

ABSTRACT

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND JUSTICE: THE CASES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, MALAYSIA, FIJI, INDIA AND TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Wendy Quamina-Yorke

This dissertation examines the relationship between affirmative action and justice in divided societies. In it affirmative action as a public policy, is viewed as a tool for addressing the needs of disadvantaged persons with justice as the philosophical umbrella. First, the study conducts an extensive review of the literature on the variables of affirmative action and justice, examines the arguments for and against affirmative action and the fit of affirmative action within the various systems of justice.

Second, it notes that several countries have embraced affirmative action policies to assist the chronically poor and oppressed and at the same time promote societal peace, stability and development. The case study approach utilized, allows the reader to be exposed to the practical aspect of affirmative action and its nexus with justice in the USA, Malaysia, Fiji, India and Trinidad and Tobago. They illustrate affirmative action in reality and highlight the varying results of such policies. In the societies examined, the lot of some of the disadvantaged was improved and while support for affirmative action is obvious, it has met the rejection of many who do not deem it fair and just. The consequences of

affirmative action, both positive and negative, in those societies, are researched and highlighted in this dissertation. The schema developed for comparison provides uniformity and enhances credibility to the study. Finally, in the context of the experiences of affirmative discussed, a way forward is proposed with a view to providing fair and just ways to address the needs of the less fortunate or disadvantaged in diverse societies through the effective use of affirmative action policies and programmes. In so doing, the negative impact of affirmative action should be minimized and the positive impact of creating peaceful, stable and developed societies enhanced.

Keywords: Affirmative Action; Justice; System of Justice; Fairness; Equality; Equity; Political Philosophy; Public Policy.