

2020 CFPR Lunchtime Seminar Series

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN MALAYSIA AND SOUTH AFRICA: PREFERENCE FOR PARITY

Malaysia and South Africa maintain the most extensive and ambitious affirmative action regimes in the world, utilizing preferential selection to promote the disadvantaged and politically dominant majority group's representation, upward mobility and capability. This study compares the contexts, programs and outcomes of affirmative action. I draw out contrasts in the constitutional underpinnings, political-economic dynamics of ethnicity and governance, and the magnitude of minority power. Affirmative action in Malaysia is characterized by discretionary decision-making, and quota-based, centralized programs, whereas South Africa has followed a legislative route involving negotiation and enforcement of target-based, statutory requirements, under less centralized oversight. On policy outcomes, both countries have made quantitative gains in broadening participation and facilitating upward mobility of Bumiputeras in Malaysia and blacks in South Africa. However, evidence also points to continuing shortfalls, in terms of capability and competitiveness, dependence on public institutions, and persistent difficulty in cultivating independent, private enterprise. Affirmative action must be systematic, focused and effective, in order to achieve its ultimate goal of rolling back overt preferential treatment.

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Chaired by: A/Prof Vincent Chua
Department of Sociology and Co-Director of CFPR, NUS

Date: 28 August | Time: 12.00noon - 1.00pm | via Zoom

Register at <https://tinyurl.com/y44j6xxf>