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IS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN EDUCATION DEFENSIBLE?

ABRAHAM MABASO

A Research Report submitted to the Faculty of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in part fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education

Johannesburg 1998

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the defensibility of affirmative action in education. The struggle against apartheid society and apartheid education has also been a struggle to build a democratic society and a democratic way of learning.

For South Africa, the children's education should be compatible with the ideals of democratic society. In order to rectify the racist discrimination and insensitivity of the apartheid regime we need to promote the ideal of complex equality.

This report argues that affirmative action is not a defensible strategy for the pursuit in education as part of the process of consolidating democracy in South Africa. The notion of equality is best understood in terms of Michael Walzer's concept of complex equality (as against simple equality). The concept of complex equality can be used to explicate the inadequacies of affirmative action. An account of education is developed which emphasizes complex equality. The application of affirmative action in education presupposes a shallow understanding of education.

The pursuit of democracy through education is best promoted through a notion of complex equality because it takes into consideration the plurality of South African society.

KEYWORDS: Affirmative Action, Complex Equality, Simple Equality, Education, Equal Opportunity, Epistemological Access.

DECLARATION

I declare that this Research Report is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

ABRAHAM MABASO

(Name of Candidate)

(Signature of Candidate)

23rd Day of November, 1998.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

From 1948 the National Party (NP) governed South Africa according to the policy of 'separate development'. This policy was refined by Verwoerd who advocated the balkanization of South Africa into homelands. Verwoerd's policy of 'separate development' created unbearable hardships. South African society has been severely affected by this policy. Apartheid policies created great inequalities in education which need to be seriously addressed. The Government of National Unity which was installed in 1994 has committed itself to the removal of inequality and the transformation of South African society. It is of vital importance for us to pursue strategies that will help us reverse the effects of decades of discrimination against the majority of the South African population, one of which is the implementation of affirmative action, proposed by some as a strategy for restoring a balance where socially engineered imbalances were maliciously put in place.

Affirmative action has been widely discussed in the economic and political sectors. It aims at making the existing scramble for office and money more accessible to everybody. According to *The Concise Dictionary of Education* (Hawes and Hawes, 1992:10) affirmative action refers to positive action

in educational institutions aimed at equalizing the opportunity for admission of all groups, and to equalize opportunity for employment and promotion of all groups. In other words, affirmative action is a plan of the government to have the staff composition of any institution reflect the overall make-up of any society. In the South African context, affirmative action implies that more black people will have to be trained. Although the notion of 'affirmative action' is closely linked to the opening up of opportunities to those who have been disadvantaged in the past, we need to bear in mind that what is meant by 'affirmative action' is influenced by an individual's political affiliation.

According to the African National Congress (ANC), talk of affirmative action is closely associated with the opening up of opportunities to all those who were discriminated against as Africans, Coloureds and Indians, women, disabled people and people living in the rural areas (Challenge, April 1994:6). This means that there are target groups which are expected to benefit from the implementation of affirmative action. For the NP, affirmative action is associated with making it possible for people who were disadvantaged in the past to receive special training, education and support so that they can develop fully and make their full contribution to the economy of the country (Challenge, 1994:7). The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) maintains that affirmative action will be promoted on a large scale in favour of the African

masses; they also believe that affirmative action is not about lowering of standards or the introduction of reverse racism (Challenge, 1994:8). Although the ANC, the NP, and the PAC endorse affirmative action as an option for ensuring equal opportunity, their interpretation of affirmative action is not exactly the same.

According to the ANC's policy (Sachs:5) affirmative action means taking appropriate steps to normalize South African society. Since imbalances need to be redressed, a study of affirmative action in education will enable us to think of alternative policy programs that might help us redress the inequalities that currently exist in our educational system.

In this research report, I propose to concentrate on formal education in South Africa. Since learners, resources, and teachers are important components in formal education and are interdependent, inequalities affecting any one of these components will inevitably impact on the other components. In this report, I will focus primarily on affirmative action with regard to the employment and promotion of teachers.

A democratic government was elected in South Africa in 1994. The expectations of those who have been disadvantaged are high, and it has been expected that drastic changes will be implemented, especially in education. How these changes should be effected is still open to debate. In some quarters it is

felt that affirmative action is an appropriate step which must be taken to bring about change in the South African society.

The mere fact that people anticipate affirmative action suggests that the rules operating in South Africa are changing. The need for changing the rules stems from the problems created by discriminatory legislation in the past, in terms of which the National Party (NP) government denied many people the right to education and the proper conditions for learning and teaching. Discriminatory legislation and financial provision have caused vast imbalances in education. It is within this framework that this study sets out to investigate the defensibility of affirmative action in education. In the process, it will be argued that affirmative action in education is not defensible.

Affirmative action is one strategy that may be pursued to attain equality of opportunity. Another strategy that may be used to herald equality of opportunity is through the promotion of complex equality. In Chapter Two of this research, I intend to consider the concept 'complex equality'. Concepts such as 'equality of opportunity' and 'liberal equality' will be pursued in the context of education in South Africa. Pursuance of these concepts (equality of opportunity and liberal equality) offer an elaboration of how complex equality could be pursued in the context of education. The apartheid policy advocated that it was possible to have equality in a

racially divided society. In this chapter, an attempt is made to explore Walzer's distinction between simple equality and complex equality. The report will show that simple equality is not suitable for redressing past imbalances in society because it is a simple distributive condition (Walzer, 1985:18). I will then proceed to argue that simple equality undermines the promotion of democratic practices in society. The importance of complex equality (Walzer, 1985) and liberty (Taylor, 1985) for democratic practices in society and for equality of opportunity will be considered. The concept `equality of opportunity' will be investigated (Alladin, 1990; Blits, 1990; Burbules, 1990; Howe, 1989; McNay and Ozga, 1985; Rebell and Block, 1985; and Rich, 1987). The idea of equality of opportunity tends to suggest that there should be fair competition. Equality and equality of opportunity need to be introduced in the South African society because the apartheid policy disadvantaged some groups or individuals.

In Chapter Three, the concept 'affirmative action' will be investigated. Wong's point of view is that, although affirmative action may be interpreted differently by various parties, there is a common denominator in all of them (Dekker and Lemmer, 1963:61). This means that affirmative action is a strategy that might be implemented with the intention of achieving equality of opportunity in any given society. If we consider affirmative action as a plan of government to have the staff composition of any institution reflect the overall

make-up of any society, then the government will have to ensure that the previously disadvantaged groups or individuals receive greater benefits than those who gained under apartheid. It will be argued in this chapter that affirmative action hampers the effective establishment of complex equality.

In Chapter Four, the viability of 'affirmative action' in education will be investigated. I will argue that affirmative action is not compatible with the aims of education. One of the aims of education is to promote critical thinking and teachers are supposed to educate the learners. It will be argued that teachers are predominantly concerned with satisfying the conditions laid down by a given curriculum. Teachers are concerned with the transmission of certain values at any given time. This suggests that education is not neutral.

The effects of apartheid education have caused a lot of imbalances in our educational system. We need to ensure that such imbalances do not occur in the future. Inequalities existing in our educational system with regard to teachers and their implications as a whole will be examined. Affirmative action is often viewed in relation to discrimination (Dekker and Lemmer, 1993:62). We need to bear in mind that the targets of affirmative action programmes are specific groups that have been the objects of discrimination historically

(Dekker and Lemmer, 1993:69); therefore affirmative action in education will have to target specific groups.

I will then proceed to consider the implementation of affirmative action for teachers. This might mean different things to different people. In other words, affirmative action programmes may be justified on the basis of the non-discrimination theme, or the general welfare theme, or the reparation theme (Dekker and Lemmer, 1993:62). An attempt will be made to show that the justification of affirmative action for teachers towards any one of these themes is bound to be highly problematic. In the process of investigating affirmative action in education I will focus on the vertical mobility of teachers (promotion to senior positions), and selective employment of teachers. The implications of implementing the policy programme of 'affirmative action in education' will be investigated. I will then conclude this chapter by arguing that affirmative action is not an appropriate strategy for attaining complex equality.

In Chapter Five a democratic theory of education will be explored (Gutmann, 1987). It will be argued that no child should be deliberately disadvantaged. We should attempt to ensure that all school-going children receive the same basic education to enable them to compete on an equal basis. Furthermore, it will be shown that although affirmative action in education purports to be striving for equality of

opportunity it is not the best route to follow. The role of 'merit' in the selection and promotion of teachers will be considered. It will be argued that only the best teachers should be eligible for appointment and promotion. This chapter will be concluded by arguing that 'education for democratic participation' is compatible with the ideal of complex equality.

CHAPTER TWO

COMPLEX EQUALITY

In this chapter the concept 'equality' will be considered. So as to have a better understanding of 'equality' I intend to investigate the distinction between 'simple equality' and 'complex equality'. This chapter will culminate in the consideration of 'equality of opportunity' to help us have a better understanding of complex equality.

2.1 The Impact of Apartheid Policies

Since the installation of a democratic government, the issue at stake is no longer whether we need equality or not. The issue now at stake is : What we understand by 'equality' and how we can achieve it. Careful consideration of the concept 'equality' is necessary if the inequalities inherited from the apartheid era are to be rectified. It has been common to observe both locally and internationally that South African society is an unequal one. As a result the international community regarded South Africa as a 'pariah' state. In the past the racial divide has played a dominant role in our country. People have not been treated equally. Supporters of the apartheid regime argued that it is possible to have equality in a racially segregated society. What the apartheid

regime meant by equality in a racially divided country actually turned out to be inequality, although segregation was described in terms of 'separate but equal'. The inequality created by apartheid precipitated conflict in South African society.

The institutionalization of apartheid policies led to the formation of liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO) and the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA). An assumption underlying my argument is that the liberation movements were justified in waging the struggle against the National Party government whose policies were never concerned with the establishment of any kind of 'equality'.

Let us now take a look at what the National Party policies did to the South African society. Apartheid has brutalized and dehumanized the majority of the South African population. Race played a pivotal role in determining how people were treated. The state deliberately attempted to promote the mentality of 'supremacy' in some race groups, while degrading other races, especially blacks, to a level of inferiority. Education was also affected by apartheid policies. The NP government manipulated education in order to further its aims. The education system was fragmented into racially segregated departments, and these departments were highly authoritarian

in their approach to the attempts by teachers and students to highlight grievances in education. Furthermore, these education departments routinely resorted to intimidating and victimizing teachers who were critical of the way in which education was being administered by the state.

