

Taking Race into Account: Charting Student Attitudes towards Affirmative Action

Julie J. Park
Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership
Miami University

Research in Higher Education, Manuscript 08-283

Address correspondence to:
304 McGuffey Hall
Miami University
Oxford, OH 45056
PARKJJ@muohio.edu

The author would like to thank M. Kevin Eagan for his helpful feedback. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2008 American Educational Research Association annual conference. A published version of the paper is available at <http://www.springerlink.com/content/n66l73776l673208/?p=6d7c71794055477f943e70844642550c&pi=2>

Abstract Page

Suggested key words: affirmative action, race, political attitudes, diversity, students, politics

This paper examines student attitudes towards affirmative action over four years of college. Asian American and Latino/a students were more likely than White students to disagree strongly or somewhat with abolishing affirmative action after four years of college. A student's attitude towards the policy as a first-year student, peer group influence, and political orientation were significant predictors of student attitudes of affirmative action during the fourth year of college. The findings suggest that while college plays some role in shaping affirmative action attitudes, its influence is somewhat limited in comparison to the background traits and attitudes that students bring to college.

INTRODUCTION

During the deliberation of the Supreme Court rulings in the University of Michigan affirmative action cases, students around the country demonstrated their reactions to the controversy in varying ways. Student coalitions such as Michigan's "Students in Support of Affirmative Action" and the national group "By Any Means Necessary" led the charge to show student support for continued race-conscious admissions policies (Young, 2003). Holding up the other end of the spectrum, conservative student organizations rallied against affirmative action policies. Campus groups even held bake sales charging different prices to students of different races to symbolize how certain groups, notably White males, allegedly bear a higher cost of affirmative action policies (CNN.com, 2003). And somewhere in the middle were students who did not protest through visible means, but nonetheless held opinions on the issue.

Even after the Supreme Court defended the right of universities to consider race in the admissions process, affirmative action in college admissions remains a highly controversial political issue (Cantor, 2004; Kang & Banaji, 2006). Sandra Day O'Connor's statement that race-conscious admissions policies would likely only be viable for the following twenty-five years put a possible deadline on the use of affirmative action; suggesting that the long-term sustainability of affirmative action is questionable. Since the Supreme Court decision, citizens voted to ban affirmative action in Michigan and Nebraska, signaling that the debate over the policy will surely continue. A number of researchers have studied affirmative action attitudes within the college student population (Aberson, 2007; Elizondo & Crosby, 2004; Inkelas, 2003; Sax & Arredondo, 1999; Smith, 1998). However, few studies to date have looked at college student attitudes towards affirmative action over time. As a result, we know little about whether

aspects of the college experience have an impact on students' attitudes towards affirmative action. Previous research has shown that college tends to have a liberalizing effect on students (Astin, 1993), but we do not know if students are more or less likely to support affirmative action after going through college.

Thus, the purpose of this study is to chart how different racial/ethnic groups vary in their opposition to affirmative action over a four year period. The study will also examine how opposition to affirmative action varies among other subpopulations such as women, students with varying levels of academic preparation, and students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Lastly, the study seeks to identify which variables predict student opposition to affirmative action in college admissions during the fourth year of college.

Previous studies (Sax and Arredondo, 1999; Zamani-Gallaher, 2007) have examined student attitudes towards affirmative action across race at the beginning of college, and at least two single-institution studies have analyzed student attitudes over time (Aberson, 2007; Sidanius, Levin, van Laar & Sears, 2008). The current study examines 18,217 students from 169 institutions who were surveyed on their opposition to affirmative action at two time points, during the first and fourth years of college, and is able to control for pre-college attitudes on affirmative action, as well as other demographic characteristics, attitudes, and experiences. Examining whether and how student attitudes towards affirmative action change during college can provide useful information for campus leaders to understand how their students are reacting to such controversial issues. Also, because college-age students are among the newest waves of voters, analyzing their attitudes towards affirmative action can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how citizens react to the policy.

BACKGROUND

In their review of the research, Crosby, Iyer, and Sincharoen (2006) note that variance of opinion on affirmative action can be often understood as a function of the policy itself as well as a function of the person. In terms of the policy, previous research has shown that attitudes towards affirmative action may vary depending on whether the policy is addressing race or gender (Sniderman & Piazza, 1993; Kravitz & Klineberg, 2000), as well as veteran status (Skretny, 1996). The very phrasing of the survey item has an impact on respondents, with individuals less likely to support the policy if the words such as “quota” or “preference” are used in descriptions (Golden, Hinkle, & Crosby, 2001; Le, Lee, & Sawyer, 2006).

Attitudes towards affirmative action also vary depending on the person and group affiliation. Support or opposition often falls along demographic lines such as characteristics such as gender (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995; Sax & Arredondo, 1999), with women being more likely to support the policy, and race. In the case of race, most studies have found that people of color are more likely than Whites to support affirmative action policies (Allen, Teranishi, Dinwiddie, & Gonzalez, 2003; Sax & Arredondo, 1999; Konrad & Linnehan, 1995; Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Golden et al., 2001).

Some studies have specifically examined attitudes towards affirmative action for college students. Paralleling research on the relationship between ethnic identity salience and affirmative action (Snyder, Cleveland, & Thorton, 2006), Elizondo and Crosby (2004) found that Latino/a students who identified more strongly with their ethnic identity were more likely to support affirmative action. They also found that students who had advanced further in college were significantly more likely to support affirmative action, suggesting that progressing through college may influence a student’s assessment of the policy. Studying affirmative action attitudes

for Asian American students, Inkelas (2003) found that Asian Americans were a “caught in the middle” minority group, split in both their opposition and support of the policy.

Smith (1998) examined attitudes towards different affirmative action-related programs in a sample of 294 college students. He found that in general Black students indicated the greatest support for different affirmative action-related programs, along with Latino/a students. He noted that Asian Americans either “...tended to stand with European Americans or by themselves in their opinions” while White students consistently showed the least support for race-conscious programs. Women also supported such programs more than men, but when testing for interaction effects, race/ethnicity explained substantially more variance (48%) than gender (7%). Smith’s study is notable because it taps into student attitudes towards not only affirmative action in admissions, but also minority scholarships, support programs, facilities for students of color, required multicultural courses, and the expansion of African American and Women’s Studies. However, the small sample size and single-institution nature of the study limits its generalizability. Additionally, he only examined attitudes at one time point, junior year.

Few prior studies have examined longitudinal samples of college students. Aberson (2007) examined 1,062 students from the University of Michigan who had been surveyed in 1990 and 1994. He was able to control for a number of student attitudes on meritocracy, prevalence of discrimination, and personal experiences with discrimination. He found that Black students had the strongest support for affirmative action, and that Asian American women were more likely than their male counterparts to believe that affirmative action did not compromise academic quality. His primary finding was that participating in diversity-related campus activities was related to positive changes in attitudes towards affirmative action across racial/ethnic groups.

