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**College Choice in Mississippi: Social, Cultural, and Political Factors that Influenced College Choice for African American Women in Mississippi, 1962-2002**

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**College Choice in Mississippi: Social, Cultural, and Political Factors that Influenced  
College Choice for African American Women in Mississippi, 1962-2002**

**by**

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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to the all the women of Mississippi who paved the way for future generations. Special thanks to the extraordinary women who influenced my life the most—my grandmothers, my mother, and my daughters.

## Acknowledgements

With equal measures of joy and sadness, I would like to acknowledge my mentors Dr. Donald Phelps and Dr. Bill Moore, the first two chairs of my dissertation committee. I know they are pleased today. Dr. Walter Bumphus, thank you for agreeing to take me the last mile of this journey.

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A special thank you to Henry Winters, that special person that is with me today and every day, I am blessed to have you in my life.

No one is more pleased today than my parents who have supported all of my efforts, all of my life.

**College Choice in Mississippi: Social, Cultural, and Political Factors that Influenced  
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Wendy McDonald Lamb, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Austin, 2010

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The goal of this study was to learn how Mississippi's society, culture, and politics influenced college choice for college bound African American women in Mississippi from 1962 to 2002. In this context, the researcher elected to interview mother and daughter pairs who attended college in Mississippi after James Meredith integrated the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) in 1962. To achieve its goals, this study traced the political history of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi, the enrollment patterns of African American women in Mississippi colleges, and captured, through individual interviews, the mothers' and daughters' motivating factors in choosing a college.

This qualitative research design study compares and analyzes the differences in the mothers' and daughters' choices and illustrates how outside influences affect college choice. The researcher used archival records, focus groups, and individual interviews to capture the data.

The common themes that emerged from this study for the mothers' generation were the power of community capital, strong family ties, extreme poverty, and personal sacrifice. The common themes that emerged from this study for the daughters' generation were the power of family capital and individual ambition, fueled by a desire for a comfortable life.

Because of the intense nature of the individual interviews the researcher captured a glimpse into the participants' thought process in choosing to go to college as well as choosing which college to attend.

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## Chapter One

The history of Black students in Mississippi has been of interest to scholars, writers, and historians, especially the turbulent years of the early 1960s, a period of racial unrest and civil rights demonstrations in the southern United States. For Mississippi, the defining moment was September 30, 1962, at the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) when James Meredith enrolled as the first Black student admitted to any historically White institution (HWI) of higher education in the state of Mississippi (Goldfield, 1990; Morris 1971; Silver, 1967; United States v. Fordice, 1987).

Mississippi's higher education system has been embroiled in multiple lawsuits over the past 30 years. Numerous cases were filed alleging constitutional and civil rights violations resulting from the racially dual system of public higher education and the failure to proceed with due haste to bring about the disestablishment of its former de jure segregated system (Ayers v. Fordice, 1997; Sansing, 1990; United States v. Fordice, 1987).

After 1962, educational opportunities for Black college students changed; this study gives *voice* to the untold stories of Black women and their daughters who enrolled in Mississippi's colleges and universities after desegregation. The participants in this study enrolled in either historically White (HWI) or historically Black institutions (HBI), between 1962 and 2002.

This qualitative study used focus groups and personal interviews to capture the stories of how Black women chose a Mississippi college to attend after desegregation. The women identified the factors that influenced their choice of colleges. The study

isolates, identifies, compares, and contrasts similarities and differences in the factors that influenced the mothers' choices of colleges and the factors that influenced the daughters' choices of colleges.

The data of personal experience in feminist scholarship usually assume the form of women's personal narratives about the events of their lives, their feelings about those events, and their interpretations of them. They reveal insights into the impact of constructions of gender on women's lives, their experiences of oppression and of coping with and resisting that oppression, and their perspectives on what is meaningful in their lives. (Foss, 1994. P. 39)

Being Southern, being female, being of the same generation as the mothers, and having daughters of the same generations made this study a personal endeavor to tell the story of the "other" women in Mississippi. Richardson (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2002) notes, ". . . we are always present in our texts, no matter how we try to suppress ourselves" (p. 41). Neumann and Peterson (as cited in Generett & Jeffries, 2003) note that, "research is a personal endeavor—experiences within and expressions of a researcher's life" (p. 1).

Whose story was this to tell? Was it possible for a southern White woman to research and write knowledgeably about the experiences of Black women? Was the research tainted because the researcher was reared in Mississippi, attended both segregated and integrated schools and attended one of the HWIs in this study, or does it have more authenticity because she did so? Creff voiced this concern: ". . . what happens when culturally entangled identities attempt to do ethnographic fieldwork in the all too familiar spaces of their own back yard" (Narayan, 1997, p. 25).

## **Statement of the Problem**

College opportunities for African American women in Mississippi changed after court-ordered desegregation in 1962 overturned Mississippi's segregated higher education system (Blackwell, 1981; Fordice v. United States, 1992; Meier, Stewart & England, 1989; Morris, 1971). Did the opportunity to enroll in formerly all White institutions change the decision-making and college selection process for Mississippi's Black women for all future generations (Carter, 2001; Fordice v. United States, 1992)?

This study explored the effect of social, cultural, and political factors on college choice for two generations (1962-2002) of Black women educated in Mississippi.

## **Specific Problem Area**

The desegregation process unfolding in Mississippi during the mid-1960s and early 1970s limited college students' choices (Fordice v. United States, 1992; Willie & McCord, 1972). What "real" choices did African American women in Mississippi in the late 1960s and early 1970s have in selecting a college? Twenty years later, did the daughters of those same women make different choices? Why? What were the differences in the social, cultural, and political circumstances of the two generations, and how did that influence "choice?"

Enrollment data indicate that, just because HWIs were open to Black students, it did not mean Black women would attend if there were only a few other Black students (Fordice v. United States, 1992; Willie & McCord, 1972). Mississippi's HWIs have, to this day, a small percentage of Black students enrolled (United States v. Fordice, 1997). A timeline was created, including dates and information about the passage of pertinent

legislation, civil rights activities, and significant court cases. The activities, political appointments, and rise and fall of prominent people are cataloged and include events and happenings in Mississippi and the nation. The timeline makes it easier to understand the political, social, and cultural environment of the place and time under review.

The researcher asked Mississippi's Black college women what influenced their decisions about which college to attend in the 1960s and early 1970s; and as racial tensions eased, time passed, and minority participation increased on the HWIs campuses, daughters of these same women were asked how they selected the colleges they attended and what influenced their decision.

### **Significance of the Problem**

Willie Morris (1971) probably stated it best in his reflections on the integration of Yazoo City, Mississippi.

Who gives a damn about the South anymore? Who for that matter gives a damn about integration? Back in the days of the Movement, that lost, lyrical time of innocence when the better part of the nation saw integration as the goal and fulfillment of our deepest impulses as a people, the South had once again been the symbol of our ills, the terrain on which to fight our noblest battles. To exorcise the South of its evils was to cleanse the nation of its simple politic hesitations. (p. 167)

African Americans place a heavy emphasis on education . . . Education is about a liberated future that must be better than the oppressive past. . . . [F]or Black parents the education of their children gives meaning to their struggle against racism . . . (Feagin et al., 1996, as cited in Carter, 2001). Mertens (1998) observed that understanding history helps understand the present and “the mood within the historical community closely parallels the changes arising in educational research” (p.195) and believes that scholars

who write about the lives of oppressed people must emphasize the importance of an understanding of the historical, cultural, social, and economic conditions surrounding an event (p. 195). Therefore, it was important in this study to examine how society, culture, and political atmosphere of an era affected our participants' choices. Including this information enhances the understanding of the trends and patterns of Mississippi's enrollment data.

The people behind the facts humanize the facts and figures; expand the knowledge related to college choice, and provide a depth of understanding and insight into the interpretation of educational data (Mertens, 1998). The narratives are a glimpse of reality using a different lens and having a rare opportunity to capture stories that rarely are told from a place and an era that is almost forgotten (Mertens, 1998; Morris, 1971).

Willie and McCord (1972) stated:

The Black experience at a White college is a story of hope, frustration, and disillusionment. It is a story of acceptance and rejection. It is a story of individual and institutional racism. It is a story that is important to every member of the community. (p. 3)

This research provides a context in which to understand the decisions and thought processes involved in making the choice between attending an HBI or an HWI. In Mississippi that was, and still is, a significant decision.

The research was restricted to Mississippi, because of its early 1960's defiance of the Equal Rights Amendment, the United States Constitution, Supreme Court orders, and Civil Rights legislation. Mississippi officials stubbornly chose to fight, delay, or

ignore pressure to integrate the public schools, colleges, and universities (Fordice v. United States, 1992; Goldfield, 1990; Morris, 1971; Sansing, 1990; Silver, 1964). Mississippi maintained a racially segregated postsecondary education system in violation of the Fifth, Ninth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Amendments, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Fordice v. United States, 1992; Sansing, 1990; Silver, 1964).

Civil rights issues were important to Don Phelps, former Chancellor of the Los Angeles Community College District and former professor at The University of Texas in Austin, Texas. He stated, “[it] must be worked at and must be developed for future generations, starting now . . . How long has it been since the Revolution? Do you think you made a difference?” (Gillett-Karam, Roueche & Roueche, 1991, p. 136). As former chair of this dissertation committee (and lost to death before defense), he felt it was important to address the past and share these women’s stories before they were forgotten.

There were opportunities for Black women to attend college out of state, often at no expense, if the degree they wanted was not offered at an historically Black institution; however, Southerners are known to possess an irrational love of the South. Mississippi is no different. Morris (1971) wrote,

I would see among Blacks a new commitment to Mississippi *as a place*, expressions of a love and loyalty to Mississippi as a society worth working for, as a frontier for redeeming some lost quality in the American soul . . . if I am going to fight for what I believe in then I am going to fight for it at home. (p. 20)

## **Terms**

*Black*—The term was used interchangeably with African American to describe Americans of African descent. It was capitalized as is the practice in the qualitative research books by Generette and Jeffries, 2003, and Mertens, 1998.

### *Civil Rights Act of 1964*—

To enforce the constitutional right to vote, to confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations, to authorize the attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities and public education, to extend the Commission on Civil Rights, to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, and for other purposes. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that this Act may be cited as the "Civil Rights Act of 1964." (Title VII, 1964)

*Closed Society*—Term is in Silver's, *Mississippi; The Closed Society*, loosely defined as a society that is entrenched in the philosophy of White supremacy demanding loyalty to a united front, and silencing dissenters through fear and violence (1964, p. 6).

*De facto segregation*—Segregation that exists, not legally or officially, but in practice.

*De jure segregation*—Segregation by law.

*Family capital*—Characteristics that create higher achievement that is passed from generation to generation (NAEP).

*Historically Black Institution (HBI)*—Publicly or privately funded college or university that originally only enrolled Black students and established prior to 1964 (NCES, 1996). This study includes both public and private HBIs as the limited data

available are often intertwined and the private colleges were important in the educational story of Mississippi's Black students. The public 4-year HBIs are Alcorn State University (ASU), Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU), and Jackson State University (JSU). The private 4-year colleges are Tougaloo College, Mary Holmes College, Wood College, and Rust College (National Center Education Statistics [NCES], 2002).

*Historically White Institution (HWI)*—Publicly or privately funded university that originally only admitted White students. This study refers to publicly funded colleges and universities in Mississippi. Those colleges are Mississippi State University (MSU), University of Mississippi (more commonly known as Ole Miss) (UM), University of Southern Mississippi (also referred to as Southern, Southern Miss or USM), Delta State University (DSU), and Mississippi University for Women (MUW) (United States v. Fordice, 1992).

*Integration*—Terms desegregation and integration used interchangeably to describe the sharing of space among White and Black people.

*Median*—Middle of a distribution: half the scores are above and half the scores are below. It is less sensitive to extreme scores than mean (Rice, 2001).

