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# Affirmative action around the world

Insights from a new dataset (update)

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Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC)

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**Abstract:** Affirmative action (or 'positive action') measures have been adopted in dozens of countries around the world as a means of addressing group-based inequalities in educational enrolment, employment, political representation, and other areas. Although there is a large research literature on affirmative action, much of it focuses on a limited number of countries. This paper introduces a new Affirmative Action Database which provides detailed information in a standardized format on the design and modalities of affirmative action policies, as well as on their adoption, implementation, associated controversies, and impact. The Affirmative Action Database thus can be used to provide a systematic description of policies and, together with other cross-country databases, to situate and examine experiences of them comparatively, including within regional and global perspectives. Versions 1 and 2, discussed in this paper, cover 81 countries.

**Policy relevance:** Affirmative action (or 'positive action') policies have been adopted in dozens of countries around the world to address group-based inequalities in education, employment, politics, and other sectors. This paper introduces a new database providing detailed information on such policies in 81 countries. It provides evidence-based insights to inform current debates on affirmative action and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policies worldwide.

**Key words:** affirmative action, positive action, horizontal inequality, ethnicity, race, social justice

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# 1 Introduction

Group-based inequality and exclusion are core global challenges (UNDP 2011, 2013; United Nations and World Bank 2018). One key policy approach to promoting greater equality between groups is affirmative action, or positive discrimination favouring the members of marginalized populations in, for instance, university enrolment, public employment, and political representation. Public debate over affirmative action points to both its potential benefits, such as correcting historical injustices, supporting marginalized groups, and promoting equality, and its potential harms, especially in terms of perceptions of fairness and societal conflict.

Although there is a large research literature on affirmative action, much of it focuses on a small subset of country programmes (see, e.g., Arcidiacono et al. 2011; Bagde et al. 2016; Gulzar et al. 2020; Kerr et al. 2017; Prakash 2020; Valente and Berr 2017). In particular, much of what we know about affirmative action is based on the experiences of the United States and India, and to a lesser extent Brazil, Malaysia, and South Africa (see Schotte et al. 2023). While affirmative action policies are found in dozens of countries around the world, the literature to date does not provide a comprehensive view of the universe of cases. This is true even in comparative studies based on consideration of diverse country experiences (Brown et al. 2012; Gomez and Premdas 2012; Lee 2020; Sowell 2004).

While much can be learned from case studies, they alone cannot provide insight into the generalizability of their findings (see King et al. 1994). Without a stronger sense of the universe of cases, we do not know whether particular country experiences are typical or unusual, much less have any leverage on examining the ways in which macrostructural, institutional, and other factors may critically influence the adoption, implementation, and impact of affirmative action across diverse contexts. This gap in the literature thus has implications for the rigour with which we can build and test theories, evaluate interventions, and inform policy.

The Affirmative Action Database speaks to this research gap and builds comparative knowledge on affirmative action (AA) policies around the world. It provides detailed information in a standardized format on the design and modalities of AA policies, as well as on their adoption, implementation, and impact. The AA Database can thus be used to provide a systematic description of policies and, together with other cross-country databases, to situate and examine experiences of them comparatively, including within regional and global perspectives. Versions 1 and 2, discussed in this paper, cover 81 countries based on review and analysis of material by at least two coders per country. In addition to the database, country factsheets explaining the data coding and providing additional context information have been prepared. In Version 3, coverage will be expanded and an additional review of coding will be undertaken.

This paper introduces the database and describes key findings based on an analysis of Versions 1 and 2. As discussed below, the 81 countries included in Versions 1 and 2 were selected based on the existing literature as countries most likely to have AA policies in some form. They thus offer a useful snapshot of the different types of AA policy implemented around the world.

The remainder of this paper introduces the database and summarizes key descriptive insights based on Versions 1 and 2. Section 2 provides a short overview of the research methodology, including the scope, information sources, coding strategy, and country coverage. Section 3 then presents the data at the policy domain level. Section 4 provides a short overview of the factors influencing policy adoption, amendment, and termination, while Section 5 discusses common controversies that have been coded at the country level and presents a snapshot assessment of coded impact assessments by policy domain. Section 6 presents a set of preliminary conclusions.

## **2 Research methodology**

This section offers an overview of the research methodology used. We discuss the scope and inclusion criteria, literature search, coding strategy, and country coverage.

### **2.1 Inclusion criteria**

The database captures AA policies implemented as a corrective measure to increase the representation of historically marginalized ethnically defined groups. AA policies provide special opportunities and active support to those who have been historically marginalized, and are to be distinguished from anti-discrimination measures that intend to give all citizens the same opportunity to thrive. Although some policies have been adopted and implemented by subnational actors in some localities within one country, our focus in this project is on national-level policies operating at scale to enable cross-national comparison. The data therefore exclude initiatives undertaken by non-governmental actors at programme or project level.

Specifically, the following inclusion criteria for AA policies were defined:

1. anchored in the constitution or national/federal law;
2. targeting a nationally recognized ethnopolitical group—which may be defined explicitly in terms of culture, ethnicity, race, language, religion, or caste; and
3. active in 2000 or implemented between 2000 and 2021.

### **2.2 Literature review, data extraction, and coding**

The information for this database has been extracted using a combination of different information sources, ranging from government documents and scholarly articles to media reports. As much as possible, highly trained coders relied on multiple sources for each code

assigned. Country factsheets were used to summarize and document the information for all country cases for which ethnic AA policies had been identified. In addition, each data section includes several string variables that document the main sources of information underlying the coding. The factsheets and source variables are intended to increase transparency and make information easier to verify for database users.

This project was conducted over a period of 28 months between September 2021 and January 2024. During the preparatory phase between September and October 2021, initial versions of the coding frame, coding manual, and factsheet template were developed and modified. This phase also included the onboarding and training of the research assistants who were to be responsible for the initial coding of information, which was subsequently checked by the project's lead investigators.

Table 1 presents the data structure of the dataset. The unit of observation is the country, and detailed information is provided by the policy domain in which the AA policies are adopted, including the following five categories: (1) education, (2) public sector employment, (3) private sector employment, (4) political representation, and (5) other.

Table 1: Data structure

Section	Description	Sections	Total no. variables
Roster	Country list (including identifiers to merge data with other sources)	Identifier (6); Region (4); Income/Development Status (7); Population (3); Ethnic Fractionalization (1); Data Monitoring (6)	27
AA	General (country-level) information on AA policies	General (8); Origins (10); Controversy (29)	47
AA_EDU	Information on AA policies in education	General (3); Target Group (7); Origins (1); Amendment (16); Termination (14); Evaluation (13)	54
AA_EMP	Information on AA policies in public employment	General (3); Target Group (7); Origins (1); Amendment (16); Termination (14); Evaluation (13)	54
AA_EMP	Information on AA policies in private sector employment/business	General (3); Target Group (7); Origins (1); Amendment (16); Termination (14); Evaluation (13)	54
AA_POL	Information on AA policies in political representation	General (3); Target Group (7); Origins (1); Amendment (16); Termination (14); Evaluation (13)	54
AA_OTH	Information on AA policies in other policy domains	General (3); Target Group (7); Origins (1); Amendment (16); Termination (14); Evaluation (13)	54
AA_policies	Detailed information on up to three AA policies (based on legislative documents)	Policy 1 (20); Policy 2 (20); Policy (3)	60
No AA	Abridged information on countries with no detected AA policy	General (9)	9
Total			413

Source: authors' elaboration.

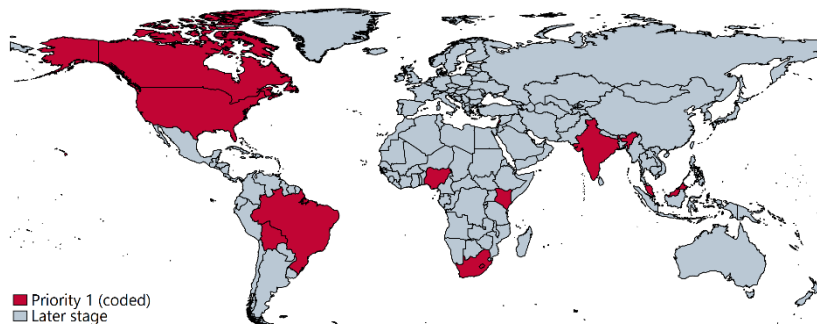
## 2.3 Timing and country coverage

The coding of country cases was rolled out following a four-stage priority list as described below. The sample covers 81 countries across the globe that in 2000 were administered by a sovereign state with a minimum population of 500,000 inhabitants.

### *Priority 1*

During the pilot phase between November 2021 and January 2022, information for the first ten countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United States) was researched and coded. In this phase, the data coding frame and factsheet template underwent several rounds of revisions as part of the process. The ten pilot countries were strategically selected from the pool of cases commonly studied in the AA literature. The focus was set on countries with overall higher-than-average levels of ethnic fractionalization that also had ethnic AA policies.<sup>1</sup> The intention was to provide wide coverage of different world regions, income levels, and ethnic group criteria (covering groups defined by race, indigeneity, ethno-region, and religion). This was useful for identifying a wide range of variables in our coding framework.

Figure 1: Priority 1 countries



Source: authors' illustration.

### *Priority 2*

We added 20 cases between February and May 2022. The focus was set on countries that have been commonly studied in the AA literature so that the research team could benefit from a wide array of data sources to capture the varying dimensions of AA.

### *Priority 3*

Between June and September 2022, the database was further extended and the coding was refined by incorporating 23 additional cases among Priority 3 countries. We included a mix of

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<sup>1</sup> The Ethnic Fractionalization Index measures the diversity of ethnic groups within a country. The index ranges from 0 to 1, 0 representing complete homogeneity and 1 representing complete heterogeneity.

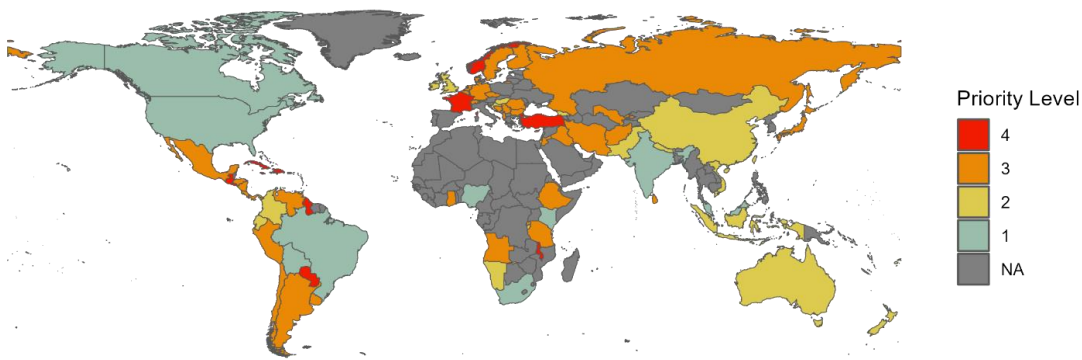
cases with ethnic AA policies in place and countries that refrain from the use of AA in managing horizontal ethnic inequalities. The inclusion of non-AA cases enabled us to further refine the coding criteria and procedure.

#### *Priority 4*

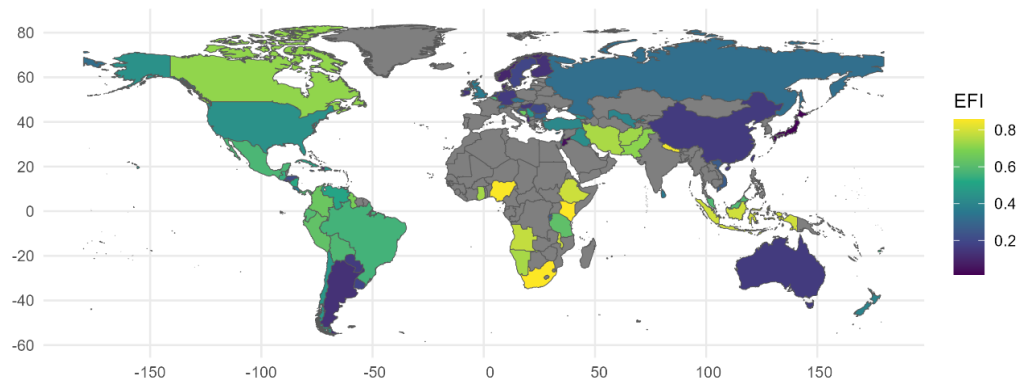
Between August 2023 and January 2024, more countries were added to the database based on our ongoing research on where policies were likely in place. We also prioritized completion of the countries in Latin America in order to allow for analysis of the region.

Figure 2 shows the coverage of countries under priority lists 1, 2, 3, and 4. Figures 3 and 4 map the Ethnic Fractionalization Index (EFI) for countries with and without AA.

