

# New Approaches to Economic and Social Analyses of Discrimination

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*Edited by*  
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*and Phanindra V. Wunnava*

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# Preface and Dedication

Sadie Tanner Mosell Alexander: 2 January 1898 - 1 November 1989

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Sadie Tanner Mosell Alexander, who died 1 November 1989 at the age of 91 while we were pulling this volume together. Dr. Alexander's successes and struggles epitomize the processes producing, as well as those resisting, inequality in our markets, first making Dr. Alexander's human capital unmarketable and then yielding to her persistent, thoughtful use of legal and collective instruments. We therefore dedicate our work to her.

Sadie Alexander was born 2 January 1898 to a prominent family in Philadelphia and attended secondary school in Washington, D.C. She studied at the University of Pennsylvania, receiving a bachelor of science degree with highest honors in 1918, a masters in economics in 1919, and a Ph.D. in economics in 1921.<sup>1</sup> She was the first African American woman to receive a Ph.D. in economics (and, by just one day, only the second Black woman to receive a Ph.D. in this country in any field). Unable to get any work despite receiving help from all her professors at Penn, she went to Durham, North Carolina, to work as an assistant actuary for two years for a Black-owned insurance firm. Being unfamiliar with and uncomfortable in the South, Dr. Alexander returned to Philadelphia. She married Raymond Pace Alexander, whom she had met when they were both undergraduates at Penn. Raymond Alexander had just completed Harvard Law School and passed the bar. Sadie Alexander decided to attend the Law School at the University of Pennsylvania, thinking "that at least I could work for him [her husband] when I graduate" [Jablow 1980]. Sadie Alexander was the first Black woman to graduate from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. In this she followed her father, Aaron Mosell, who had been the first African American to graduate from this law

school. She then became the first Black woman to be admitted to the Pennsylvania bar and was the second woman of any race to hold the position of assistant city solicitor in Philadelphia. Dr. Alexander was the first African American woman to serve on a presidential commission when Harry Truman appointed her to his Committee on Civil Rights in 1946-48. She also served on John F. Kennedy's Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in 1963 and in 1981 served as chair of Jimmy Carter's White House Conference on Aging.

Sadie Alexander achieved much for women especially for African American women. She served as national secretary of the Urban League for twenty-five years and as head or member of Philadelphia's Commission on Human Rights for seventeen years. She and her husband worked throughout the 1930s initiating legal fights to open restaurants, hotels, and movie theaters to African Americans. "In the 1940's, Dr. Alexander [pressed] for the hiring of Blacks on the Penn faculty and the integration of the armed services. As a member of Truman's civil rights commission, she played a major role in that committee's findings . . . [which were] a foundation of the later civil rights movement" [St. George 1989].

This is a record of impressive achievements in the face of stubborn resistance. Can a person who is not a male European American realistically aspire to such achievements, or are these only the stuff of superheroines? This volume seeks to explore both the causes and the consequences of barriers to equality by race and gender in our society. Although a distinction between cause and consequence of social inequality cannot be rigorously sustained, it serves well to give an initial orientation to the different emphases of the chapters here. The first three parts start with the fact of inequality and detail how this affects the ways markets operate. The fourth part reverses this view by looking at how markets sometimes appear to sustain or even amplify social inequality and also looking at roles for public policy in mitigating these possible effects of markets.

To address these questions about social diversity, we offer methodological and ideological diversity, bringing together work by sociologists and economists, Marxists and neoclassicals, econometricians and verbal artists. We achieve not harmonious agreement but vital discussion of the impediments to equality. Our views range from new Classical Marxist ideas on rivalry among entrepreneurs and among ethnic groups to neoclassical supply-side, human-capital factors (education, intermittency, and culture as capital) as well as to demand-side factors including the costs of eliciting effort from workers, so-called "efficiency" wage theories, organizational inertia, and the costs of changing social relations in workplaces. Data are

examined for evidence of segmentation of workplaces by gender as well as other criteria and for segmentation of business start-ups by geography and race. Each of the four parts of this volume has a brief introduction to place its chapters in the context both of this volume and of recent debates about inequality. We invite readers to skim these four introductions to survey what ideas are offered here.

This volume is the tangible fruit, after thoughtful revision in several cases, of the Eleventh Annual Middlebury Conference on Economic Issues held 6-8 April, 1989. This conference brought twenty-three scholars from around the nation together with an equal number of people from Middlebury College to discuss seventeen papers. This series of conferences is made possible each year through the generous support of Robert A. Jones, who has helped us host constructive debates on a wide range of topics in political economy. We especially want to acknowledge the essential institutional expertise provided by Sheila Cassin in overseeing all the nitty-gritty arrangements without which these dreams and schemes of "experts" would never see the light of barcode or human eye. We have been helped enormously by the numerous people here at Middlebury College who have been generous in many ways and especially Steven K. Metzler, who prepared the final copy of every word and digit in this volume with amazingly good humor and skill. We gratefully acknowledge the timely and careful indexing done by Helen Reiff as well as the significant financial support we received to prepare this book for publication from the Christian A. Johnson Distinguished Professorship in Economics. We also thank James and Tom Blake at the Computer Center at the State University of New York at Binghamton for help translating several disks from one format to another. We thank Jonathan F. Mowry, Sohail A. Shaikh, and Erica Nourjian, who gave us invaluable assistance when the details of organizing the tables, notes and bibliography required focused, careful labor. Finally, we very much want to make clear the support, patience, and encouragement of those who have been closest to our excitements and frustrations as we worked on this conference and book, especially Vijaya Wunnava, Kate Cornwall, and Rob Zeuner.



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