*Social capital*—Refers to the capacity of the community to influence achievement through safe neighborhoods, trust among families, and/or the presence of community institutions that support achievement (NAEP).

*South*—Refers to the 11 states of the United States of America that seceded from the Union in the Civil War (1861-1865). These states are further delineated in one study

as the Deep South and the Other South. The Deep South states include Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina; the Other South includes Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia (Jaffe et al., 1968).

*White*—European Americans or White American people. The word White was capitalized when describing White people, as is the practice in qualitative research by Generette and Jeffries, 2003 and Mertens, 1998.

*White Citizens Council*—Formed in Sunflower County, Mississippi, after the 1954 Brown v. Board decision. It was made up of a “group of enraged, determined White community leaders” determined to uphold segregation. Many of the members were ministers, lawyers, and judges (Doyle, 2001, p. 57).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Numerous studies to determine the factors that influence college choice are based on state, regional, or national studies of students (Hood, 1968; Jaffe, Adams & Meyers, 1968). The following were identified as key influencers: demographics of the family and/or the community, cost, distance from home, peer choices, family background, college aspirations, and academic preparation (Carter, 2001; Hossler, Schmidt & Vesper, 1999; Willie & McCord, 1972; McDonough, 1997). African American students chose HBIs because of the nurturing environment, the superior cultural studies programs, quality, the non-hostile environment, or because of the higher graduation and retention rates (Carter, 2001; Willie & McCord, 1972).

There were limited data on Black women’s college choices in the South and even less with the social, cultural, and political overlay included in this study. It is difficult to

make assumptions or inferences based on regional or national data about the “choices” Black women had in Mississippi in the early 1960s and 1970s. Family background may have had something to do with choosing to go to college versus not going to college, but this researcher proposes that *where* to go to college in Mississippi had much more to do with race, gender, culture, society, and politics (Hossler, Schmit & Vesper, 1999; Willie & McCord, 1972).

### **Research Questions**

The study investigated the factors that influenced African American women’s higher education choices in Mississippi from 1962 to the present. The researcher documented the influence of Mississippi’s history and culture, Southern traditions, personal aspirations, and family and financial factors on 12 pairs of mothers and daughters who chose to attend college. The following questions were used to develop the study.

- What social, cultural, and political factors influenced college choice for the mother and daughter pairs?
- How were their experiences similar and how were they different?

### **Assumptions**

The researcher made several assumptions in conducting this study. It is assumed that the data collected were accurate and that participants were truthful and forthcoming in the focus groups and personal interviews. It was also assumed that enrollment data by race and gender actually were not collected and/or reported for many years, as was stated in several cited sources (Southern Regional Education Board [SREB], 1967).

## **Limitations**

There were four limitations to this study. First, there was a paucity of state, regional, and national enrollment data collected and categorized by *race and gender* prior to 1975 (Jaffe, Adams & Meyers, 1968, p. 199).

Second, data were possibly never collected documenting Black women's enrollment history at Mississippi's HWIs, if it was collected; it was not forthcoming from state officials, despite repeated requests. In the literature review process, attempts were made to collect historical enrollment data, by race and gender, for all Mississippi colleges and universities from 1962 to 2002. The data would document, with the help of the narratives, the phenomenon. However, data prior to 1975 were not generally reported by both race and gender and were found only by state and not by separate institution.

Letters, faxes, and emails were sent to officials at Mississippi State Department of Education, Institute of Higher Education, U. S. congressmen from Mississippi, Alvin Chambliss (the trial lawyer for the Ayers case), Mississippi State Archives Department, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), to no avail. In every instance, either the researcher was told the data were not collected, or the request was ignored.

The literature review proceeds without specific data from each college. Other researchers have encountered similar problems (Willie & McCord, 1972). Studies of the South and other representative data were found, but not generally delineated by race and gender, or college, but was useful. Interestingly, this exact data set for Mississippi was reported in significant depth and breadth after 1975, and easily accessible from the World Wide Web.

Third, as James Silver (1964), a former Ole Miss law professor, wrote, “Our problem today is to try and understand why Mississippi has clung so much more desperately to its closed society . . . more than any other American state” (p. 10). This disturbing, intangible, elusive, and mysterious “code of silence or closed society” has frustrated more than just this researcher (Jaffe et al., 1968; Silver).

The *code* is understood by Mississippians, Black and White (personal conversation, April 7, 2003). Natives know *the code*: it is silence; it is rhetoric; it is the untold stories of oppressed and disenfranchised people; it protects bigots and racists; it is the failure to speak against racism; it is the failure to acknowledge the presence of injustice; it is secrecy, lies, and cover-ups; it is as blatant as ignoring federal court orders or as simple as employing delay tactics to postpone the inevitable; it protects stories of anguish, cruelty, and inhumanity; it thrives under the protection of *southern tradition* (Goldfield, 1990; Sansing, 1990; Silver, 1964).

Finally, the decision to restrict the study to include only two generations of Black women in Mississippi who attended colleges, limits what was added to the knowledge base in the field of *college choice* studies.

## **Conclusion**

Because, as Silver (1964) writes, “Racial bigotry transcends reason in Mississippi” (p. 34), a critical theory study of college choice opportunities in Mississippi must include a portrait of the cultural, political, and social climate of the era under investigation (Mertens, 1998).

The desegregation of Mississippi colleges and universities was turbulent, painstakingly slow, and fraught with violence; therefore it earns a rightful place in any discussion of college choice in this state (Goldfield, 1990; Sansing, 1990; Silver, 1964).

To understand the difficulty in choosing a college for a Black person in Mississippi it is important to be knowledgeable of the state's history and culture. It was not simple, nor easy, nor necessarily safe to choose to be the "one and only" or the "first" to enroll in an HBI. Many of Mississippi's HBIs were not accredited and not considered equal to historically White institutions (Ayers v. Fordice, 1997; Morris, 1971; Silver, 1964; Walker, 2001; Willie & McCord, 1972). In the 1960s, "choosing" to attend an HBI in Mississippi meant attending class in second-class buildings, living in inferior dorms, and attending an underfunded college, with underpaid faculty, and with limited facilities and degree offerings. (Ayers v. Fordice, 1997; Goldfield, 1990; Sansing, 1990; Silver, 1964).

The HBIs did not attract large numbers of Black students in the late 1960s and still do not enroll students in proportion to the population (Ayers v. Fordice, 1997; Census, 2000). The University of Mississippi (UM) enrolled one Black student in 1962. Thirty-nine years later, in 2001, UM records indicate the university reached a record high Black student enrollment of more than 1400 students, or 12% of the total student population. In comparison, the Black population of the state of Mississippi is 33% (Census, 2000).

Carter (2001) and Willie et al. (1972) say Black students choose colleges where they feel safe and accepted and often opt for HBIs to be in that non-hostile environment.

Black students choosing to go to an HWI are not prepared for the fatigue and loneliness of being “more in the minority at college than at home” (Willie et al.). There must be sufficient numbers of similar students on campus “with whom to form a viable community,” Tinto (1987, p. 59) states, for minorities to stay at a campus. Mississippi’s HBIs and HWIs are, for all intents and purposes, segregated with minority enrollments hovering at 10% to 14% (Ayers v. Fordice, 1997; United States v. Fordice, 1987; Census, 2000).

This study provides an opportunity to learn how the social, cultural, and political environment influences college choice and how Mississippi’s Black women, from two different generations, made their decisions about which college to attend.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

The topics covered in the literature review include a brief timeline of relevant and significant historical events, including a glimpse into the heart of Mississippi's civil rights history. This was provided because many of the civil rights issues in the 1960s and 1970s were focused on educational rights and access. Statistical and enrollment data were included to support the understanding of the complexity of the desegregation situation in Mississippi and across the South. The review provides insight into Mississippi's society, culture, and politics. Research on the college choice process was included as a baseline for, and comparison to, findings as they emerge in the study.

### Timeline

Many of the significant historical events that occurred before, during, or after 1962, such as the assassinations of Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy, were of such magnitude that they emerged during the interviews as having influenced these women's choices.

Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist for *The New York Times*, Anthony Lewis, wrote extensively about race relations in America. This is an excerpt from *Portrait of a Decade: The Second American Revolution*, on the Plessy v. Ferguson case.

Homer Plessy, who was one-eighth "Negro," entered a railroad car reserved for Whites. He was arrested. He challenged the constitutionality of the statute. The Supreme Court, by a vote of seven to one, found it valid. The dissenter, Justice John Marshall Harlan, wrote,

The destinies of the two races in this country are indissolubly linked together, and the interests of both require that the common government of all shall not permit the seeds of race hate to be planted under the sanction of law. What can more certainly arouse these races, than state enactments, which in fact, proceed on the ground that colored citizens are so inferior and degraded that they cannot be allowed to sit in public coaches occupied by White citizens? That, as all will admit, is the real meaning of such legislations as was enacted in Louisiana . . . The thin disguise of ‘equal’ accommodations for passengers in railroad coaches will not mislead anyone, or atone for the wrong this day done. (Lewis, 1964)

The Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) case held that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment did not entitle African Americans to sit in the same railway car as Whites; the Constitution, the Court said, “required no more than separate-but-equal public accommodation” (American Council on Education, 2001, p. 2). This landmark decision was used as the precedent for separate but equal schooling for Black and White children.

Siddle Walker (2001) reports in her study on African American teachers in the South from 1940-1960, that in Georgia, 69% of the Black schools were one-teacher schools and 19% of Black schools were two-teacher schools, which was typical in the South (p. 4). In 1950, Mississippi’s Black student enrollment in HBIs was 1,709 males and 1,186 females, and White student enrollment in HWIs was recorded at 8,663 females and 18,378 males (Hurt, 1950, pp. 53-55).

The year 1954 was a landmark in Mississippi: May 15, 1954, the Brown v. Board of Education decision was handed down by the courts; July 11, 1954, the White Citizen Council was formed; and on September 13, 1954, Medgar Evers was denied admission to Ole Miss (Meier et al; Silver, 1964).

Meier et al. writes, “Oliver Brown and 12 other parents sought to enjoin enforcement of a Kansas statute that permitted, but did not require, cities of more than 15,000 residents to maintain racially segregated schools” (p. 45). The decision read: “. . . in the field of public education the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate education facilities are inherently unequal” (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954: p. 495 as cited in Meier et al., p. 45). The 1954, Brown v. Board of Education ruling was considered a “victory for minority education” (Schugurensky, 2002). Ten years later, Meier, et al., noted, “Mississippi had failed to achieve the 1% mark” (p. 46) despite the Courts’ admonition to enact the law with “all deliberate speed,” “at the earliest possible date,” and in “good faith” (p. 46).

In 1955, national media attention was focused on civil rights issues. The August murder in Mississippi, of 14-year-old Chicago resident, Emmett Till, and the speedy acquittal of the two White men accused of his murder highlighted the extent of the civil rights drama that was unfolding in the South. The Montgomery, Alabama bus boycotts were sparked by Rosa Parks’, December 1, 1955, arrest for her refusal to give up her seat to a White man on a public bus (National Park Service [NPS], 2002; Silver, 1964; Sansing, 1990).

In 1956, the Mississippi State Legislature established the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission to oversee the protection of racial integrity (Doyle, 2001), and what became known as the “Southern Manifesto” was presented to the 84<sup>th</sup> United States Congress Second Session on March 12, 1956. This “Declaration of Constitutional Principles” was a protest of the Brown case and a request for a reversal of the decision;

laced with veiled threats of “the gravest concerns for the explosive and dangerous condition created by this decision and inflamed by outside meddlers . . . ” (Southern Manifesto, p. 2). Senators and House Members representing the 11 Southern states signed the Southern Manifesto.

