

Antecedent Attitudinal Predictors of Likelihood of Voluntary Support for Affirmative Action in a Statewide Law Enforcement Organization

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Abstract

This study focused on understanding the types of attitudes toward external factors of reward distribution that served as antecedent predictors of likelihood of support for the voluntary practice of affirmative action (AA) in a statewide law enforcement organization in the United States (US). The impetus for the study was the concern over the perennial opposition to AA and the banning of the policy in some US states, despite that the policy has been strongly linked to increased hiring of racial-ethnic minorities in police organizations across the country. The hierarchical regression method was used to investigate three antecedent attitudinal factors, in addition to demographic factors, in four analytic models. Findings of the third and fourth (last two) models indicated that only one demographic factor, “years in law enforcement”, predicted likelihood of support for AA. Class antecedent attitude was a significant predictor of support for AA in model 3, but it was fully mediated in model 4. Race-ethnic antecedent attitude emerged as the strongest predictor of likelihood of support for AA in the fourth model which accounted for 38 percent of likelihood of support for AA. A major take away from this study is that while a favorable attitude toward the use of social class as an external condition of reward distribution may have its merits, it is the positive attitude toward the use of race-ethnicity as a factor of reward distribution and years in law enforcement that ultimately predicted the likelihood of support for the voluntary practice of AA.

Keywords: Affirmative Action, Law Enforcement, Diversity, Reward Distribution

1. Introduction and Literature

This study intends to determine some antecedent attitudinal factors of support for the voluntary implementation and enforcement of affirmative action practices among the officers of a statewide law enforcement organization in a Midwestern US state. The policy and practice of affirmative action (AA) have been known to take many forms depending on the interests of subscribing organizations. Such practices could take the form, for example, of government contract set-asides, race-based academic scholarships, race/gender-plus hiring and promotion practices, race/gender plus differential educational admission policies (Pincus, 2003; Connerly, 2000) and, in some cases, employment quotas when mandated by a court order (Reskin, 1998; Brunner, 2007). In race/gender plus policies, race and gender of a candidate are given consideration in organization decisions, in addition to the candidate’s earned credentials (Pincus, 2003).

Regardless of its form, affirmative action practices (AAPs) have remained controversial and divisive over the decades, and the controversy appears especially intense with race/ethnic-target practices that focus on the hiring and/or promotion of racial-ethnic minorities in organizations. Reasons for opposing AA had emphasized that the policy violated the American value of individualism (Steeh & Krysan, 1996), it violated the American system of meritocracy (Peterson, 1994), it was unlawful (Golden, Hinkle & Crosby, 2001), it was no longer needed because of lesser prevalence of employment discrimination (Kravitz & Klineberg, 2000; Kravitz, Klineberg, Avery, Nguyen, Lund & Fu, 2000), and most of all, it was reverse discrimination (see Pincus, 2003).

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On the flip side of the divide, arguments in support of AA had included the position that AA helped to enhance organizational diversity (Tipper, 2004), it appealed to people's egalitarian principles (Steeh & Krysan, 1996), and most importantly, it provided remedy for past and continuing discrimination (Pincus, 2003). In addition, some studies (Kravitz, 1995; Oyinlade, 2013; Summers, 1995) asserted that people were likely to support the policy for self-interest when they perceived potential personal benefits from the policy.

Opposition to AAPs, more notably race-target AAPs, appears to be very strong among Whites, especially White men (Konrad & Spitz, 2003, Oyinlade, 2013). As indicated in a 2005 Gallup survey, non-Hispanic Whites were the most likely to oppose affirmative action (opposed by 54 percent of non-Hispanic Whites polled), while only 28 percent of Blacks, most likely racial-ethnic category to support AA, opposed the policy (Gallup Brain, 2006). While resistance to AA is common across industry, perhaps in no employment sector were the range and intensity of protests against the policy more pronounced than in urban police forces (Deslippe, 2004). Throughout the early years of American policing until the 1960s, American policing, mainly a local responsibility, was traditionally an all-White and all-male affair (Sklansky, 2006). Even, cities like Detroit, Chicago, New York, Baltimore, San Francisco, Philadelphia and Houston that had historically boasted a high resident population of racial-ethnic minorities, had police forces that were predominantly White males prior to the 1970s (Milton, 1978).

Deducing from Sklansky (2006), the predominance of White males in police forces across the country helped to create a pattern of homogenous insular police occupational culture that ossified into orthodoxy of allegiance to the blue code. The traditional all-White male police departments were characterized by working-class White males who gained recognition and employment security through policing (Darien, 2000). These officers had pride in their jobs and took pride in welcoming friends and family members into the force (Darien, 2000). This traditional race and (working) class homogeneity of American police forces transformed American policing into a working-class occupational category that required little education (Darien, 2000). Their homogeneity also enhanced their ability to develop unwritten occupational rules or codes about how to interpret police conduct, retain loyalties, express opinions, use or abuse authority and how to respond to various matters that the police faces each day, such as how to deal with someone who challenges police authority, and when to back up a partner with force (Skolnick, 2008). Essentially, with the traditional homogeneity of American police organizations, policing gave the officers more than a job. It gave them pride (Darien, 2000), status (being a cop) in society, and a feeling of brotherhood (Skolnick, 2008).

Given the tradition of predominance of White men in US policing and what policing had historically meant to White men as stated above, the strong resistance of police departments across the country to AAPs, may, perhaps, be well understood as protection of privileged self-interests, among other potential reasons. Explanations of resistance to AA for self-interests can be found in literature that indicated that those who saw potential benefits to themselves tended to support AA, while those who did not perceive themselves to benefit from it (e.g. White men) tended to oppose it (Kravitz, 1995; Oyinlade, 2013; Summers, 1995). Protection of self-interest in the case of the US police departments may be rooted in the protection of their jobs from fear of competition from minorities, and the protection of the homogenous all-White men culture that had made policing a preserve of White men. In opposing AA, they (White policemen) have attempted to protect an employment structure that benefitted them materially and psychologically (Deslippe, 2004).

