# PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN
INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

## AGNES M. TJIRAMBA

December, 2004

Supervisors:      Prof. I.E. Plattner (Unam)

Prof. H. van Deventer (UNISA)

# ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted within the qualitative research paradigm with the aim to explore the psychological aspects of affirmative action in the Namibian context. It was against this background that Attribution Theory was used as a framework for the investigation of affirmative action. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, thus interview guidelines were developed, one for the target group members and one for non-target group members. The interviews were evaluated with Qualitative Content Analysis. The participants in the present study consisted of six affirmative action target and four non-target group members at middle or high management level. They were chosen through judgmental or purposive sampling method. The results of this study were reported under six categories such as general perception about affirmative action, experience of affirmative action at the workplace, emotional reactions towards affirmative action, stigmatization and coping, self-perception/self-evaluation and perception of affirmative action appointees. The main conclusions drawn from this study were that the majority of the interviewees felt that associations with affirmative action affect impressions of an individual's work orientation and effectiveness. It was also found that the interviewees believed that affirmative action could eliminate discrimination if implemented fairly but yet can perpetuate another form of discrimination. The results were presented based on attempts of interpretation and **recommendations** for creating more insight in the psychological aspects of affirmative action in employment.

# TABLE OF CONTENT

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

# DEDICATION

I hereby dedicate this thesis to all my family members who emphasized the importance of education and who supported me during my studies.

# DECLARATIONS

(1)     This document is a true reflection of my own research, and has not been submitted for a degree in any other institutions of higher learning.

(2)     No part of this thesis may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means (e.g. electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior permission of the author, or the University of Namibia on her behalf.

(3)     In presenting this thesis, I have granted the University of Namibia the right to reproduce it in whole or in part, in any manner or format which the University may deem fit, for any person or institution requiring it for study and research, provided that the University shall relinquish this right if the whole thesis has been or is being published in a manner satisfactory to the University.

**CHAPTER 1:      INTRODUCTION**

*It is when equals have or are assigned unequal share or people who are not equal have equal share that quarrels and complaints break out (Aristotle)*

At independence on the 21st March 1990, the new Namibian government had inherited a deeply divided society based on the Apartheid doctrine of South Africa. Under this doctrine, a significant portion of Namibians was denied access to land, education, and wealth (Pandor, 1992). Therefore, the great extent of race and gender-based inequalities led to debates around policies to redress discriminatory laws and practices. For example, in both private and public sectors, black people, colored and women were more concentrated in manual, unskilled and semi-skilled jobs whilst, white men were over- represented in managerial and professional occupations (Jauch, 1998). These noticeable disparities and inequalities in employment gave birth to the notion of affirmative action.

In Namibia, the Affirmative Action Employment Act, No 29, came into effect on the 24th September 1998. This act was introduced to benefit people from previously disadvantaged groups (racially disadvantaged persons, women, and persons with disabilities) at the work place.

The concept of affirmative action originated forty years ago in the United States of America (USA), where there was a long history of segregation and discrimination. Since its origin, affirmative action is embodied in Title VII of the USA Civil Rights

Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, sex, creed and religion. In the contemporary debate, affirmative action refers to a body of policies and procedures designed to eliminate employment discrimination against women and under-represented ethnic groups. Affirmative action programs favor candidates who are qualified and belong to historically subordinated and still under-represented groups in higher employment positions.

Despite its origin in the USA, the concept of affirmative action gained an international acceptance as a legitimate vehicle to promote social justice in employment and education. However, various countries introduced the concept under different perspectives. For example, Sri Lanka and Malaysia introduced affirmative action policy after independence to benefit ethnic majorities who suffered from discrimination before. In India, affirmative action was initiated to favor the most disadvantaged groups, the so-called 'backward classes'. In both South Africa and Namibia, affirmative action policies began to be instituted against the background of racial discrimination and job reservation legislation as a means to enhance the quality of life of majority groups (Maphai, 1992). All these countries have had the opportunity to address their past employment policies through affirmative action programs. Because a growing economy demands a stable workforce, the implementation of affirmative action programs is of particular importance in the work place.

In the Namibian context, affirmative action has come to be accepted in popular discourses such as measures to redress race, gender and other inequalities. The long

history of discriminatory laws and practices justifies the importance of the implementation of affirmative action. The statement given by the former US President Lyndon Johnson (1965) about the justification for affirmative action implementation is relevant to the Namibian situation as well: *"Imagine a 100 yard dash in which one of the two runners has his leg shackled together. He/she has progressed 10 yards, while the unshackled runner has gone 50 yards. How do they rectify the situation? Do they merely remove the shackles and allow the raise to proceed? Then they could say equal opportunity now prevailed. But one of the runners would still be 40 yards ahead of the other. Would it not be the better part of justice to allow the previously shackled runner to make up the 40 yards gap or to start the raise all over again? That will be affirmative action towards equality"* (cited by Jauch, 1998:1). Past policies of discrimination have left legacies of unequal representation in most employment spheres. This necessitated the implementation of affirmative action policies to remedy policies of discrimination.

Although the objective of affirmative action is to remedy the ills of the known past discriminatory practices, controversies about this concept seem to exist. For example, affirmative action is criticized as being only beneficial to those who have suffered least from past discrimination and a burden to those who least participated in previous discrimination. Some perceive affirmative action as reverse discrimination because it condones the appointments of women and black men and the exclusion of qualified white workers. Objection is also made to the longevity of affirmative action programs. Remedial programs seem to subordinate the individual to the group. For example, the target group members are receiving preferential treatment while it is

being denied to others. In addition, it is feared that the target group members are gaining, not because of merit, but because of who they are.

Despite such misconceptions, affirmative action seems to be the only way to ensure equality. Without it the effects of discrimination may result in the loss of much needed potential. Its justification, through the principles of equality and justice, should be seen as the background against which the concept has been initiated. However, based on misconceptions a "major problem of affirmative action is that it has the ability to evoke strong, albeit usually suppressed emotions" (van Rooyen 1999:8). Consequently, questions that seem to arise are: Does affirmative action in employment has psychological effects on the target groups? How do the target group members perceive and value themselves? How do they cope and deal with the misconceptions? Various studies have been conducted on the psychological effects of affirmative action in employment and have brought evidence that affirmative action appointees can lead to, among others, negative self-perception, decreased job satisfaction and personal devaluation. However, most of the reviewed studies were conducted in the USA.

Therefore, the **objective of this study** was to explore possible effects of affirmative action on the target group members in Namibia (women, blacks, colored, and people with disabilities). In view of the fact that the implementation of the affirmative action policy might also be regarded as a threat to non-target group members (white men), the latter were be investigated as well.

In concrete terms, the study intended to

a) investigate how affirmative action target group members **perceive** and **value** their competence, ability, performance and qualifications;

b) look into the emotional or psychological status of mind, relative to affirmative action;

c) explore how both the target and non-target groups **cope** with possible psychological effects of affirmative action.

Within the context of discrimination in employment, the study reckoned that Attribution Theory would be of relevance to explain how affirmative action can have psychological effects on the target and non-target group members of affirmative action. Therefore, Attribution Theory was the theoretical framework for this study. The study was conducted within the qualitative paradigm in the Social Sciences (Mouton & Marais, 1996) with the aim to explore specifics of affirmative action in the Namibian context. The qualitative paradigm is of relevance to this type of study because it is oriented toward exploration, discovery and inductive logic. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews so as to let individuals express their experiences, opinions, points of views, attitudes, and knowledge (Plattner, 2001). For this, an interview guideline was developed. The interviews were evaluated with Qualitative Content Analysis (Plattner, 2001). The target group for the present study was people at middle or high management level in public, private or parastatal companies based in Windhoek. The non-target group members at management or supervisory level were also included in the study. In total, ten (10) affirmative action target group and non-target group members, i.e. four (4) from the non-target group

and six (6) from the target group (men and women) were interviewed.

Hopefully, the outcome of this study will shed more light on the psychological relevance of affirmative action and identification of psychological obstacles that might distort the long-term success of affirmative action.

The chapter outline of this thesis will be as follows, apart from the introductory part:

**Chapter 2 will** review the relevant literature on the psychological and behavioral effects of affirmative action. These will include a detailed discussion of various aspects, such as the definition and aims of affirmative action, perception of affirmative action amongst beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, preferential treatment versus merit-based decisions, as well as the harmful effects of affirmative action.

**Chapter 3** provides a comprehensive overview of the theoretical framework on which this study is based. Thus, it discusses Attribution Theory in general, and its relevance for investigation of affirmative action in employment. Other aspects related to affirmative action and attribution formation, e.g. stereotype, will also be discussed, notwithstanding the fact of discussing bias and errors in attribution.

**Chapter 4** will present the empirical conceptualization of the study in particular the research methodology, participants in the study, data generation, as well as analysis and evaluation.

In **chapter 5**, the results of the present study will be presented in detail. This chapter will be followed by discussion of results **(chapter 6).** Similarly, the chapter will also look at the limitations and recommendations of the study. The final chapter of this thesis will be the conclusion.

**CHAPTER 2:**       **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter will review relevant literature reflecting on psychological and behavioral effects affirmative action might have on both the target and non-target group members. According to research findings, affirmative action appears to harm its intended beneficiaries. Most of these studies have been conducted in the USA. Given the fact that the available literature on affirmative action is broad, I will narrow the scope, and thus illustrate psychological variables inherent in affirmative action. First, I will define the concept of affirmative action with regard to its goal and rational. Second, I will show how affirmative action is perceived by beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, and the effect of preferential treatment versus merit-based decision when it comes to employment. Lastly, some empirical studies will be presented that clearly indicate psychologically harmful effects of affirmative action.

## 2.1 Definition and aims of affirmative action

Some people might have a negative perception of affirmative action. At times such negative perceptions and wrong definitions of affirmative action are contrary to what the policy was meant to address. For instance, many individuals associate affirmative action with quotas (hiring individuals based solely on race or sex), without regard to meritorious qualifications. Others in society associate affirmative action with inequity, where fairness is compromised because of a preferential selection process. Whether or not these associations are true, these perceived outcomes are not what affirmative action intends. Few of us, if any, really understand what affirmative

action is, how policies relating to it are implemented, and how those very policies which are meant to aid deserving individuals, have in many instances, done more harm than good.

The Affirmative Action Employment Act No 29 of 1998 was published in the Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia. The Act aims to: "achieve equal opportunity in employment in accordance with Article 10 and Article 23 of the Namibian Constitution, provide for the establishment of the Employment Equity Commission, redress through appropriate affirmative action plans the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by persons in designated groups arising from past discriminatory laws and practices, institute procedures to contribute towards the elimination of discrimination in employment, and to provide for matters incidental thereto" (Affirmative Action Employment Act No 29, 1998:12).

In terms of definition, van Rooyen (2000:22-24) has the following to say:

Affirmative action is a set of "**measures** designed to ensure that **suitably qualified** persons in **designated groups** enjoy **equal employment opportunities** at all levels of employment and are **equitably represented** in the workforce of a relevant employer". The highlighted phrases in the definition are the cornerstones on which the Act hinges. They indicate the most essential aspects of how affirmative action can be measured, who is the target group. as well as its goals and objectives. In terms of the definition, "**equal employment opportunities** means that indirect discriminatory employment practices, rules or conditions must be eliminated. The phrase **designated groups** refers to members that have to benefit by the implementation of affirmative

action such as racially disadvantaged persons (all persons who belong to a racial or ethnic group which formerly had been, or still is, directly or indirectly disadvantaged in the sphere of employment as a consequence of social, economic, or educational imbalances arising out of racially discriminating laws or practices before the independence of Namibia), women (irrespective of race), and persons with disabilities (physical or mental limitations, irrespective of race and gender). A **suitably qualified person** is defined as a person who has the abilities, formal qualifications or relevant experience for a position of employment. **Legitimate job requirements** refer to genuine and objectively verifiable qualities needed for the successful execution of duties". Of course, all these variables constitute the definition of affirmative action. However, one might ask what affirmative action attempts to achieve.

In addition, van Rooyen (2000:22) summarized four major goals of affirmative action:

- "Elimination of employment barriers;
- Efforts to accommodate persons with disabilities;
- Furthering employment opportunities through training programme; and
- Giving preferential treatment in employment decisions to suitably qualified persons from the designated groups".

In short, the rational for the Act is to eliminate any past or present discriminatory practices, or other barriers to equal employment opportunity rather than a question of giving preferential treatment to traditionally disadvantaged groups (van Rooyen, 2000). In global terms, affirmative action has three key requirements:

1.  The organization must have and abide by an equal opportunity policy.

2.  The organization must analyse its workforce to assess possible under-utilization of women and ethnic minorities/majorities, where under-utilization is defined in terms of qualified applicants or potential applicants.

3.  If under-utilization is revealed, the organization must develop a plan of action to eliminate it, and must make a good faith effort to execute the plan.

The regulations controlling the development and execution of affirmative action plans emphasize the recruitment and the elimination of bias. For example, in the USA the Supreme Court (SC) decisions have forbidden strong preferential treatment and strict quotas except under the most extreme conditions. However, within this broad range, even in the Namibian context, considerable vagueness about affirmative action seems to exist.

These ambiguities make affirmative action a controversial phenomenon due to its dual nature of stimulating strong opposition and strong support. Nevertheless, much of the confusion and resentment surrounding the debate on affirmative action originates from the manner in which affirmative action is defined as well as people's understanding of what it entails. This lack of understanding of affirmative action principles often results in unwanted psychological effects on either target or non-target group members. Therefore, organizations must be concerned with any psychological issues that might be associated with affirmative action implementation

in the workplace. Most relevant psychological research deals with affirmative action plans as required by the United States (US) Executive Order 11246, promulgated by the US President Johnson in 1965 and subsequently revised by other presidents.

The primary interest of affirmative action is the way in which the target groups (racially disadvantaged persons, women and persons with disabilities) suffer disadvantages in opportunity throughout the work force. What is truly important here is to consider the forces that prevent individuals from benefiting from equal opportunity in job market. There is much scepticism about affirmative action, primarily because it invokes a sort of discrimination. But the important question one needs to ask is: Is this sort of discrimination counteracting other discrimination? While black or women's movements have helped remove old stigmas, there are some groups who still suffer structural inequality. One must analyse affirmative action programs by analysing who is disadvantaged and why, including the influence of historical racism and sexism.

Conversely, generalizations of character about traits among different ethnic groups could often contribute to the problem of cultural deficiencies. For example, one might explain poorer performance among blacks by saying that although blacks are just as biologically capable as any other whites, their situation has caused them to adopt unmotivated attitudes, as they have acquired the culture of poverty (Ayers, 1992). However, Stephen Steinberg, cited by Ayers (1992) argues that the situation of a racial gap in success cannot be explained causally as a result of the culture of poverty. While many others argue that current inequality is caused and then maintained

because of the cultural differences in ethnic groups, Steinberg argues that this is only a modified form of Social Darwinism and not a sufficient explanation for the racial gaps in wealth. He believes that structural reasons, including sexism and racism of the past, cause certain ethnic groups to arrive at the situation they are in, and that structural influence keeps them in their low status. This refutes the typical tendency to blame the individual vis-à-vis the culture of poverty. If structure is indeed what is at fault, then inequalities in the job market must be targeted with affirmative action.

