
THIS HOUSE THINKS POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION CAUSES MORE HARM THAN GOOD

Proposition 1: Dr Kevin Yuill

Dr Kevin Yuill a Senior Lecturer in American History at Sunderland University began by stating that positive discrimination is not the same as positive action. Positive discrimination occurs in the application procedure. It is illegal in the UK but legal over most of the United States. It existed as a civil rights demand from the 1930s, leading to the first governmental affirmative action policy by the Nixon administration. Dr Yuill detailed his five objections to positive discrimination. Firstly, it is ineffectual shown through the fact that black unemployment has been twice as high as that for other races for 50 years. Secondly, it is tokenistic as it hits the wrong group and sets up conflicts at the bottom of the pile. Thirdly, it is inevitably tokenistic. Fourthly, positive discrimination misses the real target. The glass ceiling in the boardroom is less important than other issues facing women, such as abortion rights. Fifthly, positive discrimination creates a contest of victimhood necessitating constant recognition of victimhood status by minority groups.

Opposition 1: Dr Nick Bampos

Dr Nick Bampos a Cambridge academic claimed that discrimination does a great deal of good. Even though discrimination undermines the basic notion of fairness and EU law would not ordinary support discrimination, it does so because positive discrimination is necessary. Positive discrimination meant to Dr Bampos that minority candidates in application procedures should get the job because they represent a greater cross section of the society that a given company serves. There is evidence that companies with more diverse boards, are more profitable. Dr Bampos claimed that ‘unless we deal with positive discrimination in a positive was we will not get better’.

Proposition 2: Sharmila Parmanand

Sharmila Parmanand a Gates Scholar and PhD candidate in Gender Studies claimed that positive discrimination replaces more structural solutions. Its intentions are good, but there are casualties and it doesn’t solve the problem it purports to. We end up promoting elites within minority groups, harming the minorities and displacing better solutions. Therefore, it privileges those who have suffered the least discrimination. Positive discrimination creates resentment in these communities. It harms the groups it purports to help. And it sets people up to fail. When the only reason people are in positions is because of positive discrimination this leads to imposter syndrome.
Opposition 2: EJ Rosetta

EJ Rosetta a writer and columnist stated that she loved discrimination, but it was a weapon that must be in the correct hands. Positive discrimination is a necessary evil. Presidential candidate Hilary Clinton accepted she was only admitted to Yale because she had positive discrimination on her side. EJ Rosetta recounted anecdotes displaying the benefits of positive discrimination.

Proposition 3: Srishti Krishnamoorthy-Cavell

Srishti Krishnamoorthy-Cavell a final year doctoral scholar in English at Newnham declared that even when applied correctly positive discrimination will benefit only some people well, which will trickle down to even fewer people. It amounts to cherry picking the best of a marginalised group. Furthermore, it delegitimises their success. A positive change needs to sustainable with a base of individuals to support this change. With positive discrimination there is no incentive to reform structures, creating a perception is that the problem has been fixed. It absorbs people of guilt when it shouldn’t. Furthermore, the moral framework is repugnant as it relies on white savourism.

Opposition 3: Ava Vidal

Ava Vidal a comedian stated that positive discrimination is ‘absolutely a positive thing’. She believed that ‘we are not all on a level playing field’ and positive discrimination is ‘about creating a more level playing field’. Minorities wouldn’t want a job on top of someone better than him, but wants the opportunity to apply for the job. Moreover, positive discrimination doesn’t help you keep the job. Ava Vidal recognized that in the media there is a lack of diverse voices and ‘we need to hear these different voices’. She noted the important of role models for people of colour. if we don’t use positive discrimination, ‘we will end up going backwards’.

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For footage of the event go to https://www.youtube.com/user/cambridgeunionsoc
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