A longitudinal study conducted by Sidanius et al. (2008) heightens our understanding of how student attitudes shift during college. They surveyed a pool of students attending the University of California, Los Angeles yearly over the course of five years. Their analysis on affirmative action attitudes is based on the 351 White, 419 Asian American, and 252 Latino/a students who were surveyed as fourth-year students. They found that Whites and Asian Americans entered college equally opposing affirmative action but moved to net support by the fourth year of college. The most valuable study is in their broader analysis of the crystallization of political orientation and attitudes. Using correlations to represent internal consistency of responses from year to year, they note that Whites' political orientation and attitudes were substantially more solidified at the beginning of college than both U.S. and foreign-born Asian Americans and Latino/as. Asian Americans also left college with political orientations and attitudes that were still less crystallized than those of Whites. Given the role of political orientation and ideology may play in shaping attitudes towards affirmative action, these findings are pertinent to our understanding of how different groups may evolve in their attitudes towards affirmative action. It should be noted that the measure for opposition to affirmative action used by Sidanius et al. differs from the one used by this study (see Sidanius et al. 2008, p. 340).

It is particularly important to review a study by Sax and Arredondo (1999) that the current study extends. Sax and Arredondo (1999) examined opposition to affirmative action as indicated by students at the beginning of college. Using data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program's 1996 Freshman Survey, they analyzed data for 277,850 first-time full-time college students, focusing on subpopulations of White, Asian American, Black, and Mexican American students. Descriptive analyses showed that White students were most likely to agree strongly that affirmative action should be abolished (25.6%) and least likely to disagree strongly

with abolishing the policy (8.0%). Black students were most likely to disagree strongly with abolishing affirmative action (43.5%). They also found that across racial/ethnic groups that men, those who identified as politically conservative, those who believed that racial discrimination was not a major problem anymore, and those not strongly committed to promoting racial understanding were more likely to oppose affirmative action. Interestingly, while White and Asian American students with higher high school grades were more likely to oppose affirmative action, Black students with higher grades were less likely to oppose affirmative action.

Sax and Arredondo (1999) also used regression analysis to isolate the effects of predictors of opposition to affirmative action. They ran separate regressions for each of the four groups and found that across groups, women, politically liberal students, and those who had a goal to promote racial understanding were significantly less likely to oppose affirmative action. Black students with higher levels of academic preparation and socioeconomic status were significantly more likely to oppose affirmative action, while students with higher academic preparation and socioeconomic status from the other three groups were significantly more likely to oppose affirmative action. Across all four groups, those who indicated that racial discrimination was not a major problem were significantly more likely to oppose affirmative action. White and Asian American students attending their first-choice college were significantly more likely to support affirmative action while their Mexican American counterparts were less likely to support the policy.

A major strength of their study is that they were able to analyze a national sample of college students, unlike other analyses that have been single-institution studies. They note that a key limitation of the study is the low amount of variance that the variables in the regression equation accounted for, ranging from 5.8% to 10.1%. Also, some variables that might explain

variation in affirmative action opinions such as stereotypes about race or what specific type of affirmative action plan was being implanted were not available for inclusion in the analysis. The current study builds on their work by using a later version of the same dataset to study what happens to student affirmative action opinions after students have been experienced four years of college.

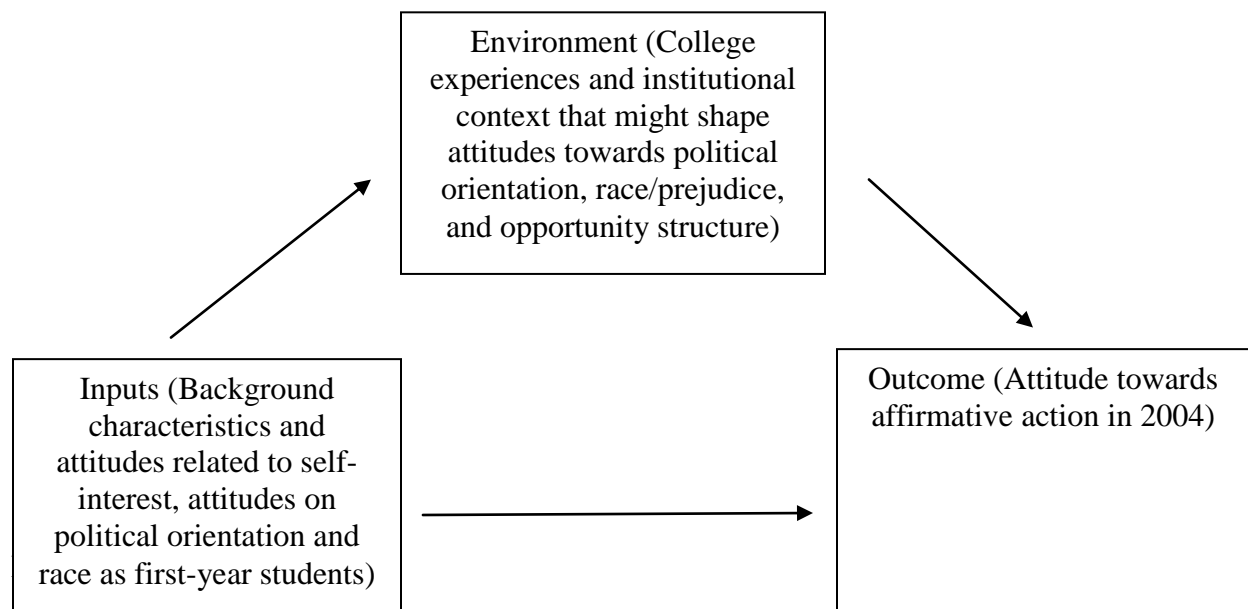
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Like Sax and Arredondo (1999), the current study will test several frameworks that have been proposed in the literature to explain support or opposition to affirmative action. Because this study looks at how attitudes towards affirmative action change during college as well as predictors of attitudes at the fourth year of college, it is also influenced by theories and models on how college affects students' beliefs and values (Astin, 1993; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Weidman, 1989). I posit that theoretical perspectives on the forces that shape affirmative action attitudes operate in a context where students come to college with existing attributes and attitudes related to affirmative action, political ideology, and race. They also encounter different environments and experiences that might shape how they perceive affirmative action after four years of college.

The below diagram outlines the conceptual framework for this study, which proposes that frameworks that seek to explain attitudes towards affirmative action work in the broader context of models that explain how college affects students. For the sake of simplicity, I use the broad framework provided by Astin's I-E-O model (Astin, 1993), which posits that the "inputs" (background characteristics, attitudes, and experiences that students have prior to college) and "experiences" (college experiences and environments, including institutional context) of college students affect a particular "outcome" (in this case, a student's attitude towards affirmative

action at the fourth year of college). While critiqued for not clearly delineating the forces that shape college impact, the simplicity of Astin’s model is flexible enough to propose a framework for how affirmative action frameworks fit into the context of how college influences students.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework for how student attributes, attitudes, and experiences affect affirmative action attitudes.



