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**Abstract**

Today increasing numbers of Americans are excluded from educational opportunity and related economic mobility as a result of decades of poor public policy and more recent polarizing politics. Those most affected are women of all ethnicities, American blacks, Latinos, and American Indians, the poorest groups in the United States whose wealth accumulation and standard of living has never achieved that of white men. Their poverty is sustained by low educational opportunities leading to low paid employment. The purpose of this paper is to analyze how this situation developed and what is happening in the present to address it. I begin with considering the many factors that work to

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exclude students from educational participation and success. This includes high school graduation rates, college choice in the face of a complicated system of higher education, and the heavy role played by poverty and other forms of ?disadvantage.? I then turn to programmes created to increase minority and female participation, discuss how they have been undermined, and conclude with policy efforts to broaden participation. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

**Signature**

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