americans were not even considered people (Doyle and Schmiedellar, 1996).

During the struggle for Independence, General George Washington refused to use African-Americans as troops even though he desperately needed more men. Thomas Jefferson voiced his concern over how the treatment of blacks would affect the nation's future (Lipsett, 1992, p.64).

He wrote, "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just."
(Jefferson, 1964, p. 156).

Nearly forty years later, Congress enacted a law that allowed only whites to carry the mail. Postmaster General Gideon Granger wanted to prevent African-Americans from doing anything that, "tends to increase their knowledge of natural rights, of men and things, or that affords them an opportunity of associating, acquiring and of establishing a chain or line of intelligence" (Shafritz et.al., 1992,p.209).

Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln were born just eight months apart and not more than one hundred miles from each other in the state of Kentucky. The former consistently defended the institution and the constitutionality of slavery while the latter set in motion the question of slavery as an institution as well as how should we deal with people of color. All the institutions of American politics failed to resolve the slavery controversy. They all lost prestige, and their collective failure culminated in the Civil War.

During this epic struggle between the states, President Abraham Lincoln signed the emancipation proclamation. This proclamation was later ratified as the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment stated that, "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for

crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction” (U.S. Constitution, 1865, XIII Amendment).

This new found freedom for African-Americans gave them hope that they would be treated equally and enjoy basic human rights. Justice Miller confirmed this hope of equal protection in stating that, “The existence of laws in the States where newly emancipated Negroes resided, which discriminated with gross injustice and hardship against them as a class, was the evil to be remedied and by it such laws are forbidden” (The Slaughterhouse Cases, 1873). However, the Court narrowly defined the Fourteenth Amendment in these cases making it an ineffective instrument in protecting African-Americans rights. As a result of the Slaughterhouse rulings, African-Americans were no better off than they were as slaves.

Two years later Congress attempted to enforce the civil war amendments with the Civil Rights Act of 1875. This act provided that all persons, regardless of race or color, were entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of public accommodations. The Supreme Court ruled that the act was unconstitutional. The majority argued that the Fourteenth Amendment only prohibited the state from discriminating. Therefore it was beyond the

control of the Federal government to prevent discrimination in the private sector.

America society was segregated, white and black. In 1896 the Supreme Court upheld this sentiment in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (163 U.S. 537, 1896). In this case the Court ruled that the railroad must provide separate but equal accommodations for both races. This separate but equal doctrine became the rule rather than the exception, particularly in the old south. In reality the African-American facilities were distinctly inferior to those of their white counterparts.

In 1913 Thomas Woodrow Wilson became the twenty-eighth President of the United States. In the campaign he declared his independence from machine politicians that selected him. Wilson advanced programs of progressive reform and was perceived as being sympathetic to the plight of the less fortunate. In reality, his administration supported racist policies. After openingly appealing to the African-American vote which was largely Republican at the time, and winning more of it than any other Democratic candidate for the Presidency, he created widespread segregation within federal agencies and sanctioned the dismissal of large numbers of African-Americans (Shafritz et.al., 1992, p.211).

In the early 1940's America found itself involved in another world war. This time the enemy was the racist regimes of Hitler, Tojo and Musolini. The Allies were successful in defeating the Axis powers but upon return from WWII to the United States many of our racist policies were still intact.

On April 15, 1947 a determined young African-American put on a Brooklyn Dodger uniform and became the first man of his race to play major league baseball. Even though Jackie Robinson was of equal ability of his white counterparts on the baseball diamond, he was denied access to public accommodations because of the color of his skin.

That same year the President's committee on Civil Rights remarked aptly that the separate but equal doctrine is one of the outstanding myths of American history, for it is almost always true that, while indeed separate, these facilities are far from equal (President's Committee, 1947, p.81). Because of these separate public accommodations, African-Americans were denied an equal share of tax-supported services.

This all began to change in 1954. In the landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* the court stated that in the field of public education, the doctrine of separate but equal had no place (*Brown v. Bd of Ed.*, 347 U.S. 483, 1954). As a result of the *Brown* decision, African-Americans began to question the separate but equal doctrine in all areas of life. This decision, in

1954, has been heralded as the beginning of the Civil Rights movement as a national commitment (Devol, 1982, p.2).

The cumulative degradation caused by these repressive laws prompted a civil rights movement led by Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr., bringing about momentous changes in this country (Editorial, 2000, p.2). Dr. King led civil disobedient protests for the desegregation of rail and bus terminals, lunch counters, public parks, libraries, swimming pools and other public facilities. The movement also concentrated its efforts in areas such as voting, education, employment, housing and justice.

Many of those involved in the movement paid the price for their efforts. They were subjected to verbal abuse, police dogs, fire hoses, imprisonment and death. During and after reconstruction, the Ku Klux Klan lynched African-Americans they accused of crimes. It is estimated that 3,446 African-Americans were lynched in the south and elsewhere from the 1882 to 1968 (Zangrando, 2000, p.2).

As a result of the peaceful protests the nation as a whole began to take notice of the situation. Without question, the media's coverage of the violence used against the protestors helped further the cause of the civil rights movement.

In 1957 the Civil Rights Commission was established and extended for two-year periods in 1959 and 1961. In 1961 the commission produced a five-volume report on civil rights in the United States. This report was the basis for much of the action taken by the legislative and executive branches. However due to the fact that most of the efforts of past civil rights legislation in Congress were unsuccessful, it then became necessary for President John F. Kennedy to utilize executive authority in order to promote racial equality.

On March 6, 1961, President Kennedy merged two committees to form the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission with Vice-President Lyndon B. Johnson serving as chairman. One of the commission's first acts was to end discrimination in government employment and by government contractors.

This was the beginning of what we call affirmative action. This policy was created because of the abuses of the past and was intended to create a level playing field for all Americans.

CHAPTER 2

EVOLUTION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

Affirmative action has been a part of the American landscape for nearly four decades. Its roots can be traced to the civil rights movement in this country. Affirmative action is, of course, a fruit of that struggle, a symbol of the successful assertion by Black Americans of their rightful claim on the American conscience (Landers, 1989, p. 199).

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy issued executive order 10925. Kennedy signed the order at a highly publicized White House ceremony at which he emphasized his administration's executive initiatives on behalf of civil rights (Graham, 1992,p.53). The order stated that employers contracting with the federal government were directed to take affirmative action to ensure that the applicants are employed and that employees are treated during employment without regard to race, creed, color or national origin (Reynolds, 1992,p.39).

Affirmative action began legislatively as an attempt to reinforce equal employment opportunity by challenging conventional recruitment and selection procedures (Klingner and Nalbandian, 1995, p.121). In November of 1963 on the eve of Kennedy's assassination, the administration and

congressional leaders of both parties had agreed to add a job discrimination provision- Title VII- to be administered by the equal employment opportunity commission (Graham, 1992, p.54).

On July 2nd of the following year President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law. This legislation was one of the major achievements of the Kennedy-Johnson administrations and the 88th Congress. The act broadened laws covering voting rights, barred discrimination in public places, authorized the desegregation of public schools and established the right to equal employment opportunity. As a result of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, most government contractors were required to develop written affirmative action plans to eliminate discrimination (Graves and Powell, 1994, p.134). This was intended to help reduce under-representation of minorities in the workplace.

President Johnson addressed Howard University's commencement. In June of 1965 he said that, as a society, we want all Americans to engage in the race, but some have shackles on their legs; hence programs are needed to remove the chains so that all can compete equally (Lipsett, 1992, p.64).

In September of that year, Johnson issued Executive Order 11246, abolishing the tangled arrangements for contract compliance and directing the Labor Department to create new enforcement machinery (Graham, 1992,

p.56). The requirements of goals and timetables, first applied to the construction trades and later to all contractors, called upon employers to compare their utilization of minorities and women to the available labor pool and, where a significant gap existed, to develop concrete plans for tapping the market of minorities and women who possess the needed skills or who could readily acquire them throughout training programs (Executive Order 11246, 1965, p.12319). Furthermore, it required those with 50 or more employees and government contracts of \$10,000 or more annually to prepare a written plan identifying any under utilization of women and minorities and establishing goals and timetables to correct it (Klingner and Nalbandian, 1995, p.122).

The Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance in 1966 developed what was called the Philadelphia Plan. This plan required that federally funded contractors would hire minorities that would mirror the minority demographics of the city. In 1968, Elmer Staats, the Comptroller General ruled that this was a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which states that: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination, under any program or

activity receiving federal financial assistance (Bureau of National Affairs, 1964, p.115).