While self-interest may be the underlying factor of police resistance to AA, their resistance has, however, been framed mainly in terms of protection of the merit system (including the use of seniority) for hiring and promotion (Darien, 2000). In particular, the established formal procedures for hiring and promotion had been contended by police departments as fair and transparent, and that AAPs will only violate this system of fairness (Darien, 2000). In addition, in their opposition to AAPs, White policemen have portrayed themselves as oppressed by the policy (Deslippe, 2004).

Despite the resistance of the police to AA, diversity in police demographics, stemming from widespread police reforms, has occurred in many police departments across the country (Skolnick, 2008). Even, in the face of police union resistance to AAPs (Deslippe, 2004; Sklansky, 2006), police demographics have changed mainly due to AAPs, especially, the enforcement of race-conscious reforms over the past three decades (Sklansky, 2006). As indicated by William G. Lewis in his study of Black employment in 46 municipal police departments between 1975 and 1985, AA enforcements (plus the presence of Black mayors and Black police chiefs) were most strongly associated with increases in Black police recruitments (Lewis, 1989).

Fast forward, evidence from a recent study by Miller and Segal (2012) found that having an active and externally imposed AA plan had led to significant increases in Black representation across all ranks in the police hierarchy than the prevailing trends of Black police representations across the country. In addition, gains in Black representation were most pronounced at higher police ranks due to AA enforcements (Miller & Segal, 2012).

Over the years since the beginning of enforcements of AA in police departments across the country, increases in Black officer recruitments have been steady. By the 1970s, Chicago, for example, had raised its percentage of Black officers, as a total percentage of its entire police force, to 20 percent from 13 percent prior to 1962. Washington, DC and San Francisco also raised Black representations in each of their forces to 42 percent and 20 percent (from 13 percent and 2 percent prior to 1962) respectively, during the 1970s (Milton 1978).

The growth in minority hiring in police forces across the country appears to have steadily continued over the years since the 1970s, however, the growth has not been even across the country, and virtually all police departments still have much to go to achieve full integration (Sklansky, 2006). While in Detroit and Washington, DC, minorities now constitute a clear majority of their forces, the Phoenix police department, for example, has remained predominantly White (Sklansky, 2006). In 2015, White residents in Phoenix were only 47 percent of the city's population, but they comprised 81 percent of the city's police force (Ashkenas & Park, 2015).

Besides Phoenix, the almost all-White police departments in cities with high minority populations can be found in other places across the country such as Ferguson, MO with only 3 Black officers (6 percent) out of its 53 total officers, in a city that is 67 percent Black (Sanders & Sharockman, 2014). Other high minority-concentrated population centers with predominantly White police forces in 2015 included Cicero, IL (9 percent White residents; 64 percent White officers), Lauderhill, FL (14 percent White residents; 57 percent White officers), Irving, TX (31 percent White residents; 83 percent White officers), Marietta, GA (43 percent White residents; 94 percent White officers), Baltimore, MD (28 percent White residents; 48 percent White officers), Garden Grove, CA (23 percent White residents; 70 percent White officers), Pomona, CA (13 percent White residents; 66 percent White officers) and many others (Ashkenas & Park, 2015). In fact, across the country, the rate of Whites in police forces is about 30 percentage points higher than in the communities in which they serve (Ashkenas & Park, 2015).

The importance of AAPs in opening-up police departments to inclusiveness of demographic diversity raises an important question regarding the future of minority hiring and promotion, as the US political climate becomes more opposed to AA. Without AA pressures, the future of equity in hiring and promoting minorities may be jeopardized in law enforcement jobs. Evidence of this potential jeopardy was affirmed in Miller and Segal (2012) who indicated that almost immediately after the termination of AA in some states, Black police employment dropped significantly compared to departments with continuing AA practice.

In light of recent (2015) reports, in popular media, of police abuse of power in policing Blacks across the country, like the cases in New York City (Eric Garner's death), Ferguson, MO (Michael Brown's death) and Baltimore (Freddy Gray's death), the need for a greater inclusion of minorities in police departments appears valid. The need appears as relevant today as when the Kerner Commission reported that to many Blacks, the police symbolized White power, White racism and White oppression, and that many officers did, in fact, reflect and express these traits (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968). The commission additionally recommended that more Blacks be recruited into police departments, and that policies be reviewed to assure the fair promotion of Black officers (National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, 1968). This recommendation for increase in Black officers was intended to promote police demographics that would mirror the demographic characteristics of the communities they policed, so as to reduce police abuse of power, and at the same time, increase community trust in the police. When a police force does not demographically represent the community it polices, the potential and actual abuse of police power in the community can produce public distrust and violence (Miller & Segal, 2012).

As indicated by Ashkenas and Park (2015), experts have indicated that diversity in the police department helps to give credibility to the department in the community it serves. In fact, as expressed by Ronald Weitzer, a George Washington University Sociologist, in Ashkenas and Park (2015), regardless the race of police officers and the similarity in the manner in which they enforce the law, a huge image problem exists with a department that is out of sync with the racial composition of its local population. Due to the continuing need for police demographic diversification, despite continuing opposition and the official eradication of AA in eight states (see Halley, 2014), this study investigated the types of attitudes that might promote the continued practice of AA for the hiring and promotion of minorities in US police departments.