## 2.2    Perception of affirmative action amongst beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries

*"All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others" (George Orwell)*

Affirmative action implementation procedures are unimaginable without reference to justice and equality. In general, people's reaction to affirmative action depends largely on what they understand or believe affirmative action to be (Golden, Hiunkle & Crosby, 2001). Several general opinion surveys have been conducted to explain the reactions of people towards affirmative action directed at blacks and women. An April 1995/CBS/New York Times poll showed that 34% of white respondents did not know how to answer a question about affirmative action (Steeh & Krysan, 1996). This indicates that people do not exactly understand how affirmative action programs operate. A study by Pratkanis and Turner (1996) showed that support of affirmative action varies from 10% when indicated as preferential treatment, 51% for set asides,

to 76% when indicated as programs to enhance equal opportunities. Hence differences in programs related to merit made vast changes in the way respondents felt about affirmative action.  Perhaps racial prejudice cannot be perceived as the only cause of bitterness towards affirmative action, but rather this opposition boils down to principles of individual effort and responsibility (Gilens et al., 1998).

Numerous studies (Nacoste & Lehman, 1987; Kleinpenning & Hagendoorn, 1993) have shown that people's reactions to affirmative action, are influenced by their perception of two dimensions of justice i.e. procedural and distributive justice (Cropanzano & Greenberg, 1997).   *Distributive justice* refers to an obligation to expand actions for the affirmative action beneficiaries (target group), and give them the chance they should have had.  In a nutshell, the concept of distributive justice is concerned with people's perceptions of the fairness in the distribution of resources (Homans, 1961; Adams, 1965; Greenberg and Cohen, 1982). On the contrary, the concept of procedural justice concerns itself with fairness of the procedures by which a distributive allocation norm is implemented (Levental et al., 1980; Lind & Tyler, 1988). As noted by others (Cohen, 1994; Smith Winkel & Crosby, 1994; Dovidio, 1996; Essess & Seligman, 1996), affirmative action can be conceptualised from a distributive and procedural justice perspective. Given the fact that affirmative action involves the distribution of resources such as jobs, pay, promotions among groups, distributive principles are relevant.

More specifically, affirmative action could be perceived as unfair at the distributive level because people perceive that the merit principle is violated (Deutsch, 1985;

Lerner, 1977). Affirmative action could also be considered unfair at the procedural level because people perceive that it violates specific procedural justice criteria, such as consistency across people (Levental et al., 1980). For example, people may argue that affirmative action treats target-group and non-target group members inconsistently because it benefits some and disadvantages others. These peoples' sensitivity to procedural inconsistency might help to explain why there is a public widespread opposition to affirmative action programs that emphasize strong preferential treatment as opposed to merit. However, given that affirmative action programs do not allow a less qualified target group candidate, merit is not violated per se.

Despite the fact that success of affirmative action programs is in improving employment opportunities and diversified work force, there is a fair amount of resistance to affirmative action programs (Heilman, 1994). Among others, racism may account for this resistance. Various authors (Kinder, 1986; Sniderman et al., 1991; Bobbo & Kluegel, 1993) have identified three types of racism that are related to the belief that affirmative action violates the norms of distributive and procedural justice. These are contemporary, aversive and symbolic racism.

*Contemporary racism*

Contemporary racism can be demonstrated in experimental laboratory situations or real world circumstances. Studies (Sniderman et al., 1991) have demonstrated that research subjects would behave in a more hostile manner in response to frustrating

situations if they have been "primed" by being presented with pictures of African-American faces, as opposed to Caucasian ones. Other studies (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986; Dovidio, Mann, & Gaertner, 1989) found that people form implicit race-based stereotypes for which they are not aware. For instance, they might link the beliefs of incompetence with blacks in certain evaluative situations.

*Aversive racism*

Aversive racism has been defined (Kinder, 1986; Sniderman et al., 1991; Bobo & Kluegel, 1993) as negative feelings toward other groups that may lead to avoidance, but are likely to be justified by some other reasons. These biases are not expressed in subtle and indirect ways that do not threaten the image of the aversive racist as non-prejudiced. However, aversive racists do not intend to be racist, and also, do not express their prejudice by endorsement of negative stereotypes about people who are not from their group. They would rather show expressions of preference for members of their own group. For example, certain whites may prefer a fellow white for a managerial position.

*Symbolic racism*

Symbolic racism refers to negative feelings toward other groups that develop early in life (Kinder, 1986; Sears, 1988). These feelings persist into adulthood and are associated with beliefs that are expressed symbolically rather than overtly. A typical example exists when non-black individuals feel that blacks are violating cherished

values by making illegitimate demands for changes in the status quo. In short, symbolic racism is a combination of racial and conservative ideology (McConahay, 1982).

Nonetheless, arguments that "affirmative action is detrimental is ultimately because racism is a cogent description of affirmative action. However, it is only so if one considers the cancer of racism to be morally and medically indistinguishable from the therapy apply to it" (Bobbo & Kluegel, 1993). This is to say that it is only harmful if one can argue that racism and its effects are no longer present in labour markets, or that any attempt at remedying these problems would invariably be unsuccessful.

Moreover, it is clear that opposition towards affirmative action can also be expressed in terms of various mentalities of racism. Hence, the ideal of equal opportunity merely requires that persons be treated in employment decisions without regard to their race.  Does deep-rooted prejudice motivate most of the strongly held opposition to affirmative action? Or does racial hatred, by itself, account for only the fringes of resistance and labelling (Kuklinski, 1997). In 1996 Link conducted a survey in the USA as an attempt to answer such questions by exploring the social constructions, images, or attitudes about a target (in this case racial) by whites; and then correlating these distinct factors with white attitudes toward equal opportunity and multiculturalism. The findings indicated that respondents who saw white Americans as being more hardworking, intelligent and peaceful than black Americans had generally negative views of equal opportunity and multiculturalism while on average, white Americans tend to view black Americans in the order of Hispanic, Asian and

Black, less positively than they view their own race. Furthermore, a study of Kuklinski (1997) found (based on survey data) that some 36 million white American adults express irrefutable hatred towards black Americans, while 163 million did not express such hatred but, nonetheless, strongly resent affirmative action. Nevertheless, prejudices against blacks exist throughout our society, yet most focus is on equality in employment opportunities. So this is where the solution must reside.

Equality refers to the principle of similar treatment, irrespective of background or race. With this in mind, affirmative action as a social policy strives to achieve equality through comprehensive non-discriminatory practices in order to minimize social unrest. Nonetheless, the most volatile equal employment issues concern preferential selection and reverse discrimination. **Equal treatment programs** include issues such as mentorship policies, maternity and paternity leave, and promotion. These are designed to remove systematic barriers. Although such programs might benefit specific target-group members because of their special needs, they however, offer services to all employees. **Under preferential treatment program,** in filling positions of employment, a relevant employer may give a preference to suitably qualified persons of designated groups (Affirmative Action Employment Act No 29, 1998 of the Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia). This implies the use of group membership as criteria for allocation of desired outcomes such as jobs, promotions, or university admission (Bobocel, D.R., & Farrell, A. 1996). By having preferential selection for protected group members, non-targeted individuals may complain that they are being discriminated against in reverse.

*Reverse discrimination*

The concept of reverse discrimination implies that a person is denied an opportunity because of preferences given to a member of a protected group who may be less qualified. One consistent finding in previous research (Taylor, 1994) is that the respondents, overall, tend to have more negative reactions to affirmative action methods that incorporate preferences, quotas, or other considerations of demographic status. For example, Fine's (1992) survey results indicated that the non-target group opposition to preferential treatment was stronger when the reason for opposition was phrased as *"it discriminates against the non-target group members"* than when it was phrased as *"it gives the target group members advantages they have not earned" (Fine, 1992, p: 209).*

Nowadays, in Namibia what are the chances of white qualified men getting a job or promotion instead of an equally or less qualified black person? Apparently, affirmative action is designed to ensure justice between groups. Opposition, however, is frequently based on concerns about justice for individuals (Clayton & Tangri, 1989). Objections range from various arguments that affirmative action results in reverse discrimination (Burstein, 1985), penalizes young white men who were not responsible for discrimination (Groarke, 1990) and forces organizations to change the rules in the middle of the game (Crosby, 1994). Heilman (1994) pointed out that reactions of non-target group members would be negative if they believed that affirmative action had caused them to be denied employment opportunities to which they were entitled.

*Preferential treatment in terms of perception of fairness*

Several researches (Heilman, 1994; Taylor, 1994; Truxillo & Bauer, 1999) have studied preferential treatment in terms of fairness in the context of affirmative action. For example, Nacoste (1987) found in a study of female psychology students that participants reacted less favorably to a hypothetical grant award decision when gender was explicitly considered than when it was not.

Accordingly, another laboratory study (Matheson et al., 1994) found that women react more negatively to strong affirmative action responses such as group exclusivity than to weak affirmative action responses, for example, non-discrimination. Heilman et al. (1996) also found that male non-beneficiaries of preferential selection reacted negatively to it in terms of fairness perceptions and intended citizenship behavior. Other studies (Kravitz & Platania, 1993; Summers, 1995) found that people are more favorable toward affirmative action that involves special training for members of particular groups, rather than altering selection criteria for these groups. One explanation that has been given for the different reactions of subgroups to preferential treatment is self-interest (Kluegel & Smith 1983) and collective interest (Summers, 1995; Tougas, Brown, Beaton, & Jolyo, 1995).

In general, people from different subgroups react to preferential treatment differently, depending on what benefits them (Kravitz et al., 1997). This effect has been found for race (Kravitz et al., 1997). There is no consensus among racial minorities or majorities on the effectiveness of affirmative action (Steele, 1994; Thomas, 1994). In addition, there has been some inconsistency in women's reactions to preferential

treatment across studies (Kravitz et al., 1997). Different subgroup reactions to preferences can be explained in other ways. For example, personal experience with discrimination has been cited as a possible explanation for affirmative action attitudes (Kravitz et al, 1997).

Consequently, Gilliland (1993) in his model of selection system fairness noted that individual's previous experiences would likely determine the salience of particular justice rules. Those who have been discriminated against, for example, women are more likely to focus on equality in determining the fairness of a selection practice. In contrast, men may focus on the consistency rule and prefer top-down selection because it leads to the same treatment across applicants. Furthermore, having experienced discrimination, women are more likely to see justification in a method that gives special consideration to particular needs; this is preference to remedy past discrimination. By and large, the implications of these findings indicate that self-interest approaches (Nosworthy et al., 1995) to fairness as well as those focused on salience of outcomes and experience with past discrimination, (men and women) will react differently to affirmative action methods that involve preferential treatment according to how the affirmative action method takes race or gender into consideration.

Nonetheless, the benefits of preferential treatment are needed to break down patterns of segregation and opening employment opportunities to previously underserved groups that were denied to them. Conversely, the answer to affirmative action may lie in how it is perceived by the society and of course the individual. Therefore, it should not be viewed as a violation of the rights of the non-target group members, but rather

as a guarantee that previously disadvantaged individuals are receiving what they would have had if it was not for a racist and sexist environment. However, people are free to define affirmative action in a variety of ways, thus consequently, leading to misconceptions and antagonism.

## 2.3    Preferential treatment versus merit-based decisions

Many studies have found that people prefer merit-based decisions (solely on merit) to any type of preferential treatment, neither weak nor strong (that are based on both merit and demographic status). Strong preferential treatment could even go as far as hiring an unqualified affirmative action beneficiary rather than a clearly qualified non-beneficiary. In contrast, a weak preferential decision favours the more qualified applicant unless qualifications are equivalent. In that case the affirmative action target group is favoured.

Research on French Canadian women (Tougas & Veilleux, 1988) and on French Canadian managers and professional men (Tougas & Veilleux, 1989; Veillex & Tougas, 1989) revealed a preference for the elimination of discrimination over weak preferential treatment. In another study, Brutus and Ryan (1994) also found that female undergraduates rated merit-based selection more positively than preferential treatment based on gender. Heilman et al. (1996) replicated these findings in a sample of male undergraduates. In this case, the effect was moderated by information about qualifications. The difference was not significant if the woman selected in the preferential treatment condition was more qualified and, therefore, would also have

been selected on the basis of merit. In addition, Heilman, Rivero and Brett (1991) conducted two experiments using male and female undergraduates. In experiment one with 60 respondents (male & female), fairness ratings varied with selection procedure, gender of the respondent and the test scores. The ratings indicated that men and women responded equally positively to merit selection, but men responded more negatively than women to strong preferential treatment while experiment two consisted of 236 females who evaluated merit-based selection more positively than strong preferential treatment, regardless of whether they were told about their scores on the pre-test.

Furthermore, the importance of merit is also revealed in a study of 96 male francophone managers in Canada (Joly, Pelchat, & Tougas, 1993). The managers evaluated a weak preferential treatment procedure, in which gender was to be considered only if competing candidates had equivalent merit. Hence the description of the procedure was different. In one condition, the procedural description emphasized the important role of merit. In the second condition, respondents were given information about the percentage of women in the workforce. While in the last condition, no information was given. The respondents' evaluations were more positive when merit was stressed. Thus, evaluations of weak preferential treatment depend on how it is described. Because the study did not include a pure merit procedure, it was not possible to know whether emphasizing the role of merit in weak preferential treatment will increase evaluations to the level of a merit procedure alone.

The implications of these studies indicate that people generally evaluate merit selection more positively than preferential treatment. The findings also showed that evaluations of merit selection are almost universally positive, but those of preferential treatment are moderated by factors such as respondent gender, self-efficacy, and knowledge about applicants' qualifications.

Yet another downside to affirmative action is the stigma that is placed on recipients of such programs. Heilman (1991 & 1996) argued that those who are selected on the basis of race or sex alone inherit a stigma of incompetence. The truth of the matter is, any policy that solely targets group membership (race & gender) without consideration of merit, will only perpetuate the problem it intends to solve. For example, Chang (1996) believes that affirmative action can be seen as unfair if it deprives others of a chance to compete. Other problems like white backlash or anger towards the target group members who gain preferential treatment contribute to stigma of incompetence. Yet this stigma may only be theoretical, and not an accurate depiction of real side effects of affirmative action.

## 2.4.    The harmful effects of affirmative action

Affirmative action goes with an argument that it stigmatises its own beneficiaries. It implies that they cannot compete on an equal basis. Interestingly, this harm hangs over the heads of those who have made it on the merits, and not just those who have made it on the basis of affirmative action handouts. As a result, affirmative action leaves its intended target group members doubting themselves, often profoundly. They ask themselves often out of the earshot of others, whether they have truly earned their positions, promotions and raises. This argument indeed leads them to lower their own expectations even for themselves. However, on the basis of some studies, there is reason to believe that these arguments are largely misconceived and exaggerated. All in all, it is still imperative to understand how other employees perceive women, black men and people with disabilities hired under affirmative action programs. One of the outcomes of this preferential treatment is seen in the following quotation:

*"The use of sex-based preferential selection in the implementation of affirmative action programs has produced interest in the psychological consequences of preferential selection. The results of these investigations have been disheartening: Prefential selection has been shown to adversely affect how women feel about themselves" (Heilman, Rivero & Brett, 1991, p: 99)*

Although hiring programs on the basis of affirmative action aim to remedy the ills of past discriminatory practices, some evidence indicated that they harm the very people

they were ostensibly designed to benefit (Heilman, Simon & Repper, 1987). In their

lab study, they examined whether sex-based preferential selection has impact on self-

perceptions and self-evaluations of affirmative action target group members. They

investigated the reactions of sixty-four (64) male and seventy-six (76) female

undergraduates serving as task leaders. The design of the study involved three (3)

independent variables such as sex of subject (male/female), assignment method

(merit-based versus preferential selection) and task outcomes (success or failure). The

subjects were told that they would be either a leader or a follower in a one-way

communication task. Although task performance depends on both the leader and the

follower, subjects were told that the leader would have a more creative and visible

position. Then the subjects completed the 14-item Spatial Communication Skills

Inventory (SCSI), to assess reliably their one-way communication abilities.