Figure 2: Country coverage of AA Database Version 2

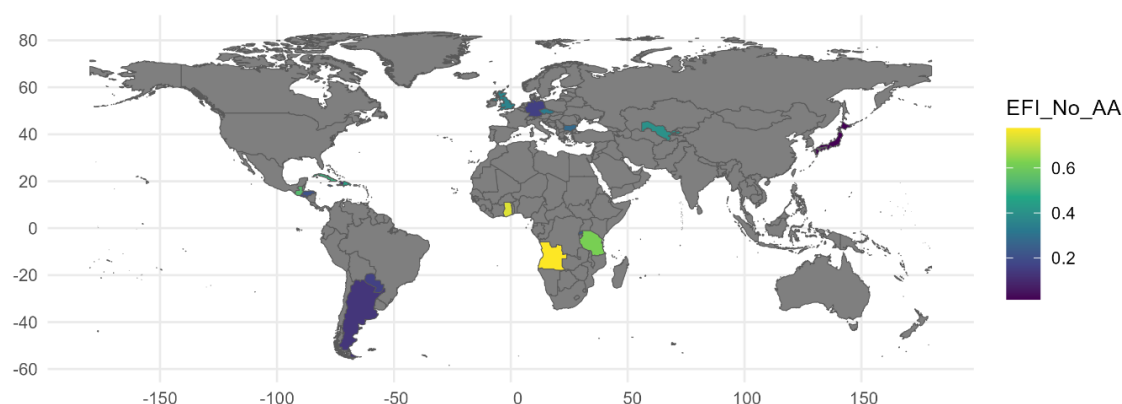


Source: authors' illustration. Figure 3: EFI for countries with AA



Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 4: EFI for countries without AA



Source: authors' illustration.

### 3 Data description

This section provides an overview of the country and policy characteristics for the cases included in Versions 1 and 2 of the AA Database.

#### 3.1 Country characteristics

Versions 1 and 2 of the AA Database are global in coverage, including 81 countries spread across all five world regions (Table 2). Countries located in Asia account for the largest share of the AA policies, followed by the Americas and Europe, Africa, and Oceania.

With populous countries such as India and China among the coded countries, the country cases included in Version 1 of the AA Database alone accounted for 69% of the world population in 2020. The coded countries were spread across different levels of economic and human development, including Burundi and Afghanistan as the world's two poorest countries in 2021, and the United States as one of the world's richest countries, as measured by the per capita gross national income (GNI). As shown in Table 3, 65% of the covered countries with AA (and about 67% of all covered countries) fall within the United Nations' 'developing country' definition, based on their standard of living, industry base, and position in the Human Development Index (HDI) (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 2: Regional classification

	with AA		without AA		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100%</b>
Africa	8	13%	4	18%	12	15%
Sub-Saharan Africa	8	13%	4	18%	10	12%



Americas	15	25%	10	45%	25	31%
Latin America and the Caribbean	13	22%	10	45%	23	28%
Northern America	2	3%	0	0%	2	2%
Asia	19	32%	2	9%	21	26%
Central Asia	0	0%	1	5%	1	1%
Eastern Asia	2	3%	1	5%	3	4%
South-Eastern Asia	4	7%	0	0%	4	5%
Southern Asia	6	10%	0	0%	6	7%
Western Asia	7	12%	0	0%	7	9%
Europe	15	25%	5	24%	20	25%
Eastern Europe	3	5%	2	10%	5	6%
Northern Europe	5	8%	1	5%	6	7%
Southern Europe	4	7%	0	0%	4	5%
Western Europe	3	5%	2	10%	5	6%
Oceania	3	5%	0	0%	3	4%
Australia and New Zealand	2	3%	0	0%	2	2%
Melanesia	1	2%	0	0%	1	1%

Source: authors' construction based on United Nations regional classification.

Table 3: Development-level classification

		with AA		without AA	
		No	%	No	%
World Bank	Total	60	100%	21	100%
	High income	20	33%	6	29%
	Low income	5	8%	3	14%
	Lower middle income	10	17%	5	24%
	Upper middle income	24	40%	5	24%
UN	Least Developed Countries (LDC)	5	8%	4	19%
	Land-Locked Developing Countries (LLDC)	6	10%	3	14%
	Small Island Developing Countries (SIDC)	4	7%	5	24%
	Developing Countries	39	65%	15	71%
	OECD Membership	19	32%	5	24%

Source: authors' construction based on World Bank and United Nations classifications.

Table 4 reveals that on average, countries that have adopted AA policies do better in almost all socioeconomic indicators compared with the world average. Although the EFI (Drazanova 2019) is identical in both groups, the Gini Index is considerably lower for countries with AA coded so far. Inequality in education, HDI, and IHDI are much lower for AA countries. The

income shares of the bottom/top of the national income distribution are, however, similar for the two groups, with the countries with AA policies doing slightly better than the world average. *Prima facie*, these results indicate that countries with AA policies perform better with regard to socioeconomic indicators.

Another set of indicators in Table 4 pertain to democracy ratings from the V-Dem Dataset. The countries coded as having AA policies have more liberal, egalitarian, deliberative, and participatory democracies on average than the world average for the same indicators. Whether the adoption of AA policies is in itself an outcome of these indicators or there is a causal link between the adoption of AA policies and better democracy-based ratings remains to be analysed in the future.

Table 4: Socioeconomic indicators

Indicator	Coded countries with AA			World		
	Mean	Max.	Min.	Mean	Max.	Min.
Population 2023 (million)	189.02	2,134.84	0.01	318.27	6,821.83	0.01
GNI per capita PPP (constant 2017 \$) 2021	33,066.07	118,470	840	26,246.15	118,470	840
Poverty gap at US\$2.15 a day (2017 PPP) (%) 2020	1.02	9.70	0.00	0.74	9.70	0.00
Poverty headcount ratio at US\$2.15 a day (2017 PPP) (% of population) 2020	3.38	35.00	0.00	2.37	35.00	0.00
HDI	0.77	0.96	0.43	0.72	0.96	0.39
Inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI)	0.67	0.91	0.30	0.60	0.92	0.24
Coefficient of human inequality	15.31	36.02	5.19	18.41	50.12	0.55
Inequality in education	14.15	45.37	1.84	18.14	43.07	4.37
Income share held by poorest 40%	17.95	23.50	7.20	18.14	24.90	7.20
Income share held by richest 10%	29.51	50.50	22.20	29.18	50.50	18.80
Income share held by richest 1%	16.42	28.42	6.92	16.01	31.11	6.52
V-Dem electoral democracy index	0.57	0.92	0.08	0.51	0.92	0.02
V-Dem liberal democracy index	0.46	0.89	0.03	0.39	0.89	0.01
V-Dem participatory democracy index	0.38	0.80	0.02	0.33	0.80	0.01
V-Dem deliberative democracy index	0.45	0.88	0.03	0.39	0.88	0.03
V-Dem egalitarian democracy index	0.43	0.88	0.02	0.38	0.88	0.02
V-Dem clean elections index	0.64	0.97	0.00	0.53	0.97	0.00

V-Dem equality before the law and individual liberty index	0.73	0.99	0.02	0.67	0.99	0.02
Gini index 2021	39.93	42.90	34.20	42.58	52.90	34.20
EFI	0.45	0.86	0.04	0.45	0.89	0.02

Note: latest available data (various years) unless otherwise specified; PPP = purchasing power parity.

Source: authors' construction based on Barro and Lee (2018); Coppedge et al. (2022); Drazanova (2019); United Nations (2022, 2023); World Bank (2023).

Table 5 compares the average characteristics of countries with and without AA by policy domain. To avoid any bias resulting from the small sample of countries without any AA policies in place, here we limit the sample to the set of 60 countries that have adopted AA in at least one domain.

Even though we find no clear link between the assessed county-level characteristics and the adoption of AA policies in education or public sector employment, we do observe some statistically significant patterns in the characteristics of countries that do or do not adopt policies in private sector employment and political representation.

Specifically, first, we observe that countries that adopt AA policies in private employment tend to be better off in terms of per capita incomes and human development. These countries also see a lower concentration of incomes at the very top of the distribution and lower inequality in human development outcomes, particularly in education. While the available data do not allow us to draw conclusions about causality, we may imagine that the adoption of AA in private employment is more politically feasible in country settings where labour market discrimination based on people's ethnic identities occurs at more similar average levels of qualification. In addition, we observe that countries that adopt AA measures in the private sector score higher on the V-Dem 'egalitarian democracy', 'liberal democracy' and 'equality before the law and individual liberty' indices. The EFI is also lower in these countries.

Second, countries that adopt AA in political representation tend to have a less unequal distribution of incomes than those without such policies in place. At the same time, the average development outcomes are slightly lower and, most remarkably, the distribution of education tends to be much more unequal. The latter may reflect discrepancies in opportunities to attain positions of political influence. At the same time, it is important to remember that these policies are often adopted to ensure the representation of national minority groups that are not adequately reflected in national average statistics.

Third, in other AA domains, countries with AA policies in place tend to do significantly better in terms of human development indicators. Inequality, both in education and in general, tends to be much lower than in countries without AA policies in other domains.

Table 5: Socioeconomic indicators, by domain of AA policy adoption

Indicator	AA in education			AA in public employment			AA in private employment			AA in political representation			AA in other domain		
	Mean		Mean diff.	Mean		Mean diff.	Mean		Mean diff.	Mean		Mean diff.	Mean		Mean diff.
	With	Without		With	Without		With	Without		With	Without		With	Without	
GNI per capita PPP (constant 2017 international US\$) 2021	27,423.53	41,786.36	-1.71**	31,752.67	34,581.54	-0.37	39,455.91	28,931.47	1.42*	32,666.36	33,639.57	-0.13	35,435.93	30,859.66	0.61
HDI	0.77	0.78	-0.43	0.76	0.79	-0.67	0.82	0.75	2.04***	0.75	0.81	-1.58*	0.80	0.75	1.68**
IHDI	0.66	0.67	-0.34	0.66	0.67	-0.36	0.73	0.63	2.14***	0.65	0.69	-0.90	0.70	0.64	1.44***
Coefficient of human inequality	15.54	14.98	0.26	15.81	14.79	0.48	12.41	16.96	-2.03***	15.59	14.89	0.31	13.55	16.78	-1.59***
Inequality in education	14.33	13.87	0.14	14.84	13.32	0.49	9.34	17.00	-2.65***	16.53	10.41	2.16***	10.98	16.82	-1.95**
Income share held by poorest 40%	17.74	18.29	-0.50	18.12	17.73	0.38	18.64	17.48	1.07	18.97	16.57	2.30***	17.98	17.93	0.05
Income share held by richest 10%	29.60	29.37	0.14	28.90	30.33	-0.87	27.99	30.56	-1.42*	28.15	31.35	-1.82**	29.04	29.89	-0.50
Income share held by richest 1%	16.25	16.66	-0.29	15.18	17.84	-1.99	13.17	18.26	-4.30***	16.18	16.78	-0.42	15.50	17.16	-1.22
V-Dem electoral democracy index	0.58	0.57	0.04	0.58	0.57	0.06***	0.62	0.55	0.98	0.52	0.66	-2.23***	0.58	0.57	0.04
V-Dem liberal democracy index	0.47	0.46	0.19	0.47	0.45	0.33	0.53	0.43	1.42*	0.41	0.55	-2.19***	0.46	0.47	-0.21
V-Dem participatory democracy index	0.39	0.38	0.29	0.39	0.38	0.16	0.42	0.36	1.12	0.35	0.44	-1.93**	0.38	0.39	-0.13
V-Dem deliberative democracy index	0.45	0.45	-0.06	0.45	0.44	0.20	0.50	0.42	1.14	0.40	0.52	-1.96***	0.43	0.46	-0.46
V-Dem egalitarian democracy index	0.42	0.44	-0.37	0.43	0.43	-0.05	0.49	0.39	1.58*	0.39	0.49	-1.74**	0.43	0.43	-0.03
V-Dem clean elections index	0.64	0.64	-0.01	0.63	0.65	-0.31	0.69	0.61	0.99	0.59	0.72	-1.86**	0.68	0.61	0.92
V-Dem equality before the law and individual liberty index	0.74	0.72	0.33	0.75	0.71	0.61	0.81	0.68	2.15***	0.67	0.82	-2.62***	0.76	0.70	1.00
EFI	0.48	0.42	0.81	0.42	0.50	-1.26	0.36	0.51	-2.34***	0.46	0.45	0.10	0.43	0.47	-0.71

Note: latest available data (various years) unless otherwise specified; sample limited to countries with AA policies in place in at least one of the policy domains; \*\*\* standardized difference in means between AA and non-AA cases statistically significant at the 10% level, \*\* at the 5% level, and \* at the 1% level.

Source: authors' construction based on Barro and Lee (2018); Coppedge et al. (2022); Drazanova (2019); United Nations (2022, 2023); World Bank (2023).

### 3.2 Policy characteristics

Detailed information is coded by the policy domain in which the AA policies are adopted, including the following five categories: (1) education, (2) public sector employment, (3) private sector employment, (4) political representation, and (5) other.