2. Objective

Given the continuing need for police departments to be more inclusive and reflect the racial characteristics of the communities they police, and given that AA continues to be strongly opposed despite its usefulness as the major tool for racially and ethnically diversifying police departments (Miller & Segal, 2012), the question arises regarding what types of police attitudes would promote the voluntary practice of AA for the recruitment and promotion of minorities in US police organizations. To this end, the objective of this study was to answer the question: what attitudinal pattern(s) would serve as antecedent factors for the voluntary practice of AA for the hiring of racial-ethnic minorities into US police organizations, in the face of oppositions and legal proscriptions of the policy? Answers to this question are likely to explain police attitudes that predict support for AA. Such knowledge may benefit police executives, and perhaps, police union leaders, in designing educational programs that could increase support for voluntary AAPs in their organizations.

3. Theoretical Guide

We postulated that the type of attitude that prevailed in a police department would determine the likelihood of support for AA among police officers. With a cue taken from Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2004) and the assumptions of the Thomas Theorem (Merton, 1968; Thomas, 1928a; Thomas, [orig. 1923]1967), we assumed that people's beliefs, perceptions or attitudes toward a phenomenon were central to their reactions to the said phenomenon. According to Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2004), beliefs are ideas and conclusions a person holds about things and others, such that a person is able to derive a sense of reality or 'what is' about things and others. Beliefs are foundational to attitude formation which typically serves as basis for actions and reactions to others or phenomena. Hence, attitudes are "pre-dispositions to respond in a positive or negative way to someone or something in one's environment" (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2004, p. 64). That is, the way people respond to a particular social condition is dependent on the general attitude they have formed, based on their beliefs, about the said social condition.

Consistently with the ideas of Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (2004) that attitude shapes predisposition to respond to a phenomenon in a particular way, the Thomas Theorem (Merton, 1968; Thomas, 1928a; Thomas, 1967) assumes that perceptions antecede behavior. According to Thomas, "... preliminary to any self-directed act of behavior there is always a stage of examination and deliberation which we may call *the definition of the situation...*" (Thomas, 1967, p.42). The definition of a situation determines the realities of the situation, because people react to a given situation according to their definition of the said situation. That is, when people define situations as real, the situations become real in their consequences (Thomas, 1928a). In his explanation of the definition of the situation, Robert K. Merton expressed that while people might seem to respond to the objective parts of a situation, more importantly, they respond to the meaning a particular situation has for them. Once a meaning or belief has been attributed to a phenomenon, subsequent behavior becomes highly likely to be consistent with the attributed meaning or belief (Merton, 1968). By reacting to a situation according to a meaning and conceived definition of the situation, people's actions typically produce consequences that are consistent with their (people's) definition (or beliefs) of that situation.

Thomas further explained that the definition of the situation is an ongoing process. One is constantly taking-in messages and processing them, defining situations, developing attitudes, and possibly taking actions (Thomas, 1928a). While the individual may, indeed, appear to be the definer of a situation through his/her processing of information, meanings and understandings, society, however, strongly shapes the entire process of the definition of the situation. According to Thomas (1928a), each person is born into a society in which all general types of situations he/she may encounter are already defined and corresponding rules of conduct for each situation already developed such that he/she is unable to define any situation without the guidance of society (Thomas, 1928a). Pointing especially to the family and community as dominant agents of socialization, Thomas emphasized that an individual's definitions are provided by society (Thomas, 1928a), and that the individual's behavioral patterns and total personalities are conditioned by the types of situational experiences encountered by individuals in the course of his/her life (Thomas, 1928b).

Based on the position that attitude predisposes people to act in a particular way (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2004) and that people define and act according to their definitions of situations (Thomas, 1928a; Thomas, 1967), this study follows the logic that because AA is practiced as a proactive use of external factors in reward distribution, people's attitudes toward the use of external factors to influence reward distribution will influence their

(people's) likelihood of support for AA. That is, the belief and definition assigned to the use of external factors for reward distribution will shape the likelihood of support for AA as a policy that centers on the use of external factors for distributing organizational rewards. Given the assumption of the Thomas Theorem, therefore, this study examines how conceived attitudes about the use of external factors of reward distribution serve as antecedent attitudes that may determine the likelihood of support (or lack of support) for AA.

3.1 External vs. Internal Factors of Reward Distribution

We describe an external factor (e.g. race, ethnicity, family connections, gender, physical beauty, etc.) as a condition that, when used to determine reward distribution, is not the direct result of one's effort or labor in attaining the distributed reward. External factors are unlike internal factors (such as technical skills and job performance) that describe functionally stipulated skills, behaviors, efforts and/or labor necessary for completing tasks and consequently obtaining a reward. If, for example, a grading scale for an examination in a college course stipulates that a minimum score of 90 percent will be awarded the grade of "A", any student who scores 93 percent is awarded the grade of "A" as a direct result of scoring above a minimum of 90 percent on the exam. This demonstrates the use of internal factor (performance on the examination) to determine reward distribution (grade). The grade of "A" is *earned* through performance (achievement) on the examination. If, however, the professor decides to give the grade of "A" to any man (but not woman) who scores a minimum of 85 percent (instead of 90 percent), because men tend to perform poorly in the course, an external factor (gender), instead of performance alone, has been used, partly, to determine reward (grade) distribution favoring men.

What constitutes an external factor of reward distribution depends on the criteria deemed as internal factors for the attainment of a particular reward. In a physical beauty contest, for example, physical beauty is a stipulated requirement for winning, hence, physical beauty, in this situation, is an internal factor of reward distribution. But, on a job like the police, where promotion decisions are based mainly on knowledge of policing and job performance (internal factors), if an officer is promoted to a higher rank mainly because of her physical attractiveness, physical beauty, in such case, has served as an external factor of reward distribution.