Experimental manipulations were applied in both conditions (merit and preferential)

after the SCSI test. In both conditions, subjects were told the following: "Normally in

situations like this, leaders are selected on the basis of skill and ability, meaning that

they are good at the task. We have been doing our selecting this way also, by using

the SCSI that you just finished. It is a highly reliable measure of one-way

communication skills developed by psychologists" (Heilman et al., 1987:64). Then

merit and preference conditions subjects were given different information. The

subjects in merit conditions were informed that their performance was good and

scored better than their counterpart; and will thus become leader of the task. In

preference conditions, the subjects were told that they have to do things a little bit

differently today, because the male subjects are not enough. Since they are all men,

they will get to be leader of the task.

The findings reflected that women selected on the basis of preference rather than merit, rated their performance more negative, took less credit for successful outcome, quit leadership roles more easily, and viewed their general leadership skills more deficient. However, the results also demonstrated that the above is not the case for everyone, because the method of leader selection had affects only on women, but not men. This is because women are generally unlikely to be confident about their ability to succeed in a leadership position whereas, men in general terms are confident about their ability in this regard. These findings are very important because they inform us that negative-self perceptions induced by sex-based preferential treatment are not confined to a particular performance, but are more general in character.

What is critical is not the sex of the individual, per se, but the degree of his or her confident ability to perform a job well. In essence, whenever individuals have doubts about their competence, irrespective of whether they are warranted, preferential selection even on the basis of non-work related criteria might have deleterious consequences on their self-perceptions and self-evaluations (Heilman et al., 1987). The findings of this study have important implications on affirmative action implementation.

In addition, two other studies conducted by Heilman, Block and Lukas (1992) investigated whether a stigma of incompetence marks those associated with affirmative action. Study one involved sixty-eight (68) women and sixty-one (61)

men (undergraduates) subjects from three different colleges in the New York City metropolitan area. The independent variables were job-sex type (strongly male or slightly male) and hiree (man, woman, affirmative action). Subjects were informed that they were participating in a study investigating personnel selection and placement process. They were also told that after reviewing a job description and application material of an individual recently hired for the job, they would answer a number of questions about the hiree. The subjects were told that their predictions would be compared with the actual performance of the hirees.

The job-sex type was manipulated by giving two types of information. First, the jobs presented were selected to differ in the degree to which they were perceived to be male sex-type, e.g. electrician being the strongly male-sex-typed and hospital technician the slightly male-sex-typed job. Second, the number of men and women currently employed in that position in the hiring organization was presented in the job description. The electrician job had 8% women and 92% men while the lab technician reported 41% women and 59% men respectively. Hence, the name and the photograph on the application form manipulated the hiree's sex.

At the bottom of the application form there was a space marked "for clerical purposes only" and asking for the hiring decision and the starting date of employment. This served as a vehicle for affirmative action manipulation. In all conditions the word "Hire" appeared in this space accompanied by a starting date. While in the affirmative action conditions, "affirmative action hiree" was also included. Care was taken to ensure that this phrase (affirmative action hiree), which was written in by

hand, was most important to subjects. The manipulation was made sensibly in the context of the task by a statement, which appeared at the end of the job description in the affirmative action conditions. The Metropolitan Hospital Authority is an Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer. In compliance with Affirmative Action Guidelines, "we do not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion or national origin" (Heilman et al., 1992: 537-238).

The findings of this study strongly support the view that a stigma of incompetence arises from the affirmative action label. When led to believe that a woman was an affirmative action hiree, male and female subjects rated her less competent than women not associated with affirmative action, regardless of job type. The affirmative action label exacerbated the negative evaluation of a female hiree's competence when the job was strongly male-sex-typed and she already was disadvantaged because of her sex, thus creating a negative evaluation of a woman hiree's competence when the job was only minimally male-sex-typed. Conversely, when individuals perceive affirmative action to be involved in preferential selection, they also discount the role that qualifications play and assume the hiree was selected solely because of his/her gender or race. These findings demonstrate the apparent sex stereotypes that invariably exist.

Furthermore, study two was a field survey and the respondents provided information about their co-workers. Information about activity, potency, interpersonal characteristics, career progress and assumptions about selection procedure were obtained. Participants were one hundred eighty-four (184) white men from Chicago

and New York City. Each participant was given a questionnaire and told to read the cover page instructions very carefully before completion. The information on the cover page informed the participant that the purpose of the questionnaire was to aid researchers to better understand working people's impressions of the dynamic composition of the American workforce. The primary measures were the presumed role of affirmative action in the hiring decision and perceived competence. The presumed role of affirmative action policies in the hiring decision was assessed with the following item: "To what extent do you think this individual was given this position because of affirmative action Policies?" (Heilman et al., 1992:540). The perceived competence measure was: "All in all, how competently does this individual perform the job" (Heilman et al., 1992:540). Participants also were asked to rate the specific co-worker on interpersonal characteristics and career progress. Respondents were asked to provide demographic information about the co-worker's potency.

The findings supported the idea that a stigma of incompetence accompanies the affirmative action label. Whether male or female, black or white, co-workers were more likely to be viewed as incompetent when their selection was presumed to be based on affirmative action policies than when it was not. If such stigmatisation occurs, it could have extensive consequences for careers of those targeted by affirmative action. "The negative expectations of these individuals that would be spawned by a stigma of incompetence could cause distorted perceptions of their behaviour and work performance and if, internalised by them, could actually create self-fulfilling prophecies that bring about the very same behaviour others expect" (Heilman, et al., 1992, p: 544). Therefore, the adverse impact of affirmative action

label must be recognized and efforts must be put in place to better understand and deal with them. Otherwise, affirmative action objectives will never be met.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the previous studies that have relied on laboratory experimentation have concluded that affirmative action when it involves preferential selection, can have debilitating social psychological effects on beneficiaries unless special care is taken to avoid these risks (Taylor, 1994). According to Taylor (1994) we often question the applicability of the laboratory findings to real beneficiaries of affirmative action on several accounts. Among them is the fact that set aside preferential selection, as simulated in the lab experiments, is illegal for all. Therefore, his study takes a different approach.

Taylor's (1994) study investigated the impact of affirmative action on beneficiaries using a different method: analysis of 1990 GSS data representing African Americans and White female members of the U.S. workforce. Respondents represented a national probability sample of American households; weighted analysis was used throughout, adjusted by household size to represent individuals rather than households. The independent variable was a response to the 1990 GSS question: "Does the place where you work have an affirmative action program or make any special effort to hire and promote minorities" (Davis & Smith, 1990: 446). The dependent measures were eleven social-psychological outcomes assessing the impact of beneficiary status on focal group's namely African-American women and men as well as White women. The outcome measures were based on the following social-psychological aspects such job satisfaction, work by choice, intrinsic work

orientation, and ambition mainly related to occupational life and life satisfaction, health, enthusiasm for life, happiness, helpful, fair, trustworthy and black in-group esteem) outcome measures as well.

The potential moderating variables, as earlier noted by Nacoste (1989), debilitating psychological effects of affirmative action beneficiary status may appear only in those who believe the process that aided them to be unfair. Similarly, Nacoste and Lehman (1987) reported negative effects of preferential selection only among those who were not led to believe that the hypothetical employer in their study was guilty of discrimination. The GSS did not directly measure support for affirmative action or beliefs about employers' history of discrimination. However, the survey did measure the belief that equal opportunity does not exist in the United States, and respondents were asked to assess the extent of job discrimination against Blacks. Because these perceptions are central to the rationale for affirmative action and lie in the general domain, these two measures were used to assess the interaction hypothesis of the earlier researches.

The GSS respondents were asked to register, on a 4-point scale, their agreement or disagreement with the statement: "One of the big problems in this country is that we do not give everyone an equal chance" (Davis & Smith, 1990, p: 423). The interaction of this item with employer affirmative action was assessed for White women and Black respondents. The second GSS measure examined potential moderator by asking a question: "How much discrimination is there that hurts the chances of [Blacks] to get good paying jobs"? (Davis & Smith, 1990: 444). Because

it refers to job discrimination against Blacks, its interaction with employer affirmative action was examined only for the Black sub-sample.

The findings indicated that it is probably inappropriate to assume that different protected groups will react similarly to affirmative action. Positive effects of employment at an affirmative action firm were suggested by these data to exist for the Black sub-sample alone, not for White female employees. Future research may bring new evidence to light, but at this point, conclusions about affirmative action's ill effects on the psychology of its beneficiaries appear to have been hasty. In the representative samples of actual workers examined, employment at affirmative action firms seems to have no negative psychological effects and may, in the case of Black workers, have psychological benefits. Recent research (Taylor, 1991) suggests that resentment widely assumed to be felt by White employees of affirmative action firms may be more mythical than real. So also may be the hypothesized negative psychological impact of affirmative action on its beneficiaries.

Summarising research findings of all the reviewed studies, resistance to affirmative action stems from self-view, workplace attitudes and behaviour. Under many circumstances, preferentially selected individuals show a decrease in at least some dimensions of ability or performance self-evaluation. In addition, preferential treatment is more likely to be judged unfair than merit-based selection. However, Heilman (1994) illustrates that affirmative action results in a negative self-view for the benefiting individual who lacks self-confidence. This means that affirmative action policy does not always produce harmful effects on the individual or create

negative outcomes. The point to remember is that reactions to affirmative action are psychological and emotional, and are based on perceptions of reality, not on reality itself (Heilman, 1994). The key to affirmative action policy is how it is implemented and how it is believed to be implemented.

Taking into cognisance the psychological considerations of affirmative action that need to be addressed, Turner and Pratkanis (1994) advise managers of affirmative action programs to eliminate discriminatory barriers. They state that an affirmative action policy must have the following conditions: Focus efforts away from the recipient and towards removing social barriers; establish unambiguous and focussed qualifications for a selection and promotion; clearly state the criteria so it will be seen as fair by the relevant audience; emphasize the competencies and contributions the recipient can bring; challenge those selected; reinforce the view that affirmative action is not preferential selection; present that change is inevitable; be aware that affirmative action policies do not act in isolation; recognize that affirmative action is not the only tool for overcoming discrimination; monitor programs to test what works.

Any policy that coincides with these goals, in guidelines, will effectively eliminate discriminatory barriers and, over time; will eliminate the need for preferential treatment.

# CHAPTER 3:   ATTRIBUTION THEORY: A FRAMEWORK FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

This study reckons that within the context of discrimination in employment, Attribution Theory would be suitable for the investigation of affirmative action. Attribution Theory suggests that the existence of affirmative action programs may lead individuals to assume that affirmative action beneficiaries are appointed for reasons other than legitimate qualifications for the job (Nortcraft, 1983). This assumption, whether true or not, may fuel inferences of incompetence often associated with the affirmative action target group. Several studies (Heilman and Herlihy, 198; Heilman, Lucas and Block, 1992) have indicated that the incompetence stigma arises from the affirmative action label. The question is, why does this happen? It is against this background that Attribution Theory is used as the theoretical framework for this study, to shed more light on the underlying factors for these assumptions.

In this section I will briefly elaborate on the main features of Attribution Theory and then link this theory to the concept of affirmative action and its psychological relevance.

## 3.1    Main features of Attribution Theory

One of the most amazing features of human beings is that they can explain anything.

No matter the cause, people have a strong need to understand and explain what is going on in their daily lives. Because people must explain, it opens up some interesting possibilities for explanations (attributions). Attribution is the process of assigning causal explanation to our own or others behavior (Howitt et al. 1989). When one sees the term 'attribution', one might think of the term 'explanation' as a synonym.

Attribution Theory originated from Heider (1944). He hypothesized that people perceive behavior as being caused. It is against this background that Heider (1958) advised social psychologists to assume people were naïve or lay scientists who used rational process to explain events. He said that the causes of behavior are perceived as inside or outside of the person and, in some cases, both. People give causal attributions even to inanimate objects.

Often people offer explanations about why things happen in terms of either internal or external attribution. An external attribution assigns causality to an outside agent or force (i.e. behavior has been caused by outside factors). In contrast, internal attribution assigns causality to factors within the person (i.e. attitude, mood or personality). We use causal explanation to understand, predict and control events. Therefore, social psychologists use Attribution Theory to understand causal inferences. One can see attribution as a process of making inferences about behavior. The attribution process is important because many rewards and punishments in society are based upon judgments about what really caused a person to behave in a certain way. In making attributions about behavior, an important goal is to determine

whether the behavior is caused by internal or external factors. For example, a man gets a managerial position - his ability might be seen as a cause, which is internal attribution on the one hand while when a woman gets a managerial position her ability as a cause might be discounted, because the likely explanation could be affirmative action, which is an external attribution on the other. Because people cannot read the mind of others in order to understand their motives, they are forced to rely on causal attributions. In short, attributions can be viewed as an aspect of impression formation as well as inferences that people draw about the causes of events, others' behavior and their own behavior.

Other theorists such as Jones and Davis (1965) and Harold Kelley (1967) expanded on Heider's ideas. For example, Jones and Davis' (1965) Correspondent Inference Theory infers (knowledge and ability) that the observed behavior and the intentions that produced it correspond to some stable underlying qualities within the individual. This implies that the individual has the disposition (aggressive, violent or playful) to act willfully. Hence Harold Kelly's (1967) theory suggests three variables of attribution in terms of distinctiveness (is behavior unique), consistency (does the person or object behave this way in similar circumstances, e.g. drunken behavior) and consensus (would other people behave likewise in similar circumstances).

Attribution Theory is about how people make causal explanations and how they answer questions beginning with *'why'*. Thus, the theory deals with the information people use in making causal inferences and what they do with this information to answer causal questions (Brown, 1999).

Heider (1958) and Weiner (1985) introduced the application of Attribution Theory to psychology focusing on the effects attribution has on an individual's personal actions and his or her attitudes and that of others. Attribution also has an effect on affirmative Action opinions. Certain attributes are ascribed to 'out groups' or minorities in an attempt to come to some sort of social policy decision regarding affirmative action (Nelson, 1999). Such attributions are, in many ways, a mirror of the attributions individuals make when assessing others and themselves.

The causes of the unfortunate circumstances of affirmative action recipients could be seen as internal or external, as well as stable or unstable. For example, the non-target group may see affirmative action target group as being unwilling to work or just lazy, and at fault for their own circumstances rather than the victims of circumstances. Such attributions affect the attitudes of the non-target group toward social programs designed to help the target group. They may not have the same attitude about individuals of their own group. For instance, a white man may see his peer as hard working, ambitious and responsible, ascribing those attributes to the group as a whole, while ascribing opposite attributions to 'out groups', such as black or women.

Attribution Theory seems appropriate in the context of affirmative action because it deals with labeling, e.g. the traits possessed by non-target group members as positive and that of the target group members are negative (Baron & Graziano, 1991). An attribution is not restricted to the labeling of the entire group but also occurs when people are interacting with individual out-group members in specific situations. Several studies have shown that bias exists in the attributions used to explain the

behavior of in- and out-groups. For example, when an in-group member receives something positive, e.g. promotion, it is typically explained in terms of some positive underlying personality traits such as appropriate skills or abilities. In contrast, to an out-group member it tends to be explained in terms of situation factors, such as ease of task, luck or sex. Biased attributions have a tendency to give out-group members less credit for their success and to blame them more for their failures. This is called an "ultimate attribution error" (Pettigrew, 1979). These biases in the perception of labeling of out-group behavior to a large degree can account for the contents of stigmatization of incompetence often associated with affirmative action target group members.