The Civil Rights Act of 1957 was passed on September 9, 1957, and Clyde Kennard attempted unsuccessfully to enroll at the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) (Doyle, 2001; NPS, 2002). Despite the fact the passage of The Civil Rights Act of 1960, Doyle (2001) observed, “If you were Black in Mississippi in 1960, the overwhelming odds were that you could not vote, could not hold office or serve on a jury, suffered substandard schools and housing, and were totally segregated from normal American life” (pp. 21-22).

In 1960, education in Mississippi was still lagging the national average. The median school year completed by Mississippians, age 25 or older, was 8.9 years; the national average was 10.6; only 12.5% of Mississippians had any education beyond college, compared to a 16.5% national average (Fact Book 1973 and 1974 [SREB], p. 7).

The situation became more unstable in the 1960s; sit-ins began at lunch counters throughout the South, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was formed, Martin Luther King was arrested and jailed, and the newly elected President of the United States, John F. Kennedy, assisted in King’s release (NPS, 2002).

John Kennedy was inaugurated President of the United States in January, 1961, and had to lead as Doyle recounts, “a portion a county that still dwelled in the Dark Age of racial injustice . . . where they [African Americans] were terrorized from voting and

forced into separate and unequal public facilities and only 1% of Black students attended integrated schools” (2001, p. 41). The first 13 Freedom Riders left Washington, D.C., on May 4, 1961, to assist with Black voter registration in the South. They were attacked in Alabama by mobs; Robert Kennedy, US Attorney General, swiftly dispatched federal marshals to protect them; however, when the Riders arrived in Jackson, Mississippi on May 24, 1961, they were arrested (NPS, 2002).

The June 25, 1962, decision of the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals found that graduate student, James Meredith, was denied admission to the University of Mississippi because he was Black and ordered him to be admitted fall semester. President Kennedy attempted to negotiate the peaceful admission of Meredith with the governor of Mississippi, Ross Barnett; but after many delays, the “showdown was at hand” (Doyle, 2001; Sansing, 1990; Silver, 1964). On Sunday, September 30, 1962, Federal Marshals and Civil Rights Division lawyers escorted Meredith on campus. Nearby were 123 deputy Federal Marshals, 316 US Border Patrolmen, and 97 federal prison guards. Within an hour a riot broke out with a mob of 2,000 armed with guns, bricks, bottles, and Molotov cocktails. Kennedy sent 16,000 federal troops to the campus; when it was over, two people were dead, 28 marshals were wounded, and 160 people were injured; and Meredith registered for fall classes (Doyle, 2001; NPS, *The Cost*, 2002, p. 3; Sansing, 1990; Silver, 1964).

Barnett is described by Doyle (2001) as the “chief executive of a one-party terrorist police state . . . dignified, courteous, and steeped in the courtly politeness of Mississippi” (p. 51). Barnett was elected governor of Mississippi in 1959, and was

serving when Kennedy was elected President and during the riots at Ole Miss. As a lawyer, Barnett represented many poor Blacks, but he was openly a segregationist. Among his milder but more notable quotes, “Mixing the races leads inevitably to the production of an inferior mongrel . . . the Negro is different . . . If a Negro wants to make good, we’ll go all out to help him, but God intended that we shouldn’t mix” (p. 52).

Civil Rights activist, Fannie Lou Hamer (1917-1977), passed Mississippi’s voters literacy test (only administered to Black people) in 1963, after her third attempt. She was fired from her job for attempting to register to vote and began her work with the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). She was arrested a few months later and brutally beaten by Black prison inmates at the direction of White guards. Fannie Lou Hamer (1917-1977), a Mississippi sharecropper and granddaughter of a slave (National Women’s Hall of Fame), is remembered as one of the “most eloquent speakers for the Civil Rights Movement in the South” going on to become one of the first the first Black delegates to attend a presidential convention (Glass Ceiling, 2003 p.1).

The 1963 bombing of churches and the use of police dogs and fire hoses to quell riots in Birmingham brought worldwide attention to the Civil Rights’ struggle in the South, prompting Kennedy to ask for another Civil Rights Act (NPS, 2002). It was a memorable year in the Civil Rights Movement.

The summer of 1963 was a hotbed of social unrest in Mississippi. College students protested, and Blacks boycotted businesses in Jackson. Medgar Evers,

Mississippi's first state Field Secretary for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) joined the boycott of Jackson merchants in May 1963; he was assassinated one month later, June 11, 1963 (NPS, 2002).

In August, more than 200,000 people marched from the Washington Monument to Lincoln Memorial where King gave his most memorable speech.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today. (1963)

One month later, in September 1963, four girls died in the bombing of Birmingham's Sixteenth Street Baptist Church (NPS, 2002).

Medgar Evers, under the auspices of the NAACP, was instrumental in investigating crimes against Blacks in Mississippi, working with voter registration drives, and helping James Meredith get admitted to Ole Miss. He is recognized as having a powerful influence in the Civil Rights Movement (NPS, 2002).

The greatest tribute can be found in changes noted in *Mississippi Black History Makers*: "Ten years after Medgar's death the national office of the NAACP reported that Mississippi had 145 Black elected officials and that Blacks were enrolled in each of the state's public and private institutions of higher learning. . ."

In 1970, according to statistics compiled by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, more than one-fourth or 26.4% of Black pupils in Mississippi public schools attended integrated schools with at least a 50% White enrollment. When

Medgar died in 1963, only 28,000 Blacks were registered voters. By 1971, there were 250,000 and by 1982 over 500,000 (Padgett, 1997).

Another assassination rocked the world community “On November 22, 1963, when he was hardly past his first thousand days in office, John Fitzgerald Kennedy was killed by an assassin's bullets as his motorcade wound through Dallas, Texas. Kennedy was the youngest man elected President; he was the youngest to die” (White House). Kennedy’s most famous quote; "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country” drove much of his political agenda from the space race to civil rights (White House).

Freedom Summer volunteers came from across America to Mississippi in 1964, to help with the voter registration efforts. Three of those young civil rights workers—James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner—disappeared outside of Philadelphia, Mississippi, on June 21, 1964 (NPS, 2002). Their bodies were found 45 days later.

When violence did not stop the voter registration process, Mississippi’s LeFlore and Sunflower Counties—two of the poorest counties in the nation—state authorities cut off federal food relief, resulting in near famine in the region. Many Black registrants were fired from their jobs, refused credit at the banks, and forced out of business (NPS, The Cost, 2002, para. 2)

After over 50 lawsuits were filed by Attorney General Robert Kennedy in four states to secure Blacks the right to vote, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, guaranteeing the right to vote, was signed into law on July 2, 1964, by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Johnson knew it would cost the Democratic Party the South in future elections (NPS, *The Players*, 2002, pp. 2-3).

In August 1964, there were no Black children in integrated schools (Morris, 1971); Ole Miss admitted its first Black undergraduate student (Doyle, 2001); and on August 4, 1964, the bodies of the three civil rights workers were found in an earthen dam; Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party Convention was held, and Freedom Democrats arrived at the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City (“Eyes on the Prize,” *Mississippi: Is This America?* pp. 6-7). On December 10, 1964, Martin Luther King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (“Eyes on the Prize,” p. 7).

In 1965, Mississippi State University was integrated, Malcolm X was assassinated, and massive riots erupted in the Watts area of Los Angeles (United States v. Fordice; NPS, *The Cost*, p. 2; *Eyes on the Prize*, pp. 7-8). The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed making it illegal to deny any adult U.S. citizen the right to vote. It also eliminated literacy tests and other voter taxes, and the federal government now protects that right. In 1965, the South had record voter turnout; Mississippi had the highest turnout at 74%. In March, King attempted three times to march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. The first, known as, “Bloody Sunday” because of the violent treatment of protesters by the police and troopers. On the third attempt, 3,200 people succeeding, marching from Selma to Montgomery but the Klan killed Viola Liuzzo as she drove the marchers home (NPS, *The Cost*, p. 2; *Eyes on the Prize*, pp. 7-8).

In 1966, Mississippi University of Women (MUW) and Delta State University (DSU) were integrated, Alcorn State University (ASU) admitted its first White students

and hired White faculty, and the Black Panther Party and Black Power movement were launched officially (NPS, *The Cost*, p. 2). James Meredith organized a “Walk Against Fear” from Memphis to Jackson, but was shot and wounded by a sniper. When he was well enough to resume the march he was joined by King and other prominent leaders (Mississippi’s Writers Page, Meredith, para. 3)

Elections and prominent appointments helped Mississippi move beyond its past. Thurgood Marshall, the first Black Supreme Court Justice, was appointed to the Court in 1967 (“Eyes on the Prize,” 1996). Robert Clark was the first Black elected to the Mississippi House of Representatives since Reconstruction. The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) was integrated in 1967, as were the faculty of Jackson State University (Sansing, 1990, p. 213; *United States v. Fordice*).

Robert Kennedy captured the essence of King’s life in this statement; “Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love and to justice for his fellow human beings, and he died because of that effort” (JFK Library, 1968). King was assassinated March 4, 1968, but things were changing across the South. For example, 32% of the schools in the South were desegregated, and the HBI, Mississippi Valley State University, hired its first White teacher.

In 1969, towns across Mississippi integrated their public facilities, including public pools and Jackson State University (JSU) hired White faculty (Sansing, 1990; USCCR, pp. 8-9).

May 14, 1970, Jackson police killed two JSU students and wounded 12 students in riots on campus, closing the campus for the rest of the semester (Sansing 1990).

President Nixon's Commission on Campus Unrest concluded, "The stark fact underlying all other causes of student unrest [at Jackson State College] is the historic pattern of racism that substantially affects daily life in Mississippi" (p. 210). MVSU was integrated, as were the faculties at the HWIs—UM, MUW; and USM but over 70% of Southern Blacks were still enrolled in desegregated schools (Sansing, 1990; SREB). In the years 1972, 1973, and 1974 a Black was appointed to the College Board, and the remaining university faculties were integrated (Sansing, 1990).

Mississippi had an important role in the civil rights era. Many battles were fought in the streets and courts during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s but it is relatively quiet today (Sansing, 1990; Silver 1964).

### **Mississippi**

"It may sound funny, but I love the South. I don't choose to live anywhere else."

Medgar Evers, *Why I Live in Mississippi*

Mississippi is described as having "a rich culture, history, and heritage . . . it is like nowhere else in America. It is a land of cotton and tobacco; antebellum mansions and shotgun shacks; Civil War battlefields and Civil Rights conflicts (Deep South). What the travel brochures do not tell visitors is that it also has a history of "anguish and cruelty and inhumanity, but also of courage and warmth and rare nobility" (Morris, 1971, p. 192).

The state's web site does not mention that, in 1964, there was not a single Black child in an integrated school in Mississippi (Morris, 1971 p. 20), or that it took 16 years

after *Brown v. Board of Education* to integrate the public elementary and high schools fully (Morris; Meier, Steward & England, 1989; Walker, 2001).

The state holds a unique place in American history, in part because of its infamous past. It took multiple Federal Court orders, Supreme Court orders, a United States presidential order, the federalization of the Mississippi National Guard, and the escort and protections services of United States federal marshals to admit one Black man to the University of Mississippi in 1962 (Goldfield, 1990; Sansing, 1990; Silver, 1964)

The process of integrating Mississippi's HWIs received national news coverage. The riots, boycotts, sit ins, and battles between local, state, and national government during the 1960s was well documented by out-of-town press (Morris, 1971, p. 86) and resulted in a successive stream of high profile lawsuits being filed, tried, or appealed in the Federal courts (Sansing, 1990). The civil rights battles of the 1960s at Ole Miss and other Mississippi colleges were well documented; however, from this point forward, there is limited press coverage (Morris, 1971, p. 86). As one resident stated, "I guess when we quit lynching people the press lost interest" (personal communication, April 5, 2002).