Table 6: Number of countries with AA policies by domain

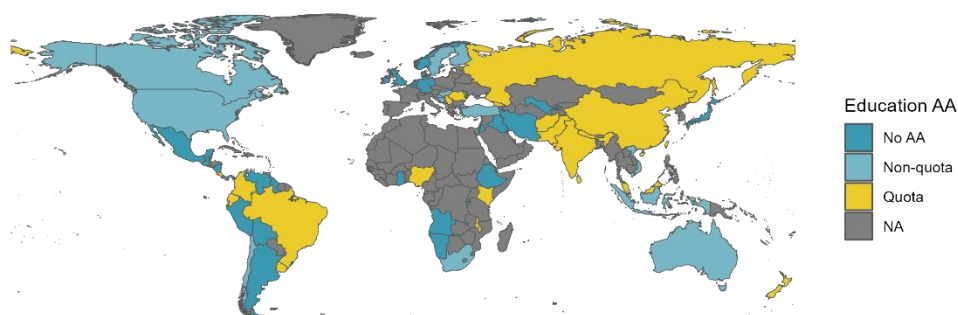
EDU	PUB	EMP	POL	OTH	Total
36	33	23	37	28	60

Source: authors' construction.

#### *Education*

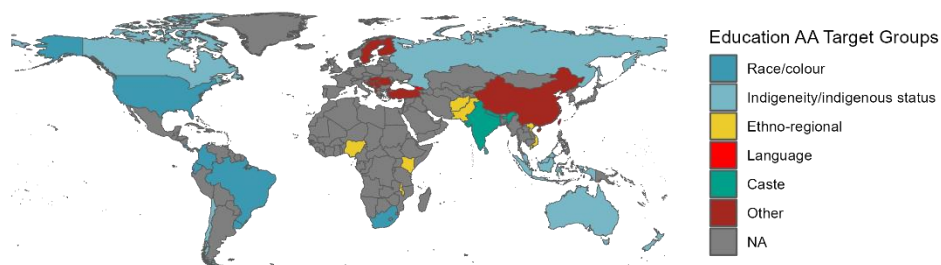
AA policies in the area of education are relatively common according to our data, being identified in 36 out of the 60 coded country cases that have some type of AA policy in place (see Table 6 and Figure 5). These policies generally grant ethnically marginalized applicants preferential access to (public) universities and colleges, often by specifying admission quotas, awarding additional points in examinations, or lowering entrance thresholds (see Figure 6). Examples include a racial quota for people of African descent in Latin America (Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Uruguay) and an ethno-regional quota in Afghanistan, Kenya, Nigeria, and Pakistan (see Figure 7). However, there are also AA policies in education that are based not on 'strong' preferences in admission but 'soft' measures such as scholarships and financial aid for indigenous people in Australia, Canada, Chile, Fiji, Indonesia, Russia, and Taiwan (see Figure 8).

Figure 5: AA in education: country map



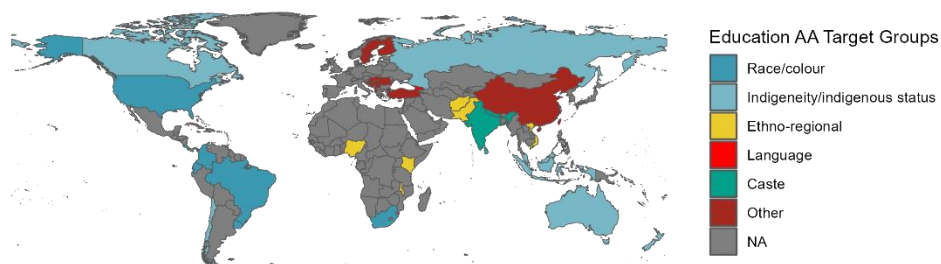
Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 6: AA in education: target groups



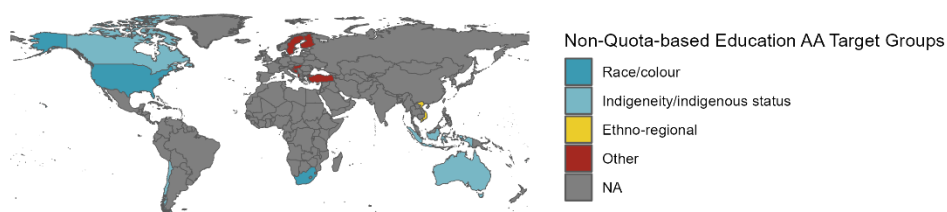
Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 7: Quota-based AA in education: target groups



Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 8: Non-quota-based AA in education: target groups



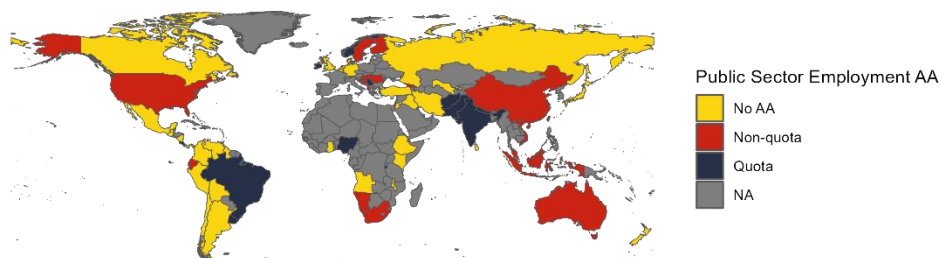
Source: authors' illustration.

### *Public sector employment*

Similarly to education, AA measures in public sector employment are relatively common according to our data, being identified in 33 out of the 60 coded country cases (see Table 6 and Figure 9). Here we see an almost even split between policies involving quotas and those granting 'soft' preferences, for example in the form of preferential hiring policies for marginalized groups at equal levels of qualification (see Figure 10). Examples of AA in public

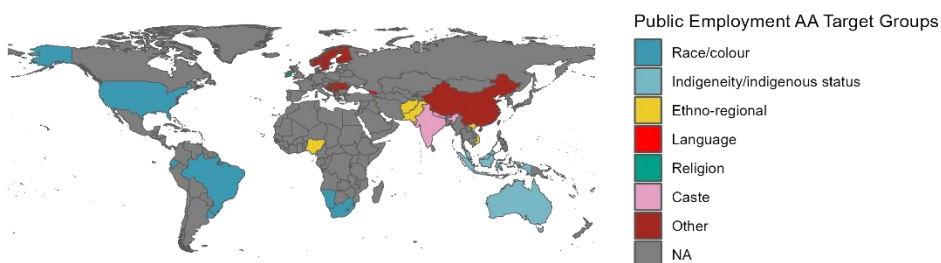
employment include ethno-regional quotas (see Figure 11) in civil service employment and public procurement in Afghanistan, Burundi, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Vietnam; racial quotas in Brazil (ministry-level goals), Costa Rica, and Uruguay; non-quota measures (see Figure 12) for racial groups in Ecuador, Namibia, South Africa, and the United States; and measures for ethnic minorities in China, Croatia, and Israel, and specifically for Roma in Albania, Hungary, Romania, and Serbia.

Figure 9: AA in public employment: country map



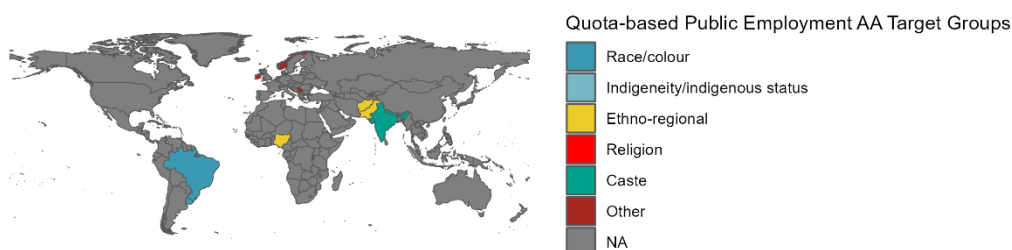
Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 10: AA in public employment: target groups



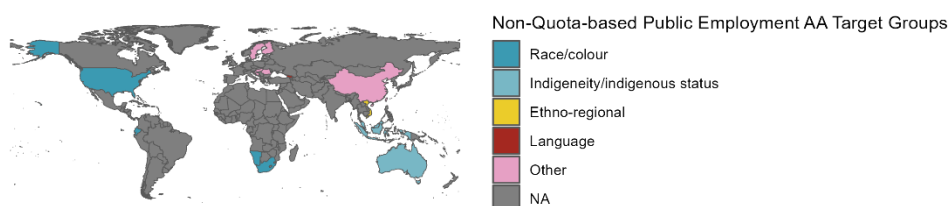
Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 11: Quota-based AA in public employment: target groups



Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 12: Non-quota-based AA in public employment: target groups

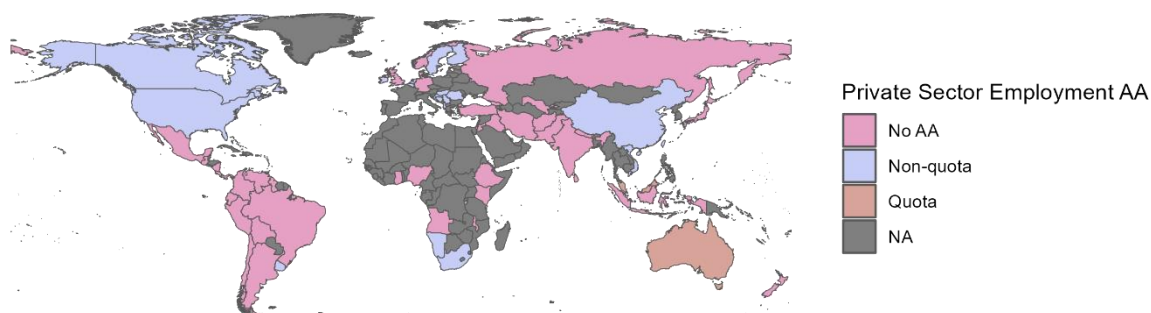


Source: authors' illustration.

### *Private sector employment*

AA policies in private sector employment were observed in 23 out of the 60 countries with some type of ethnic AA policy in place (see Table 6 and Figures 13 and 14). Here, only four countries had adopted quota systems, including Australia (e.g., 50,000 jobs to be filled by indigenous applicants), Malaysia (e.g., racial equity to be demonstrated in order to receive a manufacturing licence), Taiwan (e.g., to win public bids, at least 1% indigenous employees required), and Burundi (e.g., fixed Hutu/Tutsi quotas among non-governmental organization staff) (see Figure 15). Examples of non-quota systems include preferential treatment for those providing employment subsidies and training for specific racial groups in Namibia, South Africa, and Uruguay (see Figure 16).

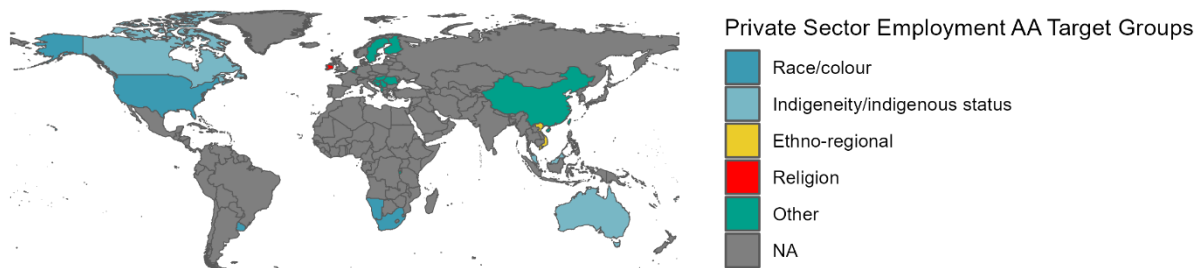
Figure 13: AA in private sector employment: country map



Source: authors' illustration.

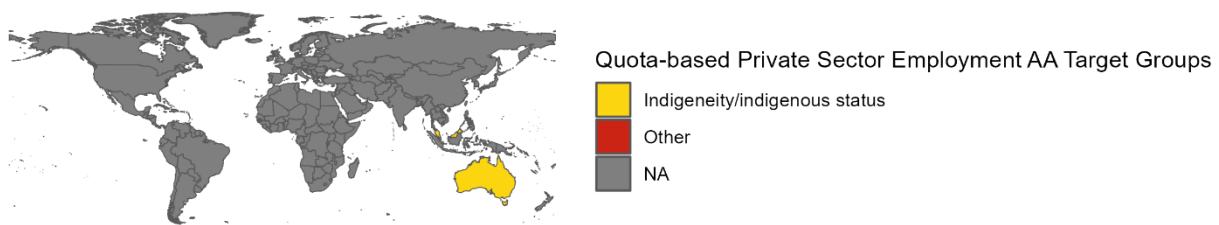


Figure 14: AA in private sector employment: target groups



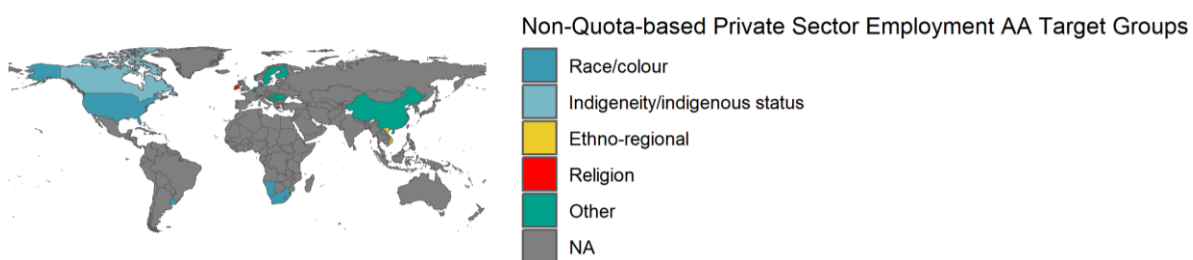
Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 15: Quota-based AA in private sector employment: target groups



Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 16: Non-quota-based AA in private sector employment: target groups

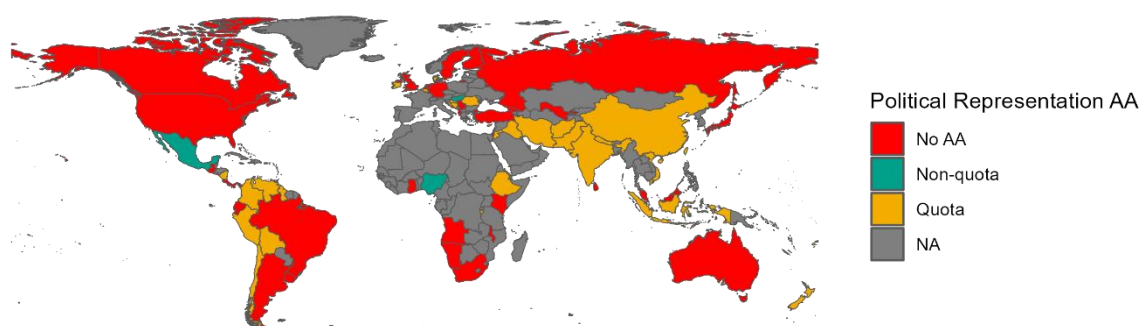


Source: authors' illustration.

