

Living with Moral Disagreement: The Enduring Controversy about Affirmative Action

Michele S. Moses

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How to handle affirmative action is one of the most intractable policy problems of our era, touching on controversial issues such as race-consciousness and social justice. Much has been written both for and against affirmative action policies—especially within the realm of educational opportunity. In this book, philosopher Michele S. Moses offers a crucial new pathway for thinking about the debate surrounding educational affirmative action, one that holds up the debate itself as an important emblem of the democratic process.

Central to Moses's analysis is the argument that we need to understand disagreements about affirmative action as inherently *moral*, products of conflicts between deeply held beliefs that shape differing opinions on what justice requires of education policy. As she shows, differing opinions on affirmative action result from different conceptual values, for instance, between being treated equally and being treated as an equal or between seeing race-consciousness as a pernicious political force or as a necessary variable in political equality. As Moses shows, although moral disagreements about race-conscious policies and similar issues are often seen as symptoms of dysfunctional politics, they in fact create rich opportunities for discussions about diversity that nourish democratic thought and life.



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