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Letter From Birmingham Jail - Analytical Essay 1

It is important to note that Dr. King's framework for just and unjust laws is held on a posture that desires equality amongst races. The intention of this analytical response is held on an identical posture, pro-equality amongst races. By analyzing Dr. King's interpretation and definitions for just and unjust laws, I seek to evince contemporary application in his take on the two terms regarding the Supreme Courts rule to ban affirmative action for practice in the college admission system.

Dr. Martin Luther King depicts unjust laws as laws that defy the moral law or the law of God. Both the moral law and the law of God are subjective and definitively vary from person to person. For analytical purposes, I see fit to only consider what he deemed "concrete examples" of the laws. Continuing, he provided examples of his interpretation of both just and unjust laws. Unjust being "a law that a majority inflicts on a minority... this is difference made legal." Contrarily, just being a law in which "sameness is made legal". In reference to his primary definition of unjust laws, the practice of Affirmative Action is the institution (majority) helping minority groups. However, this does not jibe with what he deems to be just, as this is not sameness made legal. As Dr. King writes amid civil rights reform, we can rightfully assume that he intended to draw attention to inequality by defining the two types of laws. However, he did not indicate that this interpretation was to be used exclusively regarding civil rights reform of the 20th century. Dr. King's 1st interpretation of the laws would insinuate the practice of Affirmative Action in the 21st century to be unjust. It does not align with his concept of justice since it does not promote sameness as being legal.

Although the premise of affirmative action is to create reparations for institutionalized wrongdoings of black people; is discriminating against ethnic groups for uncontrollable traits not unjust? Dr. King opined, "An unjust law is a code inflicted upon a minority which that minority

had no part in enacting or creating”. In correspondence with this subsequent definition, we can derive that discriminating against the ethnic groups that make up most of the demographics in schools that hosted affirmative action is just. Per Dr. King’s interpretation, for the practice to be unjust, the institution must be inflicting code upon a minority group. Regarding college admissions, the entities that were mostly discriminated against were Caucasian and Asian students, not the minority.

Affirmative action procures equity for oppressed groups, not equality for all. Using Dr. King’s interpretation creates a technical paradox in deciding whether equity is just or unjust. Dr. King’s definition of just and unjust laws deems the practice of affirmative action to be just, however, according to the same criteria, institutionalizing practices for equity opposes his statutes for being just. In conclusion, it is to a lesser extent that Dr. King’s framework has contemporary application regarding the practice of affirmative action in college admissions. An important derivative of this analysis can be found in that the dispute between institutionalizing equity over equality has become much more important as an oppressive system starts to become more equal. However, it is critical that the legislation passed to garner equity does not oppress others along the way. A satisfactory application of Dr. King’s framework would be implementing a policy in which the majority helps the minority, and nobody becomes a marginalized group.