During Richard M. Nixon's presidency, he appointed George P. Shultz as his labor secretary. Shultz convinced the President of the economic, social and political benefits of the Philadelphia Plan. Nixon thought Secretary Of Labor Shultz had shown great style in constructing a political dilemma for the labor union leaders and civil rights groups (Erlichman, 1982, p.228). Nixon hoped to expand the black middle class and split the Democrat's black labor alliance (Graham, 1992, p.59). This came to be known as Nixon's southern strategy, using African Americans to inflame the white population. (Reed, 1995, p.44)

It could be argued that Nixon was the savior of affirmative action. In December of 1969, a moment of strange political alliances, the Nixon White House summoned loyalist Senate Republicans to join forces with liberal Democrats and defeat an amendment Senator Sam Ervin of North Carolina had proposed to ban the Philadelphia Plans affirmative action preferences (Graham, 1990, p. 345). By a supreme irony, Richard Nixon, the man most hated by Democrats, initiated the policy that has placed them on the wrong side of this issue politically (Lipsett, 1992, p.74).

During the 1970's, affirmative action personnel and administrative units became standard in state, municipal and county governments; in private industry and commerce; in educational systems and non-profit organizations; and in all but the smallest enterprises and institutions (Graham, 1992, p.58). Having been rescued in *Brown v. Board of Education* from the insidious policy of separate but equal, the country found itself only two short decades later drifting steadily toward the policy of separate but proportional with separate avenues to school, separate employment lines, and separate contract- bid procedures. All of this was inspired by the objective of achieving proportional representation by race in the classroom, in the workforce, and on the job site (Reynolds 1992, p.43).

Affirmative action evolved, largely through judicial interpretations of the law, into a tool to remedy the effects of longstanding discrimination in employment (Klingner and Nalbandian, 1995, p.121). However the court began sending mixed signals in its decisions, which created confusion in the lower courts as well as the workplace.

Minorities began to make gains in the area of preferences as the new decade dawned. In February 1970, Labor Department Order Number 4 required all federal contractors to submit written plans modeled on the Philadelphia Plan (Graham, 1992, p.59). The following year the Labor

Department issued Revised Order Number 4, which extended affirmative action coverage to sex discrimination, in effect adding women as a protected class under Title VII (Graham, 1996, p.96).

The U.S. Supreme Court in 1971 began to interpret the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Supreme Court upheld a lower-court ruling in favor of the Philadelphia Plan and, in the path breaking *Griggs v. Duke Power* decision, adopted an adverse impact theory of discrimination that shifted enforcement emphasis from equal treatment to equal results (*Griggs*, 1971, 401. U.S. 424). With this ruling the burden of proof of discrimination shifted to employers. The *Griggs* decision changed the nature of employment discrimination law, making it easier for protected class persons to sue employers for discrimination (Ricucci, 1991, p.90).

In 1972, Congress passed and Nixon signed legislation that extended the jurisdiction of the EEOC to cover state and local governments (including educational institutions), empowered the EEOC to bring suit in federal courts, and prohibited sex discrimination in all levels of education (Graham, 1996, p.96).

In 1978 Alan Bakke challenged the University of California-Davis Medical School affirmative action program. The Supreme Court upheld affirmative action in principle, but ruled against the program developed by

the University on grounds that it was too obtrusive in reserving sixteen admission slots exclusively for racial minorities (Riccucci, 1991, p.91). The court recommended a more subtle approach, in which race would be only one factor in admission decisions (p.90).

The following year the Supreme Court ratified a lower-court interpretation of Title VII to permit employers and unions to enter into voluntary agreements that made conscious use of race to eliminate old patterns of racial segregation and hierarchy (United Steelworkers of America V. Weber, 443 U.S. 193, 1979). Justice Renquist, in a dissenting opinion in Weber, argued that no discrimination based on race is benign,...no action disadvantaging a person because of color is affirmative (Reynolds, 1992, p.43).

The Supreme Court upheld a minority set-a-side provision in 1980 in Fulliloue v. Klutznick (488 U.S. 488, 1980) Chief Justice Warren Burger wrote, "it is recognized that, to achieve this target, contracts will be awarded to available, qualified, bonafide minority business enterprises even though they are not the lowest competitive bidders, so long as their higher bids, when challenged are found to reflect merely attempts to cover cost inflated by the present effects of prior disadvantage and discrimination" (Robinson, 1996, p.101).

In 1987 the court heard two cases concerning gender and race in *Johnson v. Transportation Agency* (480 U.S. 616, 1987) and *United States v. Paradise* (480 U.S. 149, 1987). In *Johnson* the court upheld a voluntary affirmative action plan which attempted to alleviate under-representation of women. In *Paradise* the Court upheld an order requiring one black promotion for every white one for state troopers in the Alabama Department of Public Safety. In both *Paradise* and *Johnson*, the Court showed its willingness to attack the barriers of discrimination with remedies befitting those who had not been the specific or identifiable victim of discrimination (Klingner and Nalbandian, 1995, p.129).

For all practical purposes active enforcement of affirmative action ended with the 1989 term of the Supreme Court. This was due in large part to the Reagan appointments to the Supreme Court. The first indication of this change was the Court's ruling in *Richmond v. Cronson*. The Court declared that the local ordinance that set aside thirty percent of public works contracts for minorities was unconstitutional. Justice Marshall in his dissent complained that the Court majority was signaling that it regards racial discrimination as largely a phenomenon of the past, and that government bodies need no longer occupy themselves with rectifying racial injustice (*Richmond V. Cronson*, 488 U.S. 469, 1989). In other words Marshall did

not believe this nation was anywhere close to eradicating racial discrimination or its vestiges.

In addition the Supreme Court decisions in 1989 made it more difficult for protected class persons to bring employment discrimination suits (*Patterson V. McClean*), to win discrimination suits (*Wards Cove V. Atonio*, 490 U.S. 642, 1989), and to be awarded affirmative action remedies in the form of consent decrees to redress past discrimination (*Martin V. Wilks*) (Ricucci, 1991, p.90).

The following year Congress tried to pass the Civil Rights Act of 1990. This was done in an attempt to counter the Courts rulings in the 1989 term. However, Bush vetoed this legislation.

The Democratic controlled Congress successfully passed the Civil Rights Act of 1991. During the debate, the Bush Administration found political gold in labeling civil rights requirements of the legislation as quota provisions, seeking in a flagging economy to channel the discontent of many white workers toward scape goating of minority workers and Democratic advocates of affirmative action (Taylor and Liss, 1992, p.36).

The Court in 1995 rendered its decision in its landmark ruling in *Adarand Constructors, Inc. V. Pena* (515 U.S. 200, 1995). In *Adarand* the Court revisited the question of whether and under what circumstances the federal

government may engage in affirmative action. The Court narrowed the circumstances under which the federal government can implement affirmative action programs aimed at helping women and racial minorities.

In 1996 there was a referendum in California that would determine the future of affirmative action in that state. Specifically Proposition 209 was a measure intended to eliminate discriminating against or giving preferential treatment to any individual or group in the public sector on the basis of race, color, sex, ethnicity, or national origin.

Proponents argued that this proposal would adhere to the original intent and spirit of the civil rights movement in that no person or group should receive special treatment. Opponents of Proposition 209 believed that its passage would end programs that helped women and minorities achieve equal opportunity in employment, education and contracting. The proposal passed by a sizeable majority. Despite its passage, Proposition 209 did not become law until November of 1997 due to numerous delays in the courts.

In response to the frontal assault on affirmative action, Kweisi Mfume, the president of the NAACP, says, "we are not going to let years of progress be taken away from us without a fight"(Fletcher, 1998, p. A3).

A similar initiative was taken and passed in the State of Washington in 1998, I-200 prohibits preferential treatment based on race, sex, color,

ethnicity, or national origin in public employment, education and contracting. While Proposition 209 and I-200 are similar in language, the important differences are that Proposition 209 amends the California constitution and therefore overrides any conflicting statutes, while I-200 is a Washington statute and would have to be interpreted in light of existing law.

The Governor of Florida Jeb Bush signed an executive order in November of 1999 that ended all racial preferences immediately in the 15 state agencies directly under his control. “Bush acknowledged he is sweeping away historic state programs born in the long civil rights struggle, but he promised his plan will achieve even greater diversity, this is not the end of affirmative action, this transcends affirmative action”(Sayfie and Ross, 1999, p. 7).

On December 13,2000, U.S. District Judge Patrick Duggan found that the University of Michigan’s affirmative action program was constitutional. However Judge Duggan ruled that the university’s policy used from 1995-98 took race into account in an illegal way. This ruling conflicts with previous court decisions in other parts of the country, making it more likely the issue will eventually reach the U.S. Supreme Court (Cohen, 12/14/00, p. 1).