Because there has been little longitudinal research on attitudes towards affirmative action, we have little knowledge of what impact college environments and experiences might have on student attitudes in this area. Studies have documented that college tends to have a moderately liberalizing effect on students (Astin, 1993; Dey, 1996), which might suggest that students are more likely to support affirmative action after going through four years of college given the issue’s traditional affiliation with a more liberal political ideology and the Democratic Party. Elements of college that are thought to affect students’ political beliefs and values include the influence of the peer group and significant others, academic experiences and majors, and participation in workshops around racial or cultural issues (Astin, 1993). However, students

come into college with traits that could limit or facilitate the extent to which the college experience might shape their attitudes around affirmative action. They may also have experiences in college that influence certain attitudes and values that are related to their views on affirmative action. Thus, frameworks that identify different forces that may influence affirmative action attitudes are also important to take into account. These forces include self-interest, political ideology, prejudice or symbolic racism, and views on the opportunity structure in America.

Several researchers (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Jacobson, 1985) have suggested that self-interest makes certain groups more apt to support or oppose affirmative action. Those who stand to gain or lose the most from affirmative action may respond by supporting or opposing the policy. For instance, students with higher GPAs or SAT scores may be more likely to oppose affirmative action because they feel that affirmative action violates the idea that admissions should be based on a conception of merit that is limited to measures such as standardized test scores.

Secondly, political ideology may play a role in attitudes towards affirmative action. Although affirmative action has roots in both the Democratic and Republican parties (Skretny, 1996), in recent years, opposition to the policy has been more strongly associated with Republican and/or conservative ideology. I propose to also take religion and religiously oriented behavior into account when considering how political ideology might affect affirmative action attitudes. Emerson and Smith (2000) propose that evangelical White Christians are more likely to resist government sponsored remedies to racial inequality such as affirmative action because of their belief in individual responsibility. Given the role that the Religious Right has played in the

political sphere in recent years, exploring the role that religion plays in student attitudes towards affirmative action has merit.

Jacobson (1985) proposes that prejudice plays a role in shaping attitudes towards affirmative action. Although they may not demonstrate explicit acts of bias (Bonilla-Silva, 2003), members of the majority culture may oppose policies such as welfare or affirmative action because they feel that such programs give unmerited assistance to minorities. Members of the majority culture are unwilling to exhibit explicitly racist behavior, but they may still express doubts about the need for more systematic remedies to discrimination and inequality. Symbolic racism (Sears, 1988; Sears, Van Larr, Carrillo, & Kosterman, 1997) is a term used to describe this type of attitude that may underlie opposition to affirmative action and other race-conscious policies. Lastly, attitudes towards the opportunity structure in America or possibility of upward mobility may be related to affirmative action attitudes (Kluegel & Smith, 1983). For instance, those who believe that opportunity in America is stratified due to racial inequality may be more likely to support affirmative action, while those who believe that America is a complete meritocracy may be more likely to oppose affirmative action.

Thus, this study asks what differences, if any, exist between racial/ethnic groups' opposition to affirmative action in college admissions over time? Are subsets of different racial/ethnic groups (for instance women, students with higher grades, those with higher socioeconomic status) more or less likely to oppose affirmative action by the fourth year of college? Second, what student background characteristics, attitudes, experiences, and institutional characteristics significantly predict opposition to affirmative action in the fourth year of college?

METHODS

Data for the study comes from two national surveys, the Fall 2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey and the Spring 2004 follow-up survey, the College Student Survey (CSS). Both surveys were administered by the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute. The Freshman Survey is typically administered at the beginning of the first year of college during orientation or an event where attendance is mandatory for first-year students. The 2000 Freshman Survey includes information about the student's personal and academic background information, pre-college characteristics, attitudes, expectations, and values. The 2004 CSS is the post-test for the 2000 Freshman Survey; it also requests information such as academic performance, student-faculty interaction, extracurricular activities, and satisfaction with college. The sample for the study consists of the students who completed both surveys: 15,704 White students, 706 Black students, 323 American Indian students, 701 Asian American students, and 783 Latino/a students.

The dependent variable for the study is the item that asks students whether "affirmative action should be abolished in college admissions," measured on a scale of 1 (disagree strongly) to 4 (agree strongly). Independent variables were divided into seven blocks and entered into the regression equation in the order that they were thought to influence the dependent variable.

- Block 1: Demographic characteristics such as gender, socioeconomic status (level of parental education and income), racial/ethnic group, and pre-test of dependent variable.
- Block 2: Variables used to test the framework of self-interest affecting affirmative action (Bobo & Kluegel, 1993; Jacobson, 1985) such as academic preparation (measured by a composite of SAT and high school GPA) and whether the student attended his or her first-choice college.

- Block 3: Attitudes and attributes measured in 2000: Self-rating in competitiveness, political orientation, attitude that racial discrimination is not a problem, commitment to promoting racial understanding.
- Block 4: College environments, such as the region of the college, selectivity (measured by the college's mean SAT score), control (public or private), and whether the institution is an HBCU (historically black college or university). Additionally, in order to test the possibility of peer group influence affecting college impact (Astin, 1993), the mean score of student attitudes towards affirmative action at the institution was added to the equation.
- Block 5: Variables intended to capture political ideology: 2004 political orientation and 2004 religious affiliation.
- Block 6: Student majors as categorized by Holland's typology of majors. Previous research analyzing Holland's typology (Umbach & Milem, 2004) suggests that certain attributes found within majors may affect student attitudes towards diversity issues.
- Block 7: Variables related to racial attitudes or experiences related to race relations from the 2004 survey, such as the belief that racial discrimination is not a problem, the commitment to promoting racial understanding, socializing with someone of another race, taking Ethnic Studies classes, and attending a racial/cultural workshop.

Missing value analysis was conducted on the sample using the expectation-maximization algorithm to replace missing data for continuous independent variables with less than 10% missing (McLachlan & Krishnan, 1997). One exception was made for the composite variable measuring academic preparation, which was made up of a student's SAT or ACT score and GPA. Data was replaced on this variable, which had 14% missing, in order to preserve the same measure used by Sax

and Arredondo (1999). Tolerance levels, which indicate the linear relationships between independent variables, were examined to assess multicollinearity: higher tolerance levels indicate low multicollinearity. A minimum tolerance level of .30 was utilized in order to prevent multicollinearity among independent variables.

For descriptive analysis, cross-tabulations were used to examine differences across and within racial/ethnic groups, men and women, institutional type, region, academic preparation, socioeconomic status, and number of college applications filed. The study also used blocked entry regression analysis, the same analysis technique used by Sax and Arredondo (1999) to decipher which variables significantly predict opposition to affirmative action at the student's fourth year of college. Originally, the study planned to run separate regressions for each racial/ethnic group. However, after finding few differences between significant predictors for each group, the decision was made to run the regression on the entire sample. The p-level of .05 was used for interpreting significance, except in the case of variables measuring institutional characteristics. We considered the issue of clustering in the data and used Hierarchical Linear Modeling software to calculate the intraclass correlation (ICC) for the data. The ICC was .056, suggesting that clustering in the data was minimal (Raudenbusch & Bryk, 2002). However, in order to exercise caution, we used a more stringent level, $p < .001$, as a threshold for interpreting significance for the institutional variables in Block 4 (Astin & Denson, in press; Thomas & Heck, 2001).

