



# Unlevel Playing Fields: Understanding Wage Inequality and Discrimination

*By Randy Albelda, Robert W. Drago, Steven Shulman*

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After all the gains of the civil rights and women's movements, why are black people and women still faring so poorly when it comes to wages, employment levels, and the distribution of jobs? *Unlevel Playing Fields* tackles this critical question by presenting two contrasting economic theories -- neoclassical and political economy -- and showing how each theory explains discrimination and inequality in the labor market. Each chapter concludes with discussion questions and suggested readings. The authors also offer some practical proposals for altering the status quo.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

*Unlevel Playing Fields* is a great text for introductory-level students. It is very successful in giving students the necessary analytical tools for grappling with important debates about racial and gender wage gaps, labor market discrimination, and affirmative action policies. It is an excellent book to teach from, since the theory is so well present and it is always grounded in real world issues. --Carole Biewener, Simmons College

I use this book as part of a course on poverty and discrimination. The students love it. Many have said it is the best economics book they have ever read. --Doug Orr, Eastern Washington University

*Unlevel Playing Fields* is a well-written text which successfully presents alternative perspectives on how economic outcomes are generated in America. It should be widely appreciated for undergraduate teaching. --Paul Osterman, MIT Sloan School of Management

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Here's what instructors are saying about *Unlevel Playing Fields*:

"*Unlevel Playing Fields* is a great text for introductory-level students. It offers a sophisticated explanation of neoclassical and political economy approaches to labor markets in a clear and compelling manner. The book is very successful in giving students the necessary analytical tools for grappling with important debates about racial and gender wage gaps, labor market discrimination, and affirmative action policies. It is an excellent book to teach from, since the theory is so well presented and it is always grounded in real world issues." --Carole Biewener, Professor of Economics and Women's Studies, Simmons College

"*Unlevel Playing Fields* is an excellent, accessible theoretical survey of the economic analysis of race and gender for students with a wide range of backgrounds in economics, including no exposure to economics at all. Finally -- a good undergraduate text on race and gender! For the instructor interested in presenting a strong review of both neoclassical and political economy perspectives on the situation of women and people of color, this book is unique. I recommend it very highly." -- Mary King, Associate Professor Economics, Portland State University

"I use this book as part of a course on poverty and discrimination. The students love it. Many have said it is the best econ book they have ever had." -- Doug Orr, Assistant Professor of Economics, Eastern Washington University

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#### About the Author

The authors of Unlevel Playing Fields all received their graduate training in economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Randy Albelda is Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and serves as a vice president of the International Association for Feminist Economics. Robert W. Drago is Professor of Labor Studies and Women's Studies at The Pennsylvania State University, and moderates the Work/Family newsgroup on the internet. Steven Shulman is Professor of Economics at Colorado University; his current research focuses on the relationship between family structure and racial inequality.

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