

Essay on is affirmative action morally permissible

Countries, United States



Undeniably, the issue of affirmative actions has been among the most discussed issues in the past forty years. The debate global debate started after the 1961 proposal on the idea of preferential treatment by President Kennedy in the United States. During this time, the citizens of the United States were in the middle of drastic changes concerning the political rights. This is the time when all injustices that the minorities and the less privileged went through had started to be recognized, many people looked back and had the desire to make up for all the years of cruelty, which acted as a hindrance for the progression of the minorities in America. President Kennedy's proposal came at a time when, everyone considered the idea to not only morally justified but communally appropriate, as well. Affirmative action is a constitutional regulation of the active discernment of one person due to their race or sex over another person. This paper is going to focus on the debate whether affirmative action is permissible or not (Beckwith, 2007).

Since time immemorial, there has been a belief that the white people are superior to the black ones. For this reason, black people were used as slaves to the white people to work in their fields and serve them at their homes especially when it came to manual labour. It was so serious such that blacks were denied very basic rights such as the right to vote and were discriminated such that there were places where the blacks belonged and could not mingle with the whites. The American Civil War was a war that was fought between 1861 and 1865 between the confederacy and the union. After this war, slavery was abolished and some of the issues that brought up the war were solved yet others never got to be solved. This war was meant

to fight for equality and the rights of the blacks. Before the war, the blacks were looked down upon and were not given their rights (Cohen, and Sterba, 2003). They were considered inferior to the whites but the war brought that to an end by giving the blacks equal citizenship as the whites especially through the passage of the fourteenth amendment to the American constitution in 1868. Racism and ethnicity gave the blacks the zeal to fight for their rights and after the constitution amendment they were awarded the right to equal citizenship with the whites. This meant that citizenship was awarded to anyone born on the US soil regardless of their race, colour or ethnic background.

Affirmative action is certainly morally justifiable in societies or in race-conscious states. Most opponents commonly believe that affirmative action makes experience and qualification secondary to skin color. This therefore bring about unfairness to those people who have superior qualifications are making them to be bypassed. Unfairness based on race takes away the rightful chances from one person of a different race, and offers it to another person of a “ superior” race, which results into what we refer to as inverse discrimination. Nevertheless, our society has changed in to a society, where race is a major factor in decision making concerning critical aspects of day to day activities and life (Beckwith, 2007). The day to day use of race as a basis in decision making exhibits itself as private biases and it negatively affects the lives of the minorities in a broad way. Thus, in such societies or race-conscious regions, affirmative action is morally justifiable due to the reason that it reverses the communal rules of viewing race in a negative way, while rewarding for publics’ expected affinities to discriminate.

Affirmative action is morally justifiable because its main objective is to ensure that there is reconciliation between the current world and the injustices of the past. The horrifying violence that took place in the past, which include brutal slavery and the denial to give both the women and other minorities their voting rights, showed a bad picture to the history of the United States as a nation. Undeniably, affirmative action cannot wipe out all the nasty things that the people of the old days did during those days (Cohen, and Sterba, 2003). However, affirmative action only tries to reconcile the cruelty of the past. It is important that the young minorities are considered and be assisted in every way possible, so that they can get education and successfully accomplish their set goals without setback such as lack the resources and opportunities due to lack of resources.

It is unfair to let someone have something due to their nationality, race or sex. It is quite unfortunate that globally, some sexes, nationalities and races are considered as superior to others and thus, they are accorded certain advantages over others. It is commonly believed that the special treatment accorded to the white people is morally wrong (Boonin, 2011). All people around the world, whether Africans, Asians, Spanish, are all equal. Everyone should be treated the same way regardless of their sex and race. It is therefore wrong for some people especially the white people to receive better or special treatment, as compared to other races of the world.

One critical issue concerning affirmative action is the unforgettable humiliation that is attached to the minorities. The minorities are well able to acquire good jobs and admissions in prestigious learning institutions, as well as, be prosperous like any other white man or woman. However, the problem

occurs when the minorities are undermined and seen as the inferior people in the society because of the affirmative action, which carries with itself the “you cannot do it on your own” attitude (Beckwith, 2007). The consequences of this attitude to the minorities have a long-term bad effect on their well-being as well as their ability to succeed.

In conclusion, it is clear that affirmative action is morally permissible because it aims at promoting equity at all levels. It is important that the society embraces and appreciates diversity because there are a lot of things that people from different countries and cultures can learn from each other. The best way of embracing diversity is by maximizing it at workplaces and learning institutions. Affirmative action may not be the best way to encourage diversity because there are other better ways such as encouraging children to appreciate diversity at an earlier age and encouraging the minorities at an early age to live their dreams regardless of what obstacles they may face on the way.

References

Beckwith, F. J. (2007). *Affirmative action: Social justice or reverse discrimination?*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

Boonin, D. (2011). *Should race matter?: Unusual answers to the usual questions*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, C., & Sterba, J. P. (2003). *Affirmative action and racial preference: A debate*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.