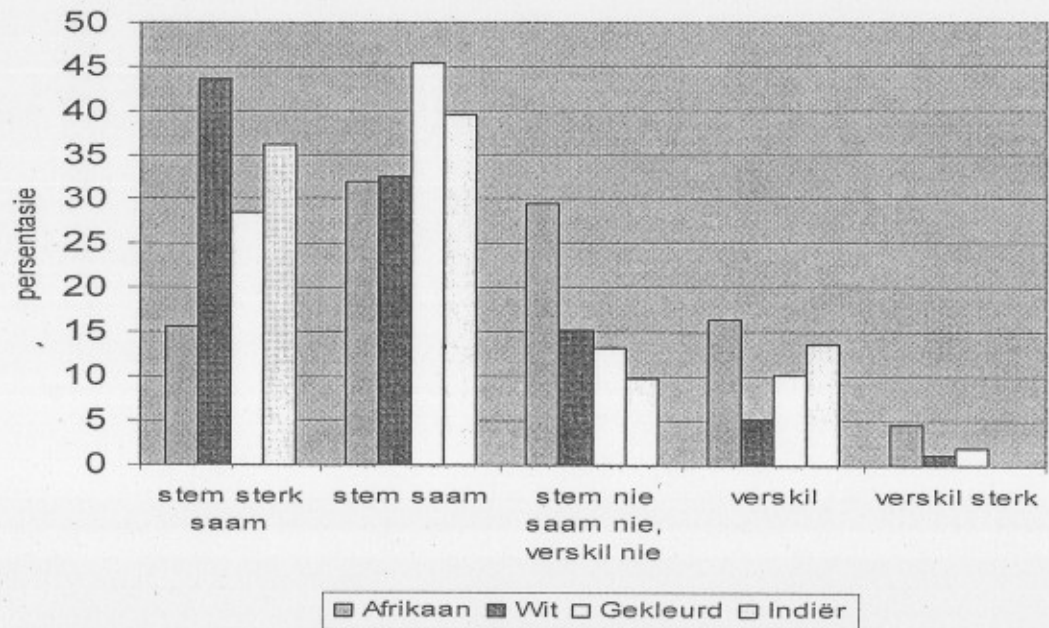


What does the public say about affirmative action?

On the question: Should young people be exempt from affirmative action based on race, the vast majority of respondents agreed that the youth should be exempt (50% of blacks, 75% of whites, Indians and coloured people)

"Jong mense wat die arbeidsmark vir die eerste keer betree, behoort vrygestel te word van die bepalings van Regstellende Aksie", volgens ras.

(Die "weet nie" en "weier" antwoorde is nie ingesluit nie)



What does the public say about affirmative action?

If South Africa would thus hold a referendum today and the question is “Should young people be exempt from Affirmative Action based on race”, the majority of the country’s voters are likely to vote in favour.

The cost of Affirmative Action

- Over and above the morale and emotional objections to the way in which the affirmative action policy is applied, the cost implications of the policy should also be taken into account.
- Recognising that expenditure on education is a capital expenditure/ investment by the state, the money spent should, after a number of years start paying dividends by way of added value to the economy and to the broader society.

The cost of Affirmative Action

Total cost to educate	Total	White	Other
School education only	R19 738m	R1 793m	R10 484m
University	R20 168m	R7 782m	R12 386
Technicon / University of technology	R9 237m	R1 788m	R7 449m
Total cost/ year of education "outputs"	R49 143m	R11 363m	R30 319m
Capital cost over 10j ('93-'03)	R491 430m	R113 630m	R303 190m
Or	R491.4bn	R113.6bn	R303.1bn
White youth unemployed % if AA aims are reached:		76%	
Total capital expenditure wasted		R85.3bn	

The cost of Affirmative Action

Using this as a measure of young whites that would be jobless, it means that an estimated R85.3bn capital expenditure will not be utilized by the country. This means a total waste of resources. We should also think of the opportunity cost that this policy causes.

The cost of Affirmative Action

- Can we afford affirmative action?
- Is it prudent for government to allow this policy to inhibit its own ability to deliver?
- Is it wise to invest so much money in the youth only to implement a policy that sends many of them into de facto exile into Europe and other parts of the world?

Perception is a reality

- An important aspect is how the community affected by a governmental policy perceive that policy. This perception is often informed by experience.

“We had nothing to do with the previous regime, and now we are the ones bearing the brunt of a policy that is in fact not serving the academic aim but is used to oppress us.”

- How will those youths that can not afford to emigrate deal with this situation?

Affirmative action as a temporary measure

- *"A coherent packet of measures, of a **temporary** character, aimed specifically at **correcting** the position of members of a target group in one or more aspects of their social life, in order to obtain effective equality."*
(UN view on Affirmative action)
- According to the UN's view, affirmative action is *temporary* by nature. This stance plays a role in debating the issue of whether the youth should not be freed from affirmative action policies.
- The policy of affirmative action should only operate to the advantage of those who had been previously disadvantaged.

Affirmative action as a temporary measure

Regarding the youth, governmental policy should rather focus on creating equal opportunities within reasonable time, from which all youth can compete without preferential governmental policy, rather than attempting to force potentially unsustainable outcomes.

Proposals

As South Africans we see ourselves as part of the democratic dispensation and not isolated from the harsh realities that the country faces, we want to make a contribution. Government should allow us to do so.

Proposals

- Affirmative action must not be applicable to those born after 2 February 1990, or
- for the definition of the “designated group” in the Employment Equity Act to be broadened to at least include all youth, irrespective of race, as part of the employment equity targets, and
- to allow new business enterprises created by young people to be treated equally to so-called black companies or black empowered companies in as far as they compete for government procurement tenders.