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### **Affirmative Action Plans That Assist Women’s Mobility in Albania: the Paradox of Education**

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## Abstract

In this paper, we are concerned with how the level of education may influence attitudes towards affirmative action plans (AAPs) that help women's career opportunities in Albania. Previous research indicates that people with a higher level of education tend to be less prejudiced, less authoritarian, more tolerant, more liberal, and more egalitarian than less educated individuals.<sup>1</sup> Thus, one can expect that more educated people will favour AAPs insofar as they conceive them as a remedy to social injustice and as a chance to create equal opportunities in education and employment. Paradoxically, however, some research has shown that more educated people consider AAPs that help women, black people and other minorities as less fair than less educated people do.<sup>2</sup>

Two studies conducted in Albania (N = 646 managers and employees across the public and private sectors as well as civil society) have examined this paradoxical relationship. Participants were contacted in their workplace and asked to complete a short questionnaire which aimed at assessing their attitudes towards AAPs directed at women in Albania as well as their opinions about women who get selected or promoted because of an AAP.

Results from Study 1 showed that, regardless of their sex, more educated participants were less positive towards affirmative actions than less educated ones. At the same time, the data indicated that more educated participants, in particular, attributed more negative features and less positive features to beneficiaries of affirmative action. Results of the second study did not seem to reveal that education or sex had any effect in the examined group. However, they did show a certain interaction between these two variables. More negative reactions towards AAPs and their beneficiaries were found among more educated women than among less educated ones. The results showed that men held the same attitudes towards AAPs regardless of their level of education. The discussion focuses on possible reasons that lead more educated individuals to be less positive towards affirmative action than less educated people are.

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1 Astin, Alexander W.: *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993; Baudelot, Christian / Leclercq, François / Chatard, Armand / Gobbille, Boris / Satchkova, Elena: *Les effets de l'éducation*. Rapport du Programme Incitatif de Recherche sur l'éducation et la formation. Paris. Ecole Normale Supérieure, 2005; Chatard, Armand / Quiazade, Alain / Mugny, Gabriel: *Les effets de l'éducation sur les attitudes sociopolitiques des étudiants: le cas de deux universités en Roumanie.*, in: *L'Année Psychologique*, 2007 (vol.107), pp. 225–237; Feldman, Kenneth A. / Newcomb, Theodore M.: *The Impact of College on Students: An Analysis of Four Decades of Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969; Lorenzi-Cioldi, Fabio: *Pluralité d'ancrages des représentations professionnelles chez des éducateurs en formation et des praticiens.*, in: *Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale*, 1991 (vol. 4), pp. 357–379; Sidanius, Jim / Pratto, Felicia / Bobo, Lawrence: *Racism, conservatism, affirmative action, and intellectual sophistication: a matter of principled conservatism or group dominance?*, in: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1996 (vol. 70), No. 3, pp. 476–490; Wagner, Ulrich / Zick, Andreas: *The relation of formal education to ethnic prejudice: Its reliability, validity and explanation.*, in: *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 1995 (vol. 25), No. 1, pp. 41–56.

2 Astin, Alexander W.: *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993; Kluegel, James R. / Smith, Eliot R.: *Affirmative action attitudes: Effects of self-interest, racial affect, and stratification beliefs on Whites' views.*, in: *Social Forces*, 1983 (vol. 61), No. 3, pp. 797–824.

## Affirmative Actions Plans

*"Affirmative Action Plans aim at equilibrating the numerical representation of various social categories in a given field or their representations in decision-making positions of this field".*<sup>3</sup>

These programmes have been embraced as a means of halting employment discrimination and combating prejudice in the work-place.<sup>4</sup> The use of affirmative action to ensure equal opportunity in employment has been controversial since its inception in the 1960s.<sup>5</sup> There are those who see affirmative action as a necessary antidote to discrimination against minorities and others who see it as self-defeating, creating more problems than it remedies.<sup>6</sup> Kravitz and Klineberg<sup>7</sup> reported that attitudes toward affirmative action are strongly influenced by two groups of factors. The first group refers to the type of procedure and the type of justification, while the second refers to individual characteristics, such as sex, level of education, etc.

