**Feedback synthèse – Affirmative Action**

On June 29th 2023, the Supreme Court of the USA (SCOTUS) ended affirmative action, a long coming decision, as it was already depicted 10 years ago, in the 2014 Chattanooga Times Free Press cartoon by Clay Bennett. Though the decision at first sight seems to be controversial, it nonetheless could be perceived as justified according to the file at stake. In an NPR article released after the decision was made, Nina Totenberg defends the view that unlike abortion, affirmative action did not earn widespread support, while the Economist’s view, published on June 30th 2023 is downright in favour of ending it. The last document, a New York Times release by Pamela Paul on May 25th 2023, as an anticipation of SCOTUS’s decision, emphasizes that banning affirmative action had always been part of the original plan. Thus, why did affirmative have to be terminated?

Granted, all documents concede that affirmative action was a useful and essential measure. Bennett portrays the irony behind the fact that Justice Clarence Thomas, who benefitted from affirmative action, to land his position as second black justice in SCOTUS, by making him carry his sign upside down – an illustration of his betrayal towards his community as he wanted to ban affirmative action. Nina Totenberg is the most prolix when it comes to listing the advantages of affirmative action, putting forward proponents such as Justices Sotomayor and Brown Jackson, but also academics such as the president of Columbia University or former-acting-dean Melissa Murray at Berkeley. The Economist and the New York Times see eye to eye on the matter since affirmative action was justified to end historical racism, benefitted to the oppressed who had suffered segregation and illustrated by Stephen Carter, who benefitted from the measure to become the successful researcher he is.

Yet, after fifty years the measure seems to have reached its limits. Even the people who benefitted from it are favorable to terminating the scheme, such as Clarence Thomas in the cartoon and Stephen Carter. SCOTUS, which ratified the measure fifty years ago, has shifted its focus back onto equality, according to Nina Totenberg. Critics pledged that affirmative action contributed to more stigmatization of African-Americans, some being called into question for their legitimacy when they succeeded, according to Paul, some being called into question for betraying their community when adopting an individual point of view. In addition, the Economist points out that SCOTUS had to let affirmative action go on the grounds it simply did not work with top-ranking schools managing to overturn it while granting a hidden privilege to children of donors and alumni.

Ultimately, public perception is key. SCOTUS has seemed to be favorable to terminating the measure for the past decade, as exemplified by Bennett, NPR acknowledges that despite the arguments of proponents, public opinion is not as clearcut as for abortion and is more inclined to take align with the global view of SCOTUS. Polls showed less than 50% supported the measure, and both NPR and the Economist referred to the case of liberal California as an example for ending affirmative action, a state which voted twice to ban it. As for Paul, the commitment of Americans to equality will free African-Americans from their shackles of having to think the “Black” way, all in all allowing what all three articles agree to: a change of paradigm, compelling society to address the root causes of the inequality problem fostered by money, social reproduction, and persistent racism. 574 words