The continuing education crisis is due to the legacy of apartheid. If we are to avoid bitter dissatisfaction and painful disruptions to education and to life in general, then we need to satisfactorily resolve the problem of inequality. For a start the description of segregation in terms of 'separate but equal' needs to be discarded. In fact, to speak of 'equality' during the apartheid era is absurd, because apartheid policies were based on inequality. In the post-apartheid era, 'equality' is associated with empowerment. We need to bear in mind that the vast majority of the South African population has been left behind by a system that excluded them by law and deprived the country of the contribution they could have made. If apartheid policies were never implemented, South Africa could have developed at a faster pace than it has actually done. In order to effectively undo the harm caused by apartheid policies we need to revisit the concept 'equality'.

2.2 Equality

Equality is a contested concept. The dilemma facing us is that of choosing the interpretation of equality that is compatible with the process of consolidating democracy in South Africa.

There is a wide range of possible approaches to the concept equality. Strike points out three possible alternatives to the concept equality (Strike, 1982:177). To some people, equality is associated with making available different experiences according to a person's ability so as to maximise the person's capacity to contribute something positive to society. The second group of people associates equality with making available different experiences according to the person's needs. The third group of people associates equality with making the same experiences available to each person, even if each person cannot profit equally from the experiences.

In this research report, Walzer's interpretation of equality will be pivotal to our argument. From Walzer's point of view, equality may be characterized in terms of a concept of simple equality or a concept of complex equality. If we say that equality is necessary in South African society, then we need to decide whether we mean simple equality or complex equality. In this report, it will be argued that the notion of equality that we ought to pursue in South Africa is complex equality.

2.3 Simple Equality

Let us suppose that it is possible to have a society in which no one possesses or controls the means of domination. Such a society would satisfy what Walzer refers to as political egalitarianism, in other words, a society free from domination. Simple equality seems to encourage the persistence of domination because people who have a particular social good, for example money, can command a wide range of other goods. Simple equality is described by Walzer as a process in which equality is multiplied through the conversion process, until it extends across the full range of social goods (Walzer, 1985:14). This notion of equality suggests that every citizen is allotted the same quantity of the dominant good. For instance, all citizens are given the same amount of money. The mere fact that all citizens are given the same amount of money does not necessarily mean that they will utilize it in the same way. Some people may use the money allocated to them in a profitable manner, while others may just be content with the fact that there has been an equitable distribution of money. Inequalities in society are not automatically eliminated through the equitable distribution of the dominant social good. Walzer emphasizes that, simple equality challenges the monopoly but not the dominance of a particular social good (Walzer, 1985:14). During the apartheid era, whites had a monopoly over the privileges in society. Simple equality

recommends that privileges which were once the preserve of whites should be distributed equitably to each and every citizen of South Africa. In the case of South Africa, this means that privileges are dispensed on the basis of race, which does not augur well for the transformation of South African society.

We may now ask the question : What criteria and arrangements accompany simple equality? Monopoly and dominance are closely linked to simple equality. Walzer argues that:

> dominance describes a way of using social goods that isn't limited by their intrinsic meanings or that shapes those meanings in its own image (Walzer, 1985:10).

'Dominance' has a high probability of being abused. Individuals who possess a dominant good may use this good to command a wide range of other goods. In South Africa, race has been used in the past especially for whites to command a wide range of goods. It is important to note that, in the course of implementing simple equality, inequalities will arise in other spheres of life. In other words, simple equality is capable of identifying only one dominant good at any given space in time. Hence Walzer's argument that simple equality is a simple distributive condition (Walzer, 1985:18).

Some people may argue that distribution need not enter into our discussion of equality. Distribution is what social conflict is all about. Simple equality cannot resolve social conflict because at any given time and place, it always identifies only one dominant good which becomes the source of inequality in society. We need to take our discussion of Walzer a step further by looking at 'monopoly'. Walzer argues that:

> Monopoly describes a way of owning or controlling social goods in order to exploit their dominance (Walzer, 1985: 11).

Walzer proceeds to point out that : Monopolistic control of a dominant good makes a ruling class, whose members stand atop the distributive system to be challenged by the other classes.

In South Africa domination and monopoly of goods such as race and money have entrenched inequality. Overall, under apartheid one racial group has monopolized the bulk of social goods in South African society. The monopolization and domination of social goods by one racial group is not congruent with the new social order. It is therefore not advisable for us to pursue simple equality when attempting to redress the problems created by apartheid.

2.4 Complex Equality

Critics of Walzer have argued that his account of simple equality lacks sufficient detail (Arneson, 1995). It is at least helpful as a foil to the notion of complex equality to which we now turn. Let us proceed to look at what Walzer calls 'complex equality'. According to Walzer:

> equality is a complex relation of persons, mediated by the goods we make, share, and divide among ourselves (Walzer, 1985:18).

Since human consumption is characterized by a wide variety of goods, this suggests that relations between persons need to be considered on the basis of the goods which are to be consumed. Furthermore, we need to bear in mind that relations between persons are not fixed; these relations will not only vary from person to person, but they will also be affected by time and locality. Walzer proceeds to point out that:

> complex equality means that no citizen's standing in one sphere, or with regard to one social good can be undercut by his standing in some other sphere (Walzer, 1985:19).

This suggests that 'equality' is multifaceted which makes it possible for an individual to operate in a wide range of spheres. Walzer's view of 'spheres' proposes pluralism within

any given society. For instance, the sphere of 'education' brings to mind the appointment of teachers, admission of learners to schools, authority, marks and promotions, and knowledge itself. The goods that are distributed to individuals through education as a sphere are not the same as the goods distributed in other spheres.

Let us take as an example of how the notion of complex equality can be applied in education : Mr A is an English teacher at a secondary school and has never studied science subjects while at school. He has applied for part-time studies in engineering at a technikon. His application for part-time studies must not be influenced by his standing as a secondary school teacher. This point is emphasized by Walzer when he says:

> no social good X should be distributed to men and women who possess some other good Y merely because they possess Y without regard to the meaning of X (Walzer, 1985:20).

There is a tendency among some teachers, who are working in schools that were formerly under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education and Training (DET), to think that they must benefit more than other teachers just because they are members of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU). This is a contravention of complex equality because

it assumes that one's standing or membership in one sphere, that is, a union, should be converted into benefits in another sphere. What are the implications of opting for complex equality instead of simple equality as the appropriate way for resolving problems of inequality resulting from apartheid? Let us consider the implications of opting for simple equality. According to Walzer, in the case of simple equality, there is one dominant good which is widely distributed for purposes of having an egalitarian society. In this instance, money might be the dominant factor. Simple equality would require drastic state intervention to equalize access and outcomes (Enslin, 1994:300). The levels of state intervention that characterized the apartheid era are widely regarded as inappropriate to a democracy.

In our quest to redress past inequalities we should always strive at neutralizing the monopoly of the dominant good. According to Walzer (1985:14), once the monopoly of one dominant good has been neutralized, other goods will come into play, and inequality takes on new forms. We may now say that simple equality does not eliminate conditions of domination; instead it reinforces the conditions that perpetuate inequalities in society. The perpetuation of inequalities in any society increases the probability of some groups being dominated by those who have the monopoly over the exercise, or control of power. It seems as though simple equality opens up the possibility of tyrannical rule taking place.

Let us now proceed to consider the implication of complex equality. According to Walzer (1985:28), complex equality works by differentiating goods. In other words, no good can be said to be wholly dominant. Complex equality is closely linked to partial dominance of goods. We may now ask: How many goods must be autonomously conceived before the relations they mediate can become the relations of equal people? There is no exact number of goods that must be autonomously conceived before the relations they mediate can become the relations of equal people. The pursuance of complex equality calls for negotiation and consensus on how the autonomously conceived goods mediate the relations between people. We should consider complex equality as presenting us with dynamic relations. Since complex equality promotes negotiation and consensus, equal consideration does not necessarily mean that competitive conditions must be held constant for all individuals (Walzer, 1985:145).

Walzer's idea of complex equality implies that while within different spheres some individuals may acquire more of some goods, this should not influence their access to goods in other spheres. In other words, goods should be distributed according to their social meanings and it is important to maintain the autonomy of the spheres. During the apartheid era, there has been a strong tendency to hold competitive conditions for all blacks constant. Making a related point Smith and Ennis point out that:

> equality does not mean that every person receive the same treatment, but that every person be treated according to standards which apply to all (Smith and Ennis, 1961:137).

The notion of 'standards which apply to all' brings to mind the concept of 'justice'. Justic prevails in a given society if its substantive life is lived in a way that is faithful to the shared understanding of the members (Walzer, 1985:313). Justice calls for the abandonment of the practice of using standards, norms and values that are inappropriate for a given situation.

2.5 Equality of Opportunity

Since the educational sphere has been abused by the apartheid regime, the problem confronting us in the New South Africa is that of introducing complex equality in our educational institutions which needs to be accompanied by the same measure in society as a whole. Are there fixed criteria for assessing the extent of equality or inequality in society? In this report it is not my intention to suggest that there are fixed criteria which can be used to detect 'equality' and 'inequality'. We need to bear in mind that education as a 'sphere' involves competition. Walzer appropriately points out that:

> any position for which people compete, and where the victory of one constitutes a social or economic advantage over the others, must be distributed 'fairly' in accordance with advertised criteria and transparent procedures (Walzer, 1985: 131).

One way of ensuring transparency in the procedures used to select competitors for positions in the educational sphere is by promoting complex equality.

In the case of South Africa, equality of opportunity as a criterion to be used to gauge equality or inequality will be interesting because the creation and reinforcement of inequalities was a deliberate state action during the apartheid era (Sachs:2), which is closely linked to the notion of 'opportunities'. Some people were denied the opportunity to develop and enhance their potential and capabilities. The basis upon which these people were denied opportunities is unjust because their standing in one sphere, or with regard to one social good, has been undercut by their standing in some other sphere. In the past, the racial sphere has influenced how opportunities were distributed. These are not the only criteria that may be used to deny people opportunities; for instance, one's creed may be used to deny one certain opportunities in life.