AAPs differ according to the importance given to personal characteristics on the one hand, and membership characteristics of beneficiaries on the other<sup>8</sup> Kravitz, Harrison, Turner, et al.,<sup>9</sup> classify affirmative action procedures as follows: *Weak preferential treatment*, whereby decisions favour the most qualified applicant unless qualifications are equivalent, in which case the minority applicant is favoured. *Preferential treatment* (neither weak nor strong), whereby decisions are based on both merit and demographic status, with relative weighting left unspecified. *Strong preferential treatment*, whereby decisions are based solely or primarily on demographic status. Research shows that attitudes toward AAPs become increasingly negative as more emphasis is given to demographic status rather than personal skills or merit.<sup>10</sup>

## Level of Education, Prejudice and Sexism

The schooling system is a powerful agent of socialization. The school does not provide only practical knowledge, technical skills and good preparation for the labour market, but it also transmits a culture and a heritage of values and norms which shape individuals' attitudes. A high level of education may foster open-mindedness and is associated with a "liberalising effect" that implies a decrease of prejudice toward different social groups.<sup>11</sup> The higher the level of education, the less people are prejudiced, authoritarian

3 Lorenzi-Cioldi, Fabio: Les représentations des groupes dominants et dominés. Collections et agrégats. Grenoble: Presses Universitaires, 2002.

4 Heilman, Madeline E. / Block, Caryn J. / Lucas, Jonathan A.: Presumed incompetent? Stigmatization and affirmative action efforts., in: Journal of Applied Psychology, 1992 (vol.77), No. 4, pp. 536-544.

5 Kravitz David A. / Klineberg Stephen L.: Reactions to two versions of affirmative action among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics., in: Journal of Applied Psychology, 2000 (vol. 85), No. 4, pp. 597-611.

6 Heilman, Madeline E. / Battle, William S. / Keller, Chris E. / Lee, Andrew R.: Type of affirmative action policy: A determinant of reactions to sex-based preferential selection?, in: Journal of Applied Psychology, 1998 (vol. 83), No. 2, pp. 190-205.

7 Kravitz David A. / Klineberg Stephen L.: Reactions to two versions of affirmative action among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics., in: Journal of Applied Psychology, 2000 (vol. 85), No. 4, pp. 597-611.

8 Lorenzi-Cioldi, Fabio: Les représentations des groupes dominants et dominés. Collections et agrégats. Grenoble: Presses Universitaires, 2002.

9 Kravitz, David A. / Harrison, David A. / Turner, Marlene E. / Levine, Edward L. / Chaves, W. / Brannick, Michael T. / Denning, Donna L. / Russell, Craig J. / Conard, Maureen A.: Affirmative action: A review of psychological and behavioral research. Bowling Green, OH: Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology, 1997.

10 Kravitz, David A. / Harrison, David A. / Turner, Marlene E. / Levine, Edward L. / Chaves, W. / Brannick, Michael T. / Denning, Donna L. / Russell, Craig J. / Conard, Maureen A.: Affirmative action: A review of psychological and behavioral research. Bowling Green, OH: Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology, 1997; Nacoste, Rupert W.: Selection procedure and responses to affirmative action: The case of favorable treatment., in: Law and Human Behavior, 1985 (vol. 9), No. 3, pp. 225-242.

11 Baudelot, Christian / Leclercq, François / Chatard, Armand / Gobille, Boris / Satchkova, Elena: Les effets de l'éducation. Rapport du Programme Incitatif de Recherche sur l'éducation et la formation. Paris. Ecole Normale Supérieure, 2005.

and the more they are tolerant, liberal, and egalitarian.<sup>12</sup> More educated people are also more positive about social groups like black people,<sup>13</sup> Jews<sup>14</sup> or Communists.<sup>15</sup> In the same vein, according to Astin,<sup>16</sup> education negatively predicts sexist attitudes. A high level of education makes people more egalitarian and more open-minded toward women as a social group. It seems that more educated people evaluate women according to personal characteristics rather than according to sexist stereotypes.