Civil rights were grossly and flagrantly violated in Mississippi and federal laws were ignored (*Ayers v. Fordice*, 1997; Goldfield, 1990, Sansing, 1990, Silver, 1964). In 1973, the *Adams vs. Richardson* case noted that between January 1969, and February 1970, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) concluded that Mississippi (along with nine other states) was operating a racially segregated system of higher education in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Each state was

required to submit a desegregation plan in 120 days. Mississippi ignored the order and did not submit a plan. In 1975, Jake Ayers filed a lawsuit stating Mississippi had maintained the racially segregated post secondary education system in violation of the Fifth, Ninth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Amendments, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (USCCR, p. 56). The United States joined the case, and it became the *United States vs. Fordice* (Hawkins, 2003). The case was settled out of court 27 years later in February 2002; however, it is once again, under appeal (Hawkins, 2003).

Three major players heavily influenced the outcome of those turbulent years in Mississippi—the Governor, the President of the United States, and Mississippi’s secret police, and the Sovereignty Commission. Each has a powerful influence on the outcome of events.

### **The Governor**

Paul B. Johnson, governor of Mississippi in 1964, stated, one week after the bodies of civil rights workers had been found in an earthen dam in Philadelphia, Mississippi, “Integration is like Prohibition. If the people don’t want it, a whole army can’t enforce it.” Wicker (1996) also attributes Johnson as explaining, “No Mississippian, including state officials, had any obligation to obey the Civil Rights Act of 1964” (Wicker, 1996, p. 12). Johnson was successful in using delay tactics and political subterfuge to hold integration at bay for many years (Sansing, 1990).

## **The President of the United States**

In a radio and television report to the nation on the situation at the University of Mississippi, President John F. Kennedy made the following statement on September 30, 1962.

Mr. James Meredith is now in residence on the campus of the University of Mississippi. I deeply regret the fact that any action by the executive branch was necessary in this case, but all other avenues and alternatives, including persuasion and conciliation, had been tried and exhausted. Had the police powers of Mississippi been used to support the orders of the court, instead of deliberately and unlawfully blocking them, had the University of Mississippi fulfilled its standard of excellence by quietly admitting this applicant in conformity with what so many other southern State universities have done for so many years, a peaceable and sensible solution would have been possible without any Federal intervention. (Radio and television report to the nation on the situation at the University of Mississippi, JFK Library)

## **The Sovereignty Commission and the White Citizens Council**

In 1957, the Sovereignty Commission was founded by the Mississippi State Legislature with the stated purpose of protecting the State of Mississippi from the Federal Government” (Doyle, 2001). The Commission controlled the police, the media, and the state government; leading the state’s resistance against school segregation and the Civil Rights Movement by gathering information on civil rights activists and conducting activities to oppose desegregation. The commission maintained lists of civil rights activists and supporters, infiltrated civil rights organizations, and shared lists of names of suspected civil rights leaders with law enforcement officials (Doyle, 2001).

The Sovereignty Commission was one of the darkest blots on Mississippi history, a “thought police agency” that violated the most basic concepts of American democracy. For almost two decades it operated as a “private Gestapo” . . . using public

funds for “cloak-and-dagger investigations” that develop into character assassinations (Doyle, 2001, p. 55).

The Citizens Council, lead by the wealthy, well educated, world traveler, Bill Simmons, was the “most powerful and feared political organization in Mississippi” (Doyle, 2001, p. 57). The Council, unlike the Klan, opposed violence, attracted prominent community leaders, and proclaimed its purpose was to “preserve racial integrity” and protect state’s rights (p. 57). Doyle reported that the Citizens Council was known to sponsor radio and TV shows and propaganda mailings. The Council also kept files on White citizens to help eradicate dissent” (p. 58). The organizations the Council listed as subversive were the FBI, the Methodist Church, the Department of the Air Force, and the YMCA (Doyle, 2001). The Council controlled state newspapers and television stations; slanted coverage or no coverage of civil rights issues was all that was allowed (p. 59). “The Council members threatened dissenting Whites with economic boycotts and had dissenting Blacks fired from their jobs, tossed off their farms, and harassed by banks and utility companies” (p. 59). Federal Judge John Wisdom described Mississippi as living in an “eerie atmosphere of Never-Never Land” (p. 60).

In 1977 the Sovereignty Commission was abolished and the records were sealed until 2027. The courts have since ordered the files opened (Afro-American Almanac, 2002). With the opening of those files, and the state posting much of the content on the Internet, there may be an end to the *closed society*.

## **Enrollment Data**

At the time of the U. S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decision in the Meredith v. Fair, 298 F.2d 696 (5<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1962), the Board of Trustees, contrary to the mandate of Brown v. Board of Education, supra, continued to operate racially dual systems of higher education. At least until October 1962, enrollment at each of the eight public institutions was limited in accordance with the respective historic racial designation—that is, there were no Black students attending any of the historically White universities and no White students enrolled at the historically Black colleges (United States v. Fordice, 1992).

United States v. Fordice (1992) holds, “Twelve years after Brown v. Board of Education, Mississippi’s public university system remained segregated . . . MSU, MUW, USM, and DSU each admitted at least one Black student during these years, but the student composition of these institutions was almost completely White” (p. 1017). Justice White continues, “By the mid 1980s . . . 99% of Mississippi’s White students were enrolled at [the HWIs] UM, MSU, USM, DSU, and MUW averaging between 80-91% White [students], 71% of the states’ Black students attended JSU, ASU, and MVSU and were [serving] 92-99% Black [students]” (p. 1017).

In 1964, two years, after James Meredith was admitted to the HWI, the University of Mississippi, “Ole Miss,” a second Black male student was admitted under court order (Silver, 1964). Mississippi’s five public HWIs desegregated slowly as is indicated by this timeline: the University of Mississippi (UM) in 1962, Mississippi State University (MSU) in 1965; Mississippi University for Women (MUW); Delta State

University (DSU) in 1966; and University of Southern Mississippi (USM) in 1967. Mississippi's HBIs enrolled their first White students in the following order: Alcorn State University (ASU) in 1966, Jackson State University (JSU) in 1969, and Mississippi Valley State University in 1970 (United States v. Fordice, \*1529, p. 7).

The U.S. Census Bureau released school enrollment population reports covering the years 1965 to 1979 show that in 1965, 148,000 Black women were enrolled in American colleges. By 1979, that number had increased to 568,000; in comparison, 1.9 million White women were enrolled in college in 1965, and 4.3 million in 1979 (Census, 2001). The NCES (1996) report on Black female fall enrollment in Mississippi documents steady increases in enrollment at all of Mississippi's colleges from 1976-1994.

### **Demographics**

Before the Civil War, Doyle (2001) writes, Mississippi was "once among the wealthiest members of the Union" (p. 2). During reconstruction (1865-1876), Black voters outnumbered Whites, and many African Americans held local, state, and national elected office (p. 2).

[a] backlash erupted in 1875, and Democratic-Party activist linked up with remnants of the Ku Klux Klan to unleash a wave of riots and terror against Blacks. . . . a culture of unrestrained violence against Blacks flourished; from 1882 to 1952, recorded lynching of African Americans in Mississippi totaled 534, more than in any other state. (p. 3)

Doyle (2001) noted, "The sharecropping system held most Blacks and many poor Whites in economic bondage for decades to come" (p. 3). Sansing (1990) observed, that Mississippi's racial discrimination policy kept over half of its citizens from

becoming productive, stagnated the economy, industrialization, and urbanization. In 1960, Mississippi's \$1,233 per capita income qualified it as the poorest state in the union with the highest proportion, 43%, of Black citizens (Doyle, 2001).

The demographics of America's poorest state quite possibly contribute to what Silver (1964) refers to as the "closed society;" 75% of Mississippi's residents were born in Mississippi, and 25% receive public assistance. The ethnic breakdown of the state's 2.8 million people is: 1.7 million White, 1 million Black, 11,000 American Indians, 18,000 Asians, and 40,000 Hispanic/Latinos (Census, 2000).

The current poverty and educational levels in Mississippi have had a significant economic impact: 16% of 16 to 19-year-olds are high school dropouts; the median family income is \$31,953; 18% of families live in poverty; 37% of female householder families are below the poverty level; and of people 25 years and older, only 74% graduated from high school (Census, 2000).

## **Education**

Mississippi's higher education system was segregated by race from 1848, until 1962. Earle Johnston, former director of The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, wrote: "no state fought harder than Mississippi after Brown to thwart integration and discourage Blacks from enrolling in all White public schools" (United States Commission on Civil Rights [USCCR], p. 8). However, colleges can, according to Ravitch (1983),

Preserve democracy, eliminate poverty, lower the crime rate, enrich the common culture, reduce unemployment, ease the assimilation of immigrants to the nation, overcome differences between ethnic and racial groups . . . and guide returning students into useful and skilled careers. (p. xxi)

Mississippi's higher education community felt that part of the state's post secondary educational needs were being met by its 15 community colleges; and that even though they were segregated in the early 1960s, there were academic opportunities for minority students.

Mississippi has an 80-year history of commitment to community colleges as the first state to establish a system of public community colleges with the opening of the state's first college in 1922. Currently, this network of 15 institutions offers both college transfer and workforce training, and the colleges are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Mississippi Commission on College Accreditation. (State Board of Community and Junior Colleges [SBCJC], 2001, p. v) Two of those 15 community colleges are HBIs—Coahoma Community College and Hinds Community College (Utica).

Presently, over 60% of Mississippi's high school graduates who attend college do so at a community college and perform at a par with native students at the 4-year institution (Mississippi's Public Community and Junior Colleges 2000-2001 Statistical Data, p. v). Mississippi's community colleges offer more than 150 occupational training programs, a variety of continuing education classes, and community and public service activities (p. v).

## **College Choice**

Higher education is an investment in human capital (DeYoung, 1989) and considered “an escalator for disadvantaged groups” (Hossler, Schmidt, & Vesper, 1999, pp. 3-5). College graduates are good citizens that vote, assume leadership roles, use technology, are less likely to be involved in criminal activities, and are a good investment for the community (Hossler et al., p. 5). However, Hossler et al. (1999) write, “The rate of return to individuals is influenced by non-egalitarian factors such as students’ family background, their choice of major, the status of the college they attend, their ethnicity, and their gender (p. 5).

Zemsky and Oedel (1983) propose that college choice is a family affair, with parents’ choices reflecting the limits of family income and students’ choices leaning toward peer pressure and the need for a sense of social belonging; but when all things were considered, the student had the largest voice in the deciding where to enroll (p. 29).

McDonough (1997) describes three basic approaches to the study of college choice decision-making influences. First are social psychological studies that examine the impact of social climate, cost, location, and others on student choices. Second are economic studies that view college choice as an investment and assume that students conduct a cost-benefit analysis, with perfect information, in a rational manner. The last approach is the “sociological status attainment study that analyzes the impact of the individual’s social status on the development of aspirations for educational attainment and measures inequalities in college access” (p. 3).

One longitudinal sample indicated that of the 1980 class seniors, 90% were admitted to their first choice college (McDonough, 1997, p. 3). However Carter (2001) noted that African American students do not attend their first choice institution at the same rate as White students (p. 59). This was true in Mississippi in the 1960s and early 1970s. “Freedom of Choice” plans were devised as a token effort at compliance. Black parents feared exposing their children to the dangers and tensions of being pioneers in school desegregation” (Meier et al. 1989, pp. 46-47).

Carter (2001) suggests that measures related to choice include the reputation of the institutional, relative closeness to home, and whether the selected institution was less expensive than other institutions (p. 59). Boyd (1980) identifies the top three characteristics Black students considered important in their choice of colleges. In 1973, students ranked financial aid as the most important factor, proximity to home, and academic reputation were ranked second and third respectively. In 1977, the order of importance was reversed, and academic reputation was considered most important to Black students, followed by financial aid and proximity to home. The participants of this study raised some of these same issues. This will be addressed in the final chapter of this study.

Manski and Wise (1983) believe that high school students choose among a discrete set of school and non-school alternatives (p. 105). In this model students going to school figure opportunity cost in foregone wages, the direct costs of tuition and living expenses, value of scholarships, and the school performance standards. In the non-

school model students choose work, the military, and homemaking as alternatives (p. 106).