There are diverse opinions concerning affirmative action among the three branches of government at the federal and state level as well as the general

public at large. Proponents of affirmative action argue that this is not the time to eliminate the one tool that helps level the playing field for members of disadvantaged classes. Opponents of affirmative action point out that these programs are inherently discriminatory in themselves. Regardless of one's position the debate is sure to rage on as the United States struggles valiantly to overcome its sordid legacy as it moves toward the ultimate elimination of race and gender inequality, the uprooting of prejudice and discrimination, and the realization of a truly democratic nation (Marable, 1996, p. XIV).

If we are to get beyond the problems of racism in this country, there needs to be a better understanding of tangible issues of race such as affirmative action. This more than likely will not end the controversy surrounding the affirmative action debate. However it might give those on opposite sides of the issue a greater appreciation as to what the attitudes are toward affirmative action and why they are held.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter there will be an examination of the literature that measures the attitudes of affirmative action. I will first review the various theories of affirmative action attitudes. Then I will identify the different type of affirmative action programs and the contrasting attitudes held toward these specific programs. I will also focus on the factors that impact attitudes toward affirmative action. Finally I will concentrate on the role the media plays in the affirmative action debate.

Bases of Affirmative Action Attitudes

There are a number of theories of affirmative action attitudes. It is essential to have a good understanding of these theories in order to be able to comprehend attitudes toward specific affirmative action policies. The theories that I will explore are racism, dominant ideology and self interest.

Racism

The American Heritage Dictionary defines racism as, “the notion that one’s own ethnic stock is superior.” The scholars of the racist theory have identified several types of racism such as old-fashioned, modern, covert, aversive, symbolic and new.

Old-fashioned racism is characterized by highly negative stereotypes of blacks, endorsement of formal and informal racial segregation, and rejection of the notions of equal opportunity and equal access for all races (Nosworthy et. al., 1995, p.315). However in recent years there has been a noticeable decline in blatant racial prejudice in America. It is clear that the number of citizens who endorse derogatory statements about blacks' innate ability or intelligence, or support the principle of racially segregated housing or schools, has declined since the 1950's (Virtanen and Huddy, 1998, p.311).

There are a number of theorists who suggest that old-fashioned racism has been replaced by a more socially accepted form of racism. This form of racism has been identified as new, modern, symbolic, covert and sometimes-aversive racism. In many instances, the authors may refer to anyone of these types of racism, when actually they are talking about the same form. Often times this becomes confusing to the reader as well as the student of racism theory. There needs to be a uniform approach when talking about the subject.

The new racism is based on feelings that evolved out of the civil rights era- feelings that blacks are making and winning too many demands from the government (Jacobson, 1985, p.307)

One type of new or modern racism is covert or aversive racism. Aversive racism has been defined as a conflict between feelings and beliefs associated with a sincerely egalitarian value system and unacknowledged negative feelings and beliefs about blacks (Gaertner and Dovidio, 1986, p.62). Kovel asserts that whites have an aversion to blacks and blackness and want nothing to do with them (Jacobson, 1985, p.328). In other words, they will not say they are opposed to blacks getting help from the government because they are black; they will instead say that they are opposed because blacks are not making a genuine effort to solve their own problems- the kind of effort everyone should make (Sniderman et.al., 1991, p.424).

It could be argued that women face similar obstacles in the workplace. For example, a sexist person may not say that a woman should not be hired because her family priorities may interfere with her motivation to achieve in the workplace (Matheson et. al., 1994, p. 2093).

Another type of new or modern racism is symbolic racism. Symbolic racism is defined as resistance to change in the racial status quo based on moral feelings that blacks violate such traditional American values as individualism and self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and discipline (Kinder and Sears, 1981, p.416).

The key, and this is how the thesis of covert/aversive racism and that of symbolic racism become tied together, is a perception of blacks as violating cherished values (McConahay and Hough, 1976,p. 39). However Jacobson points out that what is new is not new racism, but rather an exclusion of a few generalized items about racial integration (old fashioned racism) from the usual cluster of racial bigotry items (Jacobson, 1985,p.328).

The modern racism thesis suggests that whites adopt beliefs and attitudes about blacks and about race-related social policy that support their negative feelings toward blacks (Kluegel, 1985, p.773). In an earlier study Kluegel and Smith discovered that, consistent with the symbolic racism thesis, white racial hostility does have a substantial impact on opposition to affirmative action (Kluegel and Smith, 1983,p.814). Kravitz also concluded that attitudes toward affirmative action in general were strongly related to respondents' racism (Kravitz, 1995, p.2213).

Roth takes offense to the claims of symbolic racism. He contends that agreement with traditional American values provide a cover for the expression of deeply felt prejudice, and hence, is evidence of racial hostility (Roth, 1990, p.29). He calls symbolic racism; "a phantom conjured up to substitute for a racism that has declined in significance" (p.32). Roth

concludes, why should our values be abandoned for a prejudice that is undetectable?

It appears that there is a strong correlation between individuals beliefs and attitudes about minorities and their support for race-related social policy. Therefore the various racism theories appear to have an impact on attitudes toward affirmative action.

Self-Interest

The American Heritage Dictionary defines self-interest, “as a personal advantage or interest; selfish motive or gain.” Many theories have asserted that self-interest is the basic force motivating individual’s attitudes. A belief or attitude may serve individual or group interest, such as an attitude favoring a policy that will bring concrete benefits to the individual (Kluegel and Smith, 1986, p.20).

According to the personal self-interest argument, people who expect affirmative action to result in additional competition or other threats to their individual well-being will oppose affirmative action to minimize those threats (Kravitz, 1995, p.2197).

A questionnaire was given to 178 non-black students in an attempt to discover their attitudes toward affirmative action. It was discovered that the respondents felt that affirmative action would hurt their self-interest.

However the author pointed out that attitudes toward affirmative action were only partly mediated by ratings of personal self-interest (p.2213).

A study was conducted by the General Social Survey in 1990 that focused on theories of self-interest that attempted to predict white backlash to race-targeted intervention. The author discovered that there were no signs of self-interest generated in the workplace by affirmative action intervention. Instead, employees of affirmative action firms were generally more likely than other white workers to hold beliefs that provide the rationale for social intervention on behalf of minorities (Taylor, 1995,p. 1408)

Summers discovered that male and female attitudes toward affirmative action were in general related to differences in self-interest (Summers, 1995, p.1090). Women indicated that affirmative action programs would produce favorable consequences for them. Therefore he suggests the difference between men and women were related to the differences in self-interest as represented by their expectations concerning the influence of affirmative action on their careers (p.1099).

Cardell Jacobson wrote articles in *Phylon* and the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, each dealing with the theory of self-interest. In these articles he found that self-interest was only a moderate predictor of attitudes toward affirmative action.

Kluegel and Smith suggest that self-interest plays only a modest role in affirmative action attitudes. They based their measures of direct competitive self-interest on the assumption that whites in industries and occupations with a high percentage of black co-workers will see black progress as a greater potential threat to their economic well being than will whites in industries and occupations with a low percentage of blacks (Kluegel and Smith, 1983, p.814).

Lewis, in his article, would agree with Kluegel and Smith's assumption. His finding points out that, as black percentages in city labor forces increase, continued or increased resistance to affirmative action efforts is likely within police departments. Conversely, a small presence in the city labor force might not present a threat or cause fears among Anglos of reverse discrimination (Lewis, 1985, p.262).

Based on these articles, self-interest appears to play a modest to minor role in shaping attitudes toward affirmative action.

Dominant Ideology

The last theory concerning attitudes toward affirmative action that I will examine is the dominant ideology thesis. The belief in this theory is that everyone has an opportunity to succeed economically, success and failure

are due to individual rather than structural factors, and inequality of contributions (Kravitz, 1999, p.2200).

This thesis argues that in the absence of public and personal sources of information about the objective socio-economic conditions of blacks (due both to limited treatment of issues surrounding the current economic status of blacks in the media and in informal education and to the persistence of residential and occupational segregation by race) many whites adopt beliefs that are deduced from the dominant ideology (Kluegel, 1985, p.774). Many Americans have strong reasons based in the dominant ideology theory and want to believe that racism no longer exists, and thus eagerly embrace small indications of progress as evidence that racial inequality of opportunity is no longer a feature of contemporary American society (p.774).

A study conducted by Kluegel and Smith concerning white attitudes toward affirmative action programs show that beliefs about how the American stratification order does work significantly affected whites' support for these programs (Kluegel and Smith, 1986, p.209). They found that many whites do not support affirmative action because they do not believe that African-Americans stand at any current disadvantage in opportunity relative to whites.

David Kravitz conducted a study in order to test the dominant ideology theory. He concluded that attitudes toward affirmative action in general were not related to either a belief in opportunity or belief that inequality is appropriate. Contrary to the individual-differences approach, the ideological explanation for attitudes toward affirmative action received no support (Kravitz, 1995, p.2213).