A key reason for using regression analysis was the ability to run a separate regression where variables were force entered one at a time in order to observe individual changes in beta coefficients and change in R^2 when other variables enter the equation; such references to this secondary analysis are noted in the text. Observing step-by-step changes in standardized beta

coefficients can help us examine how the strength of certain variables changes when other variables are controlled (Astin, 1991).

Limitations

This study faces a similar limitation to the one noted by Sax and Arredondo (1999) in that the analysis draws from a study that was not specifically designed to study attitudes on race or racial policy. Any study of affirmative action would benefit greatly from questions that probe into the complexity behind individual's attitudes towards affirmative action, such as items about the opportunity structure in America. Additionally, as Sax and Arredondo (1999) note, students filling out the survey may harbor many misunderstandings about affirmative action, as it is such a controversial issue. However, disagreements about the preservation of affirmative action aside, I am most interested in capturing student attitudes towards the policy, regardless of how informed or uninformed their opinions may be.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 shows the distribution of students from different subgroups in their response to question that affirmative action should be banned.

[Table 1 about here]

For each response category of disagree strongly, disagree some, agree some, and agree strongly, the percentages of students from each subgroup who fell into the response category in 2000 and 2004 are listed. Additionally, the difference between the 2004 and 2000 percentages is indicated in the column marked "Change."

It appears that Black students are not only less likely than other racial/ethnic groups to agree at all with abolishing affirmative action after four years, but that they become firmer in

their disagreement with the statement. Across racial/ethnic groups, the response category with the greatest gain after four years was the disagree strongly category. White students experienced the least movement between response categories over the four year period. The percentage of White students disagreeing strongly with abolishing affirmative action rose very slightly, by 1.9 percentage points, while the percentage of those agreeing strongly also rose very slightly, by .3 of a percentage point. Both Asian American and Latino/a students experienced a noted shift in their affirmative action attitudes, with students being more likely to disagree strongly or disagree some after four years.

For differences between and within genders, men were over ten percentage points more likely than women to agree strongly that affirmative action should be abolished both in 2000 and 2004. For both years, women were over ten percentage points more likely to disagree some with abolishing affirmative action than men. It appears that over time that female students are slightly more likely to shift towards disagreeing more strongly that the policy should be abolished.

An interesting shift happens within both public and private institutions over time. For public institutions, between 2000 and 2004, the percent of students disagreeing some rose by 8.3 percentage points while the percent of students agreeing strongly rose by 7.4 percentage points. On the other hand, for private institutions, there is a slight shift away from disagreeing some, agreeing some, or agreeing strongly with abolishing affirmative action and a slight gain over time in the percent of students disagreeing strongly with abolishing affirmative action. For differences between regions, by 2004, students on the East Coast were most likely to disagree strongly with abolishing affirmative action (12.3%) while students from the South were most likely to agree strongly (22.3%). All regions experienced a slight increase in the percent of students disagreeing strongly with abolishing the policy.

The academic preparation composite, which consisted of a student's SAT or ACT score combined with their high school GPA, was broken into thirds in order to compare differences between students in the bottom 33%, middle 33%, and upper 33%. Both in 2000 and 2004, students with high academic preparation were the least likely to disagree strongly with abolishing affirmative action and most likely to agree strongly. However, students from the high academic preparation category in 2000 were 4.4 percentage points less likely to agree strongly in 2004. A variable measuring socioeconomic status was also broken into thirds for the basis of comparison. While students from the high parental education/income category were most likely to agree strongly in 2000 (22.6%), by 2004 students from the middle socioeconomic bracket were most likely to agree strongly of the three groups. Lastly, in order to see whether differences existed among students who filed different numbers of college applications, I examined two subsets of students: those who only applied to one college and those who applied to six or more colleges. Students who applied to six or more colleges were more likely to disagree some or strongly with abolishing affirmative action.

Multivariate Analysis

Table 2 shows the change in R^2 with the addition of each block of variables.

[Table 2 about here]

Overall, each block of variables made a statistically significant contribution to the variance of student responses to the dependent variable at the $p < .001$ level. The greatest changes in R^2 change occurred with the addition of Block 1, background characteristics, and Block 7, which included student attitudes during their fourth year of college towards political and racial issues. Likely the large change in R^2 that came with the addition of Block 1 is due to the inclusion of the

pre-test for the dependent variable. The smallest change in R^2 occurred with the addition of Block 2, academic preparation and college application activities, and Block 6, a student's major.

Table 3 displays the standardized and unstandardized beta coefficients after each block of variables is controlled in the regression equation. R^2 after each variable is entered into the equation is also provided.

[Table 3 about here]

In Block 1, women show greater agreement than men in opposing a ban affirmative action ($B = -.071$, $p < .001$) while a composite variable measuring the level of parental education and household income was non-significant. Being from an ethnic minority background had a significant effect across racial/ethnic groups. Being Black, Asian American, or Latino/a is associated with opposing ending affirmative action ($B = -.085$, $B = -.035$, $B = -.054$, $p < .001$). However, identifying as American Indian is slightly associated with opposing affirmative action. The strongest predictor of favoring the abolishment of affirmative action was the student's response to the question in 2000. Students who favored abolishing affirmative action as first-year students were significantly more likely to favor abolishing it by their fourth year of college ($B = .220$, $p < .001$).

Looking at Block 2, having higher levels of high school academic preparation, a composite variable of standardized test scores and high school grade point average, are positive predictors of opposing affirmative action. Whether a student attended their first-choice college or filed more college applications did not have a significant effect on the dependent variable.

Block 3 contained student responses as first-year students to items related to political orientation and racial diversity, as well as their self-rated competitiveness. A student's self-rated competitiveness was a small, but significant predictor of abolishing affirmative action ($B = .016$,

$p < .05$), while having a more liberal political orientation is a negative predictor. Looking at individual step by step changes in beta coefficient shows that the political orientation variable undergoes a sharp change, from $-.117$ to $-.021$ when the student's 2004 political orientation is controlled for in Block 5 of the regression. This suggests that when the student's 2004 political orientation is accounted for in the model, the effect of the student's 2000 political orientation decreases substantially.

One attitudinal measure is a significant predictor of the dependent variable in the final block of the regression. Stating a greater commitment to promoting racial understanding is negatively associated with wanting to abolish affirmative action ($B = -.019$, $p < .01$). Thinking that racial discrimination is no longer a problem is positively associated with favoring abolishing affirmative action until the final block of the regression, when students' 2004 responses to the same item were controlled in the regression equation. Once the 2004 version of the variable was controlled, the pre-test was rendered non-significant.

None of the variables measuring the region that the student attended college in were significant by the final block of the regression. Attending an institution with higher selectivity, however, is a negative predictor of wanting to abolish affirmative action ($B = -.035$, $p < .001$). Out of institutional variables, the strongest predictor of a student's response to affirmative action was the effect of the peer group, represented by the calculated mean score of student responses to the item within a given institution. Attending an institution where students overall were inclined to support abolishing affirmative action is a positive predictor of favoring abolishing the policy as fourth-year students.