Hossler and Gallagher (1987) developed a college choice model that examines “how students go about realizing their educational aspirations.” The three stages in this college choice model are the predisposition stage, the search stage, and the choice stage (p. 9). The study of the predisposition stage examines which individuals, background characteristics, or high school experiences help the student become interested in attending college. The search stage refers to how the student discovers and evaluates colleges for consideration. In the final stage students must choose from the colleges under consideration (Hossler et al, 1999, p. 21).

Hossler et al. (1999) found that as academic ability and socioeconomic status increased so did the number of colleges being considered (p. 9). Hood (1968) determined that students consider cost, quality of student body, curriculum, size, religious affiliation, geographical location, prestige, living accommodations, social life, athletics, financial aid, and social and intellectual attitudes of the students before deciding where to attend college (p. 4). Hossler et al. and Hood agree that the choice of a college is an important but often haphazard decision, often made under pressure from parents or peers, and without complete information. The findings in later chapters indicate the factors that were relevant for the participants of this study.

The literature review provides a timeline of the major cultural, social, and political issues that changed college choices in the United States. Mississippi was different from the national norm, and it is important for the reader to understand how

difficult college choice decisions were in the 1960s and 1970s if a Black student wanted to enroll in an HWI. The literature on college choice provides a broad foundation for the study of choice; however, for Black women in Mississippi, it would be difficult to use any system that did not include narratives, life histories or some qualitative inquiry to “tell the story.”

## Chapter Three: Methodology

### Introduction

Operating from a feminist, critical theory paradigm, the researcher used narrative life histories of the women participants to “record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions—their authority, knowledge, and wisdom” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. xv). Thus creating “. . . a narrative that is at once complex, provocative, and inviting, that attempts to be holistic, revealing the dynamic interaction of values, personality, structure, and history” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 11).

Richardson’s study in *Fields of Play* (as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2002) uses a format she refers to as pleated text, defined as, “traditional and experimental papers written over a period of 10 years folded between writing-stories . . . the pleats can be spread open at any point, folded back, unfurled” (p. 40). The idea of unfolding the statistical data to expose the story beneath the surface appealed to this researcher.

Mertens (1998), in defense of historical research states, “Scholars who write about the lives of oppressed people emphasize the importance of an understanding of the historical, cultural, social, and economic conditions surrounding an event” (p. 195). Reinharz (as cited in Mertens, 1998, p. 195) notes “. . . historical research was especially important for feminists because it draws women out of obscurity and repairs the historical record in which women are largely absent.”

The study, through the use of focus groups and interviews, documents the social, political, and cultural factors that influenced Mississippi’s Black women’s college

choices. The research group was restricted to 12 sets of mother and daughter pairs who attended college in Mississippi during 1962-2002. The study begins in 1962, when Mississippi admitted its first Black student, James Meredith, into the all White, University of Mississippi (Ole Miss).

Some of the mothers included in the study chose to attend historically Black colleges (HBIs), and some were among the first Black women to enroll in Mississippi's historically White colleges (HWIs). Some of the daughters chose to attend HBIs, and some chose to attend HWIs, some were traditional students, and some were non-traditional students. Several of the daughters chose to begin their academic career at a community college, and several went straight to a university. By studying the motivating factors that influenced the mothers' and daughters' choices, we give voice to these women and offer a better understanding of the changes that took place over the last 40 years in the Mississippi higher education system.

### **Overview of the IQA Research Flow**

Qualitative data were collected using the Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) method—a system that identifies the elements (social, cultural, and political factors) of a phenomenon (choosing a college), describes the relationships among the elements, draws conclusions, and analyzes the effects of outside influences (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The purpose of using IQA was to develop a systematic description, from the participants, of their experiences in choosing a college and for the researcher to compare the results of the mothers' experiences to the results of the daughters' experiences.

Women were selected from rural, suburban, and urban parts of the state, and the study was limited to the experiences of two generations of Mississippi's African American college women. The study specifically included the perspective of African American women who were among the first to attend (1962-1974) HWIs, followed, 20 years later, with the perspective of their daughters, Mississippi's next generation (1975-2002) of African American college women. The researcher used focus groups and individual interviews to capture a small portion of the life history of the participants.

There are four phases in an IQA study. The first phase was designing the study to clarify the research questions being studied and to identify participants who would have knowledge relevant to the study. The next step was to conduct focus groups to identify the affinities that "represent the group's experience with the phenomenon" (p. 44) and create a mind map representing the affinities relationships to each other.

The third phase of this IQA study was to conduct individual interviews with participants to add depth and richness to the descriptions of the affinities. The individual interviews were analyzed, coded into axial and theoretical code tables, and system influence design (SID) or mind maps were prepared for each participant. Using the individual interview transcripts, the researcher was able to create a composite set of tables and SIDs for both the mothers and daughters (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The final stage of an IQA study is to conduct a comparison among systems and individuals, and make inferences or predictions based on the system.

The flow chart below outlines the typical IQA Research Flow.

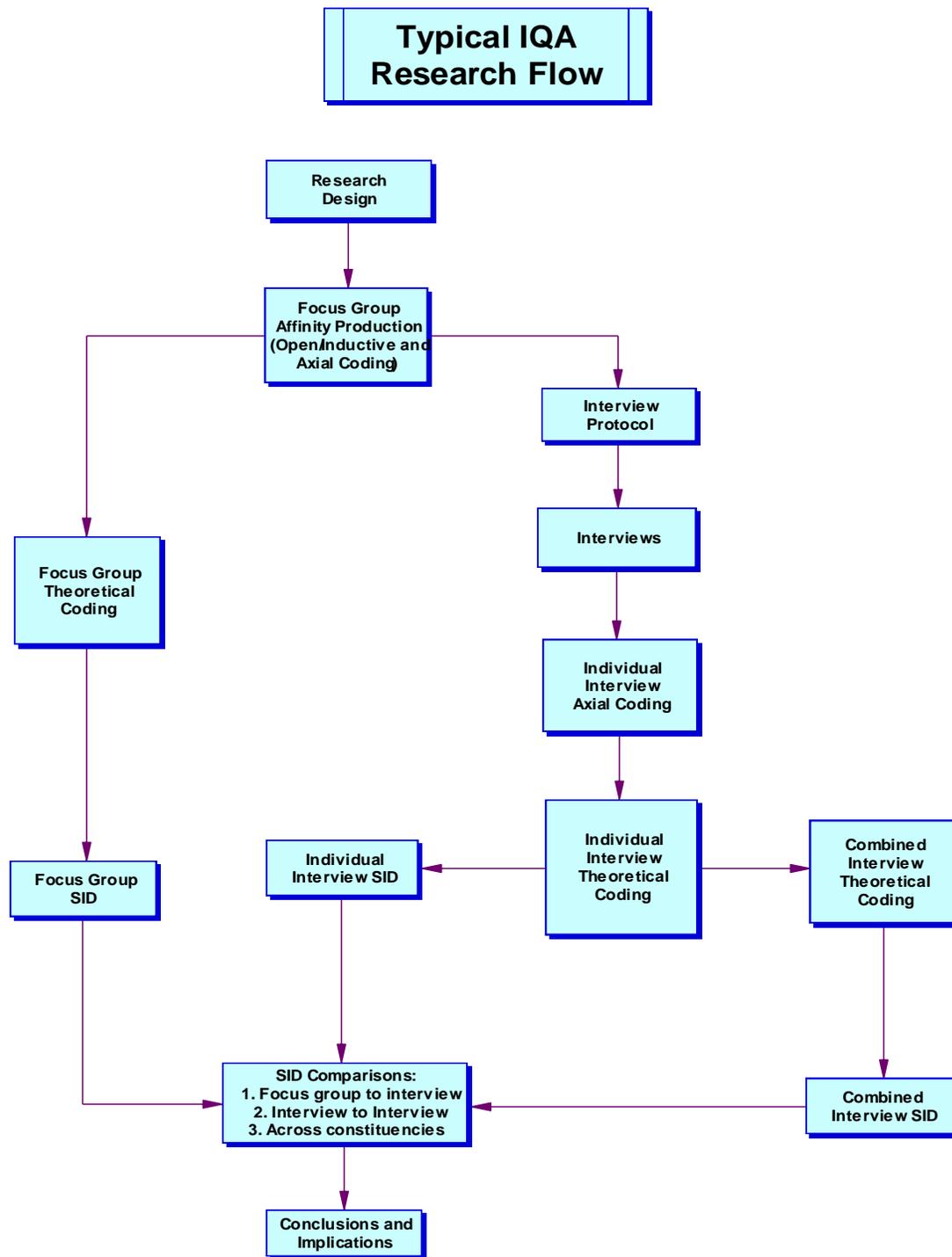


Figure 3.1. Typical IQA Research Flow

**IQA research design.** Quantitative data were collected to establish the level of participation of Black students in historically White institutions (HWI) and college in general. Qualitative data were collected using focus groups and individual interviews.

***Quantitative data collection.*** The researcher collected historical enrollment data from federal, state, and institutional archives, and current enrollment figures were available via the World Wide Web.

***Qualitative data collection.*** The Interactive Qualitative Analysis (IQA) method is a system that studies elements, and relationships among the elements, to provide an understanding of a phenomenon. Understanding a system requires identifying the elements, describing the relationships among the elements, understanding how the elements and relationships interact, interpreting the system, making inferences, analyzing the effects of outside influences, and comparing two or more systems (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

The purpose of using the IQA method was to develop a systematic description, from the participants, of their experiences in choosing a college. The use of focus groups, brainstorming, and individual one-on-one interviews, allowed the researcher to understand how a group views a particular phenomenon.

This technique is grounded in the theoretical principles of the Total Quality Management (TQM) process. Northcutt and McCoy (2004) describe IQA:

IQA is designed to capture knowledge from organizational members to solve problems and improve processes. IQA data collection and coding techniques assist group members in describing and labeling their experiences, and the relationships among these experiences, to produce a theory in perception or a conceptual map which is a systems representation of how a person or a group understands a particular phenomenon. (p. 81)

The next step in the process was to clarify the research questions during the literature review phase of the study. Focus Groups and participants were identified for inclusion in the study.

**Subjects.** The female subjects were selected based on their participation in college, their daughters' participation in college, and the type of institution, i.e. HBI or HWI, they attended. The study was limited to the experiences of two generations of Mississippi's African American women, specifically seeking to include the perspective of African American women who were among the first to attend an HWI (1962-1972) and their counterparts at HBIs. Following that is the perspective of the next generation (1973-2002) of African American college women. Stanfield observed (as cited in Mertens, 1998, pp. 195-196):

. . . for the creation of qualitative research methods indigenous to the experiences of African Americans and other people of color . . . [research] should be based on oral communication . . . grounded in holistic notions of human beings . . . and should incorporate the use of historical documents, participant observation, and oral history to allow people of color to articulate holistic explanations about how they construct reality.

Through the use of focus groups and narrative, oral history interviews, the essence of the two eras, and the determinants of college choice were captured.

**Group realities: IQA focus group.**

*Identification of factors.* To identify the factors that influenced college choices, the researcher met with the focus group and assisted them in organizing their thoughts about their college experience. This was accomplished by using the silent nominal brainstorming method described below.

*Silent nominal brainstorming phase.* Individuals in the focus groups silently brainstormed by writing individual thoughts and reflections on index cards using single words or short phrases regarding the issue statement. The process was silent to remove influence and pressure, thus “ensuring authenticity and individuality of thoughts and reflections” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 91).

*Clarification of meaning phase.* After the silent nominal brainstorming phase, focus group members taped their cards to the wall, and the facilitator guided the clarification process by asking what each card meant, therefore, establishing a “socially constructed, shared meaning of each card among members of the group” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 94).