Even though very little literature exists concerning the dominant ideology thesis, there appears to be some validity in the theory. The theory questions how level the playing field is for all Americans. Those who believe that everyone has equal opportunities, disagree with the theory. Conversely those who think that the field is not level, tend to subscribe to the dominant ideology theory.

There is support for the theories of psychological bases of affirmative action attitudes. The theories covered in this section are by no means an exhaustive study on the subject. However they are a good first step in attempting to understand attitudes toward specific affirmative action programs.

Attitudes toward Affirmative Action

The term affirmative action is deeply embedded in the American psychic. Intensive debate has arisen around this subject in the general public as well

as at all levels of government. The original intent of these policies was to create opportunities for minorities and women in education and employment. However in the last four decades this country has witnessed a wide range of affirmative action programs.

Like the emotion-charged symbols of pornography and national security, affirmative action has many meanings (Nigro, 1974, p.234). This ambiguity could be due in part to the mixed signals sent by the United States Supreme Court in their effort to interpret laws regarding affirmative action. This has created misunderstanding, conflict and mistrust that crosses racial, gender and ethnic lines.

This section will examine the various attitudes toward affirmative action in general as well as attitudes toward specific programs that bridge racial, gender and ethnic lines.

Race

When examining attitudes toward affirmative action in general there appears to be a gap between white and African-American attitudes. Kravitz and Platania point out that African-Americans have a more positive attitude toward affirmative action than whites (Kratitz and Platania, 1993 p.934). A study related to this research revealed that racial minorities are more supportive of affirmative action than Anglos (Cayer and Schaefer, 1981,

p.492). Consistent with these results, a USA Today/CNN/Gallup poll (March 17-19, 1995) showed that African-Americans expressed much stronger support, with 72% in favor of affirmative action programs and only 21% against, conversely, 53% of whites polled expressed support, compared to only 36% opposed (Marable, 1996, pg. 8).

There also tends to be a gap between African-American and white administrators' attitudes toward affirmative action. Thompson found that minority administrators seemed likely to be extremely sensitive to the problems of discrimination and therefore were more supportive of affirmative action programs (Thompson, 1978, p.335). A study of minority elites in the Department of Defense showed that 76% felt that minority group members in high level positions should attempt to serve the special needs of minorities (Rosenbloom and Kinnard, 1977, p.38).

Two other studies indicated that white administrators tend to be less committed to affirmative action policies (Thompson and Browne, 1978, p.369; Thompson, 1978, p.335).

Gender

Women tend to be more supportive of affirmative action than men. A Harris poll taken in 1996 indicated that women favor affirmative action by 55% to 26%, while men favor it by a lesser 50% to 41%, a 20 point gender

gap in the margin of difference (Harris 1996 p. 329). Another study pointed out that women are generally more favorable toward affirmative action than men, even when affirmative action programs are not directed at women (Kravitz and Platania, 1993, p.934).

Gidengil suggests that these differences between women and men reflected the fact that women were more concerned than men with the needs and rights of minorities (Gidengil, 1996, p.38).

It might be expected that female public administrators are more supportive of affirmative action policies than their male counterparts. A study of city managers, police chiefs and fire chiefs in the South revealed that the greatest support for issues concerning women such as affirmative action comes from female city managers (Slack and Sigelman, 1987, p. 677). A study of police chiefs in Illinois showed that support for affirmative action tended to be greater when their mayor was a female (Morris, 1999, p.18).

There has been criticism of women and their apparent lack of interest toward affirmative action. White women have been overwhelmingly the primary beneficiaries of affirmative action; millions have gained access to educational and employment opportunities through implementation and enforcement of such policies (Marabel, 1996, p.9).

Polls have indicated that women do not feel at risk if affirmative action programs are abandoned. In a 1996 USA Today/CNN/Gallop Poll only 8% of white women felt that their qualifications came into question by fellow colleagues due to affirmative action. In the same poll, 40% of white women felt that job discrimination was not a problem at all. This might explain why white women have been less vocal than their African-American counterparts.

Ethnicity

Ethnic groups tend to be more supportive of affirmative action than do whites. It was discovered that Hispanics have more positive attitudes toward affirmative action than whites (Kravitz and Platania, 1993, p.934). In a study related to this story, it was revealed that Mexican-American administrators were more supportive of affirmative action than were Anglos (Davis and West, 1978, p. 246).

There appears to be a lack of concern for ethnic attitudes toward affirmative action. "The Latino voice is missing in the current affirmative action debate," states political scientist Rodolfo de la Giza of the University of Texas. He points out that the discussion of the issue has centered on black-white relations as well as gender. Therefore many ethnic groups are absent from the dialogue.

This might be due to the lack of electoral strength of the ethnic groups. For example, Latinos are disproportionately concentrated in the southwest and thus are not adequately represented in the New York- D.C. power corridor that influences national policy making (Pachon, 1996, p.186). This also appears to be the case for Asian and Native Americans.

The literature reveals that there is a gap in general attitudes toward affirmative action that cross race, gender and ethnic lines. In general, these findings are consistent with racism, self interest and dominant ideology explanations.

Attitudes toward Specific Methods of Affirmative Action

The concept of affirmative action is highly controversial. There is severe erosion of support for affirmative action when one focuses more narrowly on specific steps or remedies for addressing discrimination (Marable, 1996, p.8). This section will examine the various attitudes toward those specific methods of affirmative action.

Preferential Treatment

There appears to be a wide range of attitudes toward specific methods of affirmative action that cross racial, gender, and ethnic lines.

It was discovered that whites (64%) felt that preferential treatment for African-Americans was unfair (Kluegel and Smith, 1983, p.804). A 1990

Gallup poll indicated that African-Americans (32%) were more likely to support preferential treatment for minorities and women than their white counterparts (18%). A March 1989 Gallup poll showed white men (84%) and white women (83%) felt that ability should be the main consideration rather than preference, whereas only 64% of African-Americans felt that way.

It was pointed out that women's support for preferential treatment is not based on the severity of discrimination that they face. When preferential treatment is considered necessary to gain equality, women tend to be more supportive of affirmative action. However they are more likely to support affirmative action if it is implemented in a way that implies that they are preferred because of their inherent characteristics as opposed to being preferred for their group membership per se (Matheson et.al., 1994, p.2087).

Interestingly, it was suggested preferential treatment would have harmful effects on the beneficiaries. However, it was discovered that increasing affirmative action for women seemed to lead to more positive job attitudes for women and somewhat more negative attitudes for men (Graves and Powell, 1994, p.153).

It has been suggested that because of past discrimination, minorities and women do not have the same opportunities as white males. A CBS

News/New York Times survey in October 1977 revealed that African-Americans (85%), and whites (68%), felt that the government should see to it that those who were discriminated against in the past, get a better break in the future. A Harris Poll conducted in November 1978 showed that African-Americans (91%) and whites (72%) believed after years of discrimination that it was only fair to set up special programs to make sure that women and minorities are given every chance to have equal opportunity. In March 1988, a Newsweek/Gallup poll asked, because of past discrimination, should qualified African-Americans receive preference over equally qualified whites? In response to this question, whites (20%) were less supportive than were African-Americans (50%). In 1991, a Gallup poll asked the same question, and whites (19%) still tended to be less supportive than African-Americans (48%) concerning such measures.

It was pointed out in a study of public administrators that 60% of the city managers supported the notion that with all factors being equal, hiring preference should be given to female applicants (Slack, 1987, p.202). Research related to this study indicated that the majority (53%) of public employees supported the notion of giving preference to the affirmative action job candidate when all applicants are equally qualified (Thompson and Browne, 1987, p.361). A similar response was found among urban

personnel managers who supported (80%) preference for minorities when of equal ability with whites (Davis and West, 1984, p.25). However a study of police chiefs in Illinois showed that only 28% believed minorities should be hired if there was an equally qualified white who wanted the job (Morris, 1999, p.17).

Quotas

In 1969, President Richard Nixon introduced a controversial form of affirmative action. Nixon encouraged the development of affirmative action regulations that required minority preferences in government contracts in both public and private employment (Graham, 1996, p.93). This was part of Nixon's southern strategy, the introduction of quotas, for his re-election in 1972. In reality, Nixon's true feelings on the racial issue was best described by John Ehrlichman, "Nixon believed America's blacks could only marginally benefit from federal programs because they were genetically inferior to whites" (p.94).

In a passionate and moving essay on quotas, legal scholar Alexander Bickel wrote, "Its evil lies not in its name, but in its effects; a quota is a divider of society, a creator of castes, and it is all the worse for its racial base, especially in a society desperately striving for an equality that will make race irrelevant" (Urofsky, 1991, p.33).