Several studies have assessed the application of Attribution Theory in everyday human decision-making apparatus. These studies also looked into how Attribution Theory is being used to explain attitudes or reactions to certain conditions and why different people react differently to the same predisposing factors or under different circumstances.

Due to the fact that Attribution Theory examines the causal inferences that individuals attach to performance decisions (Feldman, 1981; Lord and Smith, 1983; Weiner, 1985; DeVader, Bateson and Lord, 1986) it is however more concerned with the cognitive perceptions than the underlying reality of events. The theory is more interested in how people use attributions to shape their responses to the objective events they witness. In general the theory models the responses individuals exhibit in terms of three dimensions such as internal-external, controllable-uncontrollable and

stable-unstable (Weiner, 1979).

## 3.2   Affirmative Action and Attribution Theory

In relation to attributions associated with affirmative action, the internal-external dimension of attribution is important.  For example, particularly when it comes to the question of whether a person is hired or promoted because of his or her qualifications or ability, or his/her gender.   The controllable-uncontrollable and stable-unstable dimensions are valuable, too, in that they add further useful information to the attributional distinctions.  For instance, to what extent are people able to exert control over their knowledge, skills and abilities or influence individual's perceptions of them when it comes to affirmative action? The stability-instability dimension introduces a temporal dimension, with regard to the question of whether attributed causes to events are viewed as unique, short-term, long-term or universal. Attributions in the context of affirmative action focus on the distributive justice aspects of the outcomes such as promotion and developmental opportunities (Homans, 1961; Deutsch, 1985).  In fact, attributional perceptions may prove more important than objective conditions (Gioia and Poole, 1984; Thomas, Clark and Gioia, 1993; Ball, Trevino, and Sims, 1994) when it comes to the successful or unsuccessful implementation of affirmative action programmes.

Individuals who are appointed on the basis of affirmative action might suffer discrimination and stigmatization of incompetence that could adversely affect their motivation and productivity.  In principle, Attribution Theory examines the causal

inferences of stigma that arises from the affirmative action label. Therefore, Attribution Theory suggests that the existence of affirmative action programs may lead individuals to assume that an affirmative action appointee was hired because of his or her status (woman or black). For example, Northcraft (1983) conducted an empirical analysis to explore the possibility of affirmative action stigma of incompetence. He took forty (40) graduate students in management to participate in a person perception experiment. These students were given a job description and resumes of individuals who applied for a job. Participants were asked to decide which qualifications summary correspond either to: (1) the new black investment counselor; or (2) the new black affirmative action appointee; or (3) the branch manager's brother-in-law. In addition, the participants were also requested to rank the job applicants for how easy each would be to get along with on the job. As predicted, the participants selected the worst resume in qualifications for an affirmative action appointee. Although, the affirmative action appointee resume was previously screened for suitability it was, however, rated very low. These findings support the widely held perception that when individuals perceive affirmative action to be involved in the selection process, they tend to discount the role that qualifications play and assume the appointee to have been selected solely because of either his or her race or gender.

 Consequently, the importance of the role of qualifications in the decision process may be discounted. The appointee may be assumed to have been irrelevant to the selection process. But, because qualifications are central to selection decision, this assumption, if made, leads to another one that the incumbent is not competent. But if

the appointed individual is truly qualified, the reasoning goes; he or she would have been hired without help from affirmative action (Pettigrew and Martin, 1987 as cited by Heilman et. al 1992). The perceived suspension of ordinary and expected selection decision criteria provides impetus for the inference of incompetence. Association with affirmative action program should exacerbate the negative evaluation of an affirmative action appointee when the job is one for which he or she is ordinary viewed to be sub-optimally qualified. In addition, it will create a negative evaluation of an affirmative action appointee even when none would have occurred in the absence of the association with affirmative action.

Surprisingly, race and gender discrimination in hiring and performance decisions remain a huge barrier for affirmative action. Attributions related to stereotypes are still prevalent and strong that race and gender continues to serve as a major signal of discrimination.

## 3.3    Attributions and stereotypes

In terms of attributions of causality assigned to explain performance decisions within the context of affirmative action, stereotyping seems to be inevitable.   A stereotype is a perceptual tendency that might be based on race, age, gender, ethnic background, social class or occupation. For example, people tend to assume that individuals in certain categories, e.g. black or white, possessed certain traits. Blacks might be stereotyped as poor performers in managerial positions as opposed to whites. Many companies have promoted black executives to positions because of affirmative action,

in spite of their extensive credentials. The stereotype of race and ethnicity has interfered with affirmative action target group opportunity to ascend to high general management positions. Therefore, attributions can play an important role in determining how job performance is interpreted. Evidence from the USA (http://www.keyincarb.com/organi~1/CHAPT4L.HT) showed that ethnic and racial stereotypes indicated that good performance on part of African American managers was associated with help from others (external attribution). While good performance by White American managers was seen to be due to their effort and abilities (internal attribution).

In addition, gender stereotypes are also other important aspects in determining performance decisions. Some available evidence indicates that gender stereotypes are partially responsible for discouraging women from ascending to managerial positions. A series of studies conducted reflected that managers describe men in general, women in general and typical successful middle managers. These studies determined that successful middle managers are perceived as having traits and attitudes that are similar to those generally ascribed to men. Successful managers are seen as more similar to men in qualities such as leadership ability, competitiveness, self-confidence, ambitiousness and objectivity. Stereotypes of successful middle managers do not correspond to stereotypes of women. Granting that stereotypes exist, do they lead to biased personnel decisions and stigmatization? It seems that they appear to exist. For example, researchers asked male bank supervisors to make hypothetical personnel decisions about workers who were described equal except for sex. Women were discriminated against for promotion to a branch manager position.

They were also discriminated against when they requested to attend a professional development conference. In addition, female supervisors were less likely than males to receive support for their request that a problem employee be fired.

The above findings suggest that women suffer from a stereotype that is detrimental to their hiring, development, promotion and salaries. However, there is growing evidence that the detrimental effects of such stereotypes are reduced when decision makers have good information about the qualifications and performance of the candidate. Day-to-day performance is often easy to observe, and gender stereotypes do not intrude on evaluations. However, hiring and promotion decisions might be challenging for the management personnel and prompt them to resort to gender stereotypes in forming impressions about employees' behaviors.

Another type of stereotypes that presents problems in selection and performance decisions is the age stereotype. Knowing that a person falls into a certain age range, people have a tendency to make certain assumptions about the person's physical, psychological, and intellectual capabilities. For example, older workers tend to be viewed as less productive but better capable to perform better under pressure than younger workers. Again, these stereotypes are essentially inaccurate. It seems to appear that such stereotypes can affect decisions regarding hiring, promotion, and skills development. But of course, age stereotypes may have less impact upon personnel decisions when the management has good information about the capabilities of the particular employee in question.

Although assignment of attributions to human' behavior can play an important role in

determining how action is interpreted, there is, however, room for disagreement. Some of these disagreements are explained in terms of bias and errors. Observers often operate in a rational and logical manner in forming attributions about behavior.

## 3.4 Bias and errors in attribution

There is evidence that people do use attribution to organize their information. However, there is also evidence of a wide variety of bias and errors in the way people make attributions (Jones, 1990). These include: fundamental attribution error, actor-observer bias and self-serving bias.

*The fundamental attribution error*

Ross et al., (1972) define the fundamental attribution error as the tendency for people to make internal attributions regarding other people's behavior. The tendency is also observed when people make negative internal attribution inferences for an out-group. This error occurs firstly, because people often discount the strong effects that social roles can have on behavior. Secondly, many people whom we observe are seen in rather constrained, constant situations that reduce our appreciation of how their behavior can change in other situations. For example, laziness and low aptitude might be cited for poor performance, while poor training or lack of support is ignored. In other words, internal explanations for the poor performance will sometimes be made even when external factors are the true cause. Such error may lead to problems of stigmatization and discrimination.

*Actor-observer bias*

In the actor-observer bias people are prone to attribute internal causes to other's people behavior and external causes to their own behavior. Storms (1973) illustrate the actor-observer bias when she showed people videotapes of themselves in conversation with someone else. After the tape, people were asked to explain why the conversation took the form it did. They were likely to make sort of personal attribution that they normally avoid when describing their own behavior. The videotape allowed them to step outside their own selves and see themselves as others would.

*Self-serving bias*

Certain forms of attributions have the capacity to let people feel good or bad about them. For example, take credit and responsibility for successful outcomes and deny credit for failure. This is called self-serving bias. This bias is interesting because it suggests that people will explain the very same behavior differently on the basis of events that happened after the behavior occurred. The self-serving bias can reflect intentional self-promotion or excuse making. However, it is possible to reflect unique information about the person.

In conclusion the application of Attribution Theory to fields such as Industrial Psychology, as it relates to affirmative action, would be beneficial in the areas of personnel decisions. Industrial Psychology, however, benefits by a better

understanding of the implications of Attribution Theory to the human condition and human resources management whilst, better understanding of what attributions people make in the context of affirmative action will help us to implement affirmative action policy better and effectively. This, in the long run, will minimize the obstacles that might affect the long-term success of affirmative action.

## CHAPTER 4:     EMPIRICAL CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how the present empirical study about affirmative action in the Namibian context was designed. Hence, I will explicate briefly the research methodology upon which this study was based. Furthermore, I will describe the selection of the participants and the data generation and evaluation.

## 4.1     Research methodology

Psychological research, like all research in social sciences can be qualitative or quantitative. Both research paradigms cover a wide range of different types of research methods. For example, quantitative research differs from qualitative research in the sense that it originated from natural sciences to study natural phenomena (Myers, 1997). Experiments and survey research are the most characteristic forms of quantitative research. According to Baker (1999), "the findings of both experiments and surveys can be presented in numerical terms, though the meanings of those numbers still need to be interpreted in words" (p. 240). Contrary to quantitative research, the simplest definition of qualitative research involves the fact that the findings of a qualitative study are presented not in numbers, but solely in words (Baker, 1999).

There are various advantages and disadvantages associated with both qualitative and quantitative research. The most common advantages of quantitative research are that the use of numbers allows greater precision in reporting results. Quantitative research

permits the use of powerful methods of mathematical analysis (Reaves, 1992). The advantages of qualitative research are that in most cases it allows a researcher to view behavior in a natural setting without the artificiality found in experimental or survey research. Qualitative research techniques can increase a researcher's depth of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. For example, a person conducting a field observation or focus group discussion might discover facets of a subject that were not considered before the study began (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). However, qualitative research has also disadvantages one has to bear in mind. For instance, sample sizes are generally too small to allow data generalization beyond the selected sample for the particular study. Therefore, reliability of the data can also be a problem. The fact that a researcher conducting qualitative research must become closely involved with the participants, may lead to loss of objectivity during data collection. Finally, if qualitative research is not properly planned, the results might not be of much value.

Despite such disadvantages, the study presented in this thesis was based on the qualitative research paradigm. The qualitative research methodology is of relevance to this type of study because it was the aim of this study to explore specifics on affirmative action within the Namibian context. The use of a qualitative research approach was expected to allow individuals in both the target-group and non-target group of affirmative action, to express their emotions, feelings and experiences with regard to affirmative action.

## 4.2    The participants of the study

Participants for the present study were affirmative action target-group members as defined by the Namibian Affirmative Action Act (i.e. previously racially disadvantaged persons, women, and persons with disabilities) and non-target-group members (i.e. white men) in public, private and parastatal work organizations based in Windhoek.  The participants consisted of six (6) affirmative action target group members, i.e. three (3) men and three (3) women and four (4) non-target group members.  All together, ten (10) participants were investigated.

The present study used judgmental sampling, also called the purposive sampling method.  Baker (1999) defines purposive sample "as a form of non-probability sample in which the subjects selected seem to meet the study needs" (p. 138).  This form of sampling considers the most common characteristics of the individuals the study desires to investigate; thus it tries to figure out where such individuals can be found and then tries to study them. Due to the nature of the study and the participants involved, two stages of sampling were used. The first stage involved the selection of work organizations i.e. four public institutions, three parastatals and three private companies.   Human Resources Departments or Personnel Divisions of these organizations were contacted telephonically. The first ten (10) work organizations that indicated a positive response to the request for an interview were selected. The second stage included the selection of individuals from the identified work organizations.  The requirements for becoming part of the study were as follows: Either belonging to an affirmative action target-group and being employed in

management (middle or high) or supervisory level, however, without necessarily being appointed on the basis of affirmative action; or belonging to the non-target group and being employed on supervisory or management positions. After a brief introduction of the purpose of the study, a request for an interview was forwarded to the potential participants. Again, the selection of the interviewees was based on first come first serve basis.

## 4.3    Data generation

In this study, the interview technique was chosen as the method for data generation to enable participants to express their emotions, attitudes, feelings, and experiences about affirmative action in employment. The interview technique allows the researcher to access information that is not directly observable. In qualitative research, the interview is perceived as being closer to a conversation than to a question-and-answer session. Steiner Kvale (1996) explores what he calls the "semi-structured life-world interview," which aims "to obtain descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee" (p. 5-6).

The interview is a common method or technique of gathering data from individuals or even groups of people (Shaughnessy et al., 2000). There are various advantages of the interview technique used in psychology. First, it allows more flexibility in asking questions than a questionnaire. For example, the respondent could always receive clarification in case questions are unclear. The interviewer could also follow up on incomplete or ambiguous questions. Secondly, the interviewer tends to have control

over the order of questions and can ensure that all respondents complete the questions. Thirdly, the interview has a high response rate compared to mail or surveys. On the other hand, the interview technique has disadvantages. The use of trained interviewers can be expensive in terms of both money and time. An interviewer bias is maybe the biggest disadvantage. This happens when the interviewer tries to adjust the wording of a question to fit the respondent. Answers can also be affected by the respondent's reaction to the interviewer's sex, race, social class, age, clothing, physical appearance, or accent (Mouton & Marais, 1996).

There are different types of interviews. The structured interview is put in such a way that both interviewer and interviewee cannot change the set of questions in the interview guideline. The interviewer has to follow the order of questions regardless of the interviewer's responses. The interviewee may only answer the questions asked and not elaborate further than the questions allow. The semi-structured interview allows more dynamics in the interview. Here the interviewer has more flexibility in asking questions in the sense that he or she can adjust the order of questions in the interview guideline in relation to the progress of the interview and to the responses of the interviewee. The semi-structured interview is thus neither restricted in content nor direction of the interviewee's answers (Shauhnessy et al., 2000).

Therefore, a semi-structured interview was chosen as the most suitable method for this qualitative study. The fact that a semi-structured interview is exploratory by nature, it granted the affirmative action target-group and the non-target group (see Appendix) members the opportunity to elaborate freely on their experiences and

perceptions on affirmative action in employment.

Two interview guidelines were developed, one for the affirmative action target-group and another one for the non-target group. These interview guidelines were based on the literature review and the theoretical framework of this study. Kovacs (1985) defines an interview guide as set of written questions used in a face-to-face interview by the interviewer to the interviewee. The format of the interview guidelines involved the following: A brief introduction and the purpose of the study, followed by assurance of confidentiality concerning all information gathered. In the same vain, a request for permission to record the interview was put forward. The guidelines included items on nine (9) specific variables and concepts in the context of affirmative action. These included questions concerning the general perceptions of affirmative action, experience of affirmative action in the workplace, issues of stigmatization and coping, job satisfaction, emotional experience, self-perception and self-evaluation, perception of affirmative action appointees and demographic information (cf. Appendix A). Various sub-questions such as "why" or "if so in what way" for clarification or probing were prepared and asked in cases where the respondent's responses did not fully cover the concepts investigated. The interview was recorded on an audio tape recorder and transcribed verbatim.

