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We Need a New Path to True Racial Equity

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The United States is founded on the principle of equal opportunity for all. Getting an education, finding a job, and getting married are traditionally viewed as crucial steps for escaping poverty and ascending into the middle class, regardless of one's economic starting point.

For example, each additional year of educational attainment is associated with 3 percent reduction in mortality risk for adults aged eighteen to forty-nine years. Individuals who are employed show up to 29 percent decline in risk of mortality over a long period of time. Finally, married individuals are 16 percent protected against mortality, compared to those not married.

But education, employment, and marriage do not uniformly lead to upward mobility for every group of Americans.