Whites and African-Americans are divided in their opinion concerning the issue of quotas. A study indicated that 73% of African-Americans and other minorities felt that they would not get a fair shake unless quotas were used (Jacobson, 1985, p.310). In 1986 a NES survey discovered that African-Americans (80%) were more supportive than whites (29%) of the use of quotas in admissions to higher education.

There is less support for specific methods of affirmative action programs. However there continues to be divergence of attitudes along race, gender and ethnic lines. These results also appear to be consistent with the racist, self-interest and dominant ideology theories of psychological bases of attitudes toward affirmative action.

Determinants of Affirmative Action Attitudes

In this section I will examine what factors are critical in shaping attitudes toward affirmative action. I will use attitudes toward affirmative action as of age, education level, the dependent variable and four items as independent variables. The items consist ideology/party affiliation, and exposure to affirmative action.

Age

There appears to be some mixed results concerning the independent variable age and its effect on affirmative action according to the literature.

A November 1978 and May 1976 Harris poll indicated that there were no significant overall age trends. However the polls did show that the greatest support for affirmative action among African-Americans came from the 35-39 age group. Interestingly the least support among white respondents fell into the same age category.

It was discovered that older city managers express greater opposition toward affirmative action for women than do younger ones (Slack, 1987, p.204). A study of African-Americans, Spanish-surnamed Americans and women public administrators revealed that those born before 1926 (64%), felt high ranking minority group members should seek to serve the special needs of minorities as compared to those (90%) born after 1926 (Rosenbloom and Kinnard, 1977, p.39). What is interesting is not the level of support among older minority administrators but more so the overwhelming support of the younger ones. This might be due to the fact that the younger administrators are part of the first generation of affirmative action laws where as the older ones still remember the days of Jim Crowe and separate but equal laws.

Age appears to be a moderate predictor of support for affirmative action among certain age groups. However, age appears to be a stronger predictor of public administrators' attitudes toward affirmative action.

Education Level

There appears to be an interesting relationship between the level of education and race, which in turn impacts the level of support for affirmative action.

A study of African-Americans revealed that as their education level increased, the level of support for affirmative action also increased (Jacobson, 1983, p.307). However two studies pointed out that as whites education level increased, their level of support for affirmative action decreased. Whites with a high school education or less were more supportive of affirmative action than those who had a higher education level than high school (Cayer and Schaefer, 1981, p.492; Jacobson, 1983, p.696).

It has also been suggested that there is a relationship between education and ideology. Major support for affirmative action policies seems to come from liberal intelligentsia, the well educated, and those who have studied liberal arts in college or have gone to graduate school (Lipsett, 1992, p.68). However another study argued that political conservatives support for affirmative action decreased as a result of increased intellectual sophistication (Bobo et.al., 1996, p.486).

The findings in this section appear to be contradictory with respect to education level and its relationship with race and ideology. African-

Americans with a higher education might see the opportunities that affirmative action has created for them. Whereas better educated whites may see affirmative action as a threat to their opportunities. The already held ideological views may have only been strengthened by increased sophistication for both conservatives and liberals.

Ideology/Political Affiliation

It appears that ideology and/or party affiliation are strong predictors of attitudes toward affirmative action.

It was pointed out that Democrats tend to be more supportive of affirmative action programs than Republicans (Jacobson, 1985,p.319). It seems that Congressional Democrats increasingly support affirmative action; the proportion of these Democrats with a liberal voting record has grown steadily since the 1960's (Lipsett, 1992, p.69).

It was discovered that public administrators who espoused liberalism as an ideology and identified themselves as Democrats were more likely to be supportive of affirmative action policies than their conservative Republican counterparts.

It has been argued that ideology is a more powerful and homogeneous predictor of public administrators' attitudes toward affirmative action than party affiliation. A study pointed out ideology was stronger and more

consistent than party affiliation due to the fact that the latter must contend with the confounding effects provided by Southern Democrats (Daley, 1984, p.12). Another study pointed out that those city managers who considered themselves to be politically conservative, opposed affirmative action (Slack, 1987, p.204).

In most cases, ideology bears out as the strongest predictor of support for affirmative action.

Policy Exposure

It has been suggested that exposure to affirmative action will lead to greater support for such policies rather than opposition.

Taylor found that employees of affirmative action firms are generally more likely than other white workers to hold beliefs that provide the rationale for social intervention on behalf of minorities (Taylor, 1995, p.1404). Rather than exposure breeding contempt, exposure may engender better understanding of the range of activities that qualify as affirmative action measures (Belliveau, 1996, p.101). Since policy exposure can lead to understanding of the range of employment practices that can be used to satisfy affirmative action requirements, employees in affirmative action workplace may not be as likely to link their negative employment outcomes to the policy as “White backlash” theorists suggest (p.102).

Exposure to affirmative action programs also appears to have an impact on public administrators' attitudes. Where affirmative action programs are in place the likelihood that public administrators will support such policies will be greater. It was discovered that when city managers are armed with affirmative action plans, they tend to hire more minorities (Slack, 1987, p.25). Another study indicated that police chiefs who serve where an affirmative action plan is in the workplace, tend to be more supportive (76%) of such policies (Morris, 1999, p.19).

Exposure to affirmative action policy appears to have an impact on attitudes toward affirmative action. Those exposed to such policies tend to be more supportive of affirmative action.

The cluster of independent variables seems to have an impact in shaping attitudes toward affirmative action. One variable may be a better predictor than another, although all appear to have a strong impact on attitudes toward affirmative action.

Role of the Media

On Tuesday, April 8, 1997 the 9th U.S. Court of Appeals in San Francisco said that states have the right to dismantle preference programs and that Proposition 209 upholds the Constitution's equal protection clause (Chicago Tribune, 1997, Section 1, p.3).

This decision has monumental implications in our society regarding affirmative action programs. What is most interesting in this case is not the decision but the lack of coverage it received in the media. “CBS Nightly News”, anchored by Dan Rather, gave the story about five seconds of coverage. On April the 9th, the Chicago Tribune reported the story on page three of section one. The Washington Post National Weekly did not even cover the story. Why was so little attention paid to this news item? Is there a conspiracy of silence? This section will take a look at this phenomenon as well as other reactions to the media and its role in regard to affirmative action.

Genovese refers to a corrosive drip on public morality that the public receives from the major news media and that their (media) attitudes do not represent the publics at large. In spite of the “affirmative action” of a few non-white faces (which is good marketing, anyway) “on the table” the major aim of the media and many other institutions (financial, industrial, educational and even religious) remains the preservation of the status quo, or perhaps, more pointedly, the advancement of the interest of those who direct them (Genovese, 1996, p.115). Jesse Jackson Sr. is more specific in his blame, when he lays the problem at the editor’s doorstep. Jackson points out that the most segregated hour in America is when the editors meet with their

staffs to decide what will be the day's headlines. As a result, Jackson claims these sensationalistic headlines mirror the demagogic political rhetoric, which threatens to undo thirty years of progress and further divide us as a nation (Jackson, 1996, p.295).

Like society at large, expressions of overt racism have all but disappeared from the media. However the modern racism thesis has suggested that racism has not completely disappeared. It has been pointed out that African-Americans are continually cast in threatening ways in the media. Nonetheless, the exploratory study provides ample support for a hypothesis that local television's images of blacks feed racial anxiety and antagonism at least among that portion of the white population most predisposed to those feelings (Eatman, 1997, p.286).

Most research on the influence of the media on opinion patterns show that the media influence beliefs by reinforcing already held ideas rather than creating new ones. It has been suggested that the media influence is greatest in informing people and creating initial attitudes; it is least effective in changing attitudes and ingrained behaviors (Graber, 1989, p.183). Parenti argues, "they may not always mold opinion but they do not always have to." (Parenti, 1986,p.22). He goes on to say it is enough that they create opinion visibility, giving legitimacy to certain views and illegitimacy to others.

Roy Innis has a different view of the media's role as it relates to attitudes toward affirmative action. He believes that even though the media are trying to do the right thing and that their intentions are in the right place, they are not helping in many cases. He says the media have become a negative influence by injecting race into every news story possible (Legislating Morality, 1996).

It was argued by Lou Harris that the media has failed to recognize the differences in definitions regarding the issue of affirmative action. Sadly, the media including many of the most respected newspapers, has done the public a disservice by continually referring to "preferential treatment" or "preferences" or "racial preference programs" as interchangeable with "affirmative action" (Harris, 1996, p.328). Ishmael Reed, in his article "African-Americans Outpropagandized Again", levels a more scathing attack on the media. He states, the misinformation from the media concerning affirmative action is the result of the media and its owners-corporations who have been in more trouble with the law more often than the average mugger-allowing the critics of affirmative action unlimited access to talk shows and other infotainment vehicles (Reed, 1995, p.46).