## Political representation

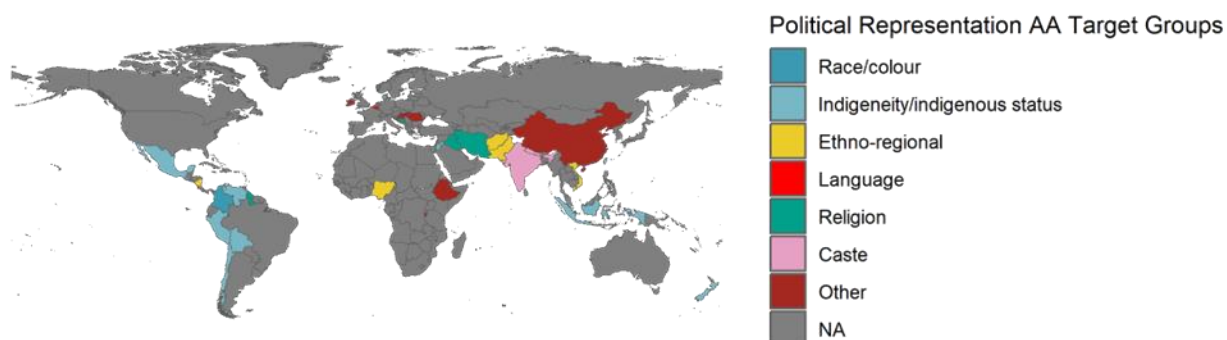
AA policies in political representation generally include providing reserved seats for specific groups in the national parliament and executive branches of the government as well as minority self-governments. In total, 37 out of the 60 countries provided some kind of AA policies (see Table 6 and Figures 17 and 18). These include, for example, indigenous quotas in the form of reserved seats in the national parliament or key public offices in Bolivia, Chile, Fiji, Indonesia, Jordan, New Zealand, Peru, Taiwan, and Venezuela (see Figure 19). Typical non-quota-based AA policies include those of Nigeria and Hungary (see Figure 20). In Nigeria, major ethnic groups receive vital public offices and parliamentary seats on a rotation basis (Aiyede 2012). In Hungary, officially designated minorities can form self-governments when they make up more than 30% of ethnic minority candidates at the local level and 10% at the regional level (Burton 2007).

Figure 17: AA in political representation: country map



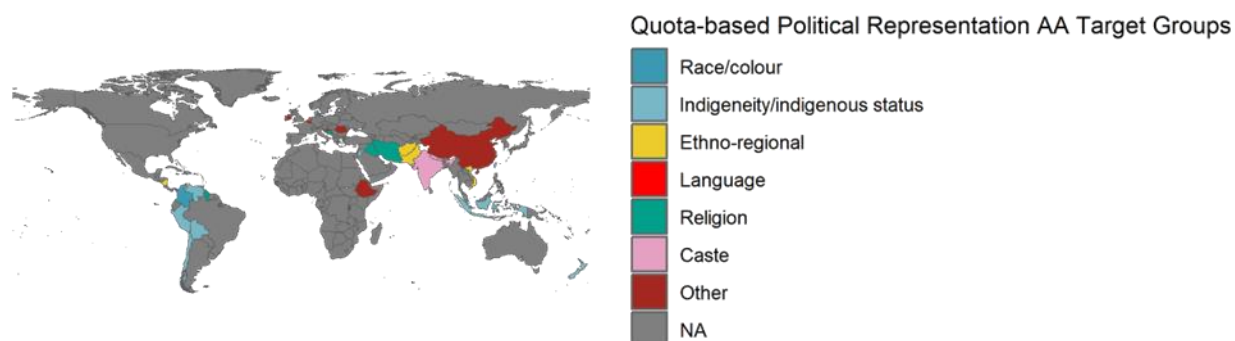
Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 18: AA in political representation: target groups



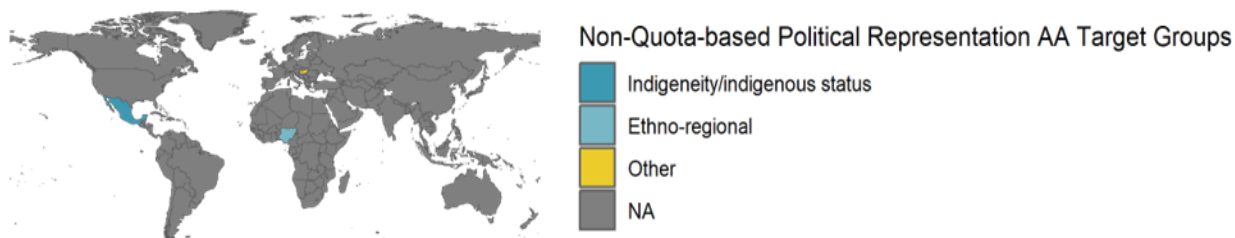
Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 19: Quota-based AA in political representation: target groups



Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 20: Non-quota-based AA in political representation: target groups

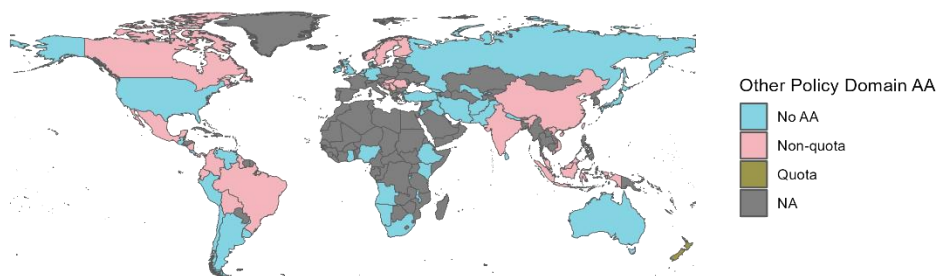


Source: authors' illustration.

### *Other policy domains*

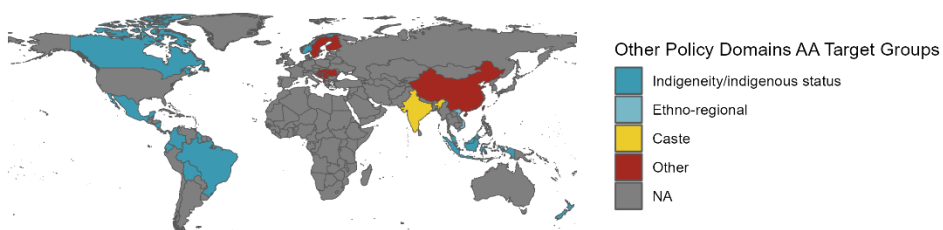
Last but not least, 28 out of the 60 countries had adopted AA policies in other policy domains (see Table 6 and Figures 21 and 22). These include, for example, quotas for social/public housing in Albania and Singapore (see Figure 23) as well as non-quota preferential housing policies for Roma in Croatia, Hungary, Romania, and Serbia. Other non-quota cases include indigenous rights to land and other resources in Panama, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Taiwan, the United States, and Vietnam (see Figure 24).

Figure 21: AA in other policy domains: country map



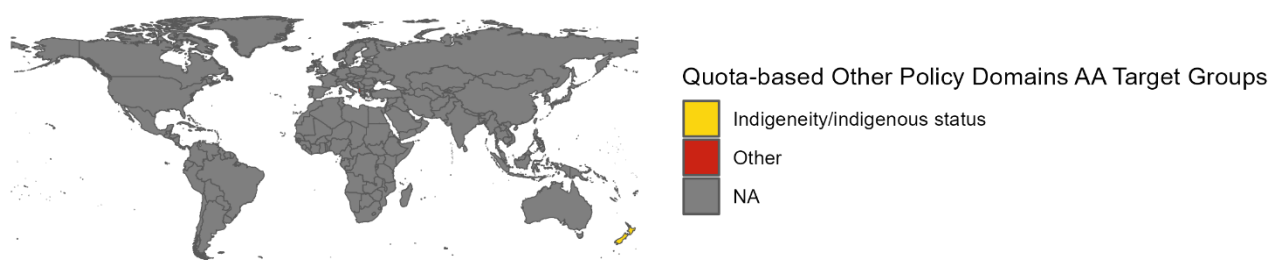
Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 22: AA in other policy domains: target groups



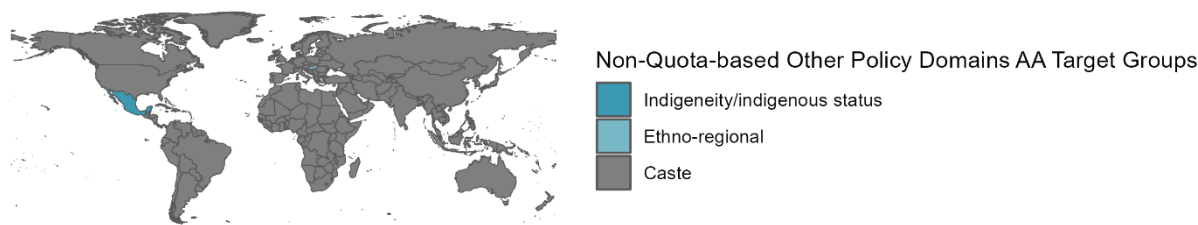
Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 23: Quota-based AA in other policy domains: target groups



Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 24: Non-quota-based AA in other policy domains: target groups



Source: authors' illustration.

## 4 Adoption, amendment, and termination of AA policies

This section gives an overview of the adoption, amendment, and termination of AA policies according to information provided in Versions 1 and 2 of the AA Database.

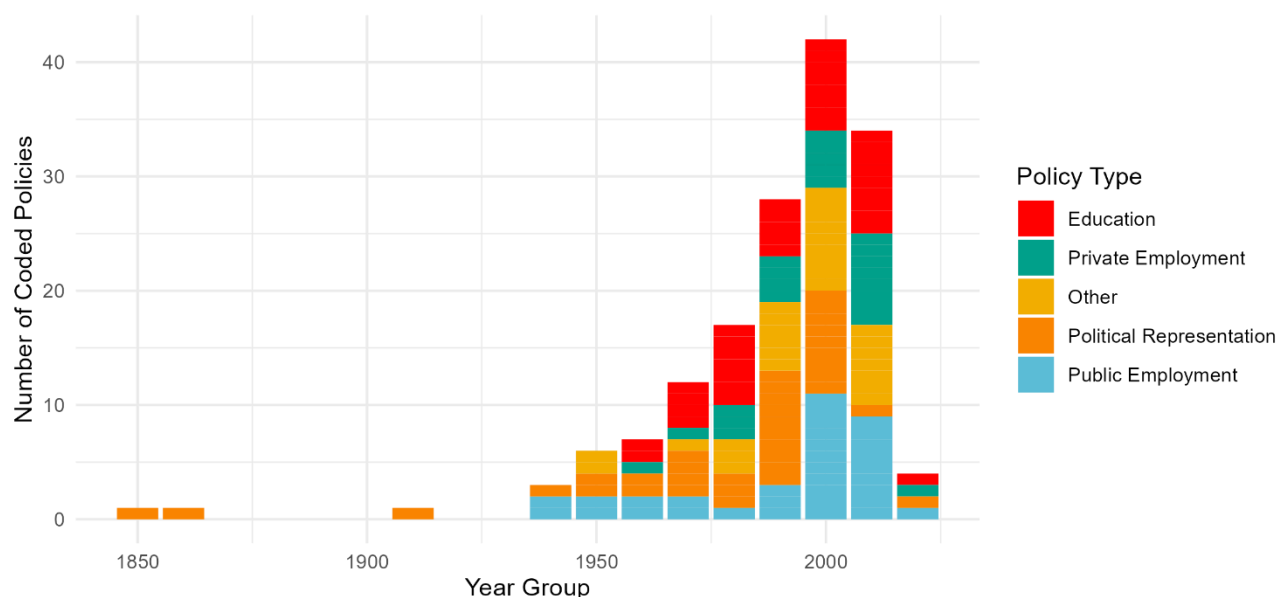
### 4.1 Adoption of AA policies

India is commonly described as the first country to have adopted AA policies, originating in the British colonial practice of providing quota systems for certain disadvantaged castes in the governing bodies. Since independence, the reservation system, backed by the 1950 constitution and the first constitutional amendment of 1951, has guaranteed the representation of historically disadvantaged groups not only in politics but also in employment and education. However, the earliest form of AA policy in our database is New Zealand's Maori Representation Act of 1867, which reserved four legislative seats for native aboriginal inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

In the latest version of the database, we see a rapid increase in the adoption of AA policies from the 1990s onwards, particularly in the political representation domain. There has been a rapid expansion since the 2000s in policies in public sector employment and education, and in the 2010s in private sector employment. Figure 25 plots the years in which AA policies were adopted.

