

**Nagel describes Affirmative Action in terms of “strong and weak,” and Bradford-Reynolds describes it in terms of “equal opportunity or equal results. What do each mean with their descriptions? How do the two sets of descriptors for Affirmative Action used by these authors relate to one another?**

Nagel describes "strong" affirmative action as the use of quotas or other forms of preferential treatment to ensure that a certain number or percentage of underrepresented groups are admitted to universities or hired for jobs. "Weak" affirmative action, on the other hand, involves taking steps to ensure that all applicants are given an equal opportunity to be considered, without necessarily giving preference to underrepresented groups. Bradford-Reynolds describes "equal opportunity" affirmative action as programs that aim to remove barriers to employment or education that may have prevented certain groups from having equal access in the past. "Equal results" affirmative action, on the other hand, involves setting goals or quotas for the number of members of underrepresented groups that should be admitted to universities or hired for jobs. The two sets of descriptors for affirmative action used by these authors relate to each other in that they both describe different approaches to achieving diversity and equality. Nagel's strong and weak affirmative action can be seen as a more direct approach to achieving diversity, while Bradford-Reynolds' equal opportunity and equal results affirmative action can be seen as a more indirect approach. Both approaches aim to address the same issues of discrimination and inequality, but they differ in how they seek to achieve these goals.

**Which type of Affirmative Action does each author advocate? (What is the “thesis” of each?)**

Nagel does not advocate for either type of affirmative action, but rather presents them as two distinct approaches. In her view, the choice between strong and weak affirmative action depends on one's views about the value of diversity, the harms of past discrimination, and the need to remedy those harms. Bradford-Reynolds, on the other hand, advocates for equal opportunity affirmative action, which he sees as a way to remove barriers to employment or education that may have prevented certain groups from having equal access in the past. He opposes equal results affirmative action, which he sees as a form of reverse discrimination that unfairly penalizes members of majority groups and undermines the merit-based principles of our society.

**How does each author justify his position? (Do they use a deontological or utilitarian style analysis?)**

Nagel's analysis is more deontological in nature, as she is primarily concerned with the moral principles that underlie affirmative action policies. She argues that both strong and weak affirmative action can be justified on the basis of moral principles such as fairness, equality, and the need to remedy past discrimination. However, she also recognizes that there are legitimate concerns about the use of quotas and preferential treatment, and that these concerns may lead some people to reject strong affirmative action in favor of a weaker approach.

Bradford-Reynolds' analysis is more utilitarian in nature, as he is primarily concerned with the practical consequences of affirmative action policies. He argues that equal opportunity affirmative action is the best approach because it removes barriers to employment or education that may have prevented certain groups from having equal access in the past, without unfairly penalizing members of majority groups. He also argues that equal results affirmative action is counterproductive because it undermines the merit-based principles of our society and creates resentment among members of majority groups. In his view, the practical consequences of equal opportunity affirmative action are more positive than those of equal results affirmative action.

**Who do you think has the better argument from a moral standpoint? Why? Whose argument influences your own opinion more?**

Both authors present compelling arguments in favor of their respective positions on affirmative action. Nagel's focus on the moral principles of fairness, equality, and the need to remedy past discrimination provides a strong justification for affirmative action policies that aim to promote diversity and equal opportunity. However, her acknowledgement of the potential harms of strong affirmative action suggests that there may be limits to the use of quotas and preferential treatment. Bradford-Reynolds' focus on the practical consequences of affirmative action policies provides a strong justification for equal opportunity affirmative action, which seeks to remove barriers to employment or education that may have prevented certain groups from having equal access in the past. However, his opposition to equal results affirmative action may be seen as a rejection of the goal of promoting diversity and equal representation.

Ultimately, the question of which argument is better from a moral standpoint depends on one's own moral and political beliefs. Both Nagel and Bradford-Reynolds present thoughtful and well-reasoned arguments, and it is up to each individual to decide which perspective is more compelling.

**Which position more closely matches the position of your textbook's author? What makes you think so?**

It is possible that the textbook presents a range of perspectives on affirmative action, including those of Nagel and Bradford-Reynolds, in order to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the issue. By presenting multiple viewpoints, the textbook may encourage students to think critically about the arguments presented and form their own opinions based on the evidence and reasoning presented.

**These articles were written almost forty years ago. How have the issues that Affirmative Action was designed to address changed? Do you believe Affirmative Action (either strong or weak) is still needed? Why or why not?**

The issues that affirmative action was designed to address have changed in some ways since the articles were written almost forty years ago. For example, there have been some gains in the representation of women and people of color in certain fields, and some affirmative action policies have been challenged and/or modified in response to legal and political developments. However, there are still significant disparities in access to education and employment opportunities for historically marginalized groups, and these disparities continue to be shaped by a wide range of social, economic, and political factors. Moreover, there is ongoing debate about the effectiveness and fairness of affirmative action policies, as well as about the most appropriate strategies for promoting diversity and equal opportunity in different contexts.

Whether affirmative action is still needed is a complex and contested question that depends on a range of factors, including the specific goals and implementation strategies of affirmative action policies, the social and political context in which they are being applied, and the broader social

and economic conditions that shape access to opportunities and resources. Some argue that affirmative action policies are still necessary to address ongoing patterns of discrimination and inequality, and to promote diversity and equal representation in fields where certain groups have been historically excluded or underrepresented. Others argue that affirmative action policies are unfair, divisive, and counterproductive, and that they can create resentment and backlash among members of majority groups. Ultimately, the question of whether affirmative action is still needed is a matter of ongoing debate and discussion, and one that requires careful consideration of the evidence and arguments presented by different perspectives.