In his article, Frederick Lynch discussed the lack of attention paid to affirmative action in the mass media. He bases this on the number of articles

in the major print media as well as the lack of airtime on television. The silence on affirmative action in talk shows and print and broadcast news programming is especially blatant when one compares coverage of affirmative action with that accorded to another issue concerning racial balancing: busing (Lynch, 1985, p.812). Lynch credits this social and psychological paralysis to the area of values, political, and material interests. Americans are individualists at heart, but have a strong desire for equality and justice. Affirmative action acts as a double-edged sword on our value system. The strong belief that nothing should limit the freedom or achievement of individuals is definitely violated by group preference schemes of many affirmative action programs (p.820).

Lynch concludes that, because of the many conflicting and complicated problems surrounding this emotionally charged issue, the media, as well as the public, have chosen to look the other way, “a semi-conscious mass self-censorship” (p.819).

There are some unanswered questions concerning the role of the media and its effect on attitudes toward affirmative action. Has the media done a less than adequate job in defining the issue of affirmative action? Are the stories that they are reporting reinforcing negative attitudes that already exists among whites? Finally, is the lack of coverage of affirmative action

intentional on the part of the media? If the answer is yes to any of these questions, then the media does have an impact on attitudes toward affirmative action, even if only to reinforce already held beliefs.

There are several determinants that are indicators of attitudes toward affirmative action. Those covered in this chapter are by no means an exhaustive list on the subject. However it is a good foundation in an effort to understand what determines attitudes toward affirmative action.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

What are the attitudes toward affirmative action in Paris, Illinois? In this study attitudes toward affirmative action is the dependent variable. Four clusters of indicators are used as independent variables. The clusters consist of 1) knowledge of affirmative action, 2) ideology, 3) presence of union membership in a household, and 4) age. The first and third independent variables are being used because they have not been tested before in previous research. The second and fourth indicators were adopted as a result of their use in earlier studies. In addition I will test Frederick Lynch's theory that the media have chosen to ignore the issue of affirmative action.

At this juncture there is a need to operationalize the words support and positive. In this context support or positive would mean that individuals score high on questions or statements concerning affirmative action. For example, the respondent would like to see an affirmative action plan in the workplace or they would like to see special efforts made on behalf of minorities and women. In other words, it would be a sign of support if they wanted to see an affirmative action plan in the workplace and it would be a sign of support if they wanted to see special efforts made on behalf of minorities and women.

The two indicators of support in this survey are questions one, two and seven. Question three is not an indicator of support but more of a precursor of affirmative action. Question one is concerned with the importance of affirmative action programs in the workplace. Question two refers to preference for minorities if of equal ability to whites. Question three deals with fair treatment for employees in the workplace. Question seven deals with the use of timetables and quotas.

It should be pointed out that fair treatment is not the same thing as preferences or programs. Fair treatment in the minds of a lot of people might be equal employment in that an individual would get the job they were entitled to based on merit. Preferences mean something completely different in that an individual receives an advantage because of the color of their skin or their gender. Questions one, two and seven are examples of the types of question and statements used to indicate support for affirmative action.

Hypothesis 1: As knowledge of affirmative action increases, attitudes toward affirmative action will tend to be more positive. There has been little research done that examines individual comprehension of affirmative action policy. However there is some evidence that accurate perceptions of affirmative action is related to positive attitudes toward the policy (Garcia et. al., 1981, p.436). Unfortunately, affirmative action polls almost never test

respondents knowledge or include questions regarding procedures that are explicitly prohibited in the U.S. Department of Labor's guidelines on affirmative action (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1992, Chapter 60-2.12e).

It is common sensical in that someone's support for an issue will be based on the knowledge of the subject or based on misinformation that they have gotten about the topic. In other words, people may not be in favor of affirmative action because they really don't know what it is about.

As discussed in the literature section of the paper, these two variables have been suggested by the literature as having a potentially significant relationship with attitudes toward affirmative action.

Hypothesis 2: Conservatives tend to be less supportive of affirmative action than liberals.

The literature suggests that ideology is a strong predictor of attitudes toward affirmative action. It was pointed out that liberal Democrats tended to be more supportive of affirmative action than conservative Republicans.

Daley (1984) indicated that ideology was a stronger predictor of affirmative action attitudes than was party affiliations. Slack (1987) discovered that those who were conservative tended to oppose affirmative action policies.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals will tend to be more supportive of affirmative action if they or someone in their household is a member of a union. Stein (1985) in her research uncovered this union variable as a potential explanatory variable of attitudes toward affirmative action.

In order to establish this theory there needs to be a connecting relationship between unions and affirmative action. The missing link is party affiliation.

There is a relationship between unions and Democrats. Unions generally support Democrats for elected office and, in turn, Democrats tend to support legislation that is beneficial to unions.

The literature suggests that Democrats tend to support affirmative action legislation. This might lead one to believe that there is a possible relationship between unions and attitudes toward affirmative action.

Hypothesis 4: Younger individuals will tend to be more supportive of affirmative action than older individuals. The literature indicated that age was only a moderate predictor of attitudes toward affirmative action. However it did point out that younger people were more supportive of affirmative action than were older people.

Finally, I will take a look at the role of the media and its effect on public perception of affirmative action. There has been little testing of how

individuals perceive and process the media's handling of affirmative action. Specifically I will examine Frederick Lynch's assertion that the media has chosen to ignore affirmative action. Thereby affecting public perception on this issue.

Lynch explored these assertions by examining the mass media, particularly the major national news magazines and the three major television networks. Thus he linked media coverage with public consciousness of the issue (Lynch, 1985, p.807).

This is what influenced me to ask the residents of Paris, Illinois what they felt was the major source of emphasis of affirmative action. This question was an attempt to discover if respondents from Paris had the same attitude toward the media's handling of affirmative action as Lynch did in his study.

A twenty-item questionnaire was constructed using multiple choice, true/false and yes/no formats. While some questions were unique to this survey, several were taken from previously used questionnaires (Thompson and Browne, 1978, p.363; Thompson, 1978, p.331).

A random sampling technique was used to reflect the sample population. The sampling frame consisted of the fourteen precincts within the city limits of Paris, Illinois. There were two hundred interviews conducted within this sampling frame. The questions that were asked are shown in the appendix.

The survey was conducted in a door to door fashion, with every third house being selected for a possible interview. If no one was home at the third house, the next home was selected.

A strict protocol was used in the survey. There was no deviation from the interview schedule. I asked the questions in the same way in an effort to minimize bias. The issue of bias will be addressed in more detail later. The interviews were conducted in a courteous and professional manner, with each respondent assured of anonymity.

At this point there needs to be some clarification and justification concerning the choices made in this study. First, why did I select the city of Paris for this particular study? Secondly, what does studying Paris show? Third, why was the focus of this thesis study mainly concentrated on African-Americans rather than other groups who are affected by affirmative action policies? Finally, what is it I hope to learn from surveying the citizens of Paris as well as concentrating on Americans and their attitudes toward affirmative action.

I selected Paris for convenience and economic reasons. It will be convenient in that I live there, which allows me to survey whenever I have spare time without having to travel a great distance. It will be relatively

inexpensive as well in that the only costs I will incur are small amounts of fuel required to travel within the city limits of Paris.

By studying Paris (population 9,000) I will be able to show what one small town in rural America thinks about affirmative action. It should be pointed out that the findings of this survey cannot be extrapolated to the nation as a whole or any particular region of this country. However it does offer a perspective of what one particular rural white (98%) community thinks about various aspects of affirmative action. This might lay the groundwork for future studies in rural white America and their attitudes toward affirmative action.

I focused on African-Americans in this study rather than other groups that benefit from affirmative action programs for two reasons. First, I wanted to keep the study narrow in focus. Affirmative action policies and programs cover a wide range of issues and individuals that it would be nearly impossible to address them all in a master's thesis study. Second, it could be argued that African-Americans are the reason why we have affirmative action in our world today. If it were not for the atrocities that African-Americans faced in the past, there would be little need for these programs. Therefore I chose to focus on African-Americans in order to gain their perspective of the affirmative action debate.

The underlying theme of this study is the issue of race. If we ever hope to close the gap that exists between the races in this country, we need to examine issues that are perceived as contributors to that gap such as affirmative action. I hope that this study will reveal attitudes of white rural Paris and African-Americans toward affirmative action as well as why these beliefs are held toward this issue. If this could be accomplished, maybe solutions could be offered to remedy the differences that exist between the races with regard to affirmative action. In turn these suggestions might render new insights to the larger issue of race.