Denying some sections of the population certain opportunities in life is inappropriate and must be rectified urgently.

According to Brubacher: "equality of opportunity can only be provided by the concerted effort of society" (Brubacher, 1962: 287). This should not be misconstrued as suggesting that equality of opportunity is a necessary condition for complex equality. Walzer is of the opinion that, a "fair" distribution in accordance with advertised criteria and transparent procedures is of paramount importance for any positions which people compete for. Walzer's view stresses the need for fairness and transparency if our effort to attain complex equality is to be meaningful. Introducing fairness and transparency into a social system that has been based on race, ethnicity and gender is a mammoth task.

Some people might hasten to point out that in order to have fairness and transparency we need 'genuine equality of opportunity'. What this means is a field of contestation. The attainment of genuine equality of opportunity is highly problematic because every individual inherits some of the advantages and disadvantages of his ancestors, and is influenced by social conditions such as education, family environment, status and so on (Blits, 1990:309). Blits proceeds to point out that opportunity is never equal, and we cannot speak of equalizing opportunity without first equalizing social conditions.

According to Rebell and Block (1985:20), equality of opportunity is justified because it is concerned with the

development of an individual to his fullest possible potential and capabilities. We can therefore say that, equality of opportunity is concerned with the removal of discriminating hurdles that have been used in the past to block some people from developing their capabilities and potentials to the fullest. In other words, equality of opportunity is concerned with levelling the playing field which, in my opinion, is of paramount importance. Some sections of the South African population have operated from a position of advantage while others were deliberately disadvantaged. We may now ask the question: What does equality of opportunity imply for South African society?

Equality of opportunity implies that we must remove or compensate for handicaps which disproportionately disadvantage certain members of society (Rebell and Block, 1985:22). This now poses a problem for us. Who is to be compensated and who is not to be compensated? What criteria are we to use to decide whether an individual or a group have been disadvantaged or not? According to Rebell and Block (1985:23), "All people will never be equal in their abilities and accomplishment". It has been pointed out earlier on that the implementation of equality of opportunity leaves us in a dilemma because we do not know whether one should deal with the individual or the group. If we decide to deal with the individual, there is the possibility of us leaving out some people who are supposed to benefit from the implementation of

equality of opportunity. Being faced with this dilemma, some people might say that the safest route to follow is that of implementing equality of opportunity on a group basis. The implementation of equality of opportunity on a group basis does not minimise the problem for us. We cannot say with certainty that all members of the targeted group have been equally disadvantaged in the past. Some members of this group might have benefited from the apartheid system. For instance, some blacks in South Africa have benefited tremendously from the balkanization of the country into homelands.

The controversy around equality of opportunity is not restricted to dealing with individuals or groups only. It also involves deciding whether we are interested in equality-of-access, or equality-of-results. Fullinwider states that:

> opportunity is a species of freedom or liberty; and since freedom involve absences of restrictions or obstacles, the idea of absence of some obstacle is implicated in the notion of opportunity (Fullinwider, 1980:97).

It is therefore important to decide whether the restrictions or obstacles are an impediment to 'access' or 'results'. Fullinwider further points out that opportunities involve three components: first, an agent who has the opportunity; second, the goal or aim of the agent; third, the absence of some obstacles to achievement of the goal or aim such that

effortful action by the agent can overcome the remaining obstacles. For the purpose of this report we shall assume that all agents have a goal or aim.

Let us now presume that equality-of-results is the best way for determining whether an agent has achieved its goal or not. In the case of equality-of-results, we are only concerned with the end-results. How these results are obtained seems not to be of any concern to the supporters of equality-of-results. Lack of concern on how the results are obtained creates problems for us. This suggests that it does not matter so much what kind of distribution has been used, as long as the results are equal, then there is no need for bothering at all. Equality-of-results is not an appropriate aim given that complex equality entails accepting that 'results' within spheres will not be equal. Furthermore, equality-of-results would require simple equality which may culminate in drastic state intervention. In this report, drastic state intervention is not favoured. We can therefore not be satisfied merely with equal results; it is important for us to know the procedures that were followed to obtain these results. In any society, there is an acceptable way of doing things. Earlier on in this research report, it was argued that the acceptable way of doing things in the New South Africa is one which promotes the establishment of complex equality. We may now ask the question : Has fairness and social justice been exercised when we judge equality of opportunity on the basis

of equality-of-results? Chances are that fairness and social justice do not play a prominent role in this case. Equality-of-results does not guarantee that the playing fields will be levelled in a defensible way.

Let us now consider equality-of access as an option for attaining equality of opportunity. In this report, it will be argued that equality-of-access is a necessary condition for ensuring equality of opportunity. Suppose X and Y are two individuals who come from different social backgrounds and whose goal is to become medical practitioners. Our starting point shall be to ensure that social backgrounds of both X and Y are not obstacles towards the achievement of their goal. Some people might argue that X and Y have been influenced by different factors and therefore their access to medical school can never be equal. This seems to be the crux of the problem that has been created by the apartheid system. People have had access to institutions of learning on the basis of race and ethnicity.

The best way of ensuring that the social backgrounds of both X and Y do not influence their admission to medical school, is the promotion of complex equality in this interaction. Some people might hasten to point out that, we should first check whether by granting both X and Y equal access to medical school will yield equal results. The notion of equality-of-results has been found to be unacceptable. What we should be

focussing on is the removal of obstacles that might have been deliberately placed to obstruct either X or Y to attain their goal. The standing of X and Y in one sphere, or with regard to one social good should not be used to determine their access to medical school. In the case of South Africa, this seems to be the appropriate move to take. We ought to act fast and swiftly in removing the obstacles that have prevented the majority of the South African population from gaining access to institutions of learning.

2.6 Formal Equal Opportunity or Liberal Equal Opportunity?

It is important for us to identify the form of equal opportunity that is compatible with the ideals of complex equality. Having pointed out that this research report intends focussing on equality-of-access, we need to take a look at the distinction between 'formal equal opportunity' and 'liberal equal opportunity'. Formal equal opportunity is concerned with the removal of legal or quasi-legal barriers. If the removal of legal or quasi-legal barriers was a sufficient condition for heralding equality of opportunity, by now all the inequalities created by apartheid policies could have been eradicated.

In any society, the source of obstruction is not only formal barriers. Fullinwider points out that besides legal or quasi-

legal barriers, there are many other significant barriers, and formal equal opportunity does not address any of these barriers (Fullinwider, 1980:104). It is therefore imperative for us to move beyond formal equal opportunity. According to Fullinwider:

> liberal equal opportunity is concerned not only with legal obstacles to employment (and other goods) but with important non-legal barriers to the development and display of talent (Fullinwider, 1988:105).

The notion of liberal equal opportunity is more closely linked to complex equality because it acknowledges that the barriers confronting an individual at any given moment are multi-faceted. The multifacetedness of barriers an individual is always confronting brings to mind Walzer's idea of 'spheres' within which the interactions between individuals occur. Furthermore, the notion of liberal equal opportunity tends to suggest that no barrier is wholly dominant, instead we are faced with a situation in which we have partial dominance of barriers. We need to bear in mind that equality is a complex relation of persons, mediated by the goods we make, share, and divide among ourselves. This is also true of the barriers that may hamper an individual's development and display of talent; these barriers are intertwined into an individual's complex relations.

It is important to note that this accepts that equality and equality of opportunity are contested concepts. Nevertheless, if our aim is to have equality of opportunity in South Africa, the best way of optimally attaining our goal is to strive for complex equality.

2.7 Summary

It was indicated in this chapter that apartheid was a deliberate state action responsible for creating inequalities in South African society. So as to eradicate these inequalities the establishment of equality is crucial to this exercise. Walzer's notion of 'equality' was explored. It was argued that 'simple equality' is not suitable for rectifying the imbalances created by apartheid. The notion of equality that is capable of redressing the imbalances of the past is 'complex equality', which ensures that deliberate imbalances do not occur at any given time. Equality-of-access and liberal equal opportunity were discussed in further elaborating the ideal of complex equality.

CHAPTER THREE

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

In this chapter, I intend to explore the concept affirmative action and will demonstrate its controversial and contested features. The defensibility of affirmative action as a strategy for pursuing equality will be raised in the remaining chapters. It will be argued that affirmative action is not compatible with the ideal of complex equality.

3.1 Affirmative Action : A Controversial Notion

Now we need to ask the question : what measure should be implemented if we are striving for equality of opportunity? Some people argue that affirmative action is the appropriate measure to be implemented if our intention is to attain equality of opportunity. In order to consider whether this is so, we need to have a better understanding of the term 'affirmative action'.

In some circles the term 'affirmative action' throws up a host of negative responses - the lowering of standards, the loss of jobs for some people, and racism in reverse. On the other hand, some people see 'affirmative action' as a measure that leads to prosperity. Affirmative action does not mean the

same thing to all people. To some people, affirmative action encompasses gender and all sections of the population which were robbed of the opportunity of participating in the economy on an equal basis to white males. This might sound appropriate but it oversimplifies the issues. Some white males actively opposed the apartheid regime and were thus subjected to repressive measures by the government of the day.

From the preceding paragraph, it seems as if affirmative action is a racial and gender issue. In the case of South Africa this suggests that affirmative action is a black and female issue because they are the ones who were disadvantaged in the past. But the notion of affirmative action being a black and gender issue does not differ from what the National Party did during its reign. The National Party promoted the interests of whites (in particular, Afrikaner whites) at the expense of other groups. It is important to note that some people prefer to see affirmative action as a matter of drawing in the disadvantaged population to participate in the economy from a position of strength. In other words, the implementation of affirmative action assumes that the playing fields were never levelled in the past.

3.2 Arguments For and Against Affirmative Action

The following claims are usually presented in favour of affirmative action (Dekker and Lemmer, 1993:18). Affirmative action redresses past injustices suffered by a particular group by making compensation in the present. It breaks the cycle of disadvantage by guaranteeing that covert discrimination cannot be practised. Affirmative action promotes the general social welfare by integrating outsider groups into society by attracting support for the social system. In other words, it increases the visibility of targeted groups. Affirmative action is an effective way of ensuring that individuals and groups who would otherwise be lost in society and the economy can realise their full potential. The benefits of affirmative action are mutually reinforcing and will eventually render any special treatment unnecessary. Affirmative action contributes to national development by providing opportunities and resources to utilize neglected talent.