## 4.4    Data analysis and evaluation

Qualitative research makes use of content analysis. In a review of various definitions of content analysis, Ole Holsti (1969: 3-5) outlined three common requirements.

These are first objectivity, which "stipulates that each step in the research process must be carried out on the basis of explicitly formulated rules and procedures" (p. 3). The second requirement is systematic procedures that ensure that "the inclusion and exclusion of content or categories is done according to consistently applied rules" (p. 4). This means that content which fails to support the researcher's hypotheses must not be left out and categories for data coding must be applied consistently. Hence, the last requirement of content analysis is generality. This "requires that the findings must have theoretical relevance" (p. 5).

The interview transcripts in this study were evaluated through Phillip Mayring's Qualitative Content Analysis (cited in Plattner, 2001). Qualitative Content Analysis is a systematic evaluation method, which involves amongst other techniques, summarizing content analysis. This technique helps us "to summarize contents of verbal material into categories related to the research question and its theoretical framework. It is the aim of this technique to reduce the material in such a way that the essence of the content remains. As part of the process of evaluation the verbal material is rendered increasingly abstract without losing the original content" (Plattner, 2001:6).

On the basis of the elaborate steps of this technique, the responses of each of the ten interviewees we paraphrased for each variable, i.e. the essence of the answers was extracted while those parts of the text, which did not carry content, were left out. These paraphrases were generalized then reduced to a system of categories reflecting the responses of all ten (10) interviewees as one result per variable.

**CHAPTER 5:     THE RESULTS**

The purpose of this chapter is to collate, analyze and evaluate the generated data. This will be done in accordance with previous findings cited in the literature review as well as the theoretical framework.   It should be kept in mind that this study aimed to explore the psychological effects of affirmative action on the target and non-target groups in public, private and parastatal organizations. The contents of the interviews with regard to the interviewees' affirmative action general perceptions, experience at the workplace, emotional experience towards affirmative action, stigmatization and coping, job satisfaction, perception of affirmative action appointees and self-perception/self-evaluation will be featured.

**5.1     Demographic information**

Tables 1 and 2 below show the demographic information of the study participants (target and non-target group).

**Table 1: Affirmative action Target Group**

| Interviewee Randomly Allotted Number | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Parameters Assessed* | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **8** |
| **Gender** | male | male | female | male | female | female |
| **Position** | Deputy Director Human Resources Planning | Executive Assistant Organizational Performance & Operations | Chief Control Officer | Manager Finance | Training Officer | Floor Manager |
| **Education** | BTech in Management & Education | MBA | Post Graduate Diploma in Education | Hon Degree in Finance | Degree in Industrial Psychology | Grade 12 |
| **Age** | 47 | 34 | 37 | 35 | 35 | 33 |

**Table 2: Affirmative action Non-target Group**

| Interviewee Randomly Allotted Number | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parameters Assessed | **6** | **7** | **9** | **10** |
| **Gender** | male | male | male | male |
| **Position** | Senior Personnel Officer | Information Technology Technician | Planning Engineer Technology Department | Corporate Manager |
| **Education** | Grade 12 | Diploma in Information Technology | High Diploma in Electronic Light Current | BCom Degree |
| **Age** | 38 | 29 | 41 | 35 |

The interview guidelines assessed four main categories for each interviewee. These included gender, employment position, level of education and age. As depicted by both tables, the mean age of all interviewees is 36 years. The target group interviewees consisted of three males and three females. Five of the interviewees possessed tertiary education, while one has Grade 12. All the six interviewees are either in middle or high management positions. The non-target group consisted of four males. From these four interviewees, three have tertiary qualifications, while one has secondary education. They are all in middle or high management positions. The interviewees from both the affirmative action target and non-target groups have

similar characteristics in terms of their qualifications and employment positions.

## 5.2    General perception of affirmative action

Interviewees were asked about their general perceptions, more specifically what comes to their mind when they hear the term affirmative action and whether they believe that it is a good strategy to redress past discrimination in employment. Table 3 presents a summary of the responses of the target and the non-target groups. Thus their responses are classified in main categories applicable to both groups.

**Table 3: General perceptions of interviewees about affirmative action**

| Target-group | Non-target group |
|---|---|
| **1. Affirmative action as an Act**<br>☐ It is a good policy<br>☐ ☐☐very new concept<br>☐ People are complied to affirm<br><br>**2. Redress past discrimination in employment**<br>☐ Blacks advancement in employment<br>☐ Jobs for previously disadvantaged people<br>☐ Women still not represented in high positions<br><br>**3. Equality**<br>☐ Equal employment opportunities<br>☐ Equal treatment<br>☐ Same qualifications same chance to get a job<br><br>**4. Implementation of affirmative action**<br><br>☐ Affirmative action cannot solve all past problems | **1. Affirmative action policy**<br>☐ It is a good policy<br>☐ ☐☐very new concept<br><br>**2. Redress past discrimination in employment**<br>☐ Jobs for previously disadvantaged people<br>☐ Reverse discrimination<br><br>**3. Equality**<br>☐ Equal employment opportunities<br>☐ Equal treatment<br>☐☐☐☐☐☐☐Fairness<br><br>**4. Implementation of affirmative action**<br>☐ Affirmative action is good if done correctly and fairly in away<br>☐ Correct measurement and procedures to employ the right people in the right positions<br>☐ Consistency in the implementation of affirmative action<br>☐ Loss of knowledge due to reverse discrimination |

As it can be seen in table 3, it is clear that both groups (target & non-target) mentioned redressing of past discriminatory practices in employment and equality or equal employment opportunities for the previously disadvantaged people as the

basic ingredients of affirmative action. In some instances the target-group and the non-target group have similar or different views on the same category. For instance, interviewee No 3 (target-group) said the following:

> "Mmm affirmative action in Namibia is a new concept it was introduced to redress past discrimination, you know the black people were racially disadvantaged in terms of social attention, in terms of education so affirmative action is intended to address the past is … equality" (p. 1 interviewee No 3, target group).

Interviewee No 8 (target group) had a similar perception. He said:

> "What comes to my mind …I think that affirmative action is very new concept to all Namibians on both sides. I think it is a good thing if it is done in the correct and fair way … … I am for affirmative action I must say" (p. 1 interviewee No 8, target group).

The interviewees of the non-target group indicated similar perceptions about affirmative action in general. For example, interviewee No 7 (non-target group) said:

> " I think affirmative action is the right thing to do if it is implemented in the right way and if not becoming reverse discrimination or reverse affirmative action racism … " (p. 1 interviewee No 7, non-target group).

60

Interviewee No 10 (non-target group) indicated following:

> "Okay I would say affirmative action is introduced to give equal opportunities to those people who have not had those opportunities before. Affirmative action is creating an environment for them to compete at an equal basis with others in working environment for a particular post" (p. 1 interviewee No 10, non-target group)

It is very interesting to note that the target-group's and the non-target group's general perceptions about affirmative action do not differ completely. One can say that the interviewees both from the target and non-target groups are of the opinion that affirmative action is needed to rectify continued exclusion and marginalization. However, the non-target group mentioned reverse discrimination as a potential threat if affirmative action implementation is not done correctly despite acknowledgement of past discriminatory practices in employment.

In the same vain, the interviewees from both groups indicated that affirmative action is a good strategy in terms of redressing employment past discrimination despite that it might not solve all the problems experienced and that it also left the other group behind. In the following quotations from the interviews, two interviewees (target & non-target group) expressed their personal views as follows:

> "If it goes about equality, yes, affirmative action is not a thing that can just take away all the past or bad things that happen like as I said if it

can equalize the power base in employment market yes, but it can not

solve all the problems" (p. 1 interviewee No 5, target group).


"… Well I think so yes, yes it is a good thing but my view is that it

should stop somewhere and my personal view is also that it should

have stop already. But now I feel that the balance hangs more over to

the other side again. If one look at the numbers in public organizations

for example, I think you will have very small number of a specific

group while in the other group you have the majority. So I think it was

a good legislation to correct those wrongs but I think it reach the point

now where it becomes … it just goes over to the other side" (p. 1

interviewee No 6, non-target).


From these responses one could reckon that despite the fact that both target and non-target group members are taking into cognizance the fact that affirmative action is a tool to redress past discriminatory practices in employment, it is still evident that some think that affirmative action is creating another gab thus compromises equal employment opportunities. From the interviewees' responses, one could depict two factors that seem to be an issue of concern.  One is the longevity of its implementation and whether the right people are affirmed.  The second concern is the balance between preferential treatment and equal employment opportunity for both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries with limited deleterious consequences.  The evolution of such concern could evoke feelings of bitterness and uneasiness between the two groups.  These feelings might lead to the belief that affirmative action is

merely shrinking the employment opportunities of one group in an attempt to correct the past practices. Alternatively, if taken further it may be perceived that the non-target group has more merit than beneficiaries of affirmative action and that, as a matter of fairness, they are also entitled to the position for which they applied.

Still under the general perception about affirmative action, the target-group interviewees expressed the discrimination they experienced in employment in terms of their gender, color and ethnicity. All the interviewees indicated that they have experienced discrimination in one or another time, particularly because of their status, i.e. gender or sex and race. For example, one said:

> "I am a woman yes, for example … you can be in the same job as a male counterpart but you might be more qualified and receive less payment. They view you as a lesser person because you are a woman. … As I said you will be in the same position as a male person with same grading but because of your gender your salary will be less than of man. If you have like apply for promotion it is more likely given to a male person. This is so because of the belief that women sometimes are going away for maternity leave, stuff like that" (p. 1 interviewee No 5, target group).

Again interviewee No 3 (target group) said:

> "Like in terms of race you know whites have discriminated blacks on

the basis of their black color and all the benefits were given to them. Employment high positions were occupied by white people, while blacks were given lower positions even though they had similar qualifications" (p. 1 interviewee No 3, target group).

Another interviewee expressed the same feeling as follows:

"I think color and ethnicity because I am black and previously it was white minority government so I did not get opportunities in education even in employment, for example in terms of salary and promotion" (p. 1 interviewee No 1, target group).

Despite the fact that all interviewees indicated clearly that they were discriminated against, it appeared that women experienced detrimental effects with regard to occupancy of management positions compared to their male counterparts. The advent effect of this is still noticed.

Interestingly, one person said that despite the fact that she was aware of or had heard about past discriminatory practices in the workplace, she personally never experienced it.

All in all, many were not specific about discrimination in the interview. They talked more in general than about themselves. The non-target group however, was not interviewed for this specific question.

## 5.3 Experience of affirmative action at the work place

The target group interviewees were asked whether they had been appointed as affirmative action candidates for their current position. Of the six interviewees belonging to the target group, five emphasized that they were not affirmative action appointees. In their interviews, it became obvious that they did not want to be regarded as affirmative action appointees. They emphasized that they got their positions because of their qualifications. Interviewee No 1, for instance, said the following: "People nowadays are becoming very angry when said they are affirmative action appointees. But I do not think so because I have the qualifications and experience. However, when it comes to appointment in management cadre I think that is affirmative action. But also I think the qualifications and experience I had contributed much more" (p. 1 interviewee No 1, target group).

Another expression of interviewee No 3 was:

"Basically not, I got this position as qualifying for it because the post was advertised and I applied and was called for an interview … they selected those who meet the requirements … so I got this position" (p.1 interviewee No 3, target group).

Similarly, interviewee No 5 expressed a similar opinion, which was:

"No I worked my way up" (p. 1 interviewee No 5, target group).

Despite the interviewees' responses of not being appointed on the basis of affirmative action in their current position, they were also asked whether they would like to be appointed as affirmative action candidates. It appears clearly from their responses that none of them would like to be appointed on the basis of affirmative action. For example, interviewee No 2 said:

"I do not really like to be appointed on the basis of affirmative action because people question your abilities" (p. 1 interviewee No 2)

However, one of the interviewees who did not explicitly indicate that he is not an affirmative action appointee although not saying that he is one, emphasized that he would not mind being an affirmative action appointee although under certain conditions:

"… I won't mind to be appointed as an affirmative action candidate because it would give me an opportunity to be exposed to certain job environment say if I can be appointed as a CEO in a parastatal which will be a new environment to me but perhaps the experience I won't have for that position so but people who apply might be few blacks and lot of whites than I do not mind to be appointed as an affirmative action" (p. 1-2 interviewee No 1, target group).

These quotations portray that being regarded as an affirmative action appointee

evoked emotions ranging from positive optimistic to hostile rejection or anger. It was interesting to realize from the interviewees' responses that commitment to affirmative action positively related positive experiences with affirmative action and negatively related to negative experiences with affirmative action. Once again, the interviewees from the target group emphasized their qualifications to be the forefront of their appointments but not affirmative action. In a way their responses seem to be surprising because they link affirmative action to inadequate credentials. Certainly, the association with affirmative action can eventually lead to impaired self-esteem. As found in the literature, unwanted association with affirmative action seems to have invalidated destructive perception on an individual.

The interviewees were further probed about change in working relationship specifically with their supervisors, subordinates or colleagues since the implementation of affirmative action policy. Obviously the interviewees reflected upon different points of view on the basis of their understanding and individual perception of change. For example, four of the interviewees indicated that they did not notice any change in relationship neither with their supervisors neither with their subordinates. Whilst only two interviewees said that they noticed some degree of change in relationship with their supervisors. For instance, interviewee No 1 said:

> "… I have, let me say I have a white supervisor but the relationship
>
> definitely changed there is no discrimination, you know he helps me in
>
> my job, I get training where I lack skills, so I think the relationship in
>
> terms of the question you asked with my supervisor I am quite happy
>
> with that" (p. 2 interviewee No 1, target group).

To add to the above response, interviewee No 3's (target group) perception of change in relationship was more ascribed to gender rather than to general supervisor-colleague working relationship. She said:

> "I can say that there are some changes because now we are also considered as human beings who have equal rights. If you look at our office not including myself we have now a combination of five women and three men which means that they also consider that women can make contribution as men" (p. 2 interviewee No 3, target group).

Nonetheless, two interviewees emphasized that the implementation of affirmative action caused change in relationship with their subordinates or colleagues. For example, interviewee No 2 had the following to say:

> "I think it changed because there was other perception. For example my subordinates all of them were whites but as time goes that perception has changed about me as a person. They looked more on my output e.g. competencies and abilities to perform certain jobs. At the beginning they view me as a typical affirmative action candidate, like young black, obviously with no skills or qualifications. But as time goes on their whole perception changed. They happened to know more about me and more about my qualifications, experiences and output in the workplace so their whole perception changed" (p. 2 interviewee No 2, target group).

Interviewee No 4 had the following to report:

> "… If you refer to our company,  … that [affirmative action] yes, of
> course, affected our white colleagues very tremendously so that some
> of them actually left" (p. 2 interviewee No 4, target group).

From the interviewees' responses as it relates to affirmative action and working relationship one can see different individual reactions. These differences might be attributed to previous positive or negative experiences with affirmative action or their understanding of affirmative action, as well as personal character. Despite the fact that the nature and reasons attributable to different factors, affirmative action might have strained harmonious relationships between the beneficiaries and the non-beneficiaries.  However, in a way, affirmative action paved a way for people to be somehow cautious about discriminatory practices, and has thus enhanced better working relationships in the labor market.