Political orientation in 2004 was the second strongest predictor of the dependent variable in the entire model, with liberalism being associated with opposition to abolishing affirmative

action. As stated earlier, a student's political orientation towards the end of college appears to have a stronger effect on his or her attitudes towards affirmative action than the political orientation at the beginning of college. Looking at variables marking religious affiliation, being Baptist or Other Christian were slight but significant predictors of students opposing abolishing affirmative action ($B = -.018, p < .05, B = -.024, p < .01$).

I was curious to see if the student's major in 2004 had any effect on whether they opposed or supported affirmative action. Presumably, by 2004 students have already chosen their final major and are in the process of completing coursework in that major. Instead of controlling for specific majors, majors were classified according to Holland's (1985) typology, which suggests that students choose majors or academic environments that are congruent with characteristics of their personalities. Umbach and Milem (2004) posit that the major environment is related to a student's attitudes towards diversity. They found that students with Social-type majors, which they define as environments that "...focus on the healing or teaching of others" were significantly more likely to be interested in bridging differences, believed that higher education should provide opportunities for cross-racial interaction, and planned to engage in diverse interactions (p. 629). Students with Realistic major types, such as engineering and military science, were significantly less like to plan to engage across race during college.

In the case of shaping attitudes towards affirmative action, I found that Realistic, Enterprising, and Artistic majors show greater agreement with abolishing affirmative action than the omitted reference group of Scientific majors. When it first entered the equation in Block 6, being a Social major type is negatively associated with wanting to abolish affirmative action, but the variable loses significance once the final block of variables is controlled for. Coming from an Artistic major has a negative simple correlation with the dependent variable, meaning that

students from Artistic majors are less likely to support abolishing affirmative action. However, once other variables in the model are controlled for, being an Artistic major is slightly positively associated with wanting to abolish affirmative action.

The last block of variables included measures of student attitudes towards diversity issues as fourth-year students. A student's 2004 commitment to promoting racial understanding is a strong negative predictor of the dependent variable, meaning that having a greater commitment to promoting racial understanding as a fourth-year student is negatively associated with wanting to abolish affirmative action. It should be noted that controlling for this variable diminishes the effect of its 2000 counterpart, a student's commitment to promoting understanding as a first-year student. The standardized beta coefficient for the 2000 version of the item drops from $-.065$ to $-.019$ once the 2004 variable is controlled. Thinking that racial discrimination was not a problem anymore in 2004 is a positive predictor of supporting abolishing affirmative action in the fourth year of college. It appears that a student's attitude on this item in 2004 has a stronger effect on the dependent variable than the student's response in 2000, as the 2000 version of the variable is rendered non-significant when the post-test version enters the equation. Lastly, the belief that an individual can do little to change society has a positive effect on a student's support for abolishing affirmative action.

DISCUSSION

Overall, a number of variables predicted student opposition to affirmative action, with several variables standing out in particular. A student's initial response to the question as a first-year student is the strongest predictor of the dependent variable, affirming literature that argues for the importance of studying predictors of student attitudes using longitudinal data (Astin & Lee, 2003). Because the pre-test is such a strong predictor of the post-test, it is critical to be able

to be able to control for a student's initial response to an item. However, other variables predict student opposition to affirmative action after four years of college, and in some cases, the attitudes and political orientation that a student had as a fourth-year student surpassed the effect of the attitudes and orientation that students indicated at the beginning of their first-year of college. For instance, the effect of a student in 2004 believing that racial discrimination was not a problem anymore has a stronger impact on the dependent variable than a student's response to the same item in 2000. In terms of practical significance, unstandardized beta coefficients suggest that predictors with a particularly large magnitude include being Black or Latino/a, the pre-test for the dependent variable, and the institutional peer aggregate.

Some of the findings from a similar study done by Sax and Arredondo (1999) were replicated. Comparing these two studies is useful because while Sax and Arredondo (1999) studied predictors of opposing affirmative action as first-year students, the current study studies predictors of opposing the policy as fourth-year students, while controlling for student attitudes from both the first and fourth years of college. It should be noted that they ran their analysis on separate racial/ethnic groups while the current study ran all groups together but controlled for racial/ethnic affiliation. Both studies found that being female, politically liberal, and having a commitment to promoting racial understanding are negatively associated with the desire to abolish affirmative action. Also, both studies found that students with higher levels of academic preparation, with the exception of Mexican American students in Sax and Arredondo's study, and those who felt that racial discrimination was no longer a problem were significantly more likely to oppose affirmative action.

Some findings, however, differed. When studying first-year students, Sax and Arredondo found that higher socioeconomic status was a positive predictor of opposition to affirmative

action, with the exception of Black students: Black student with higher socioeconomic status were significantly more likely to oppose abolishing affirmative action. However, Zamani-Gallaher (2007) did not find a significant effect for family income for Black and Latino/a students. The current study did not find that socioeconomic status had a significant effect on student opposition to affirmative action as fourth-year students. While the two variables had a positive simple correlation of .069, socioeconomic status was non-significant throughout the regression equation. Perhaps a student's socioeconomic background has a greater impact on shaping their attitudes on affirmative action when they enter college, but after four years their attitudes are more likely to be shaped by other experiences or the effect of the peer group.

While Sax and Arredondo (1999) and Zamani-Gallaher (2007) make a valuable contribution to our understanding of the forces that shape student attitudes towards affirmative action when they come into college, the present study is able to account for experiences and attitudes that students will have gained over the course of four years. A critical element of the current study is that it helps us see that while college plays some role in shaping affirmative action attitudes, its influence is somewhat limited in comparison to the background traits and attitudes that students already have when they come to college. For instance, the current study extends Sax and Arredondo's (1999) work by examining the role of major. While several major types significantly predicted opposition to affirmative action, only a small change in R^2 occurred after controlling for major types and unstandardized beta coefficients do not suggest much practical significance other than in the possible case of Realistic major types. As Table 2 shows, the block that explains the greatest amount of variance is Block 1, which includes students' demographic characteristics and the pre-test. It appears that college environments and

experiences do not play as much of a role in shaping attitudes towards affirmative action as characteristics and attitudes at college entry with the possibility of two exceptions.

First, a variable that points to the role of college shaping student attitudes is the influence of the peer group. In his landmark study of college impact, Astin (1993) states: “The student’s peer group is the single most potent source of influence on growth and development during the undergraduate years” (p. 398). In this study, students who attended institutions where overall students were more likely to oppose affirmative action were significantly more likely to oppose affirmative action over the course of four years. Thus, it appears that there is some evidence that the overall aggregate attitudes that students at an institution have towards affirmative action at the beginning of college play some role in shaping student attitudes as they pass through college. Second, a student’s political orientation in 2004 was the second strongest predictor in the entire model besides a student’s attitude towards affirmative action at the beginning of college. It appears that besides the role of the peer group, the other way that college might affect students’ affirmative action attitudes is through any shifts that might occur in their political orientation during college. Future research can draw on other statistical methods such as structural equation modeling to better understand this possible mediating effect.