*Affinity grouping (inductive coding).* Participants were asked to study the cards and resort them according to a pattern or theme, seeking commonalities and clusters. The cards were moved by any of the participants and resorted many times until everyone was satisfied. The purpose of this activity was to have the focus group categorize the affinities into a general theme.

***Affinity naming (axial coding).*** When all the cards were clustered together under one theme, the participants developed a label for each category. The labels became the “affinities” used in the individual participant interviews and throughout the rest of the study. Subcategories were defined as needed to clarify a large topic or theme. After the participants named the affinities, a brief description of each affinity was prepared. The description included more detail about the affinity, clarifying what the affinity was and was not, compared any differences between affinities, and provided further elaboration (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

***Identifying relationships (theoretical coding).*** Theoretical coding is a process that determines the cause-and-effect relationships among the affinities in a systematic process. This process is created by using a “formal protocol to determine whether or not there is a direct influence or relationship between every possible pair of affinities in the system” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 149). The first stage of this activity was done during the interview process using an Affinity Relationship Table (ART). Later, the researcher was able to create an Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) and a System Influence Diagram (SID), based on the relationships identified in the ART.

***Focus group affinity relationship table (ART).*** To create the ART the facilitator asked the focus group which affinity was the driver, or caused the reaction or effect on the other affinity. Systematically, the researcher asked the group to “determine the nature of the relationship between all possible pairs of affinities. For any two affinities, A and B, there are only three possible relationships, A influences B, B influences A, or

there is no direct influence between A and B” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 151). An example of a focus group ART is provided to demonstrate how to code the relationships.

Table 3.1

*Affinity Relationship Table*

<u>Affinity Name</u>	<u>Possible Relationships</u>
1. Mississippi	A → B
2. Civil Rights	A ← B
3. Location to Home	A ◇ B (No Relationship)
4. Influencers	
5. Finances	
6. Limited Opportunities	
7. Support System	

<u>Affinity Pair Relationship</u>	<u>Affinity Pair Relationship</u>
1 ← 2	4 ◇ 5
1 ◇ 3	4 ◇ 6
1 ◇ 4	4 ◇ 7
1 ◇ 5	5 ← 6
1 → 6	5 ◇ 7
1 ← 7	6 ← 7
2 ◇ 3	
2 → 4	
2 → 5	
2 → 6	
2 → 7	
3 → 4	
3 ◇ 5	
3 ◇ 6	
3 ◇ 7	

For example 1 ← 2 means that affinity 2—parents, drive or cause affinity 1—college choice (effect). This is backed up by a quote from a participant, “My parents wouldn’t let me go to Ole Miss because they didn’t think it was safe.” In another

example  $1 \langle \rangle 3$  means that the interviewee stated that Affinity 1—*college choice* has no relationship to Affinity 3—*Civil Rights Act*, “Just because the law passed didn’t mean we could go there” (p. 151).

After constructing each interviewee’s responses into these tables it was easy for the researcher to count how many respondents said  $1 \langle \rangle 3$ , or  $1 \leftarrow 2$  and tabulate the responses. When the focus group did not agree they voted on the direction of the arrow. The next step in the IQA process was to develop a diagram of the relationships between affinities. The tool used to construct the diagram is the Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) and is explained below.

***Constructing the focus group interrelationship diagram (IRD).*** By linking each possible pair of affinities based on the responses of the participants, the researcher determined the strength of an affinity and the power of its influence on the phenomenon. The power or strength of the affinity was recorded on an Interrelationship Diagram (IRD). Relationships were charted in the IRD as reflected in the Affinity Relationship Table (ART). Arrows face left or up and each relationship was recorded twice in the IRD. The arrows were then sorted and calculated to determine the delta. The rules for calculating deltas are as follows: Count the number of up arrows ( $\uparrow$ ) or Outs, count the number of left arrows ( $\leftarrow$ ) or Ins, subtract the number of Ins from the Outs to determine the ( $\Delta$ ) Deltas  $\Delta = \text{Outs} - \text{Ins}$ , when this is completed sort the IRD in descending order by the delta column (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
1		↑	←	←		↑	←	←	←	2	5	-3
2	←		↑	←	←	↑	←	↑	←	3	5	-2
3	↑	←		←	←	↑	←	←	←	2	6	-4
4	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑	←	↑	↑	7	1	6
5		↑	↑	←		↑	←	↑	↑	5	2	3
6	←	←	←	←	↑		←	←	←	1	7	-6
7	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑	8	0	8
8	↑	←	↑	←	↑	↑	←		↑	5	3	2
9	↑	↑	↑	←	↑	↑	←	↑		6	2	4

Figure 3.2. Sample Tabular IRD

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
7	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑	8	0	8
4	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑	←	↑	↑	7	1	6
9	↑	↑	↑	←	↑	↑	←	↑		6	2	4
5		↑	↑	←		↑	←	↑	↑	5	2	3
8	↑	←	↑	←	↑	↑	←		↑	5	3	2
2	←		↑	←	←	↑	←	↑	←	3	5	-2
1		↑	←	←		↑	←	←	←	2	5	-3
3	↑	←		←	←	↑	←	←	←	2	6	-4
6	←	←	←	←	↑		←	←	←	1	7	-6

Figure 3.3. Sample Tabular IRD Sorted in Descending Order By Delta

The order and value of delta determine if the affinity is a driver or an outcome, and to what degree. The tentative SID Assignments Table represents the initial placement of affinities for the SID. “An affinity marked by a high positive delta or number resulting from many Outs but no Ins is a primary driver—a significant cause that affects many other affinities, but is not affected by others. Any affinity that has no Ins is always a primary driver” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 173).

The Secondary driver is a relative cause or influence on affinities in the system, and there are more Outs than Ins. The Circular Pivot occurs when there are equal numbers of Ins and Outs. The Secondary Outcome has more Ins than Outs, and a Primary Outcome has a high negative number that results from many Ins but no Outs: a significant effect that is caused by many of the affinities, but does not affect others. Any Affinity with no outs is always a Primary Outcome (p. 173). An example from one of the actual focus groups used in the study is provided below.

Table 3.2

*Focus Group Tentative SID Assignments*

<b>2</b>	Primary Driver
<b>3</b>	Primary Driver
<b>7</b>	Secondary Driver
<b>1</b>	Secondary Driver
<b>6</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>4</b>	Primary Outcome
<b>5</b>	Primary Outcome

Once the drivers and outcomes were tentatively assigned, the researcher began to build the System Influence Diagram (SID). The process is explained below.

***Constructing a system influence diagram (SID).*** The IQA method allows the researcher to draw a picture or a mind map of the phenomenon. To create this mind map, or System Influence Diagram (SID), the researcher draws a picture by a set of rules that allows for “rationalization of the summary of the theoretical codes” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 149) created by the focus group and based on the IRD. Northcutt and McCoy state, “The System Influence Diagram (SID) is a visual representation of an

entire system of influences and outcomes, and is created by representing the information present in the IRD as a system of affinities and relationships (p. 174). The SID, according to Northcutt and McCoy, “allows one to see vividly how the system maintains its dynamics and where a system might be influenced to change its outcomes; it also highlights relationships among affinities that might be responsible for a system’s dynamics” (p. 176).

**Steps to build the SID.** To build an SID the researcher placed affinities in text boxes in an oval pattern, working from left to right according to the tentative SID assignment chart created in the IRD. The Primary Drivers were to the far left and Primary Outcomes to the far right. The Secondary Drivers and Secondary Outcomes were placed between the primaries (p. 176) as shown in this example.

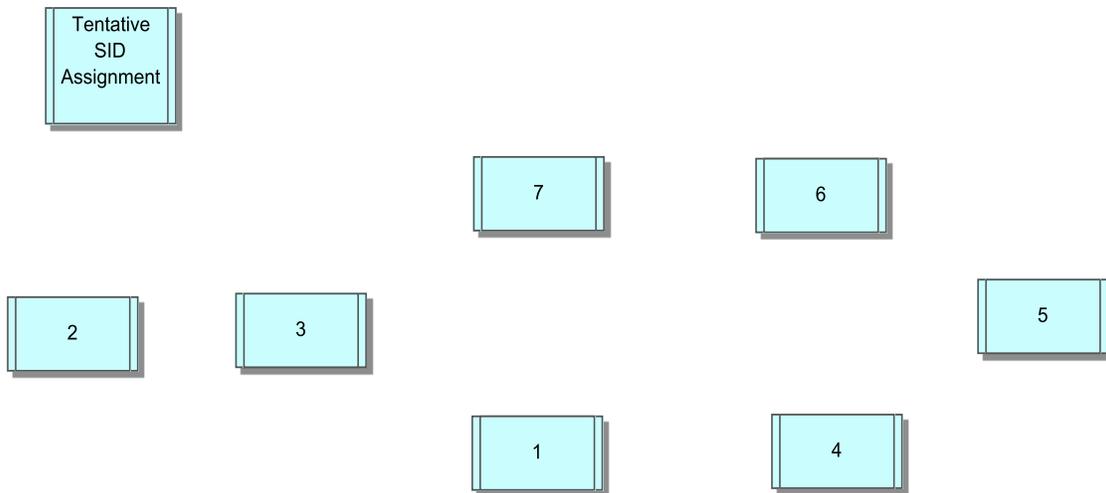
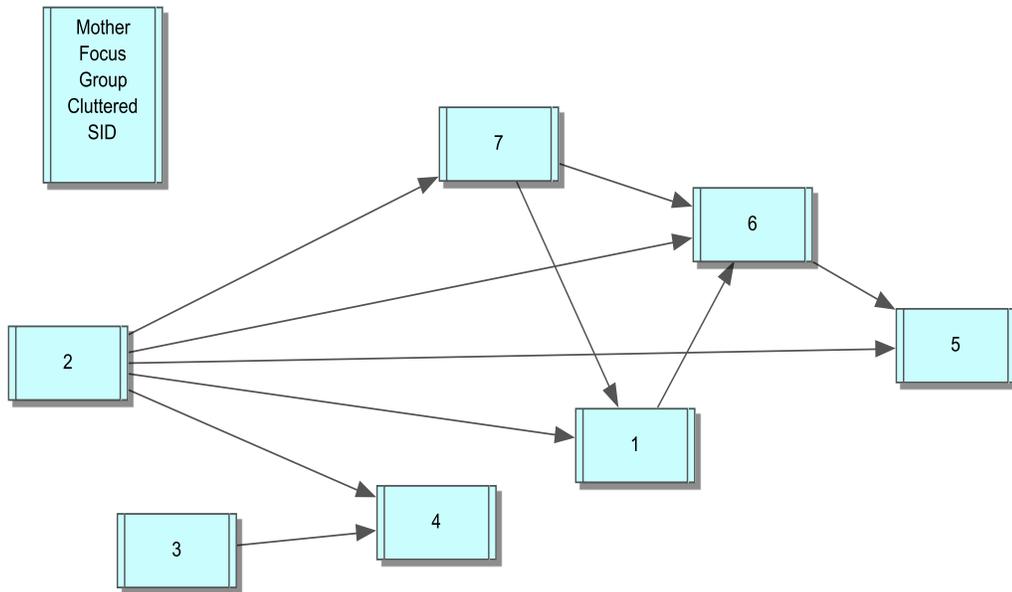


Figure 3.4. SID Assignment

The researcher, using the mind mapping software program Inspiration, drew arrows from the cause affinity to the effect affinity, working from left to right. This

created a saturated, or cluttered SID containing every link present in the IRD (See example-Cluttered SID).



*Figure 3.5. Focus Group Cluttered SID*

The cluttered or saturated SID is just that, it is cluttered and saturated with lines, making the mind map difficult to interpret. By removing redundant links the SID became easier to use to interpret the meaning and recognize the implications. Below is the uncluttered version of the previous SID.