3.2 Postulates

From the assumptions of our theoretical guide, we postulated in this study that attitudes (based on the definition of the situation) toward external factors of reward distribution would serve as antecedent factors that determined the likelihood of support for AA. We postulated that the likelihood of AA as a voluntary practice, despite widespread opposition to the policy and its proscription in eight states, would depend on positive attitudes by organization members toward three types of external factors of reward distribution: 1) *General Antecedents*: general external factors, 2) *Class Antecedent*: class-specific external factor, and 3) *Race-Ethnic Antecedent*: race-ethnic specific external factor. That is, we advanced the following specific postulates:

Postulate 1: If police officers defined the use of any general forms of connections (such as family, friends and inside connections) to their departments as acceptable forms of external influences of reward distribution in their organizations (i.e. General Antecedent), such officers would likely support AA because they were comfortable with the use of general forms of external factors in reward distribution. We, hence, derived our first hypothesis from this postulate. **Hypothesis 1:** When police officers accept general forms of external factors as factors of reward distribution in an organization, they are likely to voluntarily support AA practice in their department.

Postulate 2: If police officers positively defined social class (Class Antecedent) as an acceptable factor for positive consideration in hiring and promotion decisions, such officers would likely support the voluntary practice of AA in their organizations. This postulate produced our second hypothesis. **Hypothesis 2:** When police officers accept the use of social class for reward distribution in an organization, they are likely to voluntarily support the practice of AA in their department.

Postulate 3: If police officers positively defined race-ethnicity (Race-Ethnic Antecedent) as an acceptable factor for positive consideration in hiring and promotion decisions, such officers would likely support the voluntary practice of AA in their departments. From this postulate, we derived our final research hypothesis. **Hypothesis 3:** When police officers favor the use of race-ethnicity in determining reward distribution in an organization, they are likely to voluntarily support the practice of AA in their department.

We described the voluntary practice of AA as the implementation and enforcement of AA without court or legislative mandates. Our postulates followed the assumptions that those who perceived racial-ethnic injustice as a persistent problem in US employment might find special considerations for minority status as acceptable in hiring and promotion decisions. In the same light, some people might define special considerations for social class as a better way to remedy economic inequality because minorities would disproportionately benefit from such considerations without emphasizing race and ethnicity (see, for example, Kahlenberg, 1996; Magnus & Mick, 2000). From this perspective, we assumed that those who might define social class as a better alternative for special consideration in the hiring and promotion decisions would likely support the voluntary practice of AA.

4. Method

The specific research question for this study was to determine antecedent attitudinal patterns of police officers that would favor affirmative action practices (AAPs) for the recruitment and promotion of racial-ethnic minorities into the American police forces. The focus in this study, therefore, was on the use of AA for the inclusion of racial-ethnic minorities in US police organizations. To answer the research question, this study used one statewide police organization in a US Midwestern state as a case study. The state had a 2014 population of approximately two million people, among whom about 81 percent was non-Hispanic White and a total minority population of approximately 19 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The two largest minority populations in the state; Hispanic/Latino (of any race) and Black /African American accounted for approximately 10 and 5 percent, respectively, of the state's total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

Using arithmetic deductions, the 2014 demographic data supplied by the office of the state's (statewide) police organization indicated that the state police had approximately 478 sworn officers and officer candidates, and among them, 97 percent ($N = 462$) was non-Hispanic White, 0.837 percent ($N=4$) was Black, 0.837 percent ($N=4$) was Hispanic and 0.413 percent ($N = 2$) was Asian or Pacific Islander (another 0.837 percent of the officers claimed "other" race). The officers were mainly men (94 %, $N = 448$; women = 6%, $N = 30$), and lower officers (all ranks below lieutenant) comprised 73 percent ($N = 351$) while senior officers (Lieutenants and higher ranks) comprised 27 percent ($N = 127$) of the force.

4.1 Data

A questionnaire was designed for primary data collection for this study. The questionnaire included questions on social and organizational demographic variables (see table 1). Demographic variables were distinguished into social and organizational because they were likely to differentially shape support for AA and for different reasons (Oyinlade, 2013). Social demographic characteristics (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability) are federally protected classes of people covered under AA policy, hence, protected people (racial-ethnic minorities, White women, the elderly and people with disability) may support AA for self-interest consistently with claims in previous studies (Kravitz, 1995; Oyinlade, 2013; Summers, 1995). Differently from social demographic characteristics, organizational demography such as income, tenure and position had been found to shape the likelihood of support for AA such that those with greater organizational security (higher position, higher income and longer tenure) were likely to support the policy more than those with lesser organizational demographic security (Oyinlade, 2013). Greater discussions of social and organizational demography can be found in Oyinlade (2013). The distinction between the two sets of demographic variables allowed us to test for their different contributions to the likelihood of support for AA.

The questionnaire also contained three separate scales of antecedent attitudes for AA support and one scale of likelihood of support for AA. All scales were Likert-type, six-point summated rating (Strongly Agree = 6, Strongly Disagree = 1), adapted from Parra (1991), and designed such that higher scores represented greater presence of each measured variable. Among the antecedent attitude scales, the scale of attitude toward use of general external factors (i.e. General Antecedent Attitude) of reward distribution contained four items ($\alpha = .758$), the scale of attitude toward the use of social class as external factor (i.e. Class Antecedent Attitude) contained 10 items ($\alpha = .901$), and the scale of attitude toward the use of race-ethnicity (i.e. Race-Ethic Antecedent Attitude) as external factor of reward distribution also contained 10 items ($\alpha = .921$). Likelihood of support for AA (8 items, $\alpha = .927$) served as dependent variable. Factor results, inter-item correlations and operational items for each scale are in tables 2 through 5.