There were three options for collecting data: 1) mail, and 2) phone, and 3) door to door. I determined that a door to door survey was the best method to obtain data for this study. With respect to this study, there would have been complications by using the mail or phone techniques.

The fear of doing a mail survey was that the response rates would not be high enough. Although there would be the option of doing a follow up mailing which generally increases response rates. This could become expensive as well as time consuming. In addition slow response rates could delay the study.

The apprehension in conducting a phone survey is that response rates might be low. Two factors have led to this conclusion. The first is that

Americans are bombarded with telemarketing. The second phenomenon is the advances in telephone technology. Individuals have the capability of screening unwanted phone calls via answering machines or caller I.D. In other words, if a person gets a call from someone they don't know, they may be less likely to answer the phone.

The phone survey appears to have some advantages over the mail survey. Phoning would be less expensive if the calls were restricted to local ones. In addition response would be quicker by phone rather than by mail.

For the purpose of this study it appeared that a door to door survey was the best method of collecting data. I felt that response rates would be higher, response would be quicker and it would be cheaper since my labor is free. In addition, trust could be developed during the door to door survey. This might allow for a more comfortable interview session. In turn this could lead to more open and honest responses.

It should be noted that door to door surveys are not without problems. One of the biggest disadvantages of doing a survey in person is the introduction of bias.

There are many subtle ways which bias can inadvertently be introduced, that can potentially sway the respondents answer. This could be done by

voice inflection, a subconscious expression or just by looking in another direction.

In order to combat bias I adhered to a strict interview schedule. I, being a white middle aged male, asked the same questions in the same manner and order without any expression.

The question then becomes, do the advantages of doing interviews in person outweigh the disadvantage of introducing bias? The answer is an unequivocal yes. The door to door method is the best option considering the limited resources at my disposal.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Affirmative Action is a lot of things to a lot of different people. This study gives us a picture of how the citizens of Paris, Illinois view affirmative action.

They overwhelmingly support (76%) having an affirmative action program in the workplace. This is interesting in and of itself that the people of Paris feel it's important to have an affirmative action program in the workplace. They also agreed (98%) that supervisors should see to it that minorities and women are treated fairly at work.

When it comes to special efforts or preferences their attitudes begin to shift. When it comes to special efforts in recruitment of minorities and women the respondents are evenly divided. However they are not enthusiastic when it comes to hiring targets. They felt (56%) that public agencies should not establish hiring targets for minorities. The people of Paris strongly rejected (86.5%) the idea that minorities should be hired if there was a more qualified white applicant who wants the job.

It appears that the degree of support for affirmative action depends upon which aspect is being discussed.

This analysis represents an investigation of the attitudes of affirmative action in Paris, Illinois. The primary goal of this examination was to test the relationship between the dependent (program, ability, fairness, and quotas) and independent (education, age, ideology, worked, gender, know, and union) variables in an effort to discover what accounts for the results.

Table 1 shows the results of a regression analysis between the four dependent variable indicators and the seven independent variables. The data from these findings will indicate the support for the following hypothesis.

TABLE 1

Linear Regression Predicting Attitudes Toward

Affirmative Action in Paris, Illinois

	Program (1)	Ability(2)	Fairness(3)	Quotas(4)
Educate	-.079 (.059)	-.050 (.057)	.016 (.027)	-.171* (.062)
Age	.011 (.060)	-.028 (.058)	-.002 (.028)	-.047 (.063)
Ideology	-.025 (.116)	-.269* (.111)	-.091 (.053)	.125 (.121)
Worked	.068 (.348)	-.035 (.334)	.068 (.160)	-.355 (.364)
Gender	-.157 (.148)	.160 (.142)	.035 (.068)	-.101 (.155)
Know	.177** (.093)	-.002 (.089)	-.003 (.043)	.201* (.097)
Union	-.228 (.149)	-.240 (.143)	.070 (.068)	-.077 (.156)
Constant	3.39	4.37	1.72	4.62
R	.048	.056	.029	.077
F	1.39	1.64	.823	2.30

*P<.05 **P<.10

Unstandardized regression coefficient on first line

Standard Error of "b" in parentheses

1. It is important to have an Affirmative Action program in the work place.
2. When minority and white applicants are of equal ability and there are not as many minorities on the work force, preference should be given to the minority applicants.
3. If minorities and women are not getting fair treatment in the work place their supervisors should see that they do.
4. Timetables and quotas should be set for reaching hiring targets.

Hypothesis 1: As knowledge of affirmative action increases, attitudes toward affirmative action will tend to be more positive.

As indicated by Table 1, hypothesis 1 is supported by the data. Knowledge is marginally significant (.057 and .039) relative to the indicators of support for affirmative action programs. The relationship is in the hypothesized direction in that as knowledge increases so does support for affirmative action programs.

This is a potentially important finding in that this independent variable had not been tested in prior literature. It is a good first step for future research.

Hypothesis 2: conservatives tend to be less supportive of affirmative action than liberals.

Hypothesis 2 was supported as well. The literature tells us that the independent variable of ideology is important. The findings of this study are congruent with the literature, as ideology is statistically significant at the .016 level when analyzed in the context of the dependent variable Ability.

We assumed that there would be a negative relationship and that assumption was correct. The relationship was in the hypothesized direction

in that as the independent variable ideology decreases the dependent variable Ability increases.

In addition the results indicated that there is an inverse relationship between the independent variable ideology and the dependent variable fair treatment. This relationship is not statistically significant but it approaches it at the .08 level.

Interestingly ideology is statistically significant when you talk about preferences but it is not significant when you talk about fairness. One of the reasons might be that fairness crosses ideological lines. This is not a big step for someone to take. It is easy to say everyone should have fair treatment. However, when we get to more extreme methods of affirmative action such as preferences, ideology becomes more significant.

In this study 98% of those interviewed felt everybody should get fair treatment. But when preferential treatment becomes the issue this is where conservatives and liberals divide.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals will tend to be more supportive of affirmative action if they or someone in their household is a member of a union.

Hypothesis 3 was not supported by the results of this study. It should be noted that this variable had not been tested in previous research. However

one particular study implied that a unionized household might be a potential explanatory variable of attitudes toward affirmative action.

The results from this analysis revealed that there was not a statistically significant relationship between Ability and Union although it did approach significance at the .09 level. It was expected that the relationship would be in the hypothesized direction and that expectation was incorrect.

Hypothesis 4: Younger individuals will tend to be more supportive of affirmative action than older individuals.

Hypothesis 4 was not supported by the data in this analysis. In fact Age was not even close to being significant with any of the dependent variables that were used as indicators of support for affirmative action.

The literature suggested that there were some mixed results regarding the effect of Age on attitudes toward affirmative action, but pointed out that younger individuals would tend to be more supportive than older individuals. This was not the case in this study.

It should be pointed out that the purpose of this study was not to build an explanatory model. Instead the importance of this analysis is to look for determinants that contribute to support for relationships. Admittedly the adjusted R squares are very small and the constants are rather large. This is

an indication of a certain degree of specification error in that there are other variables that need to be taken into account.

TABLE 2

Source of Too Much Emphasis on Affirmative Action

	SA	A	U	D	SD
Do you feel there is too much emphasis on affirmative action?	5.5% (11)	53% (106)	7.5% (15)	33.5% (67)	.5% (1)
From what source does too much emphasis come from?					
Media	3.5% (7)	46% (92)	1.5% (3)	7.5% (15)	41.5%* (83)
Politicians	7% (4)	37.5% (75)	3.5% (7)	10% (20)	42%* (84)
Civil Rights Leaders	16% (32)	35% (70)	2.5% (5)	4.5% (9)	42%* (84)

The number of cases are in parenthesis.

*Indicates those that felt there was not too much emphasis on affirmative action.

(SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; U= Undecided; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree).

Finally I tested Fredrick Lynch's theory that the media has chosen to ignore the issue of affirmative action. If Lynch's assumption is correct, those interviewed would respond that the least amount of emphasis regarding affirmative action would come from the media. As indicated in

Table 2 Lynch's theory is not supported by this analysis. The respondents in this survey felt that politicians were the source of the least amount of emphasis. In fact the media came within 1.5% of being considered the major source of too much emphasis.

In addition, 83 respondents disagreed or were undecided when asked the question if they felt that there was too much emphasis on affirmative action. Therefore there were only 117 usable cases in this analysis.

I tested these hypothesis and came up with these results. In the process of analyzing the data from this study I came up with some interesting findings that suggest some avenues for a future research agenda as well as directions for that research.