Those who are opposed to affirmative action usually present the following claims. In practice affirmative action is almost exclusively involved in racial or gender politics, that is to say, it is aimed at promoting targeted ethnic groups and women. Affirmative action runs counter to the principle of equal treatment under the law. The tension between individualism and groups remains a dilemma in affirmative action; even though a programme may be aimed at protecting or enhancing individual rights, in practice it is inevitably

couched in terms of group rights. Group polarization tends to increase in the wake of preferential programmes with non-preferred groups responding negatively. Affirmative action may be economically unattainable; the implementation of affirmative action would require substantial financial support, particularly from the state. Preferential programmes, even when defined as 'temporary', often tend not only to persist but to expand in scope. Affirmative action leads to incompetence and a lowering of standards, in so far as it tolerates the filling of positions by unqualified appointees. The success of a preferred individual is often attributed to the affirmative action programme and not to the person's innate ability and effort. Individuals who would have succeeded in any case without the support of affirmative action are stigmatized by it. Some of these arguments seem to be based on the desire to resist change in society and thus the attainment of equality of opportunity.

Before attempting to offer a response on whether affirmative action is an appropriate measure for attaining complex equality or not, it will be very useful for us to look at the term 'affirmative action' with regard to the South African understanding of this concept. Let us start by looking at the western understanding of affirmative action. According to Castle (1994:265), in the West affirmative action is associated with government or institutional policies directed towards equalizing opportunities, particularly in the workplace and

in higher education. Suppose that this is the line of thought to be adopted for the South African situation. In Chapter Two, it was pointed out that the source of obstruction is not only formal barriers. Affirmative action programmes and strategies include: bursaries and academic support programmes for a particular section of the population; preferential assistance by business to institutions or communities which have been traditionally disadvantaged; corporate social welfare programmes for employees, including housing loans and adult basic education courses; and preferential recruitment and selection procedures in large companies and academic institutions. The implementation of affirmative action hampers the establishment of complex equality if some social good X is distributed to men and women who posses some good Y merely because they posses Y without regard to the meaning of X. In this case people become recipients of affirmative action merely because they were disadvantaged in the past. Affirmative action borders on the fringes of an imposed equality, that is to say, simple equality. Simple equality is not only artificial, it paradoxically suppresses freedom as well.

We cannot deny that in South Africa equal employment opportunity did not exist during the apartheid era. Now that the first national democratic elections have been to a great extent successful, what is the majority of the population expecting? The majority of South Africans expect the

affirmative action programmes should be vigorously implemented. This section of the population (the disadvantaged majority) strongly feels that the absence of equality of opportunity makes it necessary for drastic measures such as affirmative action to be implemented if current imbalances are to be adequately addressed. The disadvantaged majority perceive affirmative action as a way to establish social utopias.

3.3 Conceptions of Affirmative Action in South Africa

According to Castle (1994:267), there are currently two conceptions of affirmative action and these are the 'human resources development of affirmative action' and 'affirmative action as structural change'. The problem confronting us has to do with deciding on the conception of affirmative action that might be appropriate for rectifying the inequalities created by the apartheid system. The human resources development concept of affirmative action is a programme of action that is instituted by the management of an organization to recruit, train and nurture disadvantaged employees in preference to those who have been advantaged, for supervisory and management positions. People who are in favour of the human resources development conception of affirmative action argue that it is a strategic, pragmatic response to problems such as skills shortage which is believed to hamper economic

growth and development, a desire to promote social stability, and the need to integrate the disadvantaged people and advance them within existing organizational structures.

The rationale for the human resources development concept of affirmative action lies in Human Capital Theory (Castle, 1994:269). According to Human Capital Theory, money and time devoted to education and training is viewed as an instrument in human capital rather than as a cost to an organization. The Human Capital Theory stresses that groups which are disadvantaged in the labour market owe their inferior rewards to their lower investment in human capital. The assumption that increased investment in human capital will lead to equality of opportunity is debatable. The mere fact that in this case affirmative action is supposed to be instituted by the management of an organization means that there is a high probability of it being used to remove only the formal barriers that hamper the attainment of equality of opportunity.

The probability of the human resources development concept of affirmative action being used to remove only the formal barriers compels us to shift our focus to the structural change concept of affirmative action (Castle, 1994:267). This concept of affirmative action calls for the massive redistribution of resources and opportunities to historically denied or dispossessed people. This concept of affirmative action

looks beyond the abolition of apartheid legislation, and political guarantees of equal treatment for all, to ways of distributing opportunities and resources to achieve the goal of equal participation in society (Castle, 1994:274). Such a concept of affirmative action seems to be compatible with the ideal of equality of opportunity because it calls for political and economic restructuring. Castle points out that the structural change concept of affirmative action is seen to be driven by three imperatives namely, the political imperative, the moral imperative, and the theoretical imperative (Castle, 1994:275).

In the past the political ideology of the National Party government has played a major role in creating inequality of opportunity in the South African society. Since the political imperative has been greatly responsible for the chaos in South Africa, our focus will be on how to rectify these inequalities from a political point of view. The structural change concept of affirmative action leads us to a position where we need to note that affirmative action is more closely associated to the political imperative. This makes affirmative action to be a politically contested concept. What structural changes will be considered suitable for heralding equality of opportunity? In a multiparty society like South Africa, this is not an easy question to answer. Each and every political party has its own agenda on what structural changes need to be implemented.

Critics of the human resources development concept of affirmative action point out that its underlying motives for action are often governed by fear and guilt rather than a desire to establish equality of opportunity in the long-term (Castle, 1994:272). Confronted with a situation in which the impetus for affirmative action is fear and guilt, management is not likely to readily give away its monopoly and domination. Instead, it is likely to effect cosmetic changes thus ensuring that the power-base does not change hands. In other words, management may be tempted to engage in tokenism. Tokenism will never lead us to equality of opportunity.

The criticism against the human resources development concept of affirmative action compels us to take a look at what other arguments might be levelled against affirmative action. People who are opposed to affirmative action argue that it signifies a new discrimination and injustice, a vengeful form of juggling around with race quotas so as to threaten the livelihoods and security of those who have benefited from the apartheid system in the past. This argument reinforces doubts as to whether affirmative action is a suitable vehicle for the attainment of equality of opportunity. By saying that affirmative action is not a suitable instrument for heralding equality of opportunity, we are not arguing in favour of the status quo created by the apartheid regime. It is necessary for us to note that the conditions created by apartheid policies are unacceptable and need to be changed.

3.4 Affirmative Action and Equality of Opportunity

We have suffered a lot during the apartheid era and we cannot allow this condition to persist. Apartheid policies precipitated resentment, caused damage to the economy and destroyed social peace. Damage to the economy and destruction of social peace need to be avoided if South Africa is to become a prosperous country. In my opinion, South Africa can become a prosperous country only if liberal equal opportunity is promoted.

Let us now look at the view that:

> affirmative action is an attempt to balance earlier inequalities with later inequalities so that the over-all system of opportunities might be more nearly equal (Strike, 1982:217).

The notion of 'being more nearly equal' indicates that there is nothing like absolute equality. We may now ask the question : How are we going to balance earlier inequalities with later inequalities so that the over-all system of opportunities might be more nearly equal? In this case, balancing the over-all system of opportunities seems to be linked to formal barriers. If we pursue this argument, then we may consider affirmative action as a plan of a government to have the staff of any institution reflect the over-all make-up of any society. Acceptance of this view of

affirmative action implies that the racial mix in any institution needs to be balanced.

Some people might argue that what is needed is the advancement of blacks into management positions. Pursuance of this argument does not necessarily lead to the emancipation of black people in general. Emancipation is multifaceted; it might be referring to political emancipation or economic emancipation, or some other kind of emancipation. The advancement of people to management positions on the basis of being black violates the notion of complex equality. Complex equality is premised on the argument that: "no citizen's standing in one sphere, or with regard to one social good can be undercut by his standing in some other sphere" (Walzer, 1985:19). A person's race or gender ought not to advance or undercut his or her chances of advancement. The apartheid regime used the race factor to advance certain sections of the South African population. The usage of race as a determinant of whether a person is granted the opportunity to advance or not is highly controversial. It also undermines the ideal of complex equality. The usage of gender for the advancement of people gives those who are favoured by the policy being implemented an unfair advantage over those who are not. Complex equality is opposed to the implementation of measures that will unfairly favour some sections of society. The advancement of people on the basis of race and gender does not

challenge the trends that were prevalent during the apartheid era.

The vertical mobility of people into senior positions implies that the existing monopoly and domination is not challenged, instead, some people are drawn in with the intention of forming a substructure of that monopoly and domination. In this case, affirmative action is likely to produce a black elite that is not necessarily representative and is there to fuel its own success. It seems as if affirmative action is basically concerned with the problem of who occupies what position in an institution. The advancement of blacks to senior management positions promotes formal equal opportunity. If we are going to have a balance between the various races what does this entail? In the South African context this implies that the demographic make-up of the country must be well represented at any place of employment. To some people, this might mean that the number of people employed in any institution needs to reflect the ratios of the racial mix of society. But actual ratios are not at all indicative of equality of opportunity and therefore we cannot rely on this approach as a suitable vehicle for rectifying imbalances in society. To another group this statement might mean that within any institution all the race groups must be represented without stipulating the percentages required. This view is still not acceptable because it tends to prescribe the racial groups that need to be employed in any institution. This

prescriptive tendency is counter-productive to the ideals of equality of opportunity.

According to Maphai (*Die Suid Afrikaan*: Mei/Junie, 1993:6), the concept of affirmative action is not only emotive, but it is also contested. For instance, political parties such as the African National Congress, National Party and Pan Africanist Congress may all be speaking of affirmative action, but what they mean by affirmative action is influenced by their political ideologies. In a multiparty society like South Africa, each political party has its own hidden agenda for arguing in favour of affirmative action. In other words, what all the parties are concerned with is monopolizing and dominating the political sphere. Affirmative action may further be contested on the grounds of which political party's understanding of this concept should be implemented.