What evidence do the findings show for the theoretical frameworks that have been proposed to explain influences on affirmative action attitudes? Some findings support the self-interest hypothesis. Descriptive and multivariate analyses indicate that males, White students, and students with higher levels of academic preparation have higher rates of supporting abolishing affirmative action than females, students of color, and students with lower levels of academic preparation. Presumably these are the groups who might feel that they have the most to lose from a policy that has traditionally benefited women and/or people of color. Interestingly,

advocates of affirmative action have urged Asian Americans to move “beyond self-interest” and support the policy (Chin, Cho, Kang, & Wu, 1996), suggesting that opposing affirmative action might be more in the direct self-interest of Asian Americans. Because of the aggregate community’s performance on standardized tests, some studies have suggested that Asian Americans would have the most to gain with the end of affirmative action (Epsenshade & Chung, 2005), although this claim has been challenged (Kidder, 2006). In this study, Asian Americans first-year students were split almost 50/50 in their opposition and support for affirmative action, but by 2004, 62.6% of Asian American students disagreed some or strongly that the policy should be abolished. Support of affirmative action by Asian Americans may challenge some of the research on the role of self-interest in affirmative action attitudes, and this trend should be explored in the future.

Findings also support previous work on the influence of political ideology. However, controlling for religious affiliation apart from political orientation does not account for a large amount of variance. Examining changes in R^2 when variables were entered individually indicates that controlling for religion only resulted in the R^2 increasing by .001, while controlling for political orientation resulted in a R^2 change of .026. A strong body of empirical research exists that shows the role of religion in influencing political attitudes and affiliation (Dougherty, Johnson & Polson, 2007). However in the current study the inter-related and independent effects of political orientation and religion are unclear, although previous research has found that evangelical Christians in particular are more likely to oppose race-conscious social policies such as affirmative action (Emerson & Smith, 2000; Hinojosa & Park, 2004). Interestingly, the current study found that identifying as Baptist and Other Christian is slightly associated with opposing the end of affirmative action.

Testing the roles of prejudice or symbolic racism was difficult given the limitations of items in the dataset. As indicated in 2004, having a commitment to promoting racial understanding is associated with opposing abolishing affirmative action, while believing that racism discrimination is no longer a problem is associated with supporting an end to affirmative action. In regards to views on the opportunity structure in America, a variable that stated that an individual could do little to influence society was tested. Kluegel and Smith (1983) posit that those who see less opportunity for social mobility in America, or believe that individual efforts go unrewarded due to structural barriers, are more likely to support affirmative action policies. I hypothesized that those who felt that individuals could do little to change society would be more likely to oppose abolishing affirmative action. However, the item was actually a positive predictor of abolishing affirmative action. Perhaps those who are more pessimistic about an individual's ability to create social change feel that a policy like affirmative action is attempting to change the status quo, which they see as being ill-attempted or unnecessary.

While this study faces certain limitations in not being able to draw from items that may explain some of the variance in student responses to the dependent variable, being a dataset not specifically designed to study affirmative action, the final R^2 of .262 indicates that the overall model does account for many of the variables that explain variance in attitudes towards affirmative action. Further research that examines responses to additional items on racism, stereotypes, or the opportunity structure may be able to explain even more variance in the outcome.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examines change in student attitudes towards affirmative action over time, as well as identifies predictors of student opposition to affirmative action as fourth-year students.

Findings show that not only do different subgroups of students vary markedly on their attitudes towards affirmative action, such as students from different racial/ethnic groups and genders, but they also change over time in their attitudes in different ways. For instance, the study found that Asian American and Latino/a students have higher rates of disagreeing strongly or somewhat with abolishing affirmative action after four years, while Black students and women shift into the disagree strongly category. This finding has important implications for affirmative action researchers who want to understand how attitudes on the issue may or may not be malleable over time. It also seems to support Sidanius et al.'s (2008) finding that Asian American and Latino/a students come to college with less crystallized political attitudes and orientation, perhaps leaving them more open to reassess their beliefs. Future research should probe this finding in order to shed light on some of the processes involved in the way different populations of students assess or change their attitudes and beliefs during college, as well as to help policymakers understand how certain subsets of the population may be more or less inclined to reexamine their beliefs on affirmative action.

Multivariate analysis uncovered how certain variables, notably a student's attitude on affirmative action as a first-year student, the influence of the peer group, and a student's political orientation were significant predictors of the outcome. Certain attitudes, such as a commitment to promoting racial understanding, the idea that racial discrimination is no longer a problem, and the idea that an individual can do little to change society were also associated with the dependent variable. Future research can hopefully decipher the relationship between these attitudes and student attitudes on affirmative action. Unlike previous work that found that engaging in diversity activities was a strong predictor of greater support for affirmative action over four years (Aberson, 2007), variables like participating in a racial/cultural workshop and taking an Ethnic

Studies class were non-significant in the equation. Both variables had strong negative correlations with the dependent variable ($r = -.108$ and $.124$, respectively) but other variables such as student attitudes towards diversity issues or political orientation were stronger predictors.

A primary finding of this study is that while many students may come into college set on their attitudes on affirmative action, a notable number of students change or shift in their attitudes towards affirmative action. Both supporters and opponents of affirmative may find something to like in these findings, and those who believe that college is a prime opportunity for students to make sense of how they see the world around them can be encouraged that for many students, college is a time where students are taking in new information and forming new opinions about the nexus of race and politics. Higher education has clearly taken a stand on the importance of defending affirmative action as a tool to assemble a diverse student body (Brief of Carnegie Mellon University et al., 2003; Brief of Columbia University et al., 2003; Brief of Harvard University et al., 2003). The question remains of whether this generation of students, who will be the decision-makers when Sandra Day O'Connor's twenty-five year timeline expires, will defend affirmative action, work to abolish it, or seek out new innovative practices that will help higher education become a more equitable and accessible environment.

REFERENCES

- Aberson, C.L. (2007). Diversity experiences predict changes in attitudes toward affirmative action. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 13*(4), 285-294.
- Allen, W. R., Teranishi, R., Dinwiddie, G., & Gonzalez, G. (2000). Knocking at freedom's door: Race, equity and affirmative action in U.S. higher education. *Journal of Negro Education, 69*, 3– 11.
- Astin, A. W. (1991). *Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education*. New York: Macmillian.
- Astin, A. W. (1993). *What Matters in College? Four Critical Years Revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Astin, A.W. & Denson, N. (2009). Multi-campus studies of college impact: Which statistical method is appropriate? *Research in Higher Education, 50*(4).
- Bobo, L., and Kluegel, J. R. (1993). Opposition to race-targeting: Self-interest, stratification ideology, or racial attitudes? *American Sociological Review 58*: 443-464.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2003). *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Brief of Carnegie Mellon University and 37 Fellow Private Colleges and Universities as *Amicus Curiae* in support of respondent. *Grutter v. Bollinger et al.*, No. 02-241 (2003); *Gratz v. Bollinger et al* No. 02-516 (2003).
- Brief of Columbia University, Cornell University, Georgetown University, Rice University and Vanderbilt University as *Amicus Curiae* in support of respondent. *Grutter v. Bollinger et al.*, No. 02-241 (2003); *Gratz v. Bollinger et al* No. 02-516 (2003).