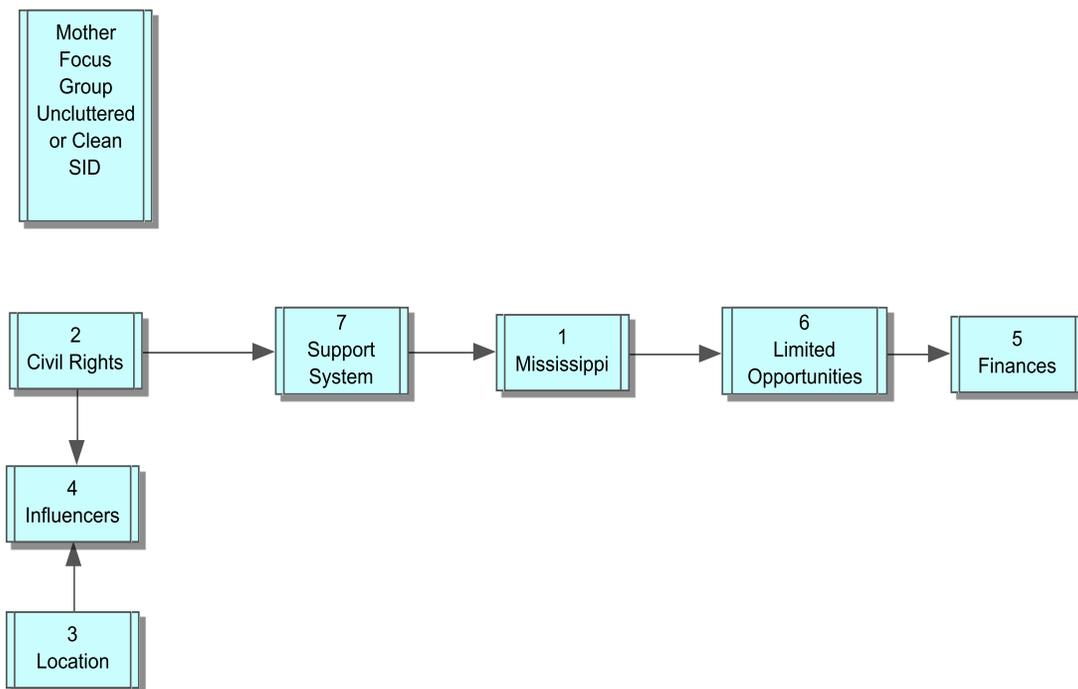


Figure 3.6. Uncluttered or Clean SID example

The Clean SID allowed the researcher to compare the phenomenon, and analyze implications and applications in a simplified and manageable format.

**Individual realities: IQA interviews.** The researcher used the affinities created by the focus group as a structural outline to create an interview protocol. The purpose of the individual interview was to develop richer data that explained the interrelationship of the affinities. Just like the focus group interview, there are two sections of an IQA individual interview—the Axial and the Theoretical interview.

**Axial interview.** The Axial phase of an IQA interview is characterized by open-ended questions and a “series of dialogues in which each dialogue opens with the interviewer asking the participant, ‘Tell me what this affinity means to you’ (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 200). While listening to the interviewee, the researcher is listening

for what “caused the affinity or what might have resulted from the affinity,” and can make “clarifying or confirming statements to ensure understanding” (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, pp. 201-207). In the example below the affinity in question is “Instructor’s Style,” notice that the researcher highlights the affinity title **instructor’s style** for easy retrieval of relevant comments made by the respondent.

### Sample of an Axial Interview

L	We’re going to be talking about the affinities that were identified in the first focus group and the first affinity that we are going to talk about is <b>instructor’s style</b> . This affinity is described as how the teacher interacted with the class. Can you tell me about the <b>instructor’s style</b> ?
7	Yes, I would think of the <b>instructor’s style</b> of being his humor, his focus, his ability to control the class, to maintain order; all those types of things.

*Theoretical interview.* After exploring the personal meaning, relevance, and life history examples of each affinity with the participant, the theoretical phase of the IQA interview was conducted, was more structured, and explored perceived relationships among the affinities (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The respondents had a copy of the Affinity Relationship Table (ART) to guide the interview. This portion of the interview asked the respondents to determine if there was a relationship between the elements of each pair of affinities. If a relationship was established, then the researcher used clarifying statements to determine the direction of the relationship for coding purposes.

In the example below the interviewer is asking the participant to explain the relationship between two affinities: **Application to Dissertation and Cognitive Reaction**. Note that by bolding key phrases in the interview, it is much easier to track or find relevant responses.

### Sample of Theoretical Interview

L The first affinity that we're going to look at is affinity one; **application towards dissertation**. Would you define the relationship between that and affinity two, cognitive reaction?

7 Well, I would say that because I understood the **IQA** method and it became pretty clear to me, I would say that was a deciding factor in choosing it for a **dissertation** method, so I would say that two definitely implies one. That my understanding and **comprehension** of the material . . . if I hadn't understood it, in a confusing semester, there's no way I would've thought of it as a **dissertation** method.

*Conducting the interviews.* The interviews were conducted to capture quotes to describe the affinities and explain relationships, and were held in Mississippi or over the phone. The mothers' focus group interview took place in a meeting room at a hotel in Jackson, Mississippi. The participants were attendees of a teachers' conference in the same hotel. The daughters' focus group was conducted on the campus of Coahoma Community College in the northwest region of Mississippi, generally referred to as the Delta. The individual mothers' interviews took place in either their home or at a small middle school in southwest Mississippi. The individual daughters' interviews took place in a variety of places including over the phone, on the campus of their college, or at their mothers' homes.

The interviewer began the interview by establishing a rapport with the interviewee, explaining confidentiality and the agreement to record the interview. The interviewee was provided a list of the affinities and an ART for reference during the interview. The interview was set up so the transcript could be quickly scanned to find the data needed. By using the words "Tell me about XX affinity," it quickly identified the affinities in the axial section. By saying the numbers pairs along with the affinities

made it easier to find the theoretical relationships when studying the transcripts later (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, pp. 207-211).

**Group realities: IQA combined interviews.**

*Data analysis.* The purpose of the individual interviews was to give a detailed description of each respondent's perception of, and experience with the phenomenon, and to add to the richness and depth of the affinities. The transcripts of the individual interviews were compiled into one, combined mothers' set of data, and one combined daughters' set of data for comparison using Axial and Theoretical Coding techniques available to researchers using the IQA method.

*Interview analysis.* Analysis of the individual interviews required creating a method to handle the large amount of relevant data. The IQA method allowed the researcher to compile the relevant quotes from each individual interview into manageable tables using the Individual Interview Axial Code Tables and the Individual Interview Theoretical Code Tables.

**Axial coding.** Axial coding seeks to name, reorganize, clarify, and refine the affinities (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). The comments relevant to the affinity are cut and pasted from the individual interview transcript into the Axial Code Table as shown below. The far right column is for the researcher to make notes or comments.

Table 3.3

*Interview Axial Code Table*

Affinity	Transcript Line	Axial Quotation	Researcher Notes
1. Application towards Dissertation	85	It has definitely laid to rest fears that you have about a <b>dissertation</b> and what research is and how you conduct it. The <b>IQA</b> method is very appealing. It's clearly understood. It would be a very nice method to follow.	The respondent understands IQA and finds it appealing but will investigate Quantitative before deciding.

The researcher identifies axial codes by highlighting key words that describe an affinity and that phrase is placed in an axial code table with the corresponding transcript line, affinity name, and a place for the researcher's notes.

**Theoretical coding.** The researcher questioned the participants to determine the relationship between two or more affinities. The transcript was studied line by line to find phrases or statements that illustrate a link between affinities (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). When those comments were captured from the interview, they were pasted into the Theoretical Code Affinity Relationship Table as shown below. This system makes the data manageable and comparable. Below is an example of this process.

**Excerpt from the Interview of Respondent 7**

Line	The first affinity that we're going to look at is affinity one—application towards <b>dissertation</b> . Would you say that drives the relationship between application towards dissertation and affinity two, cognitive reaction.
7	Well, I would say that because I understood the <b>IQA</b> method and it became pretty clear to me, I would say that it was a deciding factor in choosing it for a <b>dissertation</b> method, so I would say that two definitely implies one. That my understanding and <b>comprehension</b> of the material; if I hadn't understood it, in a confusing semester, there's no way I would've thought of it as a <b>dissertation</b> method.

Table 3.4

*Interview Theoretical Code Affinity Relationship Table*

Affinity Pair Relationship	Line Number	Theoretical Quotation	Researcher Notes
1 < 2	142	Because I understood the <b>IQA</b> method and it became pretty clear to me, I would say that it was a deciding factor in choosing it for a <b>dissertation</b> method,	
1 <> 3			Stated no relationship
1 <> 4			Stated no relationship

When all the interviews were coded, the data were summarized and combined to represent a composite of the groups’ experiences with the phenomenon. This was done by counting “the number of respondents who identified the relationship in the same direction and placing the tally in the frequency column.” The same was done for all respondents who identified the relationship in the opposite direction and those totals were tallied in the frequency column (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 271).

**Sample of Combined Theoretical Coding Summary**

<p><b>Affinity Name</b>          Application towards Dissertation          Cognitive Reaction (Dialectic) / Comprehension          Collaboration          Communication</p>	<p><b>Possible Relationships</b>          A → B          A ← B          A &lt;&gt; B (No Relationship)          A ? B (Possible Recursion)</p>
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**(Provided by Dr. Northcutt in Class via Email)**

Each individual Interview Theoretical Code Table was examined, and the frequency of each relationship was tallied in the table below. Each affinity pair was examined to determine the direction of the relationship. An overwhelming majority (Pareto Principle rule of thumb is 80%) of frequency determined the direction of the

relationship. Codes were examined for conflicts (e.g., 1→4 and 4←1) where the frequencies were close in number. The affinity pair was flagged as “?” for consideration as a recursion.

Table 3.5

*Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table*

Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Theoretical Code	Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Theoretical Code
1 → 2	6		4 → 6	13	
1 ← 2	18		4 ← 6	9	
1 → 3	3		4 → 7	2	
1 ← 3	7		4 ← 7	21	
1 → 4	3		4 → 8	5	

The researcher inserted relevant quotes from the interviews that explained the strong relationships and identified weak relationships.

**Constructing a SID from the individual interview data for a single**

**interview.** After completing the individual theoretical coding, an IRD and SID for each participant was created in the same fashion as the focus group IRD and SID were created. According to Northcutt and McCoy (2004), a SID for an individual interview is a mind map reflecting the individual’s experience with the phenomenon. For each individual interview a transcript, an axial code table, a theoretical code table, an IRD, and a SID were created producing a system that reflects the individual’s thoughts as well as providing rich detail in the respondent’s own words.

Constructing a SID from the composite interview data (Pareto Protocol).

After all the interviews were completed and coded, they were combined to create a collective SID. The Individual Axial Code Tables were combined into one large table,

as was the Individual Interview Theoretical Code Table. The Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table is used to build the Combined SID (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

The Pareto Principle documents the degree of consensus in a group, and allows that a minority of the relationships in any system will account for a majority of the variation within the system. Respondents do not all agree on affinity relationships and therefore, IQA uses the Pareto Rule to create a statistical group composite (Northcutt & McCoy 2004). However, before a composite interview SID could be created, the theoretical coding process had to include an analysis of the number of respondents who agreed on the affinity relationships and the number that disagreed.

This information was recorded in a Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table, which is similar to an Affinity Relationship Table (ART), used for focus groups. Each of the Individual Interview Theoretical Code Tables was examined to determine the direction of each affinity pair; the result of that tallying process was recorded in the frequency column of the Combined Interview Theoretical Frequency Code Table below, and as the sample indicates, a total of 185 votes were cast for a possible 30 relationships (p. 158).