In order to assess the kind of perception the supervisors, subordinates or colleagues had about the affirmative action target group, the interviewees were asked whether they think their supervisors, subordinates or colleagues saw them as affirmative action appointees and, if yes, how this made them feel and if not, why not. As expected many interviewees objected to such thoughts. For example, four interviewees denied clearly that their co-workers think they are affirmative action appointees.   Only one indicated a temporary thought, which was, however, wiped away latter. However, one admitted explicitly the existence of such a belief among

his co-workers. The following quotations illustrate some of the interviewees' reactions:

"That is a very difficult question. Affirmative action in this position where I am now is, you see let me put it this way: In Government so far up to now even before the Act there were not a lot of blacks in management, in one way I can say, yes people see me because [as an affirmative action appointee but] they know that I have the qualifications … maybe a question around experience in this job" (p. 2 interviewee No 1, target group).

On the sub-questions how does this make you feel? He said:

"I am okay with that … even if they feel I am an affirmative action appointee I do not have any problem with that because I am very confident. I think I am informed and it is even a challenge because my job is quite a new one, so people should also learn there is also another part of it" (p. 2 interviewee No 1, target group).

On the contrary, interviewee No 2 did not regard himself as an affirmative action appointee, and thus, this did not bother him. Interviewee No 4 was of the following opinion:

"No definitely not. Because I believe that I am very well qualified. Let me just quickly clarify why I am saying no; there is a feeling in the

corporate market that whenever you are an affirmative action candidate you do not necessarily possess certain qualities, qualities of experience and qualities of academic qualifications, now I do have both so I do not refer to me as an affirmative candidate and I hope my colleagues also not" (p. 2 interviewee No 4, target group).

From these quotations affirmative action seems to be a very complex phenomenon and because of its complexity people tend to have different perceptions, varying from positive to negative. Despite the subjective experience of people, it is interesting, however, to realize that those affirmative action target groups avoid vividly talking freely about the perception of others. It appears to be a very sensitive issue to discuss or talk about because people seem to be very hesitant.

Furthermore, on the component of experience of affirmative action at the workplace the four interviewees from the non-target group were asked whether they had experienced any reverse discrimination so far at their workplace. Their responses indicated similar and dissimilar views of reverse discrimination. For example, two of the interviewees stated that they encounter discrimination mostly when it comes to promotion and appointments in specific posts. Nonetheless, interviewee No 10 indicated mixed thoughts of awareness about discrimination. He also ascribed the complaints about discrimination to lack of people's proper information on the entire affirmative action policy. The interviewee also claimed that he had heard of some complaints of unhappiness with certain appointments, but had personally not yet experienced discrimination. The following quotations illustrate the interviewees'

points of views on their experiences:

> "I was in a managerial position and later on, [because of] the affirmative action appointments, some titles changed to technician instead of manager. They took all the benefits of manager position so that was in that way" (p. 1 interviewee No 7, non-target group).

Interviewee No 6 had a similar view, which was stated as follows:

> "I said that at one stage I know that I was nominated for a specific post. But when it reached the place or people it should have been recommended, then it was sent back and said, now affirmative action should be applied so in that sense, yes I felt the consequences" (p. 1 interviewee No 6, non-target group).

However, interviewee No 9 did not experience any reverse discrimination so far. He stated that when interviewed for the current position he was informed that affirmative action was involved, thus, he will be considered only if there is no capable affirmative action target group member applying for the same position. He managed to get the job. He also pointed out that he would never apply for any other position since he was happy in the position. Despite the fact that the interviewee is of the opinion that he did not yet experience reverse discrimination, his response seems to be doubtful due to uncertainty or what will happen in future.

It is interesting to note from the quotations that feelings of reverse discrimination might be perceived as a threat to affirmative action non-target members in terms of employment opportunities and advancement. The detection of such feelings is of utmost importance to avoid negative reactions towards affirmative action policy and overall the harmonious working relationship between target and non-target group members. Evidently, it was found for example in the literature that harmonious relations between targeted and non-targeted groups of affirmative action can only be expected when both have positive reactions to the affirmative action program.

## 5.4    Emotional reactions towards affirmative action

The interviewees of both target and non-target groups were asked in the interview whether they feared that their personal career could be jeopardized because of affirmative action. Table 4 shows the summary of responses provided by the affirmative action target and non-target groups on questions dealing with their personal career. To elucidate their responses, they are grouped in five categories.

**Table 4:** **Fear of affirmative action jeopardizing personal career of target and non-target group.**

---

**1. Managerial positions**

- Affirmative action helps people to move into management levels

- Exposure to managerial positions

- Opportunity for suitably qualified women to climb the ladder

- Poor representation of black women in managerial positions

**2. Discrimination**

- Pressure for promotion

**3. Qualifications, experience and skills**

- Specialized experience always needed

- Good performance

- Continuous upgrading of skills

**4. Increased competition**

- Not easy as in the past to find jobs

**5. Replacement of affirmative action**

- If not reaching its specified targets, change to other strategies

---

As depicted in the table above, it is apparent that the interviewees, both from the target and non-target group to some extent fear, or already have experienced jeopardy of their career as a result of affirmative action. Hence, others said that affirmative action seems to be a vehicle to advancement or to new opportunities. The irony is that some of the interviewees from the target group expressed, with great concern, possible negative effects that affirmative action might impose on their careers. These

were indicated as a consequence resulting from discrimination of men against women and black women against white women.

For example, in the interview the interviewees expressed their points of view as follows:

Interviewee No 2 said"

> I think it has been already jeopardized. You know that one need certain competencies to go into certain levels of organization and once you achieved that level of competencies you should compete at that level. You are discriminated because they have to appoint a woman in the organization. I felt I was discriminated because of the affirmative action candidate that have to be appointed in the organization while I feel that I am competent enough to grow higher in the organization, so my career have been jeopardized" (p. 3 interviewee No 2, target group).

Contrary to interviewee No 2, interviewee No1 said:

> "Not at all because affirmative action is exposing me to managerial positions" (p. 4 interviewee No 1, target group).

In addition, interviewee No 3 had the following to say:

> "I do not feel that my personal career could be jeopardized because for me affirmative action is an opportunity for women. We are in the favorite position. If posts arise, preferences are given to women those who are suitably qualified so our chances are higher to climb the ladder so I do not fear" (p. 4 interviewee No 3).

Two interviewees from the non-target group did not differ significantly in their views to the responses of the target group. For example, interviewee No 9, said:

> "I do not think so. I am very technically minded. I am specialized and I think that my type of experience will always be needed in this country whether it is in this company or another company. I think as long as I am good in what I am doing, should be able to find jobs out there that is the same with other white colleagues, [they] will also be able to move out of this company into another company. Maybe not as easy as in the past but if you have what is required out there I still think that you can find a job out there that is how I see it" (p. 2 interviewee No 9, non-target group).

Interviewee No 10 was of the opinion that:

> "I think to an extent yes, we are currently feeling it that the pressure is especially on white men. The pressure is becoming more and more on this people, especially as far as promotions are concerned and application for new jobs is becoming a big competition out there" (p. 2 interviewee No 10, non-target group).

These quotations indicate that despite the attempt of affirmative action to redress imbalances in employment caused by unjust labor practices, it seems that through this process other problems are created such as a feeling of hurt or backlash for some individuals. Hence it is apparent that each interviewee interpreted the issue of personal career in different ways.

Furthermore, the interviewees were asked whether they were sometimes afraid that they might not be able to perform well because others saw them as affirmative action appointees, and what they do in such a situation. This question was only asked to the target group interviewees to assess whether the perception of being affirmative action appointees had a positive or negative impact on their performance. To that, most of the interviewees' responses were more directed towards their abilities to perform well as well as their competencies. They also reflected a positive self-regard in the sense of having required qualifications and competencies and not merely affirmative action appointees. For instances in their responses they said the following:

"Yes because we think a man can do better sometimes. I try to tell myself that I can do well and even better and I try to perform better" (p. 3 interviewee No 8, target group).

Another interviewee had the following to say:

"Not once, not in future, I think I am quite competent" (p. 3 interviewee No 2, target group)

Interviewee No 4 was also of the same opinion as interviewee No 2, and said:

"Not necessarily because I do not regard myself as an affirmative action candidate … (p. 3 interviewee No 4, target group).

Interviewee No 1 said:

"I feel comfortable and do not have any problem with affirmative action because in these five years I perform all my tasks very well" (p. 4 interviewee No 1, target group).

Having had a closer look at these quotations, one can note that, because the interviewees did not regard themselves as affirmative action appointees, their performance does not seem to be affected. They also reported to feel comfortable simply because their performance, according to them, was not bad. Thus they did not

doubt their abilities and competencies to perform their tasks well. The fact that these interviewees did not in the first place, regard themselves as having got their positions on the handouts of affirmative action, their performance or abilities to perform were not affected per se. Considerable evidence from previous studies has shown that preferential selection can trigger a ferocious cycle of negative self-regard for people targeted for favored-treatment irrespective of their qualifications, even though merit should be the sole basis of selection.

## 5.5 Stigmatization and coping

During the course of the interview, the interviewees were asked to respond to three different questions about their individual opinions regarding stigmatization, perception of incompetence and feelings of being undermined. In the same vain, the interviewees were also asked to explain their coping mechanisms. One of the questions was as follows: "Sometimes people believe that affirmative action appointees are not competent enough for their job. Have you experienced such beliefs at your workplace?" Of the six target group interviewees, four of the interviewees supported the perception of incompetence often associated with affirmative action appointees while only one interviewee gave an indication of somehow agreeing with the other interviewees, even though not directly. The other interviewees did not answer the question. For example, interviewee No 2 responded as follows:

> "Yes, and that is true, there are lot of companies that do appoint
> affirmative action candidates who are not competent for their job but

they have to appoint because they are forced to do so by the law" (p. 2 interviewee No 2, target group).

Interviewee No 8 was of a similar opinion, and said:

"Not directly here at my workplace but with friends I hear that affirmative action candidates get appointed because of being a candidate and they were not really qualified that is why I said earlier I think it is fair that qualifications count still" (p. 2 interviewee No 8, target group).

Interviewee No 5 said:

"You will get people that have the highest qualifications but they lack the practice to do the job. They had worked for number of years in certain positions but if you move them to another position, on paper they worked perfectly, they can do the job, they have experience and qualifications and everything, but when you put them in the job they cannot do the job, they have all the right stuff but they cannot do the job" (p. 2 interviewee No 5, target group).

Additionally, interviewee No 4 responded that:

"There are some cases were appointees were appointed based on

affirmative action now I am not referring to blacks only, also white women. There is a lack of quality characteristics" (p. 2 interviewee No 4, target group).

Interviewee No 1 was of a different opinion he said:

"There are some … key performance areas which we are not competent with because of previous dispensation. We were not exposed to that so we have to learn or get training into that … there are some lack of skills in some areas not necessarily incompetence but I see it as a lack of skills in certain areas because of dispensation" (p. 3 interviewee No 1, target group).

It is fascinating to notice, from the quotations, the differences in people's perception about affirmative action appointees or rather the target group when it comes to the label of incompetence often associated with affirmative action generally. The interesting part is that some of the members of the target group of affirmative action also hold the same belief of incompetence on the part of some other appointees, but not necessarily the non-target group members. Whether the stigma of incompetence is true or not the crux of the matter is that such misconceptions do exist, and thus, need to be dealt with. As found earlier in the literature and the theoretical framework, there is a label or perception of incompetence mostly associated with affirmative action beneficiaries. In this investigation, the same perception of incompetence appeared to be visible even with lack of clear substantiation.

In addition to the question of incompetence, the interviewees were also asked how they react when they get an impression of being perceived as incompetent and whether they have experienced any discrimination because of affirmative action, e.g. being looked down upon. As expected, the interviewees' reactions were based on their experiences and personality characteristics. Due to the fact that most of them claimed not to be affirmative action appointees it was difficult to comment on how they react when being perceived as incompetent. However, some indicated that they were anticipating a negative perception from the white colleagues even without association with affirmative action. For example, quotations from the interviewees show their responses as follows:

"I was at ease right from the beginning because I knew that they will have negative perception, especially when white people [are] much older than you there will be such a perception … I try to make clear out a number of things. I try to involve them to make them to know who I am, what is my background, where do I come from what do I believe in and what do I not believe in and assure them as time goes" (p. 2 Interviewee No 2, target group).

Meanwhile another one said:

"I have a very strong character. When I have weak points I work on it. There were a lot of areas I was very weak on, for example, my writing skills in the past were not so good but I have improved a lot. People

knew about that but I was not scared I was not sitting in a corner I was

really coming out and worked very hard … self study helped me a lot"

(p. 3 interviewee No 1, target group).

It is, however, clear from the target group responses that an overall stigma of incompetence is apparent towards those individuals hired as a result of affirmative action policies, in particular those who lacks self-confidence.

Furthermore, the interviewees from the target group were asked, whether they think they would like their job more if they would not be seen as affirmative action appointees. Again, the responses were guided by their subjective understanding of affirmative action and how they relate themselves to affirmative action. As indicated earlier, the interviewees emphasized the fact that they were not affirmative action appointees despite of their acceptance that affirmative action opens up opportunities for previously disadvantaged people. From his or her responses, one could assume that nobody seems to like getting a job obtained with the assistance of affirmative action.

Nonetheless, the non-target group interviewees were also asked about how they cope with the implementation of affirmative action. The question was specific about what they could do to prevent or minimize the consequences of affirmative action on their career. Two of the interviewees emphasized the fact that, as individuals, they do not posses the mandate to change their situations because affirmative action is a policy that one has to comply with. For that reason there is nothing they can do to prevent

any possible consequences they might face or encounter. Another interviewee was of a different opinion and emphasized that optimum performance; adequate qualifications and specialized expertise might be one of the ways to surmount the consequences of affirmative action.

## 5.6    Self-Perception/Self-Evaluation

The interviewees of both target and non-target groups of affirmative action were asked how important they viewed their own experiences and competencies.  Table 5 shows the summary of their responses.

**Table 5: Responses on personal experiences and competencies**

| Target group | Non-target group |
|---|---|
| **1. Importance of competencies and experiences** <br><br> - Valuable competencies and experiences <br><br> - Put the company in good status and better future <br><br> - Develop people | **1. Importance of competencies and experiences** <br><br> - Important to have certain kind of abilities and competencies <br><br> - Long-term experience <br><br> - Technological and technical minded company <br><br> - Company tries to keep us because of scarcity of technical    people <br><br> - Not many of us are around <br><br> **2. Qualifications** <br><br> - Qualifications are a good platform |
| **2. Qualifications** <br><br> - Qualified and highly experienced in the    profession <br><br> - Not appointed because of any favor | **3. Expertise** <br><br> - Advise large organizations with highly qualified staff <br><br> -Add knowledge to business <br><br> **4. Training** <br><br> - Gain knowledge, experience and expertise along side years of on job training. |

As becomes apparent in the table, the interviewees appear to have positive self-regard about themselves despite the negative associations made with regard to affirmative

action, in the case of the target group. For instance, all interviewees regarded their experiences, qualifications and expertise as being very valuable assets for their respective work organizations. These are based on the person's own subjective evaluation, determined by his or her expectations of affirmative action in a personal capacity. As a matter of fact competence considerations are essential in selection decision-making.

For the target group the interviewees were asked whether they think they would have gotten their current position without affirmative action. As indicated earlier, all the interviewees did not relate their appointment to affirmative action. They thought that their qualifications and suitability was the only contributing factor. The interviewees' responses coincide with previous research findings, which suggested the consideration of qualification and the role it played in selection decision.