## Level of Education and Attitudes toward Affirmative Action Plans

As we mentioned before, more educated people are supposed to be more egalitarian than less educated ones. Thus, one could think that more educated people should be more positive about AAPs. With this reasoning in mind it is therefore paradoxical that some research has indicated that more educated people consider strong preferential treatment that helps women, black and others minorities as less fair than those who are less educated.<sup>17</sup>

Using a large student sample, Astin<sup>18</sup> provided evidence that a high level of education predicts opposition toward affirmative action. In his survey conducted in the USA during 1967–1971, Astin reported that more educated individuals had more positive attitudes toward the emancipation, promotion and professional advancement of women. The percentage of more educated individuals supporting the notion that women should be encouraged to pursue university studies was higher than the percentage of less educated individuals. In the same study, Astin assessed the attitudes towards preferential treatment in college admissions that helped students from disadvantaged social groups. Paradoxically, even though more educated individuals were more positive about the emancipation and professional advancement of women, they voiced opposition to affirmative action. In this large survey, Astin did not report differences in attitudes between women and men. However, research by both Kluegel and Smith<sup>19</sup> and Astin<sup>20</sup> suggest that more educated people are more negative than those who are less educated towards affirmative action.

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- 12 Astin, Alexander W.: *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993; Baudelot, Christian / Leclercq, François / Chatard, Armand / Gobbil, Boris / Satchkova, Elena: *Les effets de l'éducation. Rapport du Programme Incitatif de Recherche sur l'éducation et la formation*. Paris. Ecole Normale Supérieure, 2005; Chatard, Armand / Quiamzade, Alain / Mugny, Gabriel: *Les effets de l'éducation sur les attitudes sociopolitiques des étudiants: le cas de deux universités en Roumanie.*, in: *L'Année Psychologique*, 2007 (vol.107), pp. 225–237; Feldman, Kenneth A. / Newcomb, Theodore M.: *The Impact of College on Students: An Analysis of Four Decades of Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969; Lorenzi-Cioldi, Fabio: *Pluralité d'ancrages des représentations professionnelles chez des éducateurs en formation et des praticiens.*, in: *Revue Internationale de Psychologie Sociale*, 1991 (vol. 4), pp. 357–379; Sidanius, Jim / Pratto, Felicia / Bobo, Lawrence: *Racism, conservatism, affirmative action, and intellectual sophistication: a matter of principled conservatism or group dominance?*, in: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1996 (vol. 70), No. 3, pp. 476–490; Wagner, Ulrich / Zick, Andreas: *The relation of formal education to ethnic prejudice: Its reliability, validity and explanation.*, in: *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 1995 (vol. 25), No. 1, pp. 41–56.
- 13 Curtis, James / Ronald, Lambert: *Educational status and reactions to social and political heterogeneity.*, in: *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1976 (vol.13), No. 2, pp. 189–203.
- 14 Selznick, Gertrude I. / Steinberg, Stephen: *The Tenacity of Prejudice: anti-semitism in contemporary America*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.
- 15 Hyman, Herbert H. / Wright, Charles R.: *Education's Lasting Influence on Values*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.
- 16 Astin, Alexander W.: *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.
- 17 Kluegel, James R. / Smith, Eliot R.: *Affirmative action attitudes: Effects of self-interest, racial affect, and stratification beliefs on Whites' views.*, in: *Social Forces*, 1983 (vol. 61), No. 3, pp. 797–824.
- 18 Astin, Alexander W.: *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.
- 19 Kluegel, James R. / Smith, Eliot R.: *Affirmative action attitudes: Effects of self-interest, racial affect, and stratification beliefs on Whites' views.*, in: *Social Forces*, 1983 (vol. 61), No. 3, pp. 797–824.
- 20 Astin, Alexander W.: *What matters in college? Four critical years revisited*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

## Sex and Attitudes toward Affirmative Action Plans

AAPs also influence people's attitudes because it has implications for personal and collective interest.<sup>21</sup> Individuals who feel their personal interest is being served by affirmative action will react more positively toward these policies than individuals who feel threatened. For example, Goldsmith, Cordova, Dwyer, Langlois, and Crosby<sup>22</sup> found significantly more positive attitudes toward affirmative action among women than men. In a comparison of Japanese and American samples, Ozawa, Crosby, and Crosby<sup>23</sup> found that women were more positive than men about merit hiring and quota hiring following a minimum standard. Similarly, the results of a study conducted by Tougas and Beaton<sup>24</sup> at a large male-dominated Canadian company indicated that women evaluated preferential treatment procedures more positively than did men. Two years later, Summers<sup>25</sup> also reported that women were more positive than men about quotas. As far as we know, in a study with a population of undergraduate students, Singer<sup>26</sup> was the only one that found that men were more positive than women about affirmative action.

