

The term affirmative action (U.S. English), or positive discrimination (British English) means positive steps taken to increase the representation of women and minorities in areas of employment, education, and business from which they have been historically excluded. In search for the roots of Affirmative action I start at the very beginning of the US history describing institutionalized forms of slavery and later on segregation to demonstrate how deep and strong this exclusion was. Since the late 1960s this expression has been used to refer to policies that go beyond the simple prohibition of discrimination on grounds of race, national origin, and sex in employment practices and educational system. These policies require some further action, affirmative action, to make jobs and promotions and admissions to educational programs available to individuals from groups that have historically suffered from discrimination.

In an effort to create an unprejudiced picture of this phenomenon of American modern society I try to open my work for arguments of both side, the proponents and the opponents of affirmative action with the awareness of how controversial this issue for American citizens is. The work however comes to an conclusion, that affirmative action programs as they are and work at the moment do not meet actual needs of present American society. Therefore wider social justice should be guaranteed by such affirmative action programs aiming on people in need regardless of their ethnical or racial origin.