One particular finding of interest in Table 1 was the correlation between the independent variable Educate and the dependent variable Quotas. The findings indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between these variables at the .006 level. There is a negative relationship in the directionality in that as education increases support for quotas decrease. In other words as an individual increases their education level the less likely they will support quotas. This finding is supported by previous literature, which showed that as education level increased, support for affirmative action decreased among whites. This might be due to the fact that higher

educated whites might view affirmative action as a threat to their economic well being. This would be consistent with the self-interest thesis.

One of the problems with generalizing these results at least in terms of this dependent variable is the confusion between timetables and quotas. Since the question wasn't purely on quotas because timetables were included as well, which inherently meant something entirely different to those interviewed. Caution should be used in interpreting these results.

It should be pointed out that quotas are illegal. The use of quotas in the survey was an attempt to elicit or uncover negative attitudes toward affirmative action. However in today's environment quotas are very much a buzzword. People hear the words affirmative action and they think quotas.

As pointed out above, Table 1 revealed some significant relationships between the dependent variable quotas and the independent variables of education (.006) and knowledge (.039). However the research showed that there was not a significant relationship between the dependent variable hiring targets and any independent variables.

This may be an indication that people do view quotas and hiring targets differently. They think that affirmative action is based on quotas rather than based on hiring targets. Which affirmative action is actually based on goals

and targets rather than quotas, but the sample does not pick up on this aberration.

This sample likens affirmative action to quotas and timetables. It should not be surprising that individuals who support affirmative action are also supporting timetables and quotas but are not supporting hiring targets. This may be the case because they don't think affirmative action is based on hiring targets, they think its based on quotas.

This phenomenon appears to be fueling the results in that there was a relationship between quotas and knowledge but not one with knowledge and Public (hiring targets). That is people don't think affirmative action has anything to do with targets but rather they think it has everything to do with quotas.

Two sets of conclusions emerge from this analysis. First, as an individual's knowledge of affirmative action increases, so does their support for affirmative action. Second it came as no great surprise to discover that conservative respondents were considerable more supportive of affirmative action than liberals.

It was expected that age would be a good predictor of attitudes toward affirmative action. However this was not the case in the present study. The

results of this analysis showed union membership was not a good indicator of support for affirmative action. In fact the opposite was true.

As indicated by Table 1, gender did not have an effect in this study. This is consistent with the literature in that white women do not feel that their gains are related to affirmative action policies. Finally, this study revealed that there was not any support for Lynch's theory.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Affirmative action is a complex and controversial issue. This view was supported by both the literature reviewed and the current study.

The current project is an attempt to discover what the attitudes are toward affirmative action as well as what factors influence those particular attitudes. Based on the findings of this study it appears that knowledge of affirmative action and misperceptions about affirmative action are important indicators in determining attitudes toward affirmative action.

Attitudes toward affirmative action have rarely been examined in the context of knowledge. In this analysis, the most important predictor of attitudes toward affirmative action was knowledge of affirmative action. The overall implication of this study suggests that individuals have a good understanding of affirmative action tend to be more supportive of such policies.

Another important finding of this research was that individuals believe that affirmative action is about quotas. The respondents in this survey strongly disapproved of quotas. However as was pointed out earlier, quotas are illegal and are no longer an option in affirmative action policy. Thus as

long as public perception of affirmative action remains centered on quotas, opposition will exist.

The findings of this study have practical implications for those who support affirmative action. There is clearly a need to educate people about this issue. Our findings suggest that such an approach would be extremely useful.

This study is not without weaknesses. The findings from this research cannot be extrapolated to the nation as a whole for two reasons. First the sample size is too small. The number of interviews should be increased two if not three fold. Secondly the sample was restricted to the city limits of Paris, Illinois. The demographics of Paris, mentioned above, are not representative of the nation as a whole.

However, I believe that the findings of this study are a good first step for future research. A survey conducted nation wide or in a particular region that mirrors the country as a whole could test the validity of the findings of this particular study. If results from a study on a broader scale were consistent with the findings of my study this would have major implications for the future of affirmative action.

I would suggest that future research questions focus more in depth on the knowledge of affirmative action as well as the misconceptions. This would

give greater insight as to the strength and weaknesses of knowledge as an indicator of attitudes toward affirmative action. This information would be invaluable to policy makers and strategist alike of affirmative action.

America is at a crossroads in the debate over affirmative action. The intent of affirmative action programs was temporary in nature. However supporters of affirmative action have followed the path of other so called temporary programs. To protect their programs and benefits, they have entrenched themselves deeply in networks of clientele groups, legislative committees and program agencies (Rabkin, 1980, p.352). Consequently, supporters of affirmative action have strengthened the institutional base while weakening its claims to public legitimacy (Graham, 1992, p.62).

If supporters of affirmative action are to gain a sympathetic ear, they must rethink their strategy. The current study should give them direction in that there is a need to educate the public about affirmative action.

Many believe that quotas are synonymous with affirmative action. This of course is not true. In order to alleviate this misconception, there needs to be a frontal assault on this mistaken belief and set the record straight.

In addition there needs to be an effort to increase the public's knowledge of affirmative action. This study found that those who knew which President initiated affirmative action, understood what affirmative action

involved and whom affirmative action was intended for were more likely to support affirmative action policies. This should be a wake up call for those who want to see affirmative action programs continue.

This research also has implications for the up coming presidential race between Vice-President Al Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush. The polls indicate that the contest is a virtual dead heat. It appears that the candidate that can gain the support of the African-American community might have an advantage in the race for the White House.

In order to gain their support, the candidate must focus on the issues of concern to African Americans such as affirmative action. The literature review revealed that African-Americans overwhelmingly support affirmative action programs.

Both Gore and Bush face much the same situation in their respective parties when it comes to affirmative action. The conservative wings of their parties are vehemently opposed to affirmative action. This is congruent with the literature which disclosed that conservatives tend to be opposed to affirmative action policies. Therefore Gore and Bush must tread lightly if they choose to take a position on affirmative action.

It must be a strategy that will appeal to African-Americans without agitating conservatives. We will suggest that their position should be centered on opportunity rather than preference.

This approach needs to have an air of sincerity rather than the patronizing rhetoric of the past. The candidate that can gain the confidence of the African-American community and follow through with promises made might possibly be a turning point for them and their party for years to come.

It is hoped that this study will be a good first step in an effort to understand what factors influence attitudes toward affirmative action. If this objective can be accomplished, then maybe we can begin that long arduous journey of eradicating racism.

If we choose to ignore racism in America and its many harmful side effects, then disaster surely lurks like a giant iceberg awaiting this magnificent ship of ours. Like so many great empires that have gone before, American will find itself at the bottom of history books with scholars wondering, what happened.

APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE

1) It is important to have an Affirmative Action program in the work place.

A) SA B) A C) U D) D E) SD

2) When minority and white applicants are of equal ability and there are not as many minorities on the work force, preference should be given to the minority applicants.

A) SA B) A C) U D) D E) SD

3) If minorities and women are not getting fair treatment in the work place their supervisors should see that they do.

A) SA B) A C) U D) D E) SD

4) Special efforts should be made to recruit minorities and women.

A) SA B) A C) U D) D E) SD

5) There is too much emphasis place on affirmative action.

A) SA B) A C) U D) D E) SD

6) If response was A or B to question 5, from where does the source of emphasis come from?

A) Media- 1) SA, 2) A, 3) U, 4) D, 5) SD

B) Politicians- 1) SA, 2) A, 3) U, 4) D, 5) SD

C) Civil Rights Leaders- 1) SA, 2) A, 3) U, 4) D, 5) SD

7) Public agencies should establish hiring targets for minorities.

A) SA B) A C) U D) D E) SD

8) Timetables and quotas should be set for reaching hiring targets.

A) SA B) A C) U D) D E) SD

9) Minorities should not be hired if there is a more qualified white applicant who wants the job.

A) SA B) A C) U D) D E) SD

10) What is your highest level of education?

A) 4 year college degree.

B) 2 year college degree.

C) some college.

D) high school diploma.

E) other _____

11) What is your age?

A) 18-24

B) 25-32

C) 33-51

D) 52-64

E) 65+

12) Do you consider yourself to be a:

A) Conservative

B) Moderate

C) Liberal

13) Have you ever worked with a minority or female?

A) Yes B) No

14) If yes to question #13, was it a good or bad experience?

A) Good B) Bad

15) What is your race?

A) African-American

B) Hispanic

C) Caucasian

D) Other- Please indicate _____

16) What is your gender?

A) Male B) Female

17) Is anyone in this household a member of a union?

A) Yes B) No

18) Affirmative Action is based on hiring quotas.

A) True B) False

19) Affirmative Action was designed to help only African-Americans.

A) True B) False

20) Which President first introduced Affirmative Action Programs?

A) Eisenhower

B) Kennedy

C) Johnson

D) Nixon

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