## The Situation of Women in Albanian Society after the Fall of Communism

Due to historical and political developments after the fall of communism, the participation of women in the Albanian labour force has dramatically declined. In 1989, the rate of female employment was 77.5 %; in 1998 it was 43.8 %, and in 2003 it was 39.1 %.<sup>27</sup> Despite the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women approved by the Albanian parliament in 1988, women remained discriminated against in the labour market. For example, in the public sector, women hold only 26.3 % of decision-making positions.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, after the fall of communism, women's participation in the policy-making process was significantly reduced. Women only hold 7.1 % of the seats in the current parliament<sup>29</sup> against 35.2 % during the years 1974–1978.<sup>30</sup> In contrast to the public and private sectors and civil society which remain indifferent toward the situation of women, the two biggest Albanian political parties actively want to reduce this gender imbalance through legislation which aims to increase women's participation in politics. In Albania, the professional advancement of women is not supported by affirmative action. Two studies have thus been conducted in order to assess the attitudes toward these programmes directed at Albanian women.

- 21 Kravitz, David A.: Attitudes toward affirmative action plans directed at Blacks: Effects of plan and individual differences., in: *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 1995 (vol. 25), No. 24, pp. 2192–2220; Veilleux, Francine / Tougas, Francine: Male acceptance of affirmative action programs for women: The results of altruistic or egoistical motives?, in: *International Journal of Psychology*, 1989 (vol. 24), No. 4, pp. 485–496.
- 22 Goldsmith, Nancy / Cordova, Diana I. / Dwyer, Karen / Langlois, Bergen / Crosby, Faye J.: Reactions to affirmative action: A case study, in: Fletcher A. Blanchard / Faye J. Crosby (Eds.), *Affirmative action in perspective*. New York: Springer-Verlag. 1989, pp. 139–146.
- 23 Ozawa, Kazuho / Crosby, Matthew / Crosby, Faye J.: Individualism and resistance to affirmative action: A comparison of Japanese and American samples., in: *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 1996 (vol. 26), No. 13, pp. 1138–1152.
- 24 Tougas, Francine / Beaton, Ann M.: Affirmative action in the work place: For better or for worse., in: *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 1993 (vol. 42), No. 3, pp. 253–264.
- 25 Summers, Russel J.: Attitudes toward different methods of affirmative action., in: *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 1995 (vol. 25), No. 12, pp. 1090–1104.
- 26 Singer, Ming: 'Merit', 'preferential' or 'diversity-based' selection: Effect of information frame and informant gender on the public's views on preferential treatment in selection., in: *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 1996 (vol. 4), No. 1, pp. 1–11.
- 27 Muca, Mirela / Llambiri, Stavri / Xhepa, Nuri / Burazeri, Genc / Qirio, Mihallaq / Danaj, Ermira / Ekonomi, Milva / Celu, Sokol / Aliaj, Besnik: *Commun Country Assessment*. UN: Albania, 2004.
- 28 Galanxhi, Emira / Nallbani, Brikena / Danaj, Ermira: *Women and men in Albania*. INSTAT, 2004.
- 29 Kuvendi i Shqipërisë, 2006) in <http://www.parlament.al/dokumenti.asp?id=646&kujam=Statistika>
- 30 Muca, Mirela / Llambiri, Stavri / Xhepa, Nuri / Burazeri, Genc / Qirio, Mihallaq / Danaj, Ermira / Ekonomi, Milva / Celu, Sokol / Aliaj, Besnik: *Commun Country Assessment*. UN: Albania, 2004.

## The Influence of Level of Education on Attitudes toward Affirmative Action

The first study assesses support for AAPs that facilitate and promote women's access to decisions-making positions in the Albanian public administration. The study uses large samples of managers and employees (N = 336) from commercial businesses, the public sector and civil society. Two hundred and one participants are women and 133 are men (average age = 35 years). Eighty-nine participants had completed secondary school or less and 245 participants had completed university studies (BA, MA, or PhD).