Brief of Harvard University, Brown University, the University of Chicago, Dartmouth College, Duke University, the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, and Yale University as *Amicus Curiae* in support of respondent. *Grutter v. Bollinger et al.*, No. 02-241 (2003); *Gratz v. Bollinger et al* No. 02-516 (2003).

Cantor, N. (2004). Introduction. In *Defending Diversity: Affirmative Action at the University of Michigan* (pp. 1-16). Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Chin, G., Cho, S., Kang, J. & Wu, F. (1996). *Beyond self-interest: Asian Pacific Americans towards a community of justice, a policy analysis of affirmative action*. Los Angeles: Asian American Studies Center.

Espenshade, T.J., & Chung, C.Y. The opportunity cost of admission preferences at elite universities. *Social Science Quarterly*, (86)2, 293-305.

Kidder, William. "Negative Action Versus Affirmative Action: Asian Pacific Americans Are Still Caught in the Crossfire." *Michigan Journal of Race & Law* 11 (2006): 605-24.

CNN.com. (2003, December 24). Bake sales used to protest affirmative action. Retrieved October 10, 2006, from <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/West/12/24/affirmative.bake.sale.ap/>

Crosby, F. J., Iyer, A., & Sincharoen, S. (2006). Understanding affirmative action. *Annual Review of Psychology* , 57 , 586 – 611.

Dey, E. L. (1996). Undergraduate political attitudes: an examination of peer, faculty and social influences. *Research in Higher Education* 37, 535–554.

Dougherty, K., B. Johnson, & E. Polson. (2007). Recovering the lost: Remeasuring U.S. religious affiliation. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 46(4);483–99.

- Elizondo, E., & Crosby, F. (2004). Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action as a Function of the Strength of Ethnic Identity Among Latino College Students *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 34*(9), 1773-1796.
- Emerson, M. O., & Smith, C. (2000). *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Golden, H., Hinkle, S., & Crosby, F. (2001). Reactions to affirmative action: Substance and semantics. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology 31*, 17-32.
- Hinojosa, V. & Park, J.Z. (2004). Religion and the paradox of racial inequality attitudes. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 43*, 229-238.
- Holland, J. L. (1985). *Making Vocational Choices*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Inkelas, K. K. (2003). Caught in the Middle: Understanding Asian Pacific American Perspectives on Affirmative Action Through Blumer's Group Position Theory. *Journal of College Student Development, 44*(5), 625-643.
- Jackson, J. J. (1995). Race-based affirmative action: Mend it or end it? *The Black Scholar, 25*, 30-41.
- Kang, J., & Banaji, M. (2006). Fair measures: A behavioral realist revision of 'affirmative action'. *California Law Review, 94*, 1063-1118.
- Konrad, A. M., & Linnehan, F. (1995). Race and sex differences in line managers' reactions to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action interventions. *Group and Organization Management, 20*, 409-439.
- Kravitz, D. A., & Klineberg, S. L. (2000). Reactions to two versions of affirmative action among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85*, 597-611.

- Kluegel, J., & E. R. Smith. (1983). Affirmative action attitudes: Effects of self-interest, racial affect, and stratification beliefs. *Social Forces*, 61(4): 787–824.
- McLachlan, G. J., & Krishnan, T. (1997). *The EM algorithm and extensions*. New York: Wiley.
- Le, L., Lee, T., & Sawyer, M. Q. (2006). *Is Demography Destiny: Stimulating the Vote to Repeal Proposition 209?* Paper presented at the Equal Opportunity in Higher Education: The Past and Future of Proposition 209, Berkeley.
- Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (2005). *How college affects students (Vol. 2): A third decade of research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sax, L. J., & Arredondo, M. (1999). Student attitudes toward affirmative action in college admissions. *Research in Higher Education*, 40(4), 439-459.
- Sears, D. O. (1988). Symbolic racism. In P. A. Katz and D. A. Taylor (eds.), *Eliminating racism: Profiles in controversy*, pp. 53-84. New York: Plenum.
- Sears, D. O., van Larr, C., Carrillo, M., & Kosterman, R. (1997). Is it really racism? The origins of White Americans' opposition to race-integrated policies. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 61(16-53).
- Sidanius, J., Levin, S., van Laar, C., & Sears, D.O. (2008). *The diversity challenge*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Smith, W. A. (1998). Gender and racial/ethnic differences in the affirmative action attitudes of U.S. college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 6(2), 127-141.
- Sniderman, P.M & Piazza T. (1993). *The Scar of Race*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Snyder, L., Cleveland, J., & Thornton, G. (2006). Support for affirmative action initiatives among diverse groups: The role of ethnic identity. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 36(2), 527–551.

- Thomas, S. L., & Heck, R. H. (2001). Analysis of large-scale secondary data in higher education research: Potential perils associated with complex sampling designs. *Research in Higher Education, 42*(5), 517-540.
- Umbach, P. D., & Milem, J. F. (2004). Applying Holland's typology to the study of differences in student views about diversity. *Research in Higher Education, 45*(6), 625-649.
- Weidman, J. C. (1989a). Undergraduate socialization: a conceptual approach. In J. Smart (ed.), *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, Vol. V (pp. 289–322). New York: Agathon Press.
- Young, J. R. (2003, July 4). The Michigan rulings: Student activists prepare for new battles in wake of decision. *Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- Zamani-Gallaher, E.M. (2007). The confluence of race, gender, and class among community college students: Assessing attitudes toward affirmative action in college admissions. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 40*, 241–251.

Table 1. Student responses to the statement “affirmative action in college admissions ought to be abolished” in 2000 and 2004.