<sup>2</sup> The 1867 Maori Representation Act was in place until 1993, when a proportional representation system was introduced under the Electoral Act. As a result, the number of reserved seats was increased to five in 1996, six in 1999, and then seven in 2002 (Clarke 2015; Joseph 2008).

Figure 25: Year of AA policy implementation, by policy domain



Source: authors' illustration.

Different political motives can drive the adoption of AA policies. Particularly in democratic societies, AA is often a response to direct demands by under-represented groups for inequalities to be addressed. In this regard, 'in most cases, a defining moment or an event has acted as a catalyst for affirmative action' (Kalev et al. 2006: 1). These catalyst events may range from the end of colonization and establishment of a new constitution (more than 60% in our sample), to violent or non-violent protests, to a change in government and political turnover (see Figure 26).

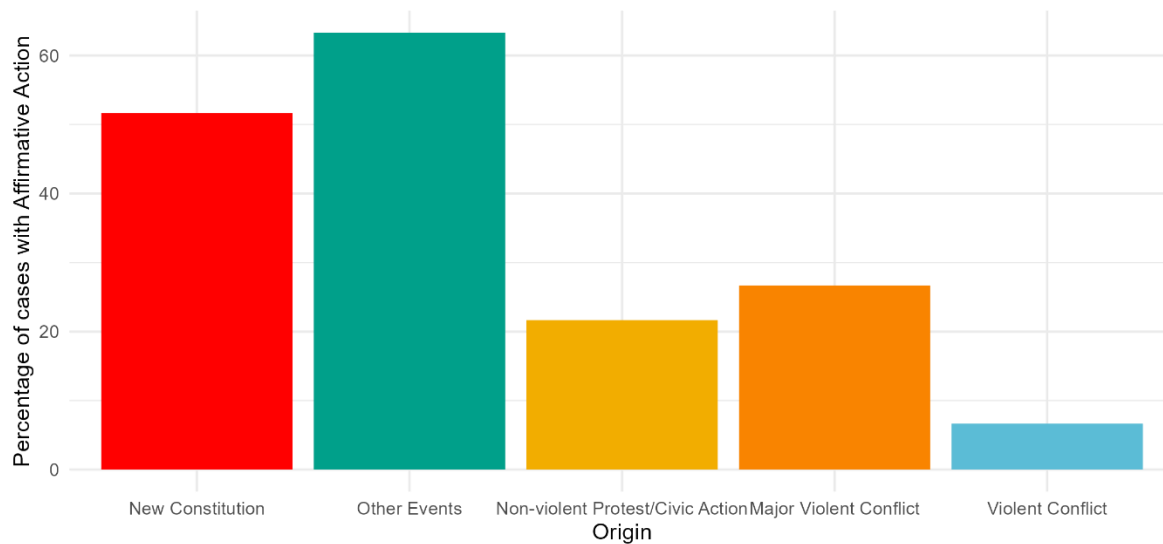
AA policies are commonly designed to promote equal opportunities and reduce discrimination against groups that have historically faced socioeconomic and political disadvantages. In some instances, AA policies may provide a viable power-sharing tool in the effort to establish a unity government or to mediate social conflict in a divided society. By providing under-represented groups with access to decision-making processes and resources that were previously unavailable to them, AA policies essentially increase the cost of resorting to violence. In this way too, such policies may promote stability and peace in conflict-affected societies.

Some countries emerging from conflict have adopted AA policies providing more access to the under-represented warring group in the political sphere. In Burundi, for instance, quota-based AA policies in public sector employment and political representation were introduced following the 2003 peace agreement that ended a decade-long ethnic civil war, to ensure ethnic integration through power-sharing arrangements between warring parties (Samii, 2003). Similarly, in Afghanistan, AA policies in public sector employment and political

representation were enshrined in the new constitution following the conclusion of the civil war, which promoted ethnic balance in the governing bodies (Girardin et al. 2021).

Importantly, and contrary to conventional wisdom, we find that AA policies can be initiated by marginalized majority groups in a country to advance their political and economic status *vis-à-vis* more privileged ethnic minorities. In other words, while AA policies favour economically, politically, and/or socially marginalized groups, these groups do not necessarily constitute a minority in the population (Schotte et al. 2023). In Malaysia, for example, the collapse of the multi-ethnic coalition government following inter-ethnic violence in 1969 enabled the Malay-dominated government to introduce AA policies under the New Economic Policy in 1971–90 that specifically targeted ethnic Malays in education and public/private sector employment (Milne 1976).

Figure 26: Origins of AA policies

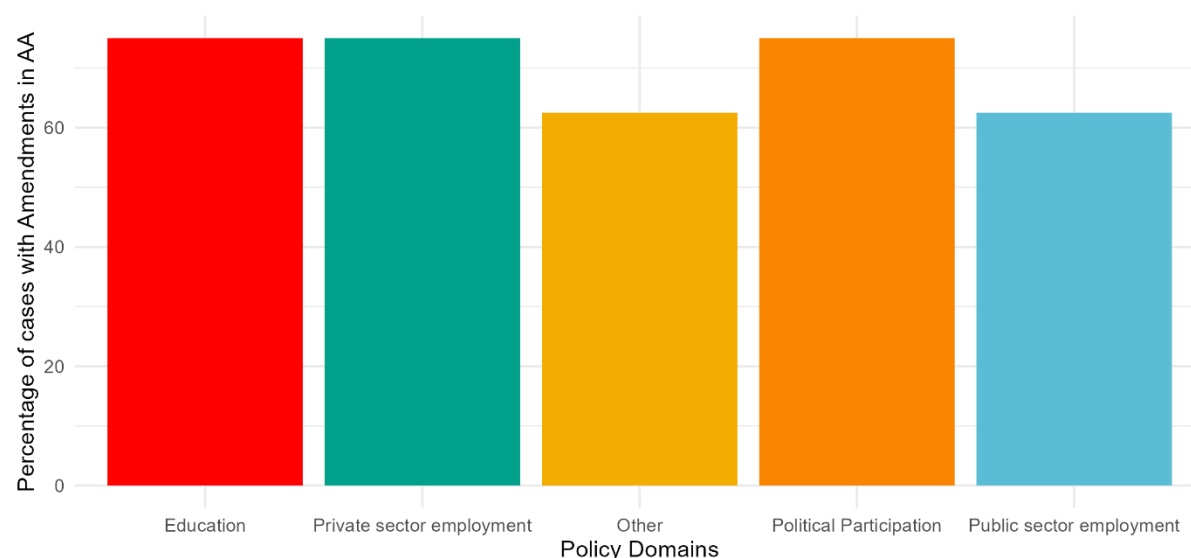


Source: authors' illustration.

## 4.2 Amendment of AA policies

AA policies, once adopted, tend to be amended as the political and social contexts change. In our data, the highest proportion of amendments are in the political representation, private employment, and education domains, followed by public employment and other sectors (Figure 27).

Figure 27: Country cases with policy amendment



Source: authors' illustration.

Factors associated with AA policy amendments in our sample include extending initial AA policies that were about to expire, redefining the scope/targets of the policy, addressing failure in existing policies, expanding/narrowing the target group, responding to legal decisions, violent/non-violent events, change of government, and other events (see Table 7). Caution is needed in causal interpretation of these factors, but they provide important contextual information in considering circumstances associated with AA policy change.

Table 7: Events linked to AA policy amendment

Amendment reason	EDU	PUB	EMP	POL	OTH
Fixed term for assessment specified at adoption	33.3%	38.9%		4.4%	33.3%
Scope of target redefined due to policy success	19.1%	16.7%	35.3%	8.7%	6.7%
Policy failure	19.1%	11.1%	12.5%	17.4%	7.1%
Expansion of target groups	38.1%	38.9%	18.8%	47.8%	20.0%
Narrowing of target groups	4.8%	16.7%	17.7%	4.2%	
Legal action/challenge in the courts	4.6%	5.6%	11.8%	8.3%	
Violent conflict	4.8%	11.1%		8.3%	
Non-violent protest or civic action	19.1%			8.3%	



Change in government	14.3%	11.1%		16.7%	
Other key events	9.5%	29.4%	47.1%	41.7%	56.3%

Source: authors' construction.

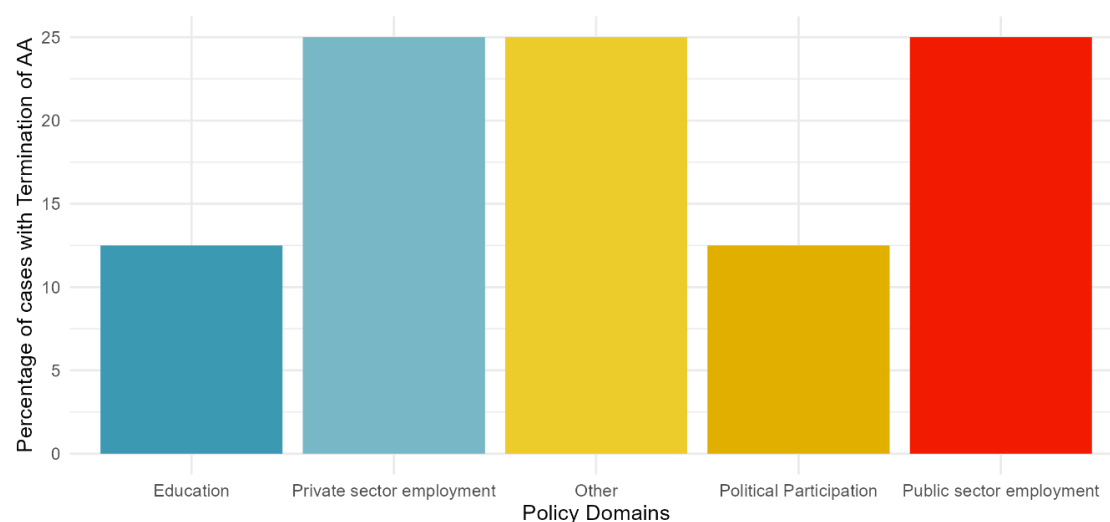
The most frequent reason for policy amendment in our sample is the expansion of target groups covered by the policy. A notable example is the expansion of quotas in higher education in India from students from Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to those from Other Backward Classes (OBCs). The SC and ST students were traditionally the core target groups of the reservation policy in higher education. Following a constitutional amendment in 2019, the Indian government introduced a new bill that provided a 27% reservation for students from OBCs in medical and dental education from 2021/22 onwards. Around one-third of policies were amended based on a fixed term for reassessment specified at adoption (that is, the government extended initial AA policies). For instance, the Albanian and Croatian governments amended the existing National Plans for Roma, commonly covering periods of five to ten years, to extend the policy coverage for another five to ten years.

Non-violent protest or civic action also appear to be common catalysts for governments to amend AA policies, most notably in the education domain (23.5% in our sample). The Chilean government, for instance, amended the 1993 Indigenous Grant Programme in 2016, in response to mounting protests by indigenous students calling for education reform. A country's exposure to violent conflict can also bring about changes in AA policies. In Lebanon, the constitution was amended in 1990 as a result of the 1989 Ta'if Agreement that ended the 15-year civil war. The amended constitution included a new provision to ensure equal representation of Muslims and Christians in the public sector. Other key events—such as the new population census that has resulted in changes in public housing access in Singapore—can also bring an amendment to the existing AA policies.

### 4.3 Termination of AA policies

During the period we covered (2000–21), the full termination of AA policies occurred more frequently in the public employment, private employment, and other policy domains (25% each) compared with education and political participation domains (Figure 28). The most common reason for the termination was the expiration of the fixed term specified at adoption. However, in the political representation domain we also observe cases where the termination was linked to violent conflict or changes in government (Table 8). For instance, a violent takeover of the central government by the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2021 effectively terminated public employment quotas among major ethnic minorities.

Figure 28: Country cases with policy termination



Source: authors' illustration.