The main part of the questionnaire aimed to investigate the attitudes toward AAPs. Thus, at the beginning of the questionnaire, we laid out the decision<sup>31</sup> taken by the Albanian public administration to increase women's participation in decision-making positions by implementing AAPs. Participants were then randomly assigned in one of three experimental conditions: weak preferential treatment, preferential treatment and strong preferential treatment: *Weak preferential treatment* holds that when a woman and a man are in competition, the woman should be selected if her skills are equivalent to those of the male candidate. *Preferential treatment* holds that when a woman and a man are in competition, the woman should be selected if her skills meet a minimum standard for the job, even if her skills are inferior to those of the man. *Strong preferential treatment* holds that when a woman and a man are in competition, the application of the man should not be considered and the woman should be selected because she is a woman (Lorenzi-Cioldi & Buschini, 2005). Next, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with a series of statements describing their attitudes towards AAPs such as: "I agree with this hiring procedure"; "I think this procedure will be accepted by men"; "I think this procedure will be accepted by women" etc. The attitudes towards the beneficiary of affirmative action were assessed with statement such as: "I think the woman hired because of affirmative action is qualified" or "I think the woman hired because of affirmative action is authoritarian". Responses were given on a 7-point Likert-type response scale that ranged from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). Finally, participants were asked to provide demographic information, that is age, sex, level of education and job position.

Consistent with past findings, the results of this study showed that weak preferential treatment directed at women in the Albanian public administration was the most accepted and strong preferential treatment was the least accepted. The negative attitudes towards strong preferential treatment can be explained by the fact that individuals think of affirmative action in terms of fairness. Strong preferential treatment is considered as an unfair procedure because it gives too much weight to group membership and violates equity by hiring female candidates with less qualification than male candidates.

The main research question was whether more educated participants differed from less educated ones with respect to their attitudes toward AAPs that help women's career opportunities in Albania. Our results revealed an impact of education on attitudes towards affirmative action, but we did not find that sex had an effect on these attitudes. Consistent with the literature reviewed and our expectations, the results showed that more educated participants were less positive than less educated ones towards AAPs. This result can be explained by the fact that more educated individuals may feel threatened by affirmative action. One can suppose that more educated people hold a power position and that affirmative action can threaten their positions because these programmes support the professional advancement of women. On the other hand, those who are less educated are not concerned about affirmative action. Thus, they do not feel threatened by AAPs and react positively to them. In line with this finding, there was evidence that more educated individuals who hold a negative attitude towards affirmative action have a negative perception of a woman who has been selected because of affirmative action. The results showed that more educated participants attribute less positive features and, simultaneously, more negative features than less educated ones to the beneficiaries of affirmative action. Thus, they consider the woman selected or promoted because of affirmative action as less qualified, less able to communicate, less able to create a positive atmosphere at work,

31 This information was false and the participants were informed of this at the end of the questionnaire. We created it in order to assess the attitudes toward affirmative action plans.

less creative, less convincing, less determined, less committed and less responsible than do those who are less educated. Similarly, more educated participants consider the beneficiary of affirmative action as more authoritarian, more suspicious, more opportunist, more arrogant, and more selfish than do less educated participants. To conclude, the reaction towards affirmative action and the perception of its beneficiaries are very closely related.

## “Queen Bee Syndrome” and Affirmative Action Plans

The second study aims at assessing attitudes towards AAPs that help women's participation in politics. The sample of the second study included 152 women and 158 men (average age = 42 years). One hundred and forty-two of the participants (half women/ half men) had completed secondary school or less and 168 participants (half women/ half men) had completed university studies.

The second study replicated the first study. In this study the attitudes towards affirmative action that helps women in politics were assessed. In line with the literature review and the results of the first study, we found that strong preferential treatment was the least accepted procedure. Inconsistent with both the literature review and our expectations, we did not find a remarkable impact of sex on attitudes towards affirmative action. Our results revealed that women and men reacted similarly to AAPs, regardless of the type of plans.

