



Taming the River: Negotiating the Academic, Financial, and Social Currents in Selective Colleges and Universities

Mary J. Fischer, Margarita A. Mooney & Camille Z. Charles, Douglas S. Massey

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Building on their important findings in *The Source of the River*, the authors now probe even more deeply into minority underachievement at the college level. *Taming the River* examines the academic and social dynamics of different ethnic groups during the first two years of college. Focusing on racial differences in academic performance, the book identifies the causes of students' divergent grades and levels of personal satisfaction with their institutions.

Using survey data collected from twenty-eight selective colleges and universities, *Taming the River* considers all facets of student life, including who students date, what fields they major in, which sports they play, and how they perceive their own social and economic backgrounds. The book explores how black and Latino students experience pressures stemming from campus racial climate and "stereotype threat"--when students underperform because of anxieties tied to existing negative stereotypes. Describing the relationship between grade performance and stereotype threat, the book shows how this link is reinforced by institutional practices of affirmative action. The authors also indicate that when certain variables are controlled, minority students earn the same grades, express the same college satisfaction, and remain in school at the same rates as white students.

A powerful look at how educational policies unfold in America's universities, *Taming the River* sheds light on the social and racial factors influencing student success.

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