Table 8: Events linked to AA policy termination

Termination reason	EDU	PUB	EMP	POL	OTH
Expiration of fixed term specified at adoption	50%	71.43%	100%		50%
Scope of target redefined due to policy success			20%		
Policy failure	25%				50%
Legal action/challenge in the courts	25%				50%
Violent conflict		14.29%		50%	
Non-violent protest or civic action					
Change in government	25%	28.57%		50%	50%
Other key events		28.57%	20%	50%	50%

Source: authors' construction.

## 5 Views on AA policies

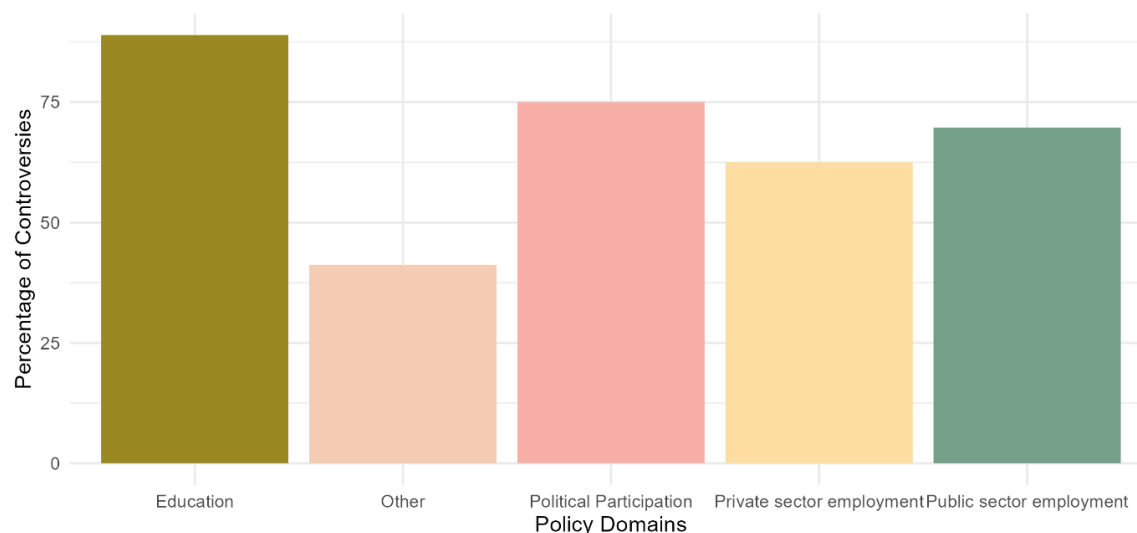
The effectiveness of AA policies in driving positive societal change has been controversially debated in the literature (Chowdhury et al. 2020; Holzer and Neumark 2000; Ratuva 2013a). A core point of critique has concerned targeting based on group-defining ascriptive

characteristics—thereby ignoring other relevant individual circumstances (Cancian 1998; Darity et al. 2011; Ellison and Pathak 2021; Reardon et al. 2018). In this section, we map the core controversies concerning AA policies based on the latest version of our database.

## 5.1 Common controversies

AA policies in the education domain are associated with the highest rate of controversies compared with those in other domains (about 80% in our sample), followed by political representation (75%), public sector employment (69%), other policy domains (about 40%), and private sector employment (62.5%) (Figure 29). One of the recurring debates on AA policies in education concerns enduring inequality in educational access between the target and non-target groups.

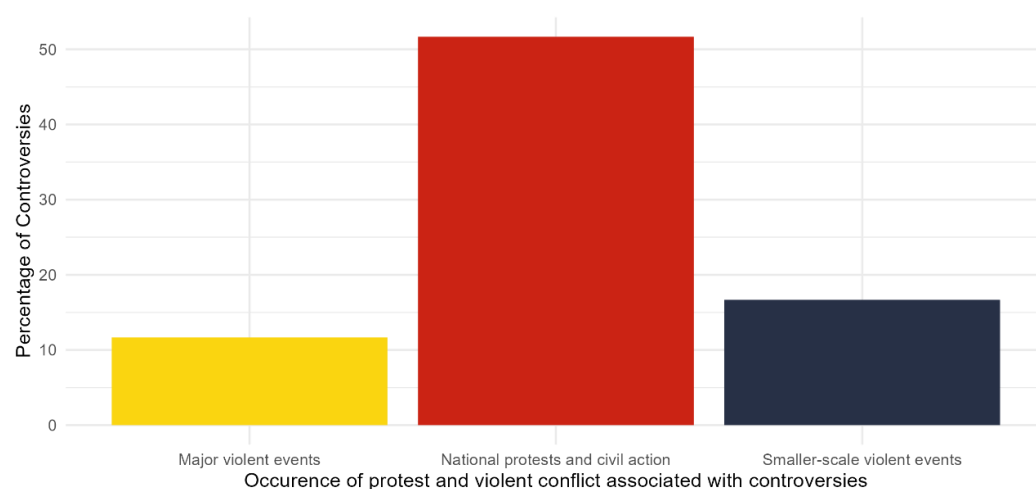
Figure 29: Controversies in policy domains



Source: authors' illustration.

Controversies over AA policies take diverse forms. In our data, they are associated more with national protests and civic action (more than 50% in our sample) than with violent events (Figure 30). On a few occasions, non-violent protests escalated into violence over time. In Ecuador, for instance, indigenous demonstrators protested in the capital in June 2022 to pressure the government to address enduring structural problems affecting indigenous populations, including access to education, employment, and resources. Reports suggest that eventually, five civilians and one member of the military died and over 300 people were injured (Broner and Ragozzino 2022).

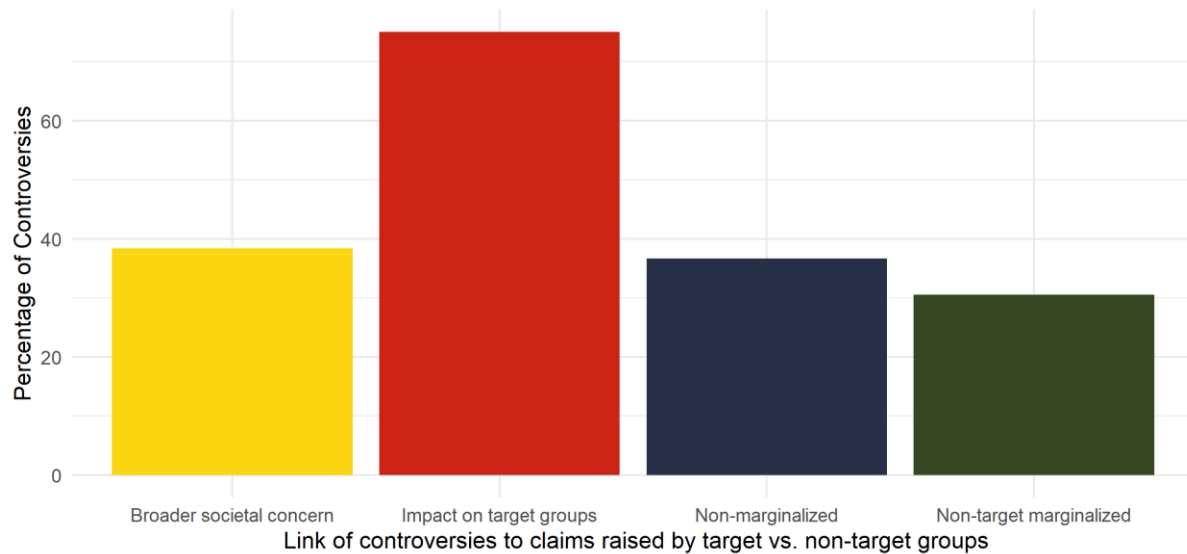
Figure 30: Occurrence of protest and violent conflict associated with controversies



Source: authors' illustration.

Most controversies in our sample are associated with critiques of the impact of AA policies on target groups (more than 70% of countries) (Figure 31). Examples include collective mobilization by black and indigenous populations to oppose a new bill to abolish the quota policy in Brazilian education, and criticism of the government by some members of minority populations for not providing sufficient resources to enhance education and employment access in Georgia. In just over a third of the countries in our sample, controversies relate to ineligible non-target groups criticizing AA policies. For instance, we identify controversies around expansion of the reservation policy to previously non-eligible groups in India, and abolishing the police hiring quota for Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. Some controversies involved broader societal concerns (39% of countries), such as the negative role of enrolment quotas in educational quality or the persistence of negative stereotypes of the target minorities.

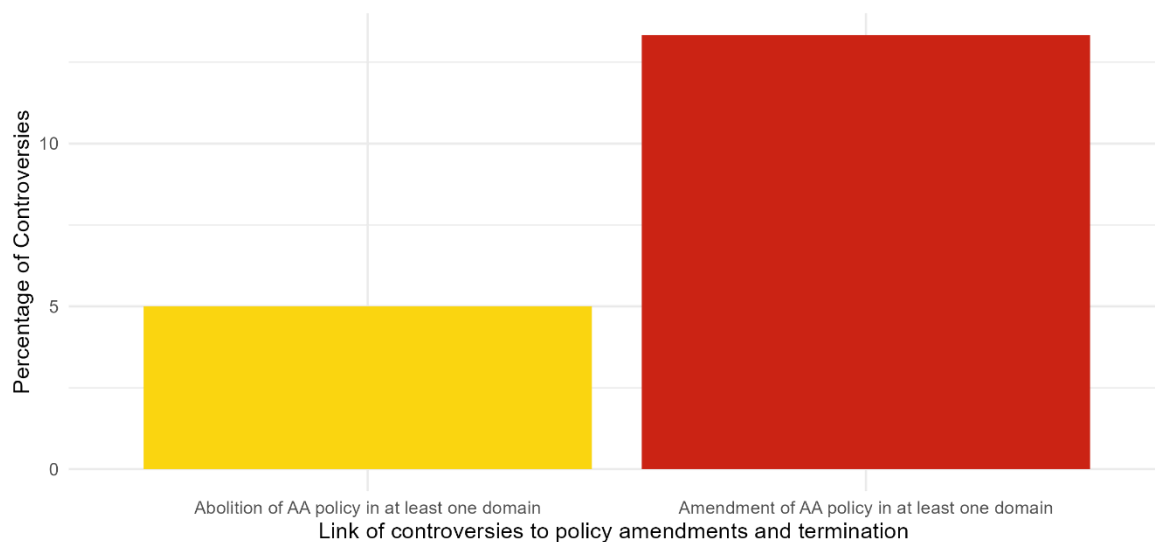
Figure 31: Claims raised by target vs. non-target groups



Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 32 illustrates that controversies are more likely to lead to the amendment of the existing policies (13%) than its termination (5%). A notable example is Venezuela's AA in the political representation domain. In 2020, the National Security Council introduced a controversial law that revoked the indigenous group's right to vote secretly and directly to choose their parliamentary representatives. A public outcry led to an amendment to the electoral law (Freedom House 2022; Uzcátegui 2020).

Figure 32: Link between controversies and policy amendment/termination



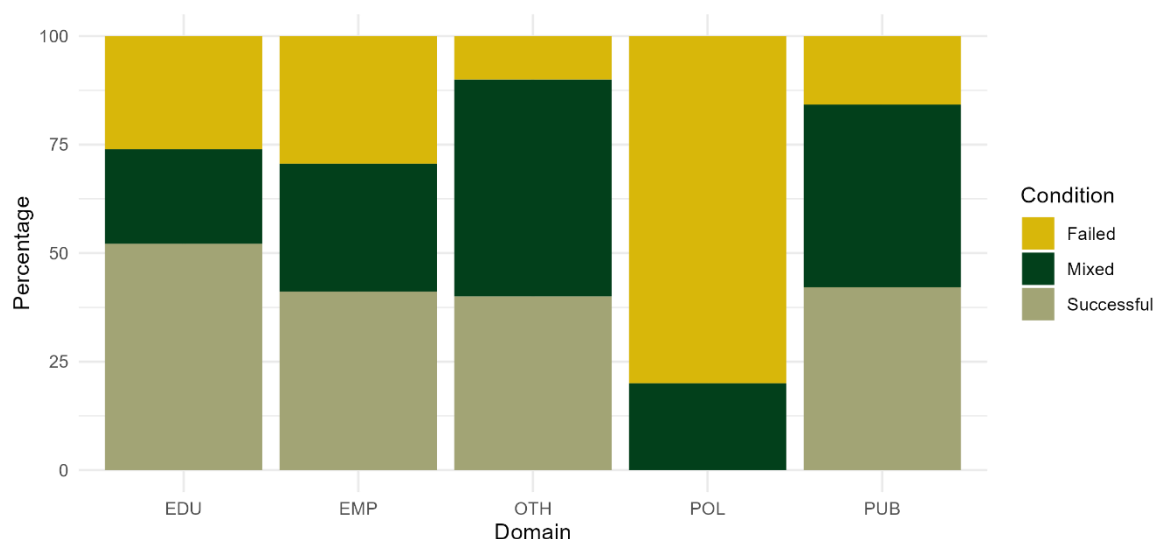
Source: authors' illustration.