Table1. Description of all Research Variable

RESEARCH VARIABLES	VARIABLE DESCRIPTION
DEPENDENT	
Affirmative Action Support	Support for Policy and practices established by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (1977) to proactively reduce or eliminate employment discrimination against people who have been traditional targets of employment discrimination as well as compensate such people for past discrimination. See table 5 for operational items.
INDEPENDENT	
Social Demographic	
Age	Current age measured in years since birth
Gender	Man and Woman
Organizational Demographic	
Job Status	Measured as higher versus lower offices. Higher officers have a rank of Lieutenant or higher, while lower offers rank below lieutenant (Sergeants and below).
Salary	Reported yearly income before taxes
Law Enforcement Tenure	Reported Length of time, in years, one has worked in law enforcement of any type.
Present Position Tenure	Reported Length of time, in years, one has held current position
Antecedent Attitudes	
General Antecedent Attitude	Attitude favoring the use of any general external factors, such as personal and family connections, to influence reward distribution in an organization
Class Antecedent Attitude	Attitude favoring the use of social class to influence reward distribution in an organization
Race-Ethnic Antecedent Attitude	Attitude favoring the use of race-ethnicity to influence reward distribution in an organization.

With the cooperation of the high officials of the state police organization, a random sample (through computer generated random selection) of all the sworn officers was conducted for data collection. A questionnaire was served to each of the 444 officers selected through random sampling based on a 55 percent oversampling to ensure at least 214 representative responses at 95 percent confidence level, 5 percent confidence interval and 50 percent response distribution. The survey yielded a representative sample size of 223 fully-completed questionnaires for a return rate of 50 percent.

Descriptive statistics indicated that the average age of all respondents was 38 years and they had an average salary of \$34, 428. They had been in law enforcement for an average of approximately 14 years, and they had occupied their present ranks for an average of approximately seven (7) years. Seventy (70) percent of the respondents were lower-ranked officers (all ranks below lieutenant) and 93 percent were men. All returned questionnaires were from White officers only, reflecting the overwhelming predominance of Whites (97 percent) in the force.

Table 2. Factor values and inter-item correlation matrix for scale of attitude toward use of general external factors (general antecedent attitude) for reward distribution

Scale Items	Factor Component1	Inter-item Correlations			Alpha
		123			
1. In considering new applicants for job training, priority should be given to those whose families have worked in the organization.	.785	1			
2. Family members of workers who have been injured on the job should be given priority in being hired over other applicants.	.765	.470	1		
3. It is okay to pay someone higher salary because management knows the person's poverty	.704	.287	.524	1	
4. Position openings should be made available to families of lower-ranking personnel first	.826	.379	.534	.534	
Cronbach's Alpha					.758

Table 3. Factor values and inter-item correlation matrix for scale of attitude toward use of social class as external factor (class antecedent attitude)for reward distribution

Variable Items	FACTOR Component										Alpha	
	1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
1	.662	1										
2	.781	.474	1									
3	.668	.475	.495	1								
4	.806	.424	.630	.472	1							
5	.847	.474	.677	.527	.765	1						
6	.683	.414	.476	.335	.458	.480	1					
7	.669	.230	.456	.313	.465	.546	.535	1				
8	.801	.466	.497	.435	.651	.629	.518	.546	1			
9	.676	.349	.477	.465	.462	.509	.425	.424	.502	1		
10	.759	.621	.526	.458	.518	.551	.444	.440	.611	.415		
Alpha												.901

1. Lower class people should be given preferential treatment in the hiring process
2. It is good to hire based on social class to have all social classes represented
3. Whether it is okay to give special consideration to lower class candidates when qualifications are equal among all the candidates
4. Social class is a beneficial criterion for hiring
5. Hiring by social class is necessary to balance the labor force
6. It is okay to hire the middle class over others
7. It is good to target certain jobs to certain social classes
8. Social class as a criterion for promotion is beneficial to an organization
9. It is good to hire people from underprivileged backgrounds if some categories benefit more than others.
10. Using social class as part of the hiring process is a good way to correct past injustice

Note: All correlations values are significant at P = .000

Table 4. Factor values and inter-item correlation matrix for scale of attitude toward use of race as external factor (race antecedent attitude) for reward distribution

Variable Items	FACTOR										Alpha	
	Component	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9		
1.	.822	1										
2.	.782	.658	1									
3.	.778	.655	.524	1								
4.	.705	.610	.586	.470	1							
5.	.843	.704	.529	.692	.522	1						
6.	.817	.623	.511	.645	.490	.808	1					
7.	.699	.478	.457	.582	.378	.509	.521	1				
8.	.757	.530	.661	.434	.479	.524	.562	.518	1			
9.	.792	.554	.641	.489	.472	.642	.598	.501	.610	1		
10.	.760	.540	.506	.528	.505	.554	.542	.535	.576	.627	1	
Alpha												.921

1. Race/ethnicity should be given special consideration in hiring
2. Underprivileged races/ethnicities should be promoted more readily than others
3. It is good to hire based on race/ethnicity to have more of them represented
4. It is okay to give special consideration to races/ethnicities when qualifications are equal among all the candidates
5. Race/ethnicity is a beneficial criterion for hiring
6. Hiring by race/ethnicity is necessary to balance the labor force
7. Promotion based on race/ethnicity is better than based on social class
8. Race/ethnicity as a criterion for promotion is beneficial to an organization
9. Using race/ethnicity as part of the hiring process is a good way to correct past injustice
10. It is good to hire people by race/ethnicity even if some categories benefit more than others

Note: All values are significant at $p = .000$

Table 5. Factor values and inter-item correlation matrix for scale of likelihood of support for Affirmative Action