## 5.7 Perception of affirmative action appointees

On the one hand, interviewees particularly from the target group were asked how competent they perceived other affirmative action appointees to be, generally. Their responses were not surprising since they had mixed perceptions of affirmative action appointees in terms of competence and incompetence. For example, four interviewees were of the opinion that affirmative action appointees are not competent and were only appointed because of their sex, color, or ethnicity in order to comply with the principle of affirmative action policy. For instance, interviewee No 2 expressed the following:

"… There are certain guidelines in the profession that need to be put not in the hands of profession but at certain level in the organization. For example, you need at least a master's degree or matric plus five years experience as a basic requirement, because those also lead to a certain output resulting in total organization performance. But if you appoint someone with matric plus three years of experience [who does not meet the necessary requirements for that specific job] only to reach a certain number of people that have to be appointed on the basis of affirmative action. Not to talk bad about these people but they are not qualified and their level of competencies is not developed. Thus, their level of functioning is not productive. Therefore, affect the total organization performance and also causes conflicts between subordinates and the management system because as a head of department … if you are unable to overlook my work I will take you for nothing. I can fool you the way I want and manipulate you because I am controlling you not you controlling me … "(p. 4 interviewee No 2, target group).

Similarly, No 8 said:

"There are mixes I think a lot of them are competent but unfortunately you also get not very competent ones that have just put into positions because of affirmative action" (p. 4 interviewee No 8, target group).

87

Nevertheless, interviewee No 4 emphasized lack of experience and support to be in the forefront of incompetence. He said:

"… There is a lack of experience in terms of years working in the same environment and there is a lack of qualities in terms of academic qualifications but more importantly in terms of experience. This is something that needs to be work on. Us who have gained the knowledge, experience and skills over the years have to take the hands of those who lack knowledge and do it in a better way" (p. 3 interviewee No 4, target group).

Along the same lines, interviewee No 1expressed the following:

"… When it comes to … top management people are coming very up in terms of academic qualifications, but yet lack the experience in that field. Even myself for example, I was a teacher, and this is Human Resources. So, this is a new environment and at the same times a challenge. Some people did not do a lot to understand that new environment. I think there are few cases of people still around who do not perform properly. It can be other problems perhaps the organization is not helping or training them or their supervisors are not assisting them, so these are few shortcomings why people are not performing very well" (p. 4 & 5 interviewee No 1, target group).

As depicted from the quotations, there are various perceptions associated with competence. On the one hand, some think that there is incompetence because of deliberate lack of support from the colleagues whilst on the other hand; the perception of affirmative action is mostly associated with appointment of unqualified or inexperienced employees. Despite all this, people's different perceptions depend on what they know or aware are of. Generally, one can also conclude that the negative expectations of affirmative action favored individuals that would be spawned by a stigma of incompetence and could cause distorted perceptions of their behavior and work performance. Such perceptions, if internalized by them, could actually lead to self-fulfilling prophecies that bring about the very behavior others expect (Heilman, Block & Lucas, 1992). It seems critical, therefore, that the potentially damaging label of affirmative action should be recognized and that efforts to better understand it be made. Only then can the objectives of affirmative action be met in spirit as well as in deed. There remains a fundamental question as to why negative perceptions and stigmatization of incompetence are held against those individuals who are targeted to benefit from affirmative action programs.

However, on the other hand, the non-target group interviewees were asked how competent they perceived affirmative action appointees at their workplace. Despite their subjective evaluation criterion based on their individual judgments, the interviewees said the following:

> "It is a bit of mixed; I think is the same with every non-affirmative
> action appointee. You find some that are very uncompetitive others

who got a big mouth and do not really have anything behind them … I think, back 20 years ago when there was no affirmative action policy in place, normally white people will get a job anyway then you have just as bad just as good people employed. I think it just shift from white to black because now in most new jobs black person are possibly employed. I think is just with the whites, you can get good ones and bad ones, so I have seen some very good black people employed and I also have seen some bad ones employed. But all of the sudden now it is becoming an important issue since that black people are hired. I just told you in the past it was the same mistake that also bad white people were employed" (p. 3 interviewee No 9, non-target).

Interviewee No 10 was of the following opinion:

"… Qualifications are there but they sort of very row at the initial stage. When [affirmative action appointees] are taking up a new job they have to gain a lot of experience [through] on-the-job training and exposure in that particular job. … I think our companies are also responsible of quickly throwing people in too deep water and they are not able to swim and are not even coping or performing. After some months that person just had enough and get out, so we must be aware of that as well. I think especially in our field of business the great concern is that the skilled people with necessary experience and qualifications are not out there especially as far as the previously

disadvantaged people are concerned. Now I get an idea that people are being forced into these positions. They are thrown [into such high positions] than left [alone] for self-survival without training and support others used to get. …We must be on the look out of that too. People are being pushed too soon [into high positions] and are expected to perform well without allowing them to grow through various ranks such as from junior level to senior level. For example, people who are coming for eras in the company before independence got the opportunity to grow through the ranks. I mean there are people in senior positions in the company who started 25 years ago with the company who are sitting in senior positions now and you can see the value they are adding to the company and the clients out there. Their overall knowledge, skills, expertise and everything are well developed compare to people coming from streets with qualifications but with no experience or very limited years of experience either in the same or other field, who are not that competent, that is my personal experience. I think it is a question of putting too much pressure. Whether it is at the government level, then on the company and the company on us as business units. It is unfair to that particular person because he is just not coping and then you kick him out or replace him with somebody else or put him in other position …" (p. 3 & 4 interviewee No 10, non-target group).

These quotations show how people react differently, and surprisingly, similarly to

affirmative action related concepts. Interestingly, the interviewees seem to have a similar perception that affirmative action could perpetuate inferences of incompetence to its intended beneficiaries.  The interviewees are of the opinion that association of incompetence with affirmative action targeted individuals might not be the case with every beneficiary.  However, when ever preferential selection is mentioned rather than merit, perception of negativity in terms of perceived fairness of qualifications and competence is often discounted.

**CHAPTER 6:       SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

This study attempted to explore the psychological effects of affirmative action on the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of this policy in the public, private and parastatal sectors. The results of this study were reported under six categories based on the different responses generated through the interviews with both the target and non-target group members.

*6.1    General perception of affirmative action*

The interviewees were asked to express their general views and opinions on how they perceive affirmative action. In their responses the majority of interviewees from both groups mentioned aspects such as fairness in the implementation of affirmative action, equal employment opportunity, and equality. All were of the opinion that the affirmative action policy is needed to rectify discriminatory practices in employment. However, all emphasized that the appointment of an individual should be based on qualification and competence to avoid negative perception of the beneficiaries and violation of equal opportunity on non-beneficiaries.

The interviewees pointed out that although affirmative action was meant to address the marginalized people, who also include women and persons with disabilities, interviewees felt these latter groups still remain disadvantaged.    Despite the inequalities in terms of access to certain managerial positions, affirmative action should not violate the fundamental premise that its beneficiaries should be evaluated

solely because of their own merit and not because of their group membership (gender, race, ethnicity, political affiliation). In addition, the non-target group members mentioned that if the implementation of affirmative action is not based on quality standards, it could lead to unfavourable evaluations of the appointees' qualifications. Moreover, they will be labelled with inferences of substandard competence thus diminishing their self-esteem. Generally, the interviewees assumed the principle of affirmative action to be good, but in practice felt political interference in the recruitment process of certain positions (high managerial) in parastatal and public organizations lead to the perception that the basic principles of affirmative action is violated and that affirmative action has a political agenda. Candidates in such positions are perceived as not deserving of their positions but got it by virtue of whom they are. Their performance is viewed as sub-standard and therefore affects the overall organisational performance and the general economy at large. The individuals involved loose control, respect, integrity, and as a result their career are ruined. This process then has a physical and psychological impact on the well being of the individuals.

## 6.2   *Experience of affirmative action at the workplace*

The interviewee's opinions were expressed in terms of negative and positive experience of affirmative action at the workplace. The analysis revealed that target and non-target groups have similar and dissimilar experiences in their respective organizations. For example, some of the target group members, in particular men were discriminated against because prevalence were given to a less qualified and less

competent woman and because of under representation in the managerial position got the position in order to make the numbers okay. Career ruined because of that and competition becomes hostile. Such feelings ruin harmonious working relationship. Contrary, the women experienced affirmative action as positive in the sense that it creates new opportunities for suitably qualified women to advance in their career. Women were also of the opinion that in the past, they were systematically excluded from certain jobs and as a consequence they now have to compete for jobs from which they were previously barred. This than put them at a disadvantage because they are not seen to have the relevant experience. Hence some men also said that affirmative action had opened up new employment opportunities for them while some white women had neutral experiences.

Additionally, it was found that the interviewees explicitly indicated their qualifications to be the cornerstone of their appointment. Their responses implied that nobody likes to be appointed on the basis of affirmative action. In a way, their responses seemed surprising because they linked affirmative action to inadequate credentials in the sense that its association lowers a person's ability to perform. These findings substantiate the wide shared belief, as found in the literature that affirmative action seems to cause destructive perception on individual valuable qualifications.

6.3   *Emotional reactions towards affirmative action*

The interviewees from both groups addressed the fact whether they feared that affirmative action could jeopardize their careers. Some of the target group members

particularly men mentioned that sex-based selection jeopardized their career compared to merit-based selection because women are favored more. Hence, in contrast, affirmative action opened new career opportunities for women. The non-target group members were of the opinion that it is not a threat to their career because they had advanced expertise in some specific fields, which their counterparts are lacking due to the previous dispensation. Thus, allowing them to be always marketable irrespective of the change economy and increased job competition. Some mentioned however, the pressure they now experienced on promotion and in recruitment. Despite the apparent clarity of these results, whether personally affected by affirmative action, implied that it somehow connects to issues with emotional resonance to them. For instance, individuals from the non-target group may use affirmative action as a scapegoat on which to place their blame for their job uncertainty and the need to work harder than their parents did. It seems that people projected their own insecurities on this issue.

## 6.4   Stigmatization and coping

The data analysis found that when affirmative action is mentioned it leads to the discounting process of qualifications unless explicit information is provided to suggest otherwise. The study also found that people in real job settings devalued the performance of others whom they believed to have been hired because of affirmative action. This implies that even members of target groups who have not personally benefited from affirmative action may be presumed to have been hired on the basis of the policy. As stated earlier, the interviewees did not personally experienced

stigmatization because of being appointed on the basis of affirmative action, but rather (target group) experienced outrageous remarks about their appointments from co-workers.

## 6.5    Self-perception/self-evaluation

The findings of the results indicated that the interviewees claimed their own merits to have influenced their appointment, thus did not lack confidence in their own abilities. As a result, they expressed a positive self-view because they emphasized that their qualifications were suitable for their positions.

## 6.6    Perception of Affirmative Action Appointees

According to the results, the majority of interviewees associated affirmative action appointees as lacking proper qualifications and the belief that they got their positions only by virtue of who they are.  Because of the negative expectations spawned by stigma of incompetence, the findings imply that, in many instances, when affirmative action beneficiaries are hired they are not provided with mentoring or support networks or they are exposed to a hostile work environment that affects their performance and motivation. This can have far-reaching consequences on their careers.  In addition, the findings also imply that some organizations hired affirmative action targeted individuals to indicate that they comply with the policy in statistical terms and window-dress them while totally excluded them from decision-making.

**CHAPTER 7:     DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study illustrate that association with affirmative action imparts a negative perception for a benefiting individual resulting from inferences of stigma of incompetence. In previous research, significant relationship was found between preferential selection and negative effects on self-perception, which is also similar to this study. Heilman has also found that people in a real job setting devalued the performance of others whom they believed to have been hired under affirmative action (Heilman, Block and Lucas, 1992). However, in the samples of the interviewees examined here, affirmative action does not seem to have direct negative psychological effects, and may, in the case of actual affirmative action appointees, have psychological benefit.  Because, they will use the important aspects that came out of this study for self-examination. Given the findings reported here, it is probably inappropriate to assume that different protected and non-protected individuals will react similarly to affirmative action.

Faced with a complex and controversial character of affirmative action, it is therefore crucial to critically scrutinize the findings of this study despite encountered **limitations** outlined as follows.

One limitation to this study was the inability to interview individuals who were in their current jobs because of affirmative action appointments. Generally, individuals are very hesitant to identify themselves for a study especially using the qualitative method, where interviews are done a bit more in depth and the identity of the subject

is easily traceable.

Therefore, the psychological effects of affirmative action in Namibia, as concluded through the findings of this study, are mainly indicated as perceived by those interviewed. The second limitation of this study was that the sample size of the participants was too small and the qualitative method used was limiting to allow the representative ness and generalization of these results to a bigger population. Thirdly, due to the sensitive nature of affirmative action, it was not possible to interview individuals who are actual affirmative action appointees, in particular, due to the fear of stigma and identification. Lastly, people were very careful and hesitant to provide more open information about their genuine view of affirmative action and its related psychological impact. Some tended to explain their hesitance and reluctance of free expression to political agenda often felt with the implementation of affirmative action. Consequently, all these could have a negative impact on the validity and reliability of these findings.

This underscores the need for the following **recommendations** recommended by this study:

- A questionnaire could be developed and distributed to a bigger sample to examine the impact affirmative action may have on targeted and non-targeted groups

- The affirmative action plans should emphasize the approach required by law, that is, the elimination of discrimination, a workforce analysis and the use of recruitment and training to improve opportunities for the previously

disadvantaged groups

- Companies should recognize the feelings of victimization that people may feel in the organizations, which can often be remedied through a sensible affirmative action policy emphasizing merit.

- The Equity Employment Commission and Organizations to have a program that includes self-examination in order to identify obstacles that distort fair implementation practices.

**CHAPTER 8:     CONCLUSION**

Until prejudices based on race, gender, ethnicity are eliminated affirmative action policy will be needed in Namibia. The point to remember when dealing with affirmative action is that its reactions tends to be psychological and emotional, and are based on the perception of reality, not on reality itself.

One may draw from this study two major goals of affirmative action. Firstly, affirmative action policy should be a merit-based selection, since it has been shown that people perform better when hired on the basis of merit. Secondly, affirmative action policy should increase the number of targeted groups in workplace, and more importantly, eliminate stereotypes and discriminatory barriers. However, these barriers will continue to exist even if affirmative action is eliminated.

## REFERENCE LIST

Adams, J.S. 1965. **Inequity in social exchange**: In L. Berkowitz, (Ed.), Advances in experimental social psychology (Vol. 2 pp 267-299). New York: Academic Press.

Baron, R.M., & Graziano, W.G. 1991. **Social Psychology**. Forth Worth, TX: Hot, Rinehart and Winston.

Baker, T.L. 1999. **Doing Social Research**. Third edition. California State University, San Macros McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Bobo, L., & Kluegel, J.R. 1993. **Opposition to race targeting: self-interest, stratification ideology, or racial attitudes?** American Sociological Review, 58, 443-464.

Bobocel, D.R., & Farrell, A. 1996. **Sex-based promotion decisions and interactional fairness: Investigating the influence of managerial accounts.** Journal of Applied Psychology, 81, 22-35.

Burstein, P. 1985. **On equal employment opportunity and affirmative action**. In C.B. Marret & C. Leggon (Eds.), **Research in race and ethnic relations** (Vol. 4, pp. 91-112). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Brown, Kelli, 1999**, Attribution Theory**, http://hsc.usf.edu/ kmbrown/Attribution

Theory_Overview.htm, last viewed April 23, 2002.


Brutus, S., & Ryan, A.M. 1994 -April**. A new perspective on preferential**

**treatment: The role of ambiguity and self-efficac***y*. Poster session presented at the

annual meeting of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology,

Nashville.