As we implement affirmative action in South Africa, we need to confront the question of who in this country will be affirmed, and by whom? One point of view might be that affirmative action programmes must remain essentially white-driven. These people might argue that since whites have been advantaged in the past, their skills and knowledge are highly advanced. This point of view does not challenge the monopoly and domination created by the apartheid regime; it simply entrenches the position of those who have been unfairly advantaged in the past. A question might be asked : Is the

level to which whites were elevated in the past the most suitable yardstick to be used in the New South Africa? People who are opposed to affirmative action being driven by whites may point out that the apartheid order promoted a one-sided view of life, and whites were encouraged to consider themselves as superior to other race groups. They insist on having a black-driven affirmative action programme, which will re-examine traditional indicators of essentially discriminatory concepts as 'standards' and 'merits'. The close examination of 'standards' and 'merits' is not a neutral process; it is bound to raise a lot of controversies.

Some people might argue that although affirmative action coupled with the re-examination of standards and merits is controversial, nevertheless it is a measure designed to ensure that those who were disadvantaged in the past are afforded equal opportunities. According to Fullinwider:

> opportunity is a species of freedom or liberty; and since freedom involves absence of restrictions or obstacles, the idea of absence of some obstacle is implicated in the notion of opportunity (Fullinwider, 1980·97).

In the course of implementing affirmative action, those who have benefited in the past are indirectly restricted from gaining any further benefits. This means that their freedom or liberty is restricted.

Let us now look at Goldman's distinction between affirmative action policies favouring groups and those favouring individuals, and the distinction between attempts to justify affirmative action policies by backward-looking principles which treat them as compensation for past harms and attempts to justify affirmative action policies by forward-looking principles which aim at future equality of opportunity (Cohen et al., 1977:192). Earlier on in this chapter, it was pointed out that every member of the targeted group really needs to be affirmed. If affirmative action policies favour groups, we tend to indirectly suggest that all the members of the targeted group have had the same experience in the past and there is a strong probability of them having the same experience in the near future. The notion of affirmative action policies favouring groups tends to suggest that members of the targeted group will act in unison. This view is based on an erroneous assumption that people will utilize opportunities in the same way.

The assumption that groups will utilize opportunities equally cannot be defended. Fullinwider points out that opportunities can be grasped or let pass, seized or squandered. Striving for equality of opportunity on a group basis is unrealistic because not all members of the targeted group will seize the opportunities presented to them. This now compels us to look at affirmative action policies favouring individuals. This view stresses that affirmative action should benefit

individuals and not groups. This approach presents problems to us because we need to identify those individuals who have been disadvantaged in the past. At face value this seems to be an easy task, but in practice this is not so. For affirmative action to benefit individuals, it needs to be implemented for all the racial groups in South Africa. If our objective is to attain equality of opportunity then affirmative action will have to be implemented on different scales to different people. Such an approach tends to promote far-reaching discrimination.

Some people might hasten to say that whatever problems we encounter when affirming individuals might be resolved by using backward-looking affirmative action policies, or forward-looking affirmative action policies. Backward-looking affirmative action policies attempt to compensate individuals for past harms, while forward-looking affirmative action policies aim at future equality of opportunity. Suppose it is possible to implement backward looking affirmative action policies for individuals. We may ask, is it possible for us to adequately compensate any individual for past harms? In my opinion, this is not possible because any reference to past harms is not likely to elicit objective responses. What are we to do if an individual fraudulently claims he has been disadvantaged in the past? Under normal circumstances there is nothing that can be done to prevent this individual from

fraudulently benefiting through the implementation of affirmative action.

In the light of backward-looking affirmative action being open to abuse, we may be tempted to opt for forward-looking affirmative action policies. We cannot say with certainty that if affirmative action is implemented now, then the individual will be guaranteed equality of opportunity in the future. Let us now return to the dilemma we were faced with earlier on as to whether to implement affirmative action favouring groups or individuals. According to Cohen, Nagel and Scanlon (Cohen et al., 1977:209), while affirmative action may be a justified form of compensation for certain individuals, it is not justified in the form encouraged by the numerical goals of affirmative action, given the facts about those who tend to benefit from it and those who tend to pay for the benefits. This suggests that affirmative action is inclined to benefit the wrong category of individuals. The critic of affirmative action might argue that affirming some individuals is a benign form of vengeance, and is therefore an outrageous and illegal form of revenge bias (Gross, 1977:46). The critic may further point out that affirmative action is an obsession with the mathematical precision of race and gender proportions.

It is indeed true that the playing fields where never levelled in the past, but to use government intervention in the form

of affirmative action in levelling the playing fields is counter-productive to the ideal of complex equality. Affirmative action undermines the pillar of complex equality that:

> no citizens standing in one sphere, or with regard to one social good can be undercut by his standing in some other sphere (Walzer, 1985:19).

Affirmative action as a strategy for levelling the playing fields is not suitable for redressing the problems created by the apartheid regime. According to Bowmaker-Falconer:

> claims of employment equity and affirmative action programmes have become to a large extent public relations exercises (*Die Suid Afrikaan*; Mei/Junie, 1993:13).

If affirmative action is likely to turn into a mere public relations exercise, then this suggests that as far as the South African situation is concerned, discrimination will continue to make racial, ethnic, or sexual classification relevant criteria for jobs in which such criteria are clearly irrelevant to performing the task.

3.5 Summary

It was pointed out earlier on in this chapter that affirmative action is a highly controversial concept. We highlighted that affirmative action is not an appropriate strategy for levelling the playing fields in South Africa. Affirmative action undermines complex equality.

The notion of complex equality is pivotal to levelling the playing fields in our country. Affirmative action has been said to be a manifestation of simple equality because its implementation tends to deliberately exclude certain citizens from benefiting from such a policy. In other words, those citizens' standing in one sphere, or with regard to one social good is undercut by their standing in some other sphere. To a greater extent, affirmative action is counter-productive to the ideal of complex equality which is necessary for creating a democratic, non-racial, and non-sexist society.

CHAPTER FOUR

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN EDUCATION

In this chapter, the application of affirmative action in education will be considered. An attempt will be made to show that affirmative action in education does not reflect a notion of complex equality and is therefore not a suitable strategy for redressing past inequalities created by the apartheid regime. Furthermore, it will be shown that affirmative action would rest on a misunderstanding of the concept of education.

4.1 Participation

According to Classen:

> the major aim of affirmative action is to provide equality for all citizens in a country by increasing the participation of disadvantaged groups or individuals (Dekker and Lemmer, 1993:61).

Before proceeding with the argument on the kind of participation that is most suitable, we need to identify the participants involved in education. For purposes of this research report our point of focus will be formal education. The participants involved in formal education may be considered to be the State, the private sector, learners, parents of the learners, teachers, and so on. The problem

confronting us has to do with the participant on whom affirmative action in education will have to focus. This chapter will attempt to show that affirmative action in education is not defensible.

4.2 Education and its Aims

It is important for us to bear in mind that what 'education' is depends on one's perspective and the paradigm from which one is operating. For purposes of this research, 'education' is going to be considered as: "the initiation of members of a society into a form of life that is thought to be worthwhile" (Peters, 1973). A question that might arise at this point is: Is there no possibility of establishing a 'neutral kind of education', thus avoiding the entrenchment of certain values? What we wish to point out is that there cannot be a value-free account of education because there exists a relationship between education and the dominant culture in society. Thus at any given point in time certain things will be considered to be correct while others are incorrect.

Education may be considered to be a deliberate, purposeful activity directed to the development of individuals; it therefore involves consideration of value. The notion of "education as the initiation of members of a society into a form of life

that is thought to be worthwhile" involves the development of individuals in a particular direction. In other words, the notion of certain things being right while others are not leads to the dilemma of deciding on the form of life that is worth pursuing at any given point in time. For some people, fundamentalism is a worthwhile form of life, on the other hand some people might be opposed to this form of life. Whatever form of life that is considered worthwhile will be dependent on certain values. Peters points out that values are always open to debate and detailed criticism, and are always in need of particular justification (Peters, 1973:89).

The notion of a 'form of life that is justifiable' implies that there is a particular aim of education which is worth pursuing. We may now raise the question: What aim of education is worth pursuing in South Africa? According to Peters:

> countless aims of education are possible depending upon what features of a worthwhile form of life any educator thinks is most important to foster (Peters, 1973:17).

Let us now look at a situation in which we encourage the growth in our learners of the capacity to think for themselves in a critical manner. This seems a noble idea to pursue because it tends to promote an 'open-minded' society. Consideration of the aim of education to promote critical

thinking is closely linked with Peters' view (Peters, 1973) of "education involving the initiation of learners into a form of life that is worthwhile in a morally acceptable manner at any given point in time". It is important for us to note that 'the initiation of learners into a form of life that is worthwhile' might lead into some controversy because education is a deliberate, purposeful activity directed to the development of individuals, and it therefore involves consideration of the values being promoted at a particular moment. Certain values might be objectionable to some sections of society as has been the case during the apartheid era.

The mere fact that education is value-laden does not prevent us from having a tentative profile of an educated person. According to Pateman (1980:145) an educated person is open to, and generally welcomes and searches for new experience in and about the world in which they live. Furthermore, an educated person has an individuality expressed in and through reflective components in terms of which new experiences and claims to knowledge are evaluated. Another feature of an educated person is that he is capable of participating in and capable of improvement by free and equal discussion.

In order to ensure that a person is capable of participating in and capable of improvement by free and equal discussion, we need to nurture sound cademic practices within our institutions of learning. orrow points out that academic

practices have developed around the search for knowledge (Morrow, 1993/4:40). This search for knowledge may be referred to as "epistemological access". Morrow further points out that mere formal access to the institutions which are supposed to distribute knowledge is different from, and not a sufficient condition for epistemological access. The notion of epistemological access involves learning how to become a participant in an academic practice. The promotion of epistemological access enables the learners to make informed and rational decisions when evaluating the social conditions under which they may find themselves.

4.3 Democracy and Education

We need to bear in mind that people in South Africa were not simply struggling for abstract rights and a new order in which economic policies would attempt to keep them exactly as and where they were - with the only difference being that they would be able to choose between two elite groups every five years. I doubt that this is going to be accepted by ordinary people. The majority of South Africans have been fighting for democracy through a series of emancipatory struggles.

It is important for us to bear in mind that what we are striving for is a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist society. In Chapter Two, it was pointed out that simple

equality promotes monopoly and domination, and is a simple distributive mechanism. It was also indicated in that chapter that complex equality is the ideal situation to strive for in South Africa if we hope to redress the imbalances created by apartheid.