In addition, our results did not reveal that the level of education had a noticeable effect on attitudes towards affirmative action. However, there was a significant interaction between participants' sex and the level of education. This interaction revealed a significant impact of education on women's attitudes. More educated women showed stronger opposition to affirmative action than did those who were less educated. In contrast, men's opposition did not depend on their educational level. Regardless of the level of education, men displayed unfavourable attitudes towards affirmative action plans. Men's attitudes suggest that affirmative action plans threaten their personal and collective interest. As for women, the pattern of results is more complex. The “Queen bee syndrome” can partially account for their reactions. Staines, Tavis, and Jayaratne<sup>32</sup> introduced the term “Queen bee syndrome” to describe the phenomenon whereby more educated women who have been successful in male-dominated environments are at times particularly likely to oppose the women's protest movement. There are indeed reasons to suppose that more educated women are professionally more successful than less educated women and that they hold power positions. Consistent with this assumption, our results indicated a strong and significant correlation between level of education and the participant's status.

As Ellemers<sup>33</sup> showed, successful women considered themselves to be non-prototypical members of their gender group. Attributing their own success to effort and hard work, they oppose hiring procedures based primarily on demographic status. Due to their personal and professional advancement, they are inclined to maintain the organisational culture that enables them to be successful as individuals and not as members of a group.<sup>34</sup> We can also suppose that more educated women oppose affirmative action due to the fact that they feel that they are in competition with women who get hired or promoted because of affirmative action.<sup>35</sup> Their opposition to AAPs may stem from the arousal of feelings of threat.

32 Staines, Graham / Tavis, Carol / Jayaratne, Toby E.: The queen bee syndrome., in: *Psychology Today*, 1974 (vol. 7), No. 8, pp. 55–60.

33 Ellemers, Naomi: Individual upward mobility and the perceived legitimacy of intergroup relations, in John T. Jost/ Brenda, Major (Eds.), *Psychology of Legitimacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 205–222.

34 Gibson, Donald / Cordova, Diana I.: Women's and men's role models: The importance of exemplars, in, Audrey J. Murrell / Faye J. Crosby / Robin J. Ely (Eds.), *Mentoring dilemmas*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1999, pp. 121–142.

35 Ellemers, Naomi / Van den Heuvel, Henriette / Gilder, Dick / Maass, Anne / Bonvini, Alessandra: The underrepresentation of women in science: Differential commitment or the queen bee syndrome, in: *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 2004 (vol. 43), No. 3, pp. 1–24.

## Conclusion

In this paper we have tried to outline the complex influence of education on attitudes towards affirmative action. The studies reported here addressed the issue of how the level of education influences individuals' attitudes. Despite the fact that most educated people are supposed to support the underprivileged groups, the results of our first study revealed that the reactions to affirmative action targeting women in public administration were more negative among those people with a higher level of education than among the less educated, regardless of sex. We can suppose that individuals who have completed university studies are likely to be more meritocratic than those who have a low level of education.<sup>36</sup> Previous research indicated that the educational system fosters and reinforces the belief that economic success depends foremost on the possession of technical and cognitive skills.<sup>37</sup>

A number of studies have revealed more positive attitudes towards affirmative action among individuals who feel their personal and collective interest is being served by these programmes than among those who feel their interests are threatened. As we know, affirmative action plans aim to support women's careers. Hence, the interest of women is served. Several studies reported that women are more positive than men towards affirmative action. However, inconsistent with this personal and collective interest explanation, our second study did not reveal that sex has an effect, but rather an interaction between the sex of the participant and their level of education. More educated women showed more negative attitudes than less educated ones towards affirmative action for women in politics. One likely explanation of this finding is in terms of the "Queen bee syndrome". According to this syndrome, women who have succeed in attaining a high-status position in an organisation oppose programmes targeting women to a larger extent than do their male colleagues. Attributing their professional success to their individual characteristics, such as merit, intelligence, ambition, hard working and effort, more educated women do not support hiring procedures based on group membership.

Acknowledging the possibility that sex and the level of education may have such effects on attitudes towards AAPs and examining these and related issues more closely in future research would constitute a first step towards an understanding of the attitudes towards these programmes.

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36 Curtis, James / Ronald, Lambert: Educational status and reactions to social and political heterogeneity., in: *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1976 (vol.13), No. 2, pp. 189–203.

37 Bowles, Samuel / Gintis, Herbert: *Schooling in Capitalist America Revisited.*, in: *Sociology of Education*, 2002 (vol. 75), No. 2, pp. 1–18.