	Disagree Strongly			Disagree Some			Agree Some			Agree Strongly		
	2000	2004	Change	2000	2004	Change	2000	2004	Change	2000	2004	Change
White	7.1	9.0	+1.9	38.3	36.8	-1.5	34.1	33.3	-0.8	20.6	20.9	+0.3
Black	33.7	46.6	+12.9	41.1	35.2	-5.9	19.0	14.6	-4.4	6.2	3.6	-2.6
Asian American	10.3	18.1	+7.8	40.8	44.5	+3.7	36.3	26.7	-9.6	12.6	10.7	-1.9
Latino/a	17.6	24.6	+7.0	43.9	44.5	+0.6	28.9	21.4	-7.5	9.6	9.4	-0.2
Men	8.1	9.2	+1.1	31.9	29.5	-2.4	33.8	33.0	-0.8	26.2	28.3	+2.1
Women	9.2	12.9	+3.7	42.5	41.5	-1.0	33.0	31.3	-1.7	15.4	14.2	-1.2
Public Institutions	9.3	10.5	+1.2	42.4	34.1	-8.3	32.2	32.1	-0.1	16.0	23.4	+7.4
Private Institutions	8.7	11.8	+3.1	38.0	37.8	-0.2	33.4	31.9	-1.5	19.8	18.5	-1.3
West Coast	8.9	11.0	+2.1	34.6	36.0	+1.4	32.5	31.8	-0.7	24.1	21.3	-2.8
Midwest	7.9	11.3	+3.4	44.0	39.3	-4.7	32.9	32.2	-0.7	15.2	17.2	+2.0
East Coast	8.8	12.3	+3.5	37.0	36.9	-0.1	34.8	31.9	-2.9	19.4	18.8	-0.6
South	10.7	11.5	+0.8	36.3	34.9	-1.4	31.6	31.3	-0.3	21.4	22.3	+0.9
Academic preparation: Low	11.5	14.1	+2.6	45.2	40.3	-4.9	31.4	29.8	-1.6	11.9	15.8	+3.9
Academic preparation: Middle	8.4	10.0	+1.6	38.4	36.4	-2.0	33.3	33.3	0.0	19.9	20.3	+0.4
Academic preparation: High	5.3	8.7	+3.4	31.6	34.4	+2.8	35.6	33.8	-1.8	27.5	23.1	-4.4
Parental education/income: Low	10.3	14.0	+3.7	41.7	38.7	-3.0	32.2	30.2	-2.0	15.7	17.1	+1.4
Parental education/income: Middle	7.8	9.5	+1.7	38.1	35.8	-2.3	34.2	33.5	-0.7	19.9	21.2	+1.3
Parental education/income: High	7.7	11.0	+3.3	35.9	36.5	+0.6	33.8	31.9	-1.9	22.6	20.6	-2.0
No other college applications	8.8	10.3	+1.5	41.3	37.0	-4.3	31.9	33.1	+1.2	17.9	19.7	+1.8
Six or more	10.1	13.8	+3.7	34.7	37.9	+3.2	32.2	29.2	-3.0	23.0	19.1	-3.9

Table 2. R² change by block for student opposition to affirmative action.

Block	<u>R² Change and Test of F Change</u>	
	R-Square	R-Square Change
1. Background characteristics	.156	.156***
2. Academic background	.158	.002***
3. Competitiveness, political orientation, and attitudes in 2000	.191	.033***
4. Institutional characteristics	.197	.006***
5. Political orientation and religion in 2004	.224	.027***
6. Major in 2004	.226	.002***
7. Attitudes and experiences in 2004	.262	.036***
Total Model R ²	.262	.

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 3. Standardized beta coefficients, unstandardized beta coefficients, and R² change for independent variables.

	Beta after Block 1		Beta after Block 2		Beta after Block 3		Beta after Block 4		Beta after Block 5		Beta after Block 6		Beta after Block 7								
	<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>		<i>b</i>								
<i>Block 1:</i>																					
<i>Background characteristics</i>																					
Gender: Female	-.136	***	-.263	-.137	***	-.266	-.113	***	-.219	-.113	***	-.219	-.107	***	-.207	-.095	***	-.183	-.071	***	-.138
Socioeconomic status	-.001		.000	.000		.000	.003		.001	.001		.000	-.003		-.001	-.003		-.001	.000		.000
Race/ethnicity: Black	-.143	***	-.681	-.136	***	-.649	-.115	***	-.549	-.113	***	-.537	-.103	***	-.491	-.106	***	-.505	-.085	***	-.406
Race/ethnicity: American Indian	.013		.093	.012		.085	.017	**	.125	.016	**	.113	.016	**	.116	.016	*	.117	.016		.119
Race/ethnicity: Asian American	-.058	***	-.273	-.054	***	-.258	-.042	***	-.202	-.043	***	-.206	-.043	***	-.205	-.045	***	-.215	-.035	***	-.166
Race/ethnicity: Latino/a	-.079	***	-.353	-.075	***	-.337	-.061	***	-.273	-.064	***	-.290	-.063	***	-.282	-.063	***	-.284	-.054	***	-.244
2000 Colleges should abolish affirmative action	.284	***	.301	.280	***	.298	.243	***	.258	.237	***	.251	.232	***	.246	.232	***	.246	.220	***	.234
<i>Block 2:</i>																					
<i>Academic background</i>																					
Academic preparation				.024	**	.009	.034	***	.013	.039	***	.015	.049	***	.019	.044	***	.017	.045	***	.017
Choice of college				.005		.008	-.003		-.004	.001		.002	-.003		-.005	-.003		-.004	-.007		-.011
Number of colleges applied				-.035	***	-.016	-.011		-.005	-.006		-.002	.000		.000	.000		.000	.000		.000
<i>Block 3:</i>																					
<i>Competitiveness, political orientation, and attitudes in 2000</i>																					
Self-rating: Competitiveness							.034	***	.034	.032	***	.033	.022	**	.022	.019	**	.019	.016	**	.016
2000 Political							-.125	***	-.147	-.117	***	-.137	-.026	**	-.031	-.027	**	-.032	-.030	***	-.036

orientation (Liberal)															
2000 Racial discrimination is no longer a problem	.061	***	.075	.059	***	.073	.049	***	.061	.048	***	.060	.008	.010	
2000 Commitment to promoting to racial understanding	-.086	***	-.094	-.083	***	-.091	-.068	***	-.073	-.065	***	-.070	-.019	**	-.021
2000 Plan to socialize across race	-.003		-.006	-.003		-.006	.001		.001	.003		.005	.018	**	.031
<i>Institutional characteristics</i>															
Region: West				-.004		-.009	-.003		-.008	-.003		-.007	.004		.010
Region: Midwest				-.031	***	-.060	-.030	***	-.059	-.026	**	-.050	-.014		-.028
Region: South				.006		.015	-.002		-.006	-.001		-.003	-.002		-.005
Institutional selectivity				-.052	***	.000	-.038	***	.000	-.041	***	.000	-.035	***	.000
Institutional control: Private				-.034	***	-.090	-.031	***	-.082	-.027	***	-.070	-.020		-.051
Peer aggregate of 2000 colleges should abolish affirmative action				.064	***	.343	.053	***	.282	.052	***	.279	.051	***	.271
<i>Block 4: Political orientation and religion in 2004</i>															
2004 Political orientation (Liberal)							-.203	***	-.223	-.200	***	-.220	-.155	***	-.170
Religion: Baptist							-.023	**	-.074	-.021	**	-.069	-.018	**	-.060
Religion: Other Christian							-.034	***	-.076	-.032	***	-.072	-.024	**	-.054
Religion: Eastern							-.003		-.025	-.004		-.029	.000		.002
Religion: Jewish							.000		.003	.001		.008	.002		.017

Religion:								
Mainline Protestant								
<i>Block 5: Major in 2004</i>								
Major type: Realistic								
Major type: Social								
Major type: Conventional								
Major type: Enterprising								
Major type: Artistic								
<i>Block 6: Attitudes and experiences in 2004</i>								
2004 Commitment to promoting racial understanding								
2004 Socialized across race								
2004 Took an Ethnic Studies class								
2004 Participated in a racial/cultural awareness workshop								
2004 Racial discrimination is no longer a problem								
2004 An individual can do little to change society								
***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05								