The unilateral implementation of unpopular decisions by the apartheid regime was evident in education. In other words, during the apartheid era there was a lack of transparency, consultation and consensus when decisions were made. The adoption of participatory democracy in our institutions will promote widespread use of public enquiries, of advisory referenda, of consultative bodies, and similar devices can increase the degree to which ordinary people participate in the forming of policy. Since participatory democracy is the ideal form of democracy desired in the post-apartheid South Africa, it is necessary for us to link participatory democracy to education.

Participatory democracy is a form of democratic structure that provides the most suitable condition for the self-development of individuals. Participatory democracy is closely linked to the ideal of 'democratic agency' which is not the agency of an isolated individual considered outside of any social context, but is rather the exercise of this power in free association with the agency of others. An individual's free

association with the agency of others ensures that no citizen's standing in one sphere, or with regard to one social good can be undercut by his standing in some other sphere (Walzer, 1983:19). In other words, participatory democracy does not undermine the self-development of an individual. It is important to note that the most suitable conditions for the self-development of individuals does not necessarily mean that all individuals need the same conditions. The notion that all individuals need the same conditions so as to enhance their self-development undermines complex equality. There is no set of 'suitable conditions' universal to all persons; the self-development toward which the most suitable conditions directs itself may be quite properly different from one person to another. Moreover, since there are temporally final 'suitable conditions', there is no final stage in self-development. We can identify education with self-development of individuals and it is a process of continually transforming and reorganizing the stage in which one end is achieved into a means for achieving another. We should not forget that in directing the activities of learners, society determines its own future in determining that of the young.

We do not wish to inadvertently suggest that participatory democracy is absolutely perfect. Nevertheless, it is so far the best form of governance under which education can take place. South Africans are currently striving for a kind of life that promotes and sustains participatory democracy. It

was pointed out earlier on in this chapter that epistemological access involves learning how to become a participant in any practice (in particular, academic practice). People need to learn how to become agents of participatory democracy. In other words, people need to be initiated into a form of life that promotes participatory democracy. The notion of education as "the initiation of members of a society into a form of life that is thought to be worthwhile" (Peters, 1973) is closely linked with the ideal of participatory democracy and epistemological access. In the post-apartheid era, education is supposed to propagate values that are compatible with democratic participation. If we are to avoid contradicting ourselves, then we need to beware of perpetrating anti-democratic activities. According to Morrow (1989:128): "anti-democratic activities are those activities, relationships or practices which undermine or destroy democratic ideals or practices". Morrow proceeds to point out that although educative relationships cannot be relationships between equals, nevertheless educative teaching is anti-manipulative (Morrow, 1989:148). In other words, there is no way in which education can be linked to anti-democratic activities because educative teaching is not a kind of manipulation.

4.4 Affirmative Action in Education

In our discussion of affirmative action in education, we need to bear in mind that affirmative action purports to provide equality for all citizens in a country by increasing the participation of disadvantaged groups or individuals. In Chapter Three, it was indicated that affirmative action is a highly controversial concept and it tends to undermine complex equality.

Some people might insist that despite all reservations about affirmative action, it must still be implemented in education. The implementation of affirmative action in education confronts us with the problem of deciding on where to focus these measures that are supposed to be corrective. It is important to note that the participants involved in education (that is to say, learners, teachers, and resources) are mutually interdependent. This suggests that an atomistic approach to the implementation of affirmative action in education is bound to elicit a lot of complications. The field of focus of this research report is the implementation of affirmative action for teachers. In particular it will focus on affirmative action with regard to the employment and promotion of teachers. It is undeniable that the apartheid regime has created disparities in the educational system along racial lines. Different criteria were used for the employment and

promotion of black and white teachers. These criteria for the employment and promotion of teachers seemed justifiable to some because the education system was divided along racial lines.

The division of education along racial lines created feelings of superiority in some people, while fostering feelings of inferiority in others. Such feelings need to be transformed. Peters argues that education ought to be transformative (Peters, 1973:19). We may say that education inherited from the apartheid legacy is not transformative because it does not rectify the deliberate imbalances encountered in the past, instead it perpetuates the undermining of complex equality in society. It is therefore inappropriate to think of any form of apartheid education as being the most suitable ideal to strive for. In actual fact, we should not be concerned with using any form of apartheid education as a measure for implementing affirmative action in education for teachers. Instead we should be asking ourselves the question : what are the malevolent side effects of apartheid education? Through unequal access to education, the apartheid system has created a workforce that could not compete on an equal basis for jobs. In other words, apartheid education violated the principle of equality of opportunity.

This now leads us to the claim that white teachers have always been favoured when promotional posts in educational institu-

tions were filled. What should be done to rectify the unfair employment and promotional practices in education that were prevalent in the past? To a certain extent this claim is true, but not all promotional posts in educational institutions were filled by whites. Furthermore, not all whites were considered to be suitable candidates for senior promotional posts. In most cases only those individuals who had a strong affinity for the apartheid regime were elevated to higher positions. Earlier on we hinted at considering the malevolent side effects of apartheid education. To do this, we need to take an in-depth view of unfair employment and promotional practices. Most people are inclined to believe that all teachers except for white ones have been the victims of unfair employment and promotional practices.

Unfair employment practices might be interpreted by some people as the usage of irrelevant criteria in determining who is employed where. Some of the irrelevant criteria that have been used in the past are race, creed and political affiliation. If these criteria were applied by the apartheid regime, then we may be justified in suggesting that most teachers in South Africa have been the victims of unfair employment practices. The rationale for arguing this is based on the fact that all teachers were denied the right to render their services where they deemed it fit to do so. If all teachers in South Africa had no choice concerning place of employment, then we cannot easily come to the conclusion

that some teachers were disadvantaged while others were not. It seems more appropriate to say that most, if not all, teachers in South Africa have been disadvantaged in one way or another. Since most if not all teachers in our country have been disadvantaged, we need to find an alternative way of rectifying this destructive practice (unfair employment and promotion of teachers).

4.5 Restitution

Let us suppose that it is possible for restitution to be implemented. Restitution is associated with the restoration of a thing to its rightful owner. If restitution is possible, then this suggests that education can be restored to its rightful owner. The notion of there being rightful owners of education implicitly compels us to identify particular individuals as recipients of affirmative action measures. It is of paramount importance to note that restitution is concerned with compensating the victims who were actually disadvantaged by a particular action. In other words, restitution in education suggests that we must compensate all the victims of apartheid. At face value this might seem to be an easy task, nevertheless, it is not so because apartheid was harmful to both blacks and whites in South Africa.

Pursuance of restitution in education leads us to a point where we may ask whether education is an opportunity or a benefit? What are the implications of education being a benefit? According to Erickson (1984:98), consideration of education as a mere benefit tends to suggest that it is the sort of thing that may not be part of an individual's life plans. This understanding of education implies that education is a private good of which individuals should be free to purchase as little or as much as they desire. If education is indeed a private good, then there is no justification whatsoever for blaming the apartheid regime for the immoral imbalances that were created in education because individuals were free to choose the kind of education that they wanted. On the contrary, such a freedom of choice with regard to education was never promoted.

Since restitution is not compatible with the view of education as a benefit, let us now proceed to consider education as an opportunity. Erickson argues that viewing education as an opportunity generates the logic of equality in education (Erickson, 1984:99). The need for equality in education cannot be disputed. What we need to bear in mind is that restitution involves compensation of the individuals who were wronged in the past. In other words, we must trace only those people who were negatively affected by apartheid education in the past. Tracing only of some people is not compatible with the notion of education being an opportunity. The notion of

education being an opportunity implies that it would be wrong to deny any person education. Opportunities can be grasped or left to pass by. If education is indeed an opportunity, we cannot verify that all people could have grasped this opportunity in the same way. What is of paramount importance is to note that it is impossible to restore educational opportunities lost in the past. In actual fact it is a misnomer for us to speak about restitution in education because we are not concerned with the education of past generations, instead we are concerned with the education of future generations.

Since learners are entrusted in the care of teachers to provide them with education, we need to ask ourselves the question: what kind of teachers do we need in our schools? In my opinion, we do not need teachers who are beneficiaries of affirmative action because there is a possibility of affirmative action being misdirected. For instance, some people might wrongfully climb the affirmative action bandwagon, which might lead to incompetence and a lowering of standards, in so far as it tolerates the filling of positions by less qualified appointees. Instead of implementing affirmative action in education, we should rather strive for equality of opportunity by ensuring that all teachers are given better opportunities for study. The promotion of better opportunities for study given to all teachers will definitely improve their level of competence.

4.6 The Impact of Affirmative Action in Education

In order to take a particular stance on affirmative action in education, we need to look at the ideals of education or, in Walzer's terms, at the meaning of education as a social good. Education is an ongoing process and there are many alternatives which are available at any given moment. Education is dynamic and its dynamism calls for continued assessment of the decisions taken, and if they are no longer worthwhile they should be abandoned. Walzer points out that, 'all the goods with which distributive justice is concerned are social goods' (Walzer, 1985:7). Education falls into the category of social goods because we always need to assess whether the way it is distributed is just or unjust. In the course of implementing affirmative action in education we must not forget that, the envisaged situation in South Africa is one that promotes the establishment of complex equality. Although affirmative action is currently the buzzword in South African society, we need to investigate the impact of affirmative action in education. According to Peters, "education suggests not only that what develops in someone is valuable but also that it involves the development of knowledge and understanding" (Dearden et al., 1972:3).

Let us now suppose that affirmative action in education is implemented on the basis of advancing those who have been

disadvantaged in the past. This now creates the possibility where the colour of a person's skin or gender may become the determining entry factor into a job. If this determines the appointment of teachers, some people might secure positions beyond their capacity. What is of great importance to any institution is the value and contribution a person brings to an organization. People who are appointed on the basis of affirmative action do not always meet the criterion of being able to develop knowledge and understanding and so they will not be able to execute their duties efficiently and effectively.

Furthermore, teachers who are unable to develop knowledge and understanding will not be able to explore the many alternatives which are available at any given moment. Once teachers are unable to uphold the dynamism which is an inherent feature of education due to the fact that they have been elevated to positions that are beyond their capacity and contribution, then this is bound to lead to insecurity and failure. No institution is interested in a workforce that does not deliver the goods. Inability to live up to expectations may lead to replacements being effected.

