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**Major/Minor: Political Science/ History**

**Research Topic: Is There An African American Perspective On Affirmative Action?**

**Mentor: Assistant Professor Alec Ewald**

## **Abstract**

This project explored African American perspectives on affirmative action to assess whether there is a common African American perspective or view on affirmative action. I have analyzed and focused on the viewpoints of five African American authors: Patricia Williams, Stephan Carter, Clarence Thomas, Ward Connerly, and Cornel West by reading books, articles, and literature reviews that were written by and about them. The findings of my research show that there is a conflict or paradox within African American perspectives when it comes to affirmative action and similar policies. These authors encompass diverse opinions and approaches when addressing affirmative action, which appeals to the phrase I like to call *my black, is not your black*. I found the authors' thinking to obtain conflicts regarding affirmative action. Williams is conflicted about her socially constructed paradoxical identity. Carter is conflicted because of societal pressures. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, which ironically enough I believe shares the same views as Carter but yet, his approach to affirmative action asserts that he is not conflicted about the policy what so ever. The advocate for anti-affirmative action, Ward Connerly, is conflicted because of an internalized vulnerability that is caused by the effects of race that is branded within African Americans. Cornel West's, conflict in his perspective lies within what he believes is the solution to affirmative action. I will conclude that each of these authors have made some valid points, and the bottom line is that they are all conflicted.