## 5.2 Impact evaluations

Finally, the database included coding on evaluations of AA policies, whether conducted by government bodies, scientific communities including academics, international and non-governmental organizations, or public discourse in the media. This coding aims to capture conclusions reached in major evaluations of the sort that are important in understanding the politics and public discussion around these policies in each country. It is not intended to reflect our assessment of the 'correct' impact of policies—i.e., we do not evaluate the evaluations, conduct independent analysis of data available on programmes, or reflect findings from a systematic review or meta-analysis of all evaluations of a given policy. We consider the impact of AA policies extensively in other work drawing on systematic review methodology (see Schotte et al. 2023).

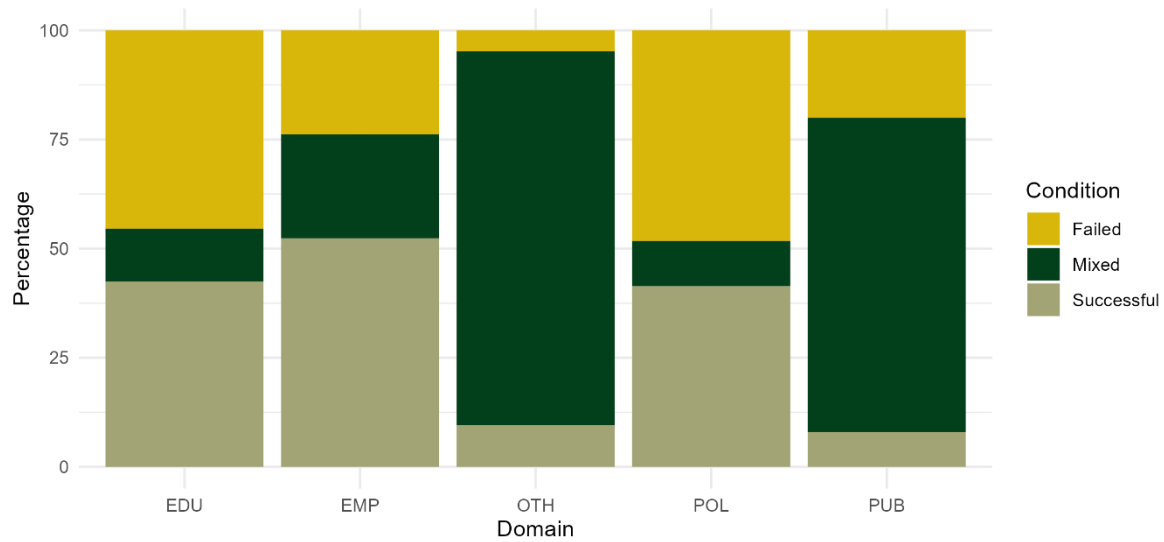
Our database suggests significant variation in major evaluations of AA policies between 'failures', 'successes', and something in the middle ('mixed'), but few policies are judged in these evaluations as clear successes. We find suggestive differences between the conclusions drawn by evaluations conducted by government and those undertaken by the scientific community or in public discourse: in general, public discourse is more critical of AA policies than both government and scientific evaluations (Figures 33, 34, and 35). Looking across domains, evaluations by government tend to be more critical of AA policies relating to political representation (Figure 33), whereas the scientific community is more critical of policies in the political representation and education policy domains (Figure 34).

Figure 33: Government evaluation in each policy domain



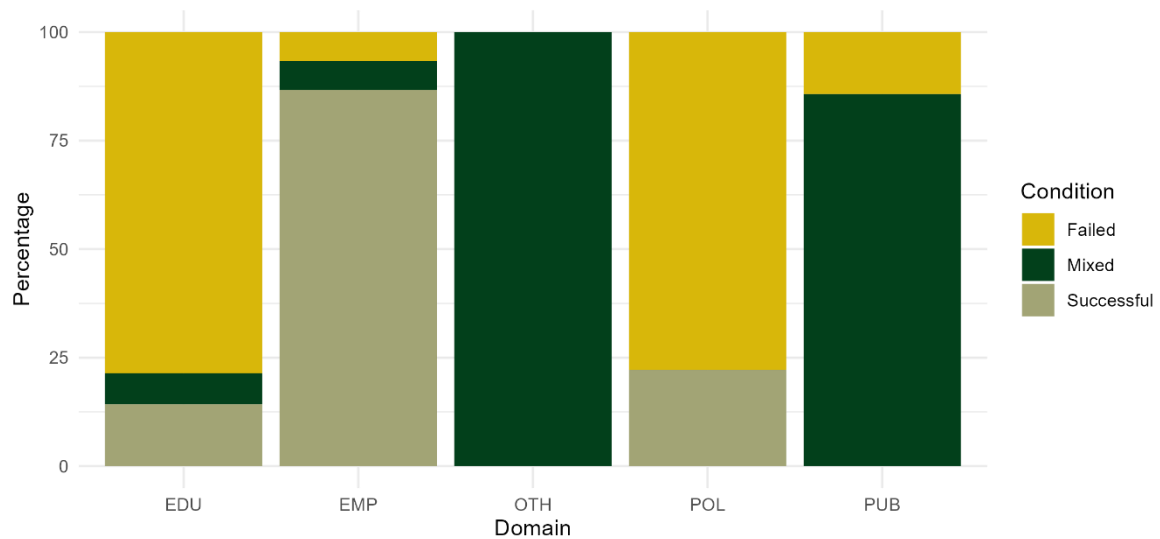
Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 34: Scientific evaluation in each policy domain



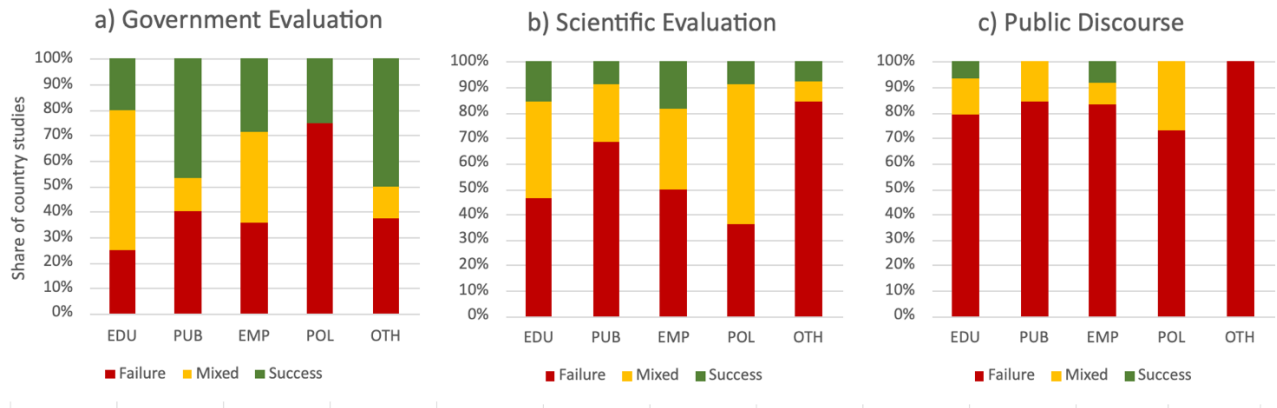
Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 35: Discourse evaluation in each policy domain



Source: authors' illustration.

Figure 36: Government, scientific, and public discourse evaluation of AA policies



Source: authors' illustration.

## 6 Preliminary conclusions

In this paper, we provide a brief introduction to our AA Database and a summary of the data from Versions 1 and 2. Based on a rigorous literature review and systematic coding on each case, our database provides nuanced insight into the origins, characteristics, implications, and debates around AA policies globally.

We have three core aims in ongoing work on Version 3 of the database. The first is to further probe and strengthen the validity of our coding, in particular through broader consultation, discussion, and review of Versions 1 and 2 of the database with other thematic and country experts.

Second, we aim to expand the country coverage of the database so that it can be used to draw more fully comparative insights into AA policies. Versions 1 and 2 offer significant coverage of countries, which further strengthens empirical insights into AA policies in countries with AA policies of various kinds. In particular, they include all countries for which some AA policy has been studied in the literature according to our systematic review (see Schotte et al. 2023). However, as our work on the AA Database underscores, there are a number of AA policies—and some countries with AA policies—that do not appear in the literature identified in our systematic review; thus, the systematic review does not identify the universe of relevant countries for the database. In Version 3, we are working to better understand which countries with AA policies may be missing from our initial sample and to correct for potential biases in the identification of countries in Versions 1 and 2. An alternative approach would be to expand coding to all countries; however, we opt for a more graduated approach given project resources.

Third, we are further investigating the relationship between AA policies and ethnic power-sharing arrangements in divided societies. Our initial analysis points to the use of AA policies



as a powerful tool in post-war societies, facilitating buy-in among disadvantaged combatant groups through providing preferential access to political representation and public employment in particular. The extent to which AA policies function as stabilizers in post-conflict environments, and through what exact mechanisms, are questions for our ongoing research.

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## Appendix: Codebook

### Appendix 1: Roster

Table A1: Roster

VARIABLE	CODE	DESCRIPTION	TYPE
countryname		Country name	string
code_iso2		ISO-alpha2 code	string
code_iso3		ISO-alpha3 code	string
code_m49		M49 code	numeric
code_cow		Correlates of War (no date) country code	numeric
code_vdem		V-Dem country code	numeric
reg_name_un		UN Region name	string
reg_code_un		UN Region code	numeric
	2	Africa	
	19	Americas	
	142	Asia	
	150	Europe	
	9	Oceania	
sreg_name_un		UN Sub-region name	string
sreg_code_un		UN Sub-region code	numeric
	53	Australia and New Zealand	
	143	Central Asia	
	30	Eastern Asia	
	151	Eastern Europe	
	419	Latin America and the Caribbean	
	54	Melanesia	
	57	Micronesia	
	15	Northern Africa	
	21	Northern America	
	154	Northern Europe	
	61	Polynesia	
	35	South-Eastern Asia	
	34	Southern Asia	
	39	Southern Europe	
	202	Sub-Saharan Africa	
	145	Western Asia	
	155	Western Europe	
inc_name_wb		WB Income Level name	string
inc_code_wb		WB Income Level code	numeric
	1	Low income (LIC)	
	2	Lower middle income (LMC)	

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	3 Upper middle income (UMC)	
	4 High income (HIC)	
ldc	UN Least Developed Countries (LDC)	numeric
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
lldc	UN Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDC)	numeric
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
sids	UN Small Island Developing States (SIDS)	numeric
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
developing	UN Developed/Developing Countries	numeric
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
pop2000	UN World Population Prospects 2000	numeric
pop2010	UN World Population Prospects 2010	numeric
pop2020	UN World Population Prospects 2020	numeric
EFindex	Index of Ethnic Fractionalization (Drazanova 2019)	numeric
quota_er	Legislative Ethnicity Quota Dummy (Htun 2004)	numeric
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
quota_e	Statutory Ethnicity Quota Dummy (Htun 2004)	numeric
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
quota_e7	Ethnic Quota Dummy (including Reynolds 2007)	numeric
	0 No	
	1 Yes	

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Source: authors' construction.

## Appendix 2: AA

Table A2: General

VARIABLE	CODE	DESCRIPTION	TYPE
AA		Existence of any AA policy in the country that addresses ethnic horizontal inequalities? <i>*Note: The database captures only AA policies that target ethnic groups (broadly defined). If a country has AA policies that target other disadvantaged groups (e.g., women), but the policies have no ethnic dimension, this is coded as 0</i>	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
AA_edu		Any AA policy that addresses ethnic horizontal inequalities in education?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
AA_pub		Any AA policy that addresses ethnic horizontal inequalities in public sector employment/business contracts?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
AA_emp		Any AA policy that addresses ethnic horizontal inequalities in private sector employment/business operations?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
AA_pol		Any AA policy that addresses ethnic horizontal inequalities in political representation?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
AA_oth		Any AA policy that addresses ethnic horizontal inequalities in any other policy domain not mentioned above? <i>*Note: If information is not readily available, code as missing</i>	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
AA_oth_d		If AA policy in other policy domain, please specify	string
AA_title		Title by which AA policies in the country are commonly referred to	string

(if applicable) (e.g., Reservation, Black Economic Empowerment)

Source: authors' construction.

Table A3: Origins

VARIABLE	CODE	DESCRIPTION	TYPE
orig_cons		Adoption of AA policies is linked to (new) constitution? <i>*Note: All variables in this section refer to the first time an AA policy was introduced in the country. For example, in Kenya the first quota system was introduced in 1985. However, the system was revised in response to the 2010 constitution, which provided broadened ethnic AA policies. In this case, the coding would be 0, as the origins are not linked to a new constitution—only the later amendment is.</i>	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
orig_viol1		Adoption of AA policies is linked to (major) violent conflict (including civil war, insurrection, riots, violent protest) in which at least 25 people died? <i>*Note: A broad definition is adopted here. This variable and the subsequent two variables are coded as 1 if the AA policy was introduced to address ethnic inequalities that had sparked violent conflict or protests in the recent past. That is, there should be a clear link, but it does not need to be a direct causal relationship. For example, in South Africa AA policies were introduced to address racial inequalities that had sparked violent protest. It should thus be coded as 1, even though the eventual transition in government (which led to a new constitution and the adoption of AA) was peaceful.</i>	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
orig_viol2		Adoption of AA policies is linked to (smaller scale) violent conflict, riots, protests with fewer than 25 deaths?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
orig_prot		Adoption of AA policies is linked to primarily non-violent protest or civic action?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
orig_oth		Adoption of AA policies is linked to other events? <i>*Note: Other events could, e.g., be a change in government (which may or may not coincide with the adoption of a new constitution)</i>	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	



	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
orig_oth_d	If linked to other events, please specify	string
orig_reason	Provide short explanation for the coding of the origins section	string
orig_source1	1st main source used for coding origins section (APA style)	string
orig_source2	2nd main source used for coding origins section (APA style)	string
orig_source3	3rd main source used for coding origins section (APA style)	string

Source: authors' construction.