Variable Items	FACTOR								Alpha	
	Component	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1	.849	1								
2	.848	.858	1							
3	.793	.611	.646	1						
4	.758	.543	.511	.568	1					
5	.898	.711	.670	.646	.690	1				
6	.913	.727	.696	.654	.696	.893	1			
7	.724	.528	.559	.509	.472	.579	.640	1		
8	.773	.562	.603	.584	.513	.667	.647	.522	1	
Alpha										.927

1. Affirmative action programs will result in progress for everyone
2. Affirmative action is a very good business practice
3. The concept of affirmative action is good in general
4. Affirmative action means giving equal employment and educational opportunities
5. Affirmative action helps to assure fairness in employment
6. Affirmative action results in better utilization of human resources
7. Affirmative action programs should be gradually phased out
8. Affirmative action is a good step to address continuing discrimination

5. Tests and Findings

5.1 Correlation Matrix:

Inter-item correlations among all research variables (table 6) showed that each antecedent attitudinal variable was correlated with likelihood of support for AA. Race-ethnic antecedent attitude (attitude toward use of race-ethnicity as external factors of reward distribution) was the most strongly correlated variable with likelihood of support for AA ($r = .605$; $p = .000$), while general antecedent attitude (attitude toward the use of general external factors) had the lowest correlation value ($r = .157$; $p < .05$). Class antecedent attitude (attitude toward use of social class as external factor of reward distribution) was correlated with support for AA at $r = .447$; $p = .000$. Correlation values showed no significant bi-variate relationships between each of the demographic variables and support for AA.

5.2 Inferential Statistics

To determine the significance and amount of contributions of each of the independent variables to predicting the likelihood of support for AA, the hierarchical regression method was used for analysis. In total, four models were analyzed with each model entered into the hierarchical regression equation by reverse order of importance for understanding antecedent attitudes of likelihood of support for AA. To this effect, the social demographic model was entered into the regression equation first, followed by the organizational demographic model and the antecedent attitudinal models respectively. This order of entry allowed us to first control for the influences of demographic variables before assessing the contributions of our theoretical attitudinal variables on likelihood of support for AA.

Model 1: Because AA was manifestly designed to protect workers who were collective victims of employment discrimination, and because previous research (Kravitz, 1995; Oyinlade, 2013; Summers, 1995) indicated that federally protected classes of workers were more likely to support AA than non-protected classes, we first, assessed the impact of social demographic variables in predicting support for AA by entering “age” and “gender” into the first model of our hierarchical regression equation. Race-ethnicity of respondent was not included in this model because no racial-ethnic minority responded to our survey. All participants were non-Hispanic Whites.

Table 6. Two-tailed Inter-item correlations among all research variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	1								
2.	-.037	1							
3.	-.061	.093	1						
4.	.049	.348***	.038	1					
5.	.047	.521***	.048	.614***	1				
6.	.027	.864***	.092	.453***	.649***	1			
7.	-.126	.551***	.127*	-.186***	.098	.532***	1		
8.	.157*	-.065	.009	-.070	-.118	-.056	-.048	1	
9.	.447***	-.072	.014	.013	-.038	-.077	-.117	.508***	1
10.	.605***	.014	-.083	.105	.101	.036	-.122	.394***	.736***

1. Affirmative Action

2. Age

3. Gender, Man=1

4. Status, Senior Officers =1

5. Salary

6. Law Enforce Years

7. Present Position Years

8. General Antecedent Attitude

9. Class Antecedent Attitude

10. Race Antecedent Attitude

*Significant at $p < .05$, **Significant at $P = .00$, ***Significant at $P = .000$

Results of Model 1 showed that neither age ($\beta = -.027$), gender ($\beta = -.057$) nor the entire social demographic model alone ($R^2 = .004$, $p = .655$) significantly explained or predicted the likelihood of support for AA (see table 7) in our subject police organization.

Model 2: The variables of organizational demography were entered into the regression equation to determine the separate contributions of these variables in predicting support for AA, as well as determine the combined contributions of all demographic variables (social plus organizational) to the likelihood of support for AA.

Results indicated that years in law enforcement significantly positively predicted likelihood of support for AA among the officers ($\beta = .347, p < .05$), and the officers' number of years in their present positions was a significant inverse ($\beta = -.219, p < .05$) predictor of likelihood of AA support. These results indicate that while longer time worked in law enforcement positively increased the likelihood of support for AA, longer time in present position (rank) reduces the likelihood of support for AA. Likely interpretations of these potentially conflicting results are presented in our discussion section.

Other test results (for model 2) showed that neither rank nor salary of the officers significantly predicted the likelihood that the officers would support AA. Additional results also showed that the combined effects of all four organizational demographic variables contributed additional 3.7 percent ($\Delta R^2 = .037, p = .000$) to the change in the variance for likelihood of support for AA over the contributions of the social demographic variables. The entire second model (like model 1), however, failed to significantly account for the likelihood of support for AA ($R^2 = .042; p = .218$).

Model 3: In this model, two of the three theoretical antecedent attitudes, general and class antecedent attitudes, were added into the hierarchical equation to measure their contributions to likelihood of support for AA. Race-ethnic antecedent attitude was not included in this model because, unlike general and class factors of reward distribution, attitudes toward the use of race and ethnicity in AA had perennially generated strong debates. In addition, race-ethnic antecedent attitude had the highest correlation value with likelihood of support for AA, hence, we decided to measure its separate impact on likelihood of support for AA in a separate model.