Chang, Weining C. **Toward Equal Opportunities: Fairness, Values, and**

**Affirmative Action Programs in the U.S.** Journal of Social Issues*,* Volume 52

(1996): 93-97


Clayton, S.D., & Tangri, S.S. 1989. **The Justice of Affirmative Action.** In F.A.

Blanchard  & F.J. Crosby (Eds.), **Affirmative Action in perspective** (pp. 177-192).

New York: Springer-Verslag.


Cohen, R.L 1994. **Some reflections on Smith and Crosby's Affirmative Action:**

**Setting the record straight.**  Social Justice Research, 7, 329-344.


Cropanzano, R., & Greenberg, J. 1997. **Progress in organizational justice**:

Tunneling through the maze. In C.L. Cooper & I.T. Robertson (Eds.), International

review of industrial and organizational psychology. New York: John Wiley & Sons

Crosby, F.J. 1994. **Understanding Affirmative Action,** Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 15, 13-41.

Dalley, D. 1996. **Attribution Theory and the Glass Ceiling: Career Development Among Federal Employees,** http://www.hbg.psu.edu/faculty/jxr11/glass1sp.html, last viewed April 23, 2002.

Davis, J.A. & Smith, T.W. 1990. **The General Social Survey:** Cumulative codebook and data file. Chicago: National Opinion Research Center.

Deutsch, M. 1985**. Distributive justice**: A social psychological perspective. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

DeVader, C. L., Allan G. Bateson, and Robert G. Lord 1986. **Attribution Theory: A Meta-Analysis of Attributional Hypothesis.** In Edwin A. Locke (ed). **Generalizing From Laboratory to Field Studie**s. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Dovidio, J.F., Mann, J., & Gaertner, S.L.1989**. Resistance to Affirmative Action: The implications of aversive racism.** In F.A. Blanchard & F.J. Crosby (Eds.), Affirmative Action in perspective (pp. 83-102). New York: Springer-Verslag.

Dovidio, J.F. 1996**. Affirmative Action and contemporary racial bias: Need resistance**. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Feldman, J. M. 1981. **Beyond Attribution Theory: Cognitive Process in Performance Appraisal.** Journal of Applied Psychology 66, 2: 127-148.

Fine, T.F. 1992. **The impact of issue framing on public opinion toward affirmative action programs.** The Social Science Journal, 29 (3), 232334.

Gaertner, S.L., & Dovido, J.F. 1986. **The aversive form of racism**. In J.F. Dovido & S.L. Gaertner (Eds.), **Prejudice, discrimination, and racism**. Orlando: Academic Press.

Gilens, Martin, Sniderman, Paul M., and Kuklinski, James H. 1998. **Affirmative Action and the Politics of Realignment.** British Journal of Political Science, Volume 28 159-183.

Gilliland, S.W. 1993. **The perceived fairness of selection systems: An organizational justice perspective**. Academy of Management Review, 18, 694-734.

Gioia, Dennis A., and Peter P. Poole 1984. **Scripts in Organizational Behavior.** Academy of Management Review 9, 3: 449-459.

Gioia, Dennis A., and Henry P. Sims 1986. **Cognition-Behavior Connections: Attribution and Verbal Behavior in Leader-Subordinate Interactions.** Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes 37: 197-229.

Gioia, Dennis A., and K. Chittipeddi 1991. **Sense making and Sense giving in Strategic Change Initiation.** Strategic Management Journal 12: 433-448.

Golden, H., Hinkle, S., and Crosby, F.J. 2001. **Reactions to Affirmative Action: Substance and semantics.** Journal of Applied Social Psychology, Volume 31, 73-88.

Government Gazette of the Republic of Namibia No 242 Promulgation of Affirmative Action Employment Act No 29 of 1998 of the Parliament, 24 September – Windhoek.

Greenberg, J., & Cohen, R.L1982. **Equity and justice in Social behavior**. New York: Academic Press.

Groarke, L 1990**. Affirmative Action as a form as restitution**. Journal of Business Ethics, 9, 207-213.

Heider, F. 1944**. Social perception and phenomenal causality**. Psychological Review, 21, 107-12.

Heider, F. 1958. **The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations**, New York, Willey.

Heider, F. 1980**. Perception and Attribution** in D. Gorlitz (ed.), **Perceptive on Attribution Theory.** Cambridge, MA: Ballinger.

Heilman, M.E., & Herlihy, J.M. 1984. **Affirmative Action, negative reactions? Some moderating conditions.** Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 33, 204-213.

Heilman, M.E., Simon, M.C., & Repper, D.P. 1987. **Intentionally favored, unintentionally harmed? Impact of sex-based preferential selection on self-perception and self-evaluations.** Journal of Applied Psychology, 72, 62-68.

Heilman, M.E., Rivero, J.C., & Brett, J.F. 1991. **Skirting the competence issue: Effects of sex-based preferential selection on task choices of women and men.** Journal of Applied Psychology, 76, 99-105.

Heilman, M.E., Block, C.J., & Lucas, J.A. 1992**. Presumed incompetent? Stigmatization and Affirmative Action efforts.** Journal of Applied Psychology, 77, 536-544.

Heilman, M.E. 1994. **Affirmative Action: Some unintended consequences for working women.** In B.M. Staw & L.L. Cummings (Eds.), Research in organizational behavior (Vol. 16, 125-169).

Heilman, M.E., McCulloug, W.F., & Gilbert, D. 1996. **The other side of Affirmative Action. Reactions of non-beneficiaries to sex-based preferential selection.** Journal of Applied Psychology, 81, 346-357.

Holsti, Ole R. 1969. **Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and the Humanities.** Addison-Wesley Reading, MA.

Homans, G.C. 1961. **Social behavior: Its elementary forms**: New York: Partout, Brace, & World.

Howitt, D., Billig, M., Cramer, D., Edwards, D., Kniveton, B., Potter, J. & Radley, A. 1989. **Social Psychology: Conflicts and Continuities**. Open University Press, 12 Cofferidge Close Stony Strafford.

Jauch, H. 1998. **Affirmative Action in Namibia: Redressing the imbalances of the past.** New Namibian Books, Windhoek.

Joly, S., Pelchat, D. & Tougas, F. 1993. **Men and Affirmative Action: Opposition or misconception?** Poster session presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Psychological Association, Montreal.

Jones, E.E. & Davis, K.E. 1965. **From Acts to Dispositions: The Attribution Process in Person Perception.** In L. Berkowitz (ed.), Advances in Experimental Social Psychology: Vol. 2. New York: Academic Press.

Jones, E.E. 1990**. Interpersonal Perception**. New York, Macmillan.

Kinder, R.D. 1986. **The continuing American dilemma: White resistance to racial change 40 years after Myrdal**. Journal of Social Issues, 42 (2), 151171.

Kleinpenning, G., & Hagendoorn, D 1993. **Forms of racism and the cumulative dimension of ethic attitudes.** Social Psychology Quarterly, 56, 21-36.

Kovacs, R. N. 1985. **The Research Process: Essentials of skill development**. F.A. Davis Company, Philadelphia

Kravitz, D.A., & Platania, J. 1993. **Attitudes and beliefs about Affirmative Action: Effects of target and of respondent sex and ethnicity.** Journal of Applied Psychology, 78, 928-938

Kravitz, D.A., Harrison, D.A., Turner, M.E., Levine, E.E., Chaves, W., Brannick, M.T., Denning, D.L., Russel, C.J. & Conrad, M.A. 1997. **Affirmative Action: A review of psychological & behavioural research.** Bowling Green, O.H: Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.

Kuklinski, James H. **Racial Prejudices and Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action.** American Journal of Political Science 41.2 April 1997. 15 April 2002 http://www.jstor.org/

Kvale, S. 1996. **Interviews.** An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing, Sage Thousand Oaks, CA

Lerner, M.J. 1977. **The justice motive: Some hypothesis as to its origins and its forms**. Journal of Personality, 45, 1-52.

Levental, G.S., Karuza, J., & Fry, W.R. 1980. **Beyond fairness: A theory of allocation preferences.** New York: Springer-Verslag. In G. Mikula (Ed), **Justice and Social interaction.** (pp. 167-200).

Lind, E.A., & Tyler, T.R. 1988. **The social psychology of procedural justice**. New York: Plenum.

Link, Michael W., & Robert W. Oldendick. **Social Construction and White Attitudes toward Equal Opportunity and Multiculturalism.** The Journal of Politics 58.1 February 1996. 17 April 2002. <http//www.jstor.org>

Lord, R. G., and Smith J. E. 1983**. Theoretical, Information Processing and Situational Factors Affecting Attribution Theory Models of Organization Behavior.** Academy of Management Journal 35, 5 (December): 1057-1069.

Maio, G.R., & Esses, V.M. 1996, July. **Affirmative Action Can Have Deleterious Effects on Perceptions of Groups**. Poster Sessions Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Society, San Francisco.

Maphai, V.T. 1992. **The South African Law Commission on Affirmative Action**. South Africa Foundation Review, 18:7.

Matheson, K., Echenherg, A., Taylor, D.M., Rivers, D., Chow, I. 1994. **Women's attitudes toward Affirmative Action: Putting actions in context**. Journal of Applied Social Psychology 24, 2075-2096.

McConahay, J.B. 1982. **Self-interest versus racial attitudes as correlates of anti-bussing attitudes in Louisville. It is the busses of the Blacks?** The Journal of Politics, 44, 692720.

Mouton, J. & Marais, H.C. 1996**. Basic Concepts in the Methodology of the Social Sciences**. Pretoria, Aurora.

Myers, M.D. **Qualitative Research in Information Systems** MIS Quarterly (21:2), June 1997, pp 241-242. MISQ Discovery, archival version, June 1997, www.misq.org/misqd961/isworld/. MISQ Discovery updated version, last modified: September 15, 2003 www.qual.auckland.ac.nz

Nacoste, R.W., & Lehman, D. 1987. **Procedural stigma.** Representative Research in Social Psychology, 17, 25-38. Nacoste, R.W. 1987. **But do they care about fairness? The dynamics of preferential treatment and minority interests**. Basic and Applied Social Psychology Vol. 2, 8, 177-191.

Nacoste, R. W. 1989**. Affirmative Action and self-evaluation**. In F.A. Blanchard & F. J. Crosby (Eds), **Affirmative Action in perspective** (pp. 103-109). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Nelson, T. & Thomas, E. 1999. **Group Affect and Attribution in Social Policy Opinions.** Journal of Politics, May 1999, Vol. 61 Issue 2, p 331, 32p. 12 charts, 2 diagrams.

Northcraft, G.B. 1983. **The Stigma of Affirmative Action***: An Empirical Analysis. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Rocky Mountain Psychological Association (Snowbird, UT, April 26-30, 1993).

Nosworthy, G.J., Lea, J.A., & Lindsay, R.C.L 1995**. Opposition to Affirmative Action: Racial affect and traditional value predictors across four programs**. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 25, 314-337.

Pandor, N. 1992. **Equal opportunity: The route to equal opportunity**. Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies, University of Cape Town – South Africa

Perception, Attribution and Judgement of Others, [2001]. (http://www.keyincarb.com/organi~1/CHAPT4L.HT), [1/13/01]

Pettigrew, T.F. 1979. **Shaping the organizational context of Black American inclusion.** Journal of Social Issues, 43 (1) 41-48.

Plattner, I.E. 2001**. Phillip Mayring's Qualitative Content Analysis. An explication in terms of Namibian examples**. Papers from the Department of Psychology University of Namibia, Windhoek, 1/01.

Pratkanis, A.M., and Turner, M.E. 1996. **The Proactive Removal of Discriminatory Barriers: Affirmative Action as Effective Help**. Journal of Social Issues, Volume 52, 111-132.

Reaves, C.C. 1992. **Quantitative Research for the Behavioural Sciences**. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Canada. (Pp 17).

Ross, L.D., Amabile, T.M. and Steinmetz, J.L. 1972. **Social Roles, Social Control and Biases in Social-Perception.** Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 35, 485-94.

Sears, D.O. 1988. **Symbolic racism**. In P.A. Katz & D. A. Taylor (Eds.), Eliminating racism: Profiles in controversy (pp. 5384). New York: Plenum Press.

Shaughnessy, J.J., Zechmeiser, E. B., & Zechmeiser, J.S. 2000. **Research Methods in Psychology**. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Smith Winkelman, C., & Crosby, F.J. 1994. **Affirmative Action: Setting the record straight.** Social Justice Research, 7, 309-328.

Sniderman, P.M., Piazza, T., Tetlock, P.E., & Kendrick, A. 1991. **The new racism.** American Journal of Political Science, 35, 423-447.

Steeh, Charlotte and Maria Krysan. Trends: **Affirmative Action and the Public, 1970-1995.** Public Opinion Quarterly 60.1 1996. 15 April 2002. http://www.jstor.org/

Steele, S. 1994. **A negative vote of Affirmative Action**. In N. Mills (Ed.), Debating Affirmative Action (pp. 37-47), New York, NY: Delta.

Storms, M.D. 1973. **Videotape and Attribution Process**. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 27, 165-75.

Summers, R.J. 1995. **Attitudes toward different methods of Affirmative Action**. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 25, 1090-1104

Taylor, M.C. 1991. **Two faces of color-blindness**. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Sociological Association, Cincinatti, OH.

Taylor, M.C. 1994. **Impact of Affirmative Action on beneficiary groups***: Evidence from the 1990 General Society Survey. Basic and Applied Social Psychology, Vol. 3, 15, 143-178.

Thomas, James B., Shawn M. Clark, and Dennis A. Gioia 1993. **Strategic Sense making and Organizational Performance: Linkages Among Scanning, Interpretation, Action, and Outcomes.** Academy of Management Journal 36, 2

(April): 239-270.

Thomas, C. 1994. **Affirmative Action goals and timetables: Too tough? Not tough enough!** In N. Mills (Ed.), **Debating Affirmative Action** (pp. 89-99). New York, NY: Delta.

Tougas, F., & Veilleux, F. 1988. **The influence of identification, collective relative deprivation, and procedure of implementation on women's response to Affirmative Action: A causal modeling approach**. Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 20, 15-29.

Tougas, F., & Veilleux, F. 1989. **Who likes Affirmative Action: Attitudinal processes among men and women.** In F.A. Blanchard & F.J. Crosby (Eds.), **Affirmative Action in perspective** (pp. 111-124). New York: Springer-Verlag.

Tougas, F., Brown, R., Beaton, A.M., & Joly, S. 1995. **Neosexism**: **Plus ca change, plus cest pareil.** Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21, 842849.

Turner, M.E., & Pratkanis, A.R. 1994**. Affirmative Action as help**: **A review of recipient reactions to preferential selection and Affirmative Action**. Basic and Applied Social Psychology, 15, 43-69.

Truxillo, D.M. & Bauer, T.N. 1999. **Applicant reactions to test score banding in entry-level and promotional contexts.** Journal of Applied Psychology, 84, 322-339

Van Rooyen, J.W.F., 2000. **Implementing Affirmative Action in Namibia**. Namibia Institution for Democracy, Windhoek.

Veilleux, F., & Tougas, F. 1989. **Male acceptance of Affirmative Action programs for women: The results of altruistic or egoistical motives?** International Journal of Psychology, 24, 485-469.

Weiner, B. 1985. **An Attributional Theory of Achievement Motivation and Emotion**.

Wimmer, R.D. & Dominick, J.R. 1994**. Mass Media Research**. Fourth edition. Wadsworth Publishing Company – Belmont, California.