Table A4: Controversy

cntrvrs	Have AA policies been subject to major controversy in the country (understood as prolonged public dispute or debate that raised mainstream concerns about the policies' potential to positively influence major national outcomes)? <i>*Note: This remainder of this section is only completed if this variable is 'Yes'. If 'No', then all following numerical variables in this section are coded as 888.</i>	numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
cntrvrs_edu	Controversy concerns AA policies in education? <i>*Note: Variable coded as 888 if the country has no ethnic AA policy in education</i>	numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
cntrvrs_pub	Controversy concerns AA policies in public employment/business? <i>*Note: Variable coded as 888 if the country has no ethnic AA policy in public sector employment/ business contracts</i>	numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
cntrvrs_emp	Controversy concerns AA policies in private employment/business? <i>*Note: Variable coded as 888 if the country has no ethnic AA policy in private sector employment/ business operations</i>	numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
cntrvrs_pol	Controversy concerns AA policies in political representation? <i>*Note: Variable coded as 888 if the country has no ethnic AA policy in political representation.</i>	numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	

cntrvrs_oth	999	Missing/don't know	
		Controversy concerns AA policies in other policy domain?	numerical
		<i>*Note: Variable coded as 888 no other ethnic AA in the country</i>	
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
cntrvrs_viol1	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
		Controversy is linked to (major) violent conflict in which at least 25 people died?	numerical
		<i>*Note: Here we are trying to capture the occurrence of violence that can be directly linked to an AA policy. Violent protests by upper castes against the expansion of reservation policy to the OBCs in India would be an example.</i>	
	0	No	
cntrvrs_viol1_d	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
		If applicable, short description of 'cntrvrs_viol1'	string
		Controversy is linked to (smaller scale) violent conflict, riots, protests with fewer than 25 deaths?	numerical
cntrvrs_viol2	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
		If applicable, short description of 'cntrvrs_viol2'	string
cntrvrs_viol2_d		Controversy is linked to national protests and civic action?	numerical
		<i>*Note: Here we are looking for protests that can be directly linked to an AA policy. College students in the US protesting against affirmative action and urging for an equal opportunity in education would be an example.</i>	
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
cntrvrs_prot	999	Missing/don't know	
		If applicable, short description of 'cntrvrs_prot'	string
		Controversy is linked to claims by non-marginalized groups?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
cntrvrs_prot_d	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
		If applicable, short description of 'cntrvrs_prot'	string
		Controversy is linked to claims by non-marginalized groups?	numerical
	0	No	
cntrvrs_nmarg	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
		If applicable, short description of 'cntrvrs_nmarg'	string
		Controversy is linked to claims by non-target (ineligible) marginalized groups?	numerical
cntrvrs_nmarg_d	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
		If applicable, short description of 'cntrvrs_nmarg'	string
cntrvrs_marg		Controversy is linked to claims by non-target (ineligible) marginalized groups?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	

cntrvrs_marg_d	If applicable, short description of 'cntrvrs_marg'	string
cntrvrs_tgr	Controversy is linked to critique concerning its impact on target groups? 0 No 1 Yes: Inadequate implementation/ineffective 2 Yes: Negative indirect effects on target group 3 Yes: Both 888 Not applicable 999 Missing/don't know	numerical
cntrvrs_tgr_d	If applicable, short description of 'cntrvrs_tgr'	string
cntrvrs_soc	Controversy is linked to factors of broader societal concern? 0 No 1 Yes 888 Not applicable 999 Missing/don't know	numerical
cntrvrs_soc_d	If applicable, short description of 'cntrvrs_soc'	string
cntrvrs_oth	Controversy is linked to linked to other issues not specified above? 0 No 1 Yes 888 Not applicable 999 Missing/don't know	numerical
cntrvrs_oth_d	If applicable, short description of 'cntrvrs_oth'	string
cntrvrs_amd	Controversy is linked to amendment of AA policy in at least one domain? 0 No 1 Yes 888 Not applicable 999 Missing/don't know	numerical
cntrvrs_amd_d	If applicable, list domains for 'cntrvrs_amend' (EDU, EMP, POL, OTH)	string
cntrvrs_end	Controversy is linked to termination of AA policy in at least one domain? 0 No 1 Yes 888 Not applicable 999 Missing/don't know	numerical
cntrvrs_end_d	If applicable, list domains for 'cntrvrs_end' (EDU, EMP, POL, OTH)	string
cntrvrs_source1	1st main source used for coding controversy section (APA style)	string
cntrvrs_source2	2nd main source used for coding controversy section (APA style)	string
cntrvrs_source3	3rd main source used for coding controversy section (APA style)	string

Source: authors' construction.

### Appendix 3: Domains (EDU, EMP, PUB, POL)

Table A5: General

Variable	CODE	Description	Type
quota		AA policies in DOMAIN use quotas to reserve a certain portion of admission seats for target group(s)?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
quota_d		If AA policies use quotas, please provide a brief description	string

Source: authors' construction.

Table A6: Target group

Variable	CODE	Description	Type
tgr_type		Type of targeting?	numerical
	1	Generic	
	2	Specific	
	3	Mixed	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
tgr_eth		Primary (main) criterion that defines ethnic groups targeted by AA policies in domain	numerical
	1	Race/colour	
	2	Indigeneity/indigenous status	
	3	Ethno-regional	
	4	Language	
	5	Religion	
	6	Caste	
	7	Other (specify)	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
tgr_eth_d		Please specify ethnic groups targeted by AA policies in domain	string
tgr_gen		AA policies additionally target women?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
tgr_oth		AA policies additionally target other non-ethnic/non-culturally defined marginalized group(s)?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
tgr_oth_d		If other non-ethnic/non-culturally defined marginalized group(s) targeted, please specify	string

tgr_elig	AA policies are limited to those in the target group, who meet additionally defined eligibility criteria? <i>*Note: This variable captures whether target groups need to meet additional criteria to be eligible. If any, additional eligibility criteria would most often be defined in socioeconomic terms (e.g., members of minority group falling below a certain income threshold).</i>	numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes, socioeconomic	
	2 Yes, other (specify)	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
tgr_elig_d	If other eligibility criteria defined, please specify	string

Source: authors' construction.

Table A7: Origins

Variable	CODE	Description	Type
orig_year		Year in which policies in this domain were first implemented	numerical

Source: authors' construction.

Table A8: Amendment

Variable	CODE	Description	Type
amd		Have there been major amendments to AA policies in this domain? <i>*Note: Only complete this section if 'Yes'. Answer questions with regard to all major amendments that occurred in the policy domain</i>	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
amd_year		Year of last major amendment to AA policies in this domain	numerical
amd_fix		Major amendment(s) linked to a fixed term for reassessment specified at adoption?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
amd_succ		Major amendment(s) linked to need to redefine scope or targets due to policy success (i.e., progress made in some areas)?	Numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
amd_fail		Major amendment(s) linked to addressing policies' failure in reaching targets?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
amd_exp		Major amendment(s) linked to an expansion of target groups?	numerical

	0 No		
	1 Yes		
	888 Not applicable		
	999 Missing/don't know		
amd_nar	Major amendment(s) linked to a narrowing of target groups?	numerical	
	0 No		
	1 Yes		
	888 Not applicable		
	999 Missing/don't know		
amd_leg	Major amendment(s) linked to legal action/challenge in the courts?	numerical	
	0 No		
	1 Yes		
	888 Not applicable		
	999 Missing/don't know		
amd_viol	Major amendment(s) linked to violent conflict?	numerical	
	0 No		
	1 Yes		
	888 Not applicable		
	999 Missing/don't know		
amd_prot	Major amendment(s) linked to primarily non-violent protest or civic action?	numerical	
	0 No		
	1 Yes		
	888 Not applicable		
	999 Missing/don't know		
amd_gov	Major amendment(s) linked to a change in government?	numerical	
	0 No		
	1 Yes		
	888 Not applicable		
	999 Missing/don't know		
amd_oth	Major amendment(s) linked to other key events?	numerical	
	0 No		
	1 Yes		
	888 Not applicable		
	999 Missing/don't know		
amd_d	Brief description of major amendment(s) considered in this section, incl. main reasons/events that led to the amendment(s)	string	
amd_source1	1st main source used for coding amendment section (APA style)	string	
amd_source2	2nd main source used for coding amendment section (APA style)	string	
amd_source3	3rd main source used for coding amendment section (APA style)	string	

Source: authors' construction.

Table A9: Termination

Variable	CODE	Description	Type
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end	Have all AA polices in this domain been terminated? <i>*Note: Only complete this section if 'Yes'</i>	Numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
end_year	Year in which AA policies in this domain were terminated (if applicable)	Numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
end_fix	Termination is linked to a fixed term specified at adoption?	Numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
end_succ	Termination is linked to official decision that policy has reached its targets and no further preferential treatment is required?	Numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
end_fail	Termination is linked to policies' failure in reaching targets?	Numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
end_leg	Termination is linked to legal action/challenge in the courts?	Numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
end_viol	Termination is linked to violent conflict?	Numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
end_prot	Termination is linked to primarily non-violent protest or civic action?	Numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
end_gov	Termination is linked to a change in government?	Numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	

	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
end_oth	Termination is linked to other key events?	Numerical
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
end_d	Short description of reasons for termination	String
end_source1	1st main source used for coding termination section (APA style)	String
end_source2	2nd main source used for coding termination section (APA style)	String
end_source3	3rd main source used for coding termination section (APA style)	String

Source: authors' construction.

Table A10: Evaluation

Variable	CODE	Description	Type
eval_inst		National institution tasked with evaluation of AA policy	string
eval		'eval_inst' provided assessment(s) of the policy after its adoption? <i>*Note: Only complete next two questions if 'Yes'</i>	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
eval_impct		If applicable, impact on ethno-political target group(s) as reported by 'eval_inst'	numerical
	0	Failure	
	1	Mixed	
	2	Success	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
eval_impct_d		If applicable, short description of 'eval_inst' assessment of the policy	string
eval_science		Are there independent scientific evaluations of AA policies in domain?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
eval_science_impct		If applicable, impact on ethno-political target group(s) as reported by 'eval_science'	numerical
	0	Failure	
	1	Mixed	
	2	Success	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
eval_science_d		If applicable, short description of 'eval_science' assessment of the policy	string
eval_discourse		Is the impact of AA policies in domain discussed in mainstream public discourse?	numerical



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	<i>*Note: This variable attempts to provide a rapid assessment of how AA policies are being discussed in the country's political discourse (e.g., critique by opposition party) and media (e.g., major news outlets)</i>	
	0 No	
	1 Yes	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
eval_discourse_impct	If applicable, impact of AA policies in domain according to mainstream public discourse	numerical
	0 Failure	
	1 Mixed	
	2 Success	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
eval_discourse_d	If applicable, short description of public discourse	string
eval_source1	1st main source used for coding evaluation section (APA style)	string
eval_source2	2nd main source used for coding evaluation section (APA style)	string
eval_source3	3rd main source used for coding evaluation section (APA style)	string

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Source: authors' construction.

## Appendix 4: Policy

Table A11: Policy

Variable	CODE	Description	Type
title_short		Short title by which the policy is commonly known	string
title_long		Official full title	string
pol_edu		Policy concerns education?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
pol_pub		Policy concerns public sector employment/ business contracts?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
pol_emp		Policy concerns private sector employment/ business operations?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
pol_pol		Policy concerns political representation?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
pol_oth		Policy concerns any other policy domain not mentioned above?	numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
pol_oth_d		If policy regards other policy domain, please specify	string
objective		General objectives of the policy (as stated in legislation)	string
tgr_group		Target group(s) (as stated in legislation)	string
mechanism		Description of means through which the policy seeks to benefit the target group (as stated in legislation)	string
URL		URL to official legislative text	string
legal_src		Legal source	numerical
	1	Constitution	
	2	Federal law (statute)	
	3	State law	
	4	Other (specify)	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	
legal_src_d		Specify other legal source	string

year_start	Year of implementation	numerical
duration	Timeframe for which the policy was is adopted	numerical
	1 Indefinite	
	2 Definite	
	888 Not applicable	
	999 Missing/don't know	
year_end_planned	If definite, specify planned year of termination	numerical
year_end_actual	Year of termination (if applicable)	numerical
year_amend	Year of last major amendment (if applicable)	numerical

Source: authors' construction.

## Appendix 5: No AA

Table A12: No AA

Variable	CODE	Description	Type
NO_AA_reason			numerical
	0	No	
	1	Yes	
	888	Not applicable	
	999	Missing/don't know	

Source: authors' construction.