Results of model 3 regression test indicated that class antecedent attitude strongly and positively predicted likelihood of support for AA ($\beta = .481, p = .000$), but not general antecedent attitude. That is, greater acceptance by the officers for the use of social class, to influence reward distribution in their organization, positively predicted the likelihood that the officers would support AA, but their support for the use of general forms of external influences in shaping reward distribution in their organization did not predict the likelihood that they would support AA. In addition, years in law enforcement remained a significant predictor of likelihood of AA support with a slight partial mediation ($\beta = .346, p < .05$) from model 2 value, while number of years in present position was fully mediated from model 2. Also, the combined influence of the two antecedent attitudes (general + class) increased explained variance in likelihood of support for AA by 19.4 percent ($\Delta R^2 = .194, p = .000$) from model 2, while the entire model 3 (social demographic variables + organizational demographic variables + two antecedent variables) significantly accounted for approximately 24 percent ($R^2 = .236; p = .000$) of explained variance in likelihood of support for AA practice.

Model 4: Race-ethnic antecedent attitude alone was entered into the regression equation in this model as the last model in the hierarchical analysis. Results showed that the addition of race-ethnic antecedent attitude to the regression equation fully mediated the value of class antecedent attitude as well as produced additional partial mediation to the value of years in law enforcement in predicting support for AA. Both years in law enforcement ($\beta = .297, p < .05$) and race-ethnic antecedent attitude ($\beta = .557, p = .000$) stood as the only two final independent predictors of likelihood of support for AA. In addition, race-ethnic antecedent attitude, by itself, accounted for additional 14 percent ($\Delta R^2 = .141$) of the variance in the likelihood of support for AA, and the entire full model (social + organizational demographic variables + all antecedent attitude variables) accounted for approximately 38 percent ($R^2 = .376, p = .000$) of the variance in the likelihood of support for AA.

TABLE 7. Hierarchical regression values for the predictors of support for affirmative Action

Variables	Mean	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Constance		24.538***	28.067***	18.243**	15.712**
<u>Social Demographic Model</u>					
Age	38.3	-.027	-.164	-.169	-.177
Gender: Man = 1, Woman = 0		-.057	-.043	-.059	-.004
<u>Organizational Demographic Model</u>					
Status: Senior Officer = 1, Lower = 0			-.077	-.089	-.087
Salary	\$34,428		-.029	-.012	-.053
Law Enforcement Years	13.67		.347*	.346*	.297*
Present Position Years	7.15		-.219*	-.161	-.122
<u>Antecedent Attitudinal Model</u>					
General Antecedent	7.10			-.084	-.110
Class Antecedent	18.78			.481***	.092
Race-Ethnic Antecedent	19.53				.557***
<u>MODEL STATISTICS</u>		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
R SQUARE		.004	.042	.236	.376
ADJ. R SQUARE		-.006	.012	.204	.347
R² CHANGE		-----	.037***	.194***	.141***
F-VALUE		.424	1.397	7.358	12.740
P-VALUE		.655	.218	.000	.000

*Significant at $p < .05$, ***Significant at $P = .000$

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was designed to identify the attitudinal factors that might serve as compelling reasons for the continuing use of AA in hiring and promoting racial-ethnic minorities in American police organizations, using one statewide police force in a Midwestern state as a case study. Based mainly on the assumptions of the Thomas Theorem as a theoretical guide, this study investigated the likelihood that attitude toward three external factors of reward distribution would predict support for the voluntary practice of AA, while controlling for the effects of social and organizational demographic variables.

Using the hierarchical regression method, we were able to determine the relative contributions of the different sets of independent variables to the likelihood of support for AA in one statewide police organization. In that neither age nor gender (social demographic variables) in model 1 predicted support for AA, our findings appeared not to support the position in some earlier studies on AA (Kravitz, 1995; Oyinlade, 2013; Summers, 1995) that people who expected to benefit from AA, such as members of protected classes, would support the policy more than those who perceived themselves as potential losers under the policy. However, given only a minimum presence of race-ethnic diversity in the subject police organization, and a complete absence of racial and ethnic minorities in our research sample (despite 55 percent oversampling), we were unable to test for race-ethnic demographic status differentials in the likelihood of support for AA. This problem could have been, perhaps, resolved with additional (target) sampling of the police department to seek minority participation in this study, but such effort was prevented by financial constraints, especially given that there was no guarantee that any racial-ethnic minority who did not respond to our first survey would respond the second time.

We anticipated that organizational demographic characteristics would be important in this study because they described, as expressed in Oyinlade (2013), organizational characteristics that determined an employee's level of occupational security. As argued by Oyinlade, these demographic characteristics, such as employee status or rank, salary, work type, job tenure, etc., had the potential to shape support for AA because employees, such as those who had high wages and long tenure, might feel secure enough in their organizations to support AA. Such employees were likely to define the policy as useful in improving the social diversity of their organizations (Oyinlade, 2013). Conversely, low earning junior workers might suffer from job insecurity and might perceive AA as threatening to their employment securities and might, therefore, be inclined to oppose it (Oyinlade, 2013).

In that only one of four organizational demographic variables in our final model predicted support for AA consistently with the assumption in Oyinlade (2013) that employees with higher job security were likely to support the policy, that assumption was only partially supported in this study. Two major similarities in the findings of this study with those of Oyinlade (2013) were that in both studies, salary was not a predictor of support for AA, but “job tenure” was a strong predictor. It is, however, important to point out that in Oyinlade (2013) tenure referred to the length of time an employee had worked for one organization, but in this study, tenure in law enforcement referred to the total length of time in law enforcement regardless of number and type of law enforcement organizations in which an officer might have served. The take away lesson from the importance of tenure in this study is that longer tenure in law enforcement appeared, one might argue, to have granted the officers adequate job security, and positively shaped the officers’ attitude toward the use of AA in their organization, consistently with the argument of Oyinlade (2013). This argument may be further strengthened with the finding that tenure in present rank, which was only half as long as tenure in law enforcement (see table 7), inversely predicted support for AA in model 2, and its predictive coefficients were fully mediated in models 3 and 4. This may suggest that 7 years in present position did not prove to be enough employment security to promote support for AA, like time in law enforcement with an average of approximately 14 years.