Let us now proceed to look at the impact of affirmative action on equality of educational opportunity. The implementation of affirmative action in education appears to be a negation of equality of opportunity. Since we are concerned with the

educational system in South Africa this means that affirmative action negates equality of educational opportunity because it is a limited strategy. The success rate of affirmative action to attain equality of educational opportunity will be minimal because it does not address the root cause of prejudice and inequality, and it does little to develop the full potential of every woman and man in our educational system. In theory, affirmative action in education is supposed to end once equality of educational opportunity has been attained. In essence, equality of educational opportunity is an unattainable ideal because society is not necessarily better off where the satisfaction of the less talented is increased at the expense of limiting the more talented from realizing their abilities.

The notion of increasing the satisfaction of the less talented at the expense of limiting the more talented from realizing their abilities is likely to lead to reduced efficiency due to the employment of less qualified people. Although the main aim of affirmative action is the reduction of racism, it might end up being a source of frustration because the recipients of affirmative action are unable to maintain the standard required of them in their new positions of employment. This leads us to the point where we need to ask the question : Are all the recipients of affirmative action in education going to use the opportunity afforded to them in a productive way? According to Hoffman, an opportunity is a state in which

someone may choose whether or not to perform some effortful act(s) that he considers desirable in themselves or a means to something desirable in itself (Gross, 1977:365). It is important for us to note that opportunities can be grasped, or let pass, seized or squandered. When we implement affirmative action in education we cannot guarantee that the recipients of this measure will definitely seize this opportunity.

4.7 Summary

Earlier on in this research report, we pointed out that what we are striving for is the establishment of complex equality. In this chapter it has been pointed out that affirmative action is counter-productive to the aims of education. We proceeded to argue that the implementation of affirmative action in education does not guarantee the establishment of complex equality in society.

It was pointed out in this chapter that, the implementation of affirmative action in education might lead to a situation wherein a person's colour of the skin or gender becomes the determining factor for his or her appointment and promotion into senior positions. It was stressed that the implementation of affirmative action in education negates the notion of equality of educational opportunity. It is of paramount

importance to note that all teachers in South Africa were disadvantaged during the apartheid era. We are therefore not supposed to select a particular section of the teaching fraternity as being disadvantaged.

CHAPTER FIVE

DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION

In the previous chapter it has been argued that affirmative action in education is inappropriate. In this chapter, an account will be given of how we ought to interpret democratic education so as to ensure that complex equality is not undermined.

5.1 A Democratic Theory of Education

In order to have a better understanding of 'democratic education' we need to consider the tenets of a democratic theory of education. According to Gutmann:

> the most distinctive feature of a democratic theory of education is that it makes a democratic virtue out of our inevitable disagreement over educational problems (Gutmann, 1987:11).

Apartheid education has caused a lot of discord and conflict in South African society, and what is needed is a theory that will ameliorate rather than exacerbate the situation. A democratic theory of education has the potential to pull us out of the mess created by apartheid because it promises to promote public debate on educational problems in a way much more likely to increase our understanding of education and

each other than if decision-making is entirely left to the judgement of the most enlightened experts.

Gutmann points out that the primary aim of a democratic theory of education is not to offer solutions to all the problems plaguing our educational institutions, but to consider ways of resolving those problems that are compatible with a commitment to democratic values. What makes the democratic theory of education more viable is that it provides principles that, in the face of our social disagreement, help us judge on who should have authority to make decisions about education, and what the moral boundaries of that authority are. In other words, as we move away from the apartheid era, we need to guard against simply perpetuating the beliefs held by dominant majorities because this would amount to political repression (Gutmann, 1987:75). What we are striving for in our educational institutions is accountability. Although policies resulting from democratic deliberations will not always be the right ones, they will be more enlightened by the values and concerns of the many participants that constitute a democratic educational institution.

The prominent participants in an educational institution (in this case, a school), are learners and teachers. This does not mean that the other participants are irrelevant; we are identifying learners and teachers as being prominent because in this research report we are concerned with the employment

and promotion of teachers in schools which is bound to impact either negatively or positively on the learners. It is therefore of paramount importance to ask ourselves the question : What kind of teachers should be employed, and promoted to senior positions in our schools? Some people might argue that we need to employ and promote teachers who are highly talented. It is indeed true that we need highly talented teachers in our schools, but just being talented is not a sufficient condition. Gutmann stresses that:

> democratic education depends not only upon attracting intellectually talented people with a sense of professional mission to teaching, but also upon cultivating and sustaining that sense during their careers as teachers (Gutmann, 1987:81).

It is therefore not only teachers' professionalism that is needed to rectify the mistakes caused by apartheid education. Teachers are supposed to work together with learners, and their actions must not threaten the development of the learners. There is a strong tension between the professional autonomy of teachers and democratic education to the extent that teachers tend to invoke their professional competence to deny the learners any influence in shaping the form or content of their own education (Gutmann, 1987:88).

The professionalism of teachers renders the learners unable to share equally in making decisions. We are aware of the

fact that teachers and learners ar epistemologically not equal. This epistemological inequal. y between teachers and learners should not prevent us from promoting participatory democracy in our schools. According to Gutmann:

> participatory approaches aim to increase students' commitment to learning by building upon and extending their existing interest in intellectually productive ways (Gutmann, 1987:89).

As soon as learners start building and extending their existing interests in intellectually productive ways, then both teachers and learners will be involved in the determination and transmission of what is educationally worthwhile.

The participatory involvement of both teachers and learners in schools should enable these participants to come to realize that the participatory approach may not bring all good things in its wake (Gutmann, 1987:90). It is therefore necessary for these participants to become critical in their approach. Once teachers and learners adopt a critical approach, they will then be able to explore a wide range of world views and participate effectively in the educational process. In other words, knowledge, values, norms, standards and so on transmitted through schools must complement the ideals of participatory democracy.

Education was used during the National Party reign to prop up and entrench apartheid. The principle of equal educational opportunity was tampered with by the government of the day. One's race and gender played a major role in determining the kind of education transmitted to learners. Participatory democracy on the other hand, does not undermine any stakeholder involved in education. Some people might argue that for us to successfully implement democratic education we require affirmative action. It seems to me that those who defend affirmative action claim that it is a part of a democratic policy, in that it aims to place persons from disadvantaged groups in positions of authority. On the contrary, affirmative action undermines democratic aims because a citizen's standing in one sphere or with regard to one social good is used to undercut his standing in some other sphere, with regard to some other good (Walzer, 1985:19). Implementation of affirmative action is not compatible with the notion of participatory democracy because it involves the imposition of decisions which in most cases are arbitrarily taken by politicians.

Participatory democracy guarantees the involvement of all the participants in society. In other words, participatory democracy is antithetical to drastic state intervention. It was pointed out in Chapter Two that drastic state intervention is a common feature of simple equality because it does not diminish the level of monopoly and domination. By promoting

participatory democracy in our educational institutions, the domination and monopoly of the state will be challenged, thus curtailing the imposition of policies by the state, or any other dominant group. Supporters of affirmative action might argue that this measure is the correct step that enables those who were disadvantaged in the past to become participants in the decision-making process. When people are thrust into positions of authority through affirmative action, there is a great possibility that some people will be elevated to positions of authority in a manner that undermines complex equality. In other words, their standing in one sphere will influence their appointment and promotion in educational institutions.

It is important for us to note that participatory democracy in schools ensures that the required commitment of all the stakeholders involved in educational institutions will be forthcoming. It was pointed out earlier on in this research report that authoritarian management is no longer acceptable in our educational system. Some people might misconstrue the democratization of education as being a matter of promoting democratic governance of schools and changing relationships between teachers and learners. In my opinion, the democratization of education enables the parties involved to participate effectively in our schools. The process of democratization calls for the transformation of education, which is necessary if the democratization of South African

society is not to be sabotaged. Gutmann aptly points out that:

> democratic education supplies the foundation upon which a democratic society can ensure the civil and political freedoms of its citizens without placing their welfare or its very survival at great risk (Gutmann, 1987:289).

We shall not lose sight of the reciprocity that exists between democracy and democratic education. In other words, democratic education provides the moral strength for the sustenance of participatory democracy.

In my opinion, the democratic theory of education and complex equality are highly compatible because they both take into consideration the fact that society is not homogeneous. South African society is heterogeneous and is currently doing its utmost best to nurture democratic practices. In a heterogeneous society like South Africa, the best option to follow is to publicly discuss issues and make decisions based on principles of justice by participatory means.

5.2 Merit

At this juncture we need to consider how teachers ought to be appointed and promoted so as to ensure that the democratization of education is not undermined. For any person

to become a teacher, academic certification is required, and this makes teaching to be an 'office'. According to Walzer, "an 'office' is a place of trust, authority, service under constituted authority ... an official position or employment" (Walzer, 1985:129). Since teaching is an office we cannot just appoint and promote teachers randomly. Some form of merit needs to be considered when appointing and promoting teachers. Walzer points out that: "since offices are relatively scarce, the process of selecting officials must be fair to all candidates" (Walzer, 1985:132). In other words equality of opportunity must be practised. Nevertheless, we should not lose sight of the fact that the candidates we are looking for should be those who are capable of sustaining the ideals envisaged in the New South Africa. Teachers must be appointed and promoted on the basis of merit. As Walzer stresses, "offices must be won in open competition. The goal is a perfect meritocracy" (Walzer, 1985:132). If appointments and promotions are done on the basis of affirmative action, then offices are not won in open competition.

We should not lose sight of the fact that we need to appoint and promote teachers who are capable of establishing and promoting participatory democracy and of educating learners about complex equality. In other words, teachers who are eligible for appointment and promotion should be capable of promoting epistemological access in our schools. Morrow points out that epistemological access involves learning how

to become a participant in an academic practice, and academic practices have developed around the search for knowledge (Morrow, 1993/4:40). Epistemological access is closely linked to the notion of achievement, in particular educational achievement. In other words, epistemological access is closely linked to achievement in relation to educational activities. The appointment and promotion of teachers should be based on the fostering of educational achievement in the learners which ensures that they constructively engage in educational activities. It is important to note that "educational activities are activities which contribute to learning how to participate in some socially constructed practice which is regarded as valuable" (Morrow, 1994/4:38). We are not just concerned with ensuring that the learners have formal access to institutions of learning, our main concern is the promotion of epistemological access, thus ensuring that the learners become active participants in an academic practice.

