

Preface

Economics is about policy, and policy by nature is transdisciplinary. This book attempts to look, in a broader manner than is usually done, at economic ideas as they relate to race and to policies that deal with racial inequalities. It was inspired (or maybe the better word is *provoked*) by David Levy's work on the history of economics and its relationship to racism. David's work was, as it usually is, provocative and interesting, but it seemed to us that there was more at stake than was initially evident from his articles and from those he published with coauthor Sandy Peart. Specifically, it seemed that David had a broader agenda of revitalizing the Chicago approach to race. A conference was designed to explore that broader goal and to consider the issue of race in a broader perspective than is usually done. This book is the end product of that conference.

The conference was made possible by the generosity of the Christian A. Johnson Endeavor Foundation, which has funded David Colander's chair at Middlebury College. It was one of an ongoing set of conferences that have been run at Middlebury College on economic issues. These conferences have always tried to bring out, rather than hide, controversy, and this one was no different; we chose a set of very bright participants from a variety of different fields, including philosophy, English, and anthropology as well as economics, and we let them at each other. The diversity of approaches of the conferees was not only from outside economics; there was also a significant diversity of views among the economists who attended.

While this volume is derived from the papers presented at the conference, it diverges from the conference in a number of ways. We used the conference as raw material and then, after the conference, organized the themes that came up in discussion into what we think will be an interesting and provocative volume. This places enormous burdens on the participants, whom we asked to expand on issues that were raised at the conference and that we believe are important for understanding the subject