The tests of our theoretical assumptions provided mixed results. Based on the assumptions of the definition of the situation (Thomas, 1928a; Thomas, 1967), a full and consistent support for the Thomas Theorem would have meant that all antecedent attitudinal variables would have positively correlated with, and predicted support for AA. While all the three antecedent attitudinal variables were correlates of likelihood of support for AA, only antecedent race-ethnic attitude emerged as independent predictor in the final model. The predictive value of antecedent class attitude was fully mediated in model 4, and general antecedent attitude failed to predict support for AA in both models 3 and 4. From our theoretical model, we learned that a positive attitude toward the use of general forms of external factors of reward distribution did not necessarily tantamount to a support for AA. That is, just because the officers may support the use of family connections or inside connections with the police department to attain a position with the department, it does not mean the officers will, therefore, support AA.

Our finding that antecedent race-ethnic attitude fully mediated antecedent class attitude demonstrated that the single most important police attitude for predicting the likelihood of support for AA was positive attitude toward the use of race and ethnicity, rather than class, as external factors of reward distribution. This finding contradicted the assertions of Kahlenberg (1996) and Magnus and Mick (2000) who had argued that support for AA would be stronger, if AA was based on class rather than race/ethnicity. Kahlenberg (1996) argued that class-target AA would provide equal opportunity for all people such that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds would be able to improve their situations. He assumed that class-target AA would properly address past discrimination as well as bring about a “natural integration” that would attempt to move the US towards a color-blind society. Class-target AA, he asserted, would help minorities remedy past discrimination in economic opportunities because minorities were disproportionately poor, and would therefore, disproportionately benefit from class-target AA.

Like Kahlenberg (1996), Magnus and Mick (2000) promoted the idea that class-target, rather than race-target AA, be used as criterion in distributing resources such as admissions into medical schools. They argued that lower class status is a present, rather than intergenerational handicap, and it can, therefore, be adequately addressed at the individual rather than category level with class-target AA. Also, in the face of greater social, political and legal oppositions to AA, class-target AA may facilitate support for the policy (Kahlenberg, 1996).

While the assertions of the class-target AA perspective may bear some logic, Darity, Deshpande and Weisskopf (2011), found that class-target AA did not benefit racial-ethnic minorities as the class-target AA proponents had claimed. In their work, Darity, Deshpande and Weisskopf (2011) explored the differential benefits of class- and race-ethnic-target AA programs to Blacks, Hispanics and Whites. They discovered (using income as basis for determining social class) that only about 37 percent of Blacks and 30 percent of Hispanics would qualify for AA benefits. Consequently, 63 percent of Blacks and 70 percent of Hispanics who would have qualified for AA benefits under race/ethnic-target criterion would be replaced by 20 percent and 18 percent of poor White and Asian households respectively. These authors, however, also argued that if wealth, rather than income, was used to determine social class, more subaltern populations would, perhaps, benefit from AA. Unfortunately, however, wealth information is less accurate and not readily available like income data.

Darity, Deshpande and Weisskopf (2011) concluded strongly that substituting class-target for race/ethnic-target AA could compound the marginalization of an already subaltern population by screening out many members of the population from the benefits of AA.

In conclusion, this study suggests that support for the voluntary practice of AA in a police department may hinge on both the length of time the officers had served in law enforcement and a positive attitude of the officers toward the use of race-ethnicity as an acceptable external factor of reward distribution. The longer the length of service, and the greater the positive attitude of the officers favoring the use of race-ethnicity to grant rewards, the higher the likelihood the officers will support AA. This may mean that the intersection of a sense of employment security provided by long service tenure and a positive attitude toward race-ethnicity, as an acceptable factor of reward distribution, will produce the necessary support among police officers for the continuing voluntary use of AA in the face of oppositions to the policy. This suggestion, as a final take away from this study, may prove useful in designing training and educational programs for police departments to boost support for AA for the recruitment and promotion of minority members. This suggestion may be especially useful for police departments that seek to diversify their social demographic characteristics in the states that have proscribed AA, and the states that often wage strong opposition to the policy. In designing training and educational programs to boost voluntary support for AA, it may behoove training officers to solicit the support of officers with longer tenure (preferably those around 14 years of employment and longer as suggested by our findings) to serve as change agents. Since such officers have demonstrated higher likelihood of support for AA, they may prove useful to police trainers as change agents in educating and encouraging other officers, especially those with shorter employment tenure, to support AA and significantly reduce opposition to the use of the policy in their departments.

7. Limitations

In that this study focused exclusively on determining the predictive attitudinal variables of support for AAPs for the inclusion of racial-ethnic minorities in US police organizations (using one as a case study), our findings are limited to this focus. It will, therefore, be an ecological fallacy to use the findings of this study to generalize over support for all types of affirmative action programs. Similarly, the choice of the subject organization in this study was purely availability. Even though all officers who participated in this study were randomly selected, the subject organization itself was not selected based on a random or systematic approach. Rather, it was selected because it willingly allowed us to survey its employees. Because the choice of the organization studied was based on availability, it is recommended that generalizations in this study be limited to this particular subject organization. For accurate broad generalizations beyond this subject organization, we recommend that additional studies be conducted among many police departments in many states, assuming minimum or complete absence of financial and other restrictions to conducting such studies.

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