The notion of educational achievement is closely linked to the idea of agency because only agents are capable of achievements. In order to attain educational achievement we need teachers who are transformative agents. It is the task of selection committees in educational institutions to ensure that only the best teachers are appointed and promoted, to ensure that learners are initiated into forms of life that are worthwhile. For this, learners need knowledge. In the appointment and promotion of teachers we need to select those

candidates who will equip the learners with knowledge that makes it possible to promote complex equality. Knowledge plays a critical role in the promotion of this ideal. Walzer states that: "if one devalues knowledge, one falls back on ideology, for some kind of guiding principle, some standard reference for the regulation and evaluation of work, is necessary in the management of a modern economy" (Walzer, 1985:134).

During the apartheid era, we have seen the harmful side effects of pandering to ideology in education. We should be careful so as not to repeat the same mistakes. We should bear in mind that when we appoint and promote teachers, this should be to the benefit of the learners. Walzer indicates that:

> selection committees are committed to look for qualified candidates, not only out of fairness to the candidates but also out of concern for all those people who depend upon the source of qualified office holders (Walzer, 1985:145).

The development of learners is central to the selection of candidates for appointment and promotion in our schools. We should not fail the learners by appointing and promoting teachers who might not be the best educators in the interest of advancing their careers. Instead we should ensure that only

those candidates who are competent proponents of education for democratic participation are appointed and promoted.

5.3 Education for Democratic Participation

Let us now consider what Morrow refers to as 'education for democratic participation',

> education for democratic participation is education which attempts to develop rationality, particularly that kind of political rationality presupposed in the idea of a democratic community (Morrow, 1989:117).

The notion of 'education for democratic participation' is compatible with the ideals of complex equality and equality of opportunity because it is more likely to ensure that the people who are involved in education do not become passive recipients of whatever is transmitted. Morrow proceeds to indicate that such an education should attempt to develop in people the knowledge and capacities to stand against the manipulation so prevalent in our kind of society and to which the less rational are more vulnerable (Morrow, 1989:117).

The need to stand against manipulation calls for the appointment and promotion of teachers who are strongly committed to the ideal of participatory democracy. It is essential to recall that learners depend upon the service rendered by

teachers. Since our objective is to instil in the learners the ideals of participatory democracy, we need to develop them into morally autonomous agents (Morrow, 1989:117). The notion of morally autonomous agents links up with the ideal of rationality. For us to have democratic education we need to appoint and promote teachers who are committed to the development of rationality in the learners.

> The development of rationality is a systematic process given direction by rational judgements of which those who are not yet rational are not yet capable; if they were they would not need education (Morrow, 1989:118).

The notion of the development of rationality in the learners presupposes that epistemological access is vigorously promoted so as to enable them to make well informed decisions.

Epistemological access requires the best teachers, not affirmative action appointments. Affirmative action appointments will tend to be underqualified to promote the development of rationality. The development of rationality in the learners is essential for ensuring that well informed choices are made on the form of life that is considered worthwhile at any given point in time. Undermining the development of rationality opens up the way for manipulation. Manipulation is antithetical to the ideal of complex equality. Manipulation is closely linked to the process of domestication. Undermining

the development of rationality is a recipe for the domestication of people because they will tend to unquestioningly accept whatever decisions are taken by others on their behalf.

In the past, South Africans received the kind of education that undermined the development of rationality. This kind of education tended to obscure the political judgement of citizens thus failing to liberate them. Morrow stresses that, "education must either be for liberation or for domestication" (Morrow, 1989:121). Apartheid education is a typical example of education that domesticates, and the time is ripe for pursuing education that liberates. Morrow points out that: education for liberation respects, and education for domestication obscures, the essential subjective element of moral judgement (Morrow, 1989:121).

It is important to have sound political judgement because this will assist us to differentiate between policies that are in the 'public interest' of South African society and those policies that are elitist in nature. According to Morrow,

> the concept of political judgement is central to the consideration of politics; it is central to the political decisions we make, the policies we support, oppose, pursue or reject, the political activities we engage in, and our political views or comments, our discussions and arguments (Morrow, 1989:124).

We need to ensure that learners will be capable of making worthwhile political judgements when the time comes for them to do so. If our objective is to develop South Africa into a prosperous country in the near future, then we should encourage teachers to facilitate the development of rational political judgement in the learners.

The nurturing of rational political judgement in our institutions of learning will serve as a vehicle for ensuring that the learners acquaint themselves with making practical judgements in the context of their practices (Morrow, 1989:125). Apartheid education has deliberately promoted elitism in society; it granted certain sections of our society special privileges for political judgement. This is not the kind of political judgement we envisage as being appropriate. The kind of political judgement we think is appropriate to be cultivated in the learners is one that is compatible with the ideals of impartiality and independence of judgement;

> Political judgement is a capacity that needs to be cultivated; impartiality and independence of judgement are something attained in the actual context of making judgement, and they are not capacities which, once attained, are never lost (Morrow, 1989:127).

We cannot expect the learners to acquire rational political judgement if it is not cultivated during their school days through the promotion of epistemological access. Furthermore,

since rational political judgement is supposed to promote impartiality and independence of judgements, this reinforces the argument in favour of education for democratic participation. Impartiality and independence of judgement are highly fragile and need to be developed with care. We should therefore ensure that rational political judgement is not undermined or destroyed. Once rational political judgement is threatened or destroyed the ability of citizens to participate in democratic decision-making will be minimal. Morrow stresses that:

> To participated in democratic decision-making is to engage in an activity which enlarges our sympathy for the point of view of others and which might lead to the modification of our own point of view, and this is an educative process (Morrow, 1989:127).

The notion of 'enlarges our sympathy for the point of view of others and which might lead to the modification of our own point of view' suggests that rational political judgement is an educative process that makes it possible for people to consider and evaluate other strategies because it is open to public debate and criticism. In other words, those people who are capable of making rational judgements will not rigidly stick to a strategy which is not capable of yielding worthwhile results that are in the 'public interest' of the South African society.

The development of rationality is not only supposed to be concerned with the learners; we also need to develop rationality in those teachers who were disadvantaged in the past. Affirmative action in education is not a suitable strategy for developing rationality in both learners and teachers because it undermines complex equality.

In my opinion, education for democratic participation is compatible with the ideal of complex equality. Education for democratic participation does not undermine any citizen's standing in one sphere, or with regard to one social good; on the contrary, it promotes the establishment of educative practices in our institutions of learning. All participants in education are encouraged to become active agents in the transformation of South Africa into a democratic society. So as to enhance the proliferation of education for democratic participation, we require the most effective managers whoever they are at all levels in our educational institutions of learning.

5.4 Summary

In this chapter, I argued that 'affirmative action in education' as a strategy should be discarded. I then proceeded to present 'a democratic theory of education' as an alternative to affirmative action in education. It was also

indicated that the primary aim of a democratic theory of education is not to offer solutions to all the problems plaguing our educational institutions, but to consider ways of resolving those problems through the implementation of strategies that are compatible with a commitment to democratic values. I proceeded to argue in favour of the appointment and promotion of teachers who are committed to the promotion of complex equality.

The importance of promoting epistemological access in our educational institutions was explored. An attempt was made to show that epistemological access is closely linked to complex equality. The promotion of complex equality is conducive to the promotion of 'education for democratic participation'. It was argued that the notion of participatory democracy is linked to the idea of morally autonomous agents. The development of learners into morally autonomous agents calls for the development of rationality. Epistemological access and rationality ensures that all the participants involved in education are able to constructively engage in educational activities.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In this report, I have defended equality of opportunity and given an account of what it means. In the New South Africa, equality of opportunity seems to be a frequently expressed social goal. Formal equality of opportunity is not sufficient for eradicating inequalities created by the apartheid system. The promotion of complex equality is appropriate for rectifying the imbalances deliberately created by the National Party government.

In Chapter Three, the viability of affirmative action as a strategy for eradicating inequalities deliberately created in the past was explored. It was shown that affirmative action is a highly controversial concept. Furthermore, it was argued that affirmative action is closely linked to simple equality. The pursuit of simple equality would require drastic state intervention. In the past, drastic state intervention has hampered the progress of certain sections of the South African population. Instead of promoting the ideal of complex equality, affirmative action is counter-productive to this ideal. The ideal of complex equality is necessary for creating a democratic, non-racial, and non-sexist society. Affirmative action is not a reliable strategy for establishing a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa.

The establishment of a democratic society requires the vigorous promotion of equality of opportunity. Education is closely linked to the ideal of equality of opportunity. Education plays a prominent role in discussions of equality of opportunity. If equality of opportunity is a social goal, then education pays social returns over and above private returns to the recipients of education.

In Chapter Four, I argued against the implementation of affirmative action in education because most if not all teachers in South Africa have been disadvantaged in one way or another. This report also indicates that we need to appoint and promote the best teachers so as to ensure that epistemological access is not undermined.

The promotion of epistemological access is necessary for ensuring that the knowledge acquired by learners is not just general and superficial. The appointment and promotion of the best teachers will ensure that the knowledge acquired by the learners provides them with epistemological access. It is also argued in this report that affirmative action in education is not defensible because our most urgent need is not for teachers who are beneficiaries of affirmative action in our schools.

Having considered Gutmann's theory of democratic education and Walzer's notion of complex equality in relation to South

African education, we return to the question : is affirmative action in education defensible? This research report is opposed to the strategy of implementing affirmative action in education because it violates complex equality. Focussing on the democratization of education is a better strategy because it enables the learners to acquire rational political judgement and this promotes participatory democracy.

Since South African society is not homogenous, but a highly diversified complex of interest groups with criss-crossing membership, we should pursue strategies that disperse power. Affirmative action is not capable of dispersing power because it grants the selected group more advantages than the others. Participatory democracy is the most suitable option to follow because it requires the dispersal of power. The process of democratization infers increased equality of opportunity. It is therefore a process which includes measures to overcome disabilities in our educational system and thus serve as a catalyst for the economic and social democratization of society as a whole.

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