Table 3.6

*Sample Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table*

Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency
1 → 2	3	2 → 6	3
1 ← 2	0	2 ← 6	0
1 → 3	1	3 → 4	1
1 ← 3	0	3 ← 4	0
1 → 4	0	3 → 5	0
1 ← 4	18	3 ← 5	18
1 → 5	1	3 → 6	1
1 ← 5	1	3 ← 6	1
1 → 6	2	4 → 5	2
1 ← 6	1	4 ← 5	1
2 → 3	3	4 → 6	3
2 ← 3	17	4 ← 6	17
2 → 4	2	5 → 6	2
2 ← 4	15	5 ← 6	15
2 → 5	13		
2 ← 5	3		
<b>Total Frequency</b>	<b>185</b>		

After the frequencies were recorded for each affinity pair, they were sorted in descending order of frequency and cumulative percentages were calculated for each relationship. Cumulative Percent (Relation) represents the total possible relationships, and Cumulative Percent (Frequency) represents the percentage of votes cast for an affinity pair added to the previous total. This technique allows the researcher to determine the optimal number of relationships to be included in the composite; and helps resolve ambiguous relationships that attract votes in either direction (Northcutt &

McCoy, 2004). Power represents the degree of optimization of the system.

Table 3.7

*Pareto Cumulative Frequency Chart*

Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency Sorted (Descending)	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent (Relation)	Cumulative Percent (Frequency)	Power
1. 2 → 3	20	20	3.3	10.8	7.5
2. 1 ← 2	18	38	6.7	20.5	13.9
3. 3 ← 5	18	56	10.0	30.3	20.3
4. 4 ← 6	17	73	13.3	39.5	26.1
5. 2 ← 4	16	89	16.7	48.1	31.4
6. 1 ← 3	15	104	20.0	56.2	36.2
7. 5 ← 6	15	119	23.3	64.3	41.0
8. 2 → 5	13	132	26.7	71.4	44.7
9. 1 ← 6	12	144	30.0	77.8	47.8
10. 1 ← 5	11	155	33.3	83.8	50.5
11. 1 → 3	3	158	36.7	85.4	48.7
12. 1 → 4	3	161	40.0	87.0	47.0
13. 2 → 4	3	164	43.3	88.6	45.3
14. 2 → 6	3	167	46.7	90.3	43.6
15. 4 → 6	3	170	50.0	91.9	41.9
16. 2 ← 5	3	173	53.3	93.5	40.2
17. 5 → 6	2	175	56.7	94.6	37.9
18. 4 → 5	2	177	60.0	95.7	35.7
19. 1 → 2	1	178	63.3	96.2	32.9
20. 1 ← 4	1	179	66.7	96.8	30.1
21. 1 → 5	1	180	70.0	97.3	27.3
22. 3 → 4	1	181	73.3	97.8	24.5
23. 3 → 6	1	182	76.7	98.4	21.7
24. 3 ← 6	1	183	80.0	98.9	18.9
25. 4 ← 5	1	184	83.3	99.5	16.1
26. 1 → 6	1	185	86.7	100.0	13.3
27. 2 ← 3	0	185	90.0	100.0	10.0
28. 2 ← 6	0	185	93.3	100.0	6.7
29. 3 ← 4	0	185	96.7	100.0	3.3
30. 3 → 5	0	185	100.0	100.0	0.0
<b>Total Frequency</b>	<b>185</b>				

As Figure 3.7 indicates, relatively few of the possible 30 relationships account for most of the variance, which is consistent with Pareto's theory. The first 10 relationships account for 84% of the total variation (p. 160).

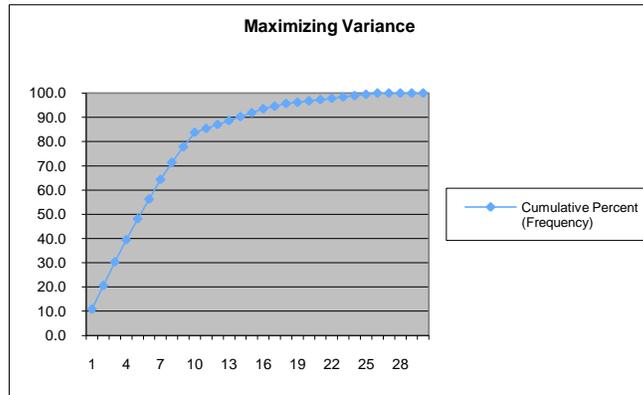


Figure 3.7. Frequency Chart

The power analysis allows the researcher to minimize the number of affinities included in the IRD and SID composite. Figure 3.8 shows the researcher that power reaches a maximum at 10 relationships, which accounts for 84% of the variation in this system. This chart helps the researcher determine the cut-off point for inclusion in the composite IRD.

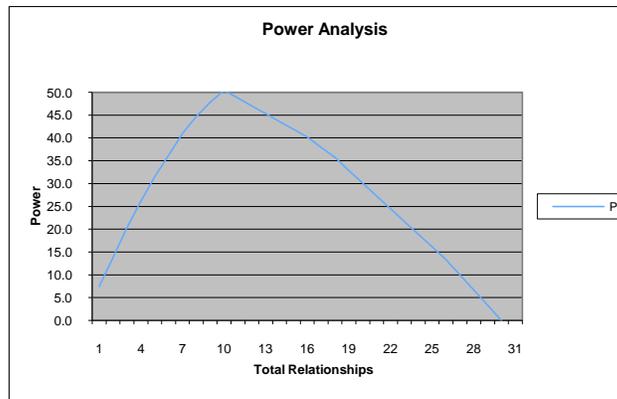


Figure 3.8. Power Chart

These two techniques assist the researcher by allowing for the maximum variance and minimum number of affinities to be included in creating the composite IRD, and ultimately the composite SID.

The next step in theoretical coding was to identify apparent conflicts among affinity pair relationships. Before a Composite IRD could be constructed, these conflicts were resolved, as the table only allowed for one possible relationship between two affinities. Apparent conflicts were flagged, allowing the researcher to identify exactly which affinity pairs appeared ambiguous (Table 3.8). The most frequently occurring affinity relationship pair was chosen for the IRD; however, additional observations were necessary to resolve ties (McCoy, 2003). Once all ambiguous relationships were resolved, the researcher constructed a Composite Affinity Relationship Table (Table 3.9) in the same manner as the Focus Group ART. The Composite ART was used to construct a Composite IRD (Table 3.10) in the same manner as the Focus Group IRD. The Pareto Chart solves most conflicts or ambiguous relationships; however, it is important to identify feedback loops so the researcher can understand mischievous topologies or relationship conflicts. This is done by using the Relationship Conflict Summary as shown in Table 3.11, and is used when the top 20% contain hypotheses that argue for both directions, and both sets seem equally plausible.

To construct the Composite IRD, conflicts were resolved since the table only allowed for one possible relationship between two affinities. Potential conflicts were noted; allowing the researcher to identify exactly which affinity pairs appeared ambiguous (Table 3.8). The most frequently occurring affinity relationship pair was

chosen for the IRD; however, additional observations were necessary to resolve ties (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). Once all ambiguous relationships were resolved, the researcher built a Composite Affinity Relationship Table (Table 3.9) in the same manner as the Focus Group ART. The Composite ART was used to construct a Composite IRD (Table 3.10) in the same manner as the Focus Group IRD.

Table 3.8

*Sample Mischievous Topologies: Relationship Conflict Summary*

Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Use
2 ← 8	10	Use
2 → 8	7	
3 ← 10	9	
3 → 10	13	Use
4 ← 6	9	
4 → 6	14	Use
4 ← 10	8	Use
4 → 10	7	
6 ← 10	17	Use
6 → 10	7	
8 ← 9	7	
8 → 9	13	Use

Table 3.9

*Composite Affinity Relationship Table*

Affinity Pair Relationship		
1	←	2
1	←	3
1	◇	4
1	←	5
1	←	6
2	→	3
2	←	4
2	→	5
2	◇	6
3	◇	4
3	←	5
3	◇	6
4	◇	5
4	←	6
5	←	6

Table 3.10

*Sample Composite Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) with Calculations*

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>OUT</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>Δ</b>
<b>1</b>		←	←	↑	←	←	1	4	-3
<b>2</b>	↑		↑	←	↑		3	1	3
<b>3</b>	↑	←			←		1	2	-1
<b>4</b>	←	↑				←	1	2	-2
<b>5</b>	↑	←	↑			←	2	2	0
<b>6</b>	↑			↑	↑		3	0	3

The Composite IRD was sorted in descending order by the deltas in the same way as the Focus Group IRD (Table 3.11). The delta values identified the tentative SID assignments (Table 3.12).

Table 3.11

*Sample Composite Interrelationship Diagram Sorted*

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>OUT</b>	<b>IN</b>	<b>Δ</b>
<b>6</b>	↑			↑	↑		3	0	3
<b>2</b>	↑		↑	←	↑		3	1	2
<b>5</b>	↑	←	↑			←	2	2	0
<b>3</b>	↑	←			←		1	2	-1
<b>4</b>	←	↑				←	1	2	-1
<b>1</b>		←	←	↑	←	←	1	4	-3

Table 3.12

*Sample Composite Tentative SID Assignments*

<b>6</b>	Primary Driver
<b>2</b>	Secondary Driver
<b>5</b>	Circulator / Pivot
<b>3</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>4</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>1</b>	Primary Outcome

**Combined interview SID and SID comparisons.** Two separate combined, ARTs, IRDs, and SIDs were created, one for each generation of participants, tracking the influence and decision patterns of each group of women. A comparison of the SIDs revealed the similarities and differences in the decision-making pattern of each generation and allowed the researcher to study any cause-and effect-relationships revealed by the study.

### **Limitations**

One limitation of this study was the small number of mothers who participated in the focus group, and the limited amount of time available to work with them at the conference they were attending. This study only included women who successfully completed college in Mississippi after 1962, and had daughters who graduated from college, thereby severely limiting participation. At the time, the researcher did not realize that a slight difference in the age of the focus group as compared to the individual participants would make a rather large difference in comparing experiences. Another limitation was the reluctance of participants to participate in the interview because the researcher was a person they did not know.

An additional limitation was the poor quality and scarcity of quantitative data available, i.e., enrollment data, based on race and gender delineated by colleges, for 1962-1975.

The daughters were exceptionally difficult to convince to participate, and several lived out of state, presenting additional complications. After studying the individual interviews, a difference was noted in the descriptions of the affinities. The daughter

focus group was a few years younger than the actual daughters interviewed, and their experiences and perspectives were slightly different.

The final challenge was to find enough mother and daughter pairs to make the study relevant.

### **Summary**

This chapter explored the reason the IQA method was chosen for this college choice study. An overview of the IQA methodology was followed by a brief description of focus groups, brainstorming, and interview protocol. The IQA research flow was outlined, and the design process explained how information was gathered and the individual interviews were conducted and analyzed. This chapter includes some notable limitations of the study.

By using this qualitative research method, several theories were constructed. The findings of the study unfold in the next two chapters. The interview data are presented as one generation of women's life stories about college choices in Mississippi in the 1960s; and are shared and compared to the second generation's stories about college choices in the 1970s.

## Chapter Four: Results

### Group Reality: System Elements

**Problem statement.** Did the opportunity to enroll in formerly all White institutions change the decision-making and college selection process for Mississippi's Black women for all future generations? College opportunities for African American women in Mississippi changed after court-ordered desegregation in 1962 overturned Mississippi's segregated higher education system (Blackwell, 1981; Fordice v. United States, 1992; Meier, Stewart & England, 1989; Morris, 1971, Carter, 2001; Fordice v. United States, 1992). This study explored the social, cultural, and political factors and their effects on college choice for two generations (1962-2002) of African American women educated in Mississippi.

There are limited data on Black women's college choices in the South and even less with the social, cultural, and political overlay included in this study. It is difficult to make assumptions or infer generalities based on regional or national data about the "choices" Black women had in Mississippi in the early 1960s and 1970s. Family background may have had something to do with choosing to go to college versus not going to college, but this study suggests that *where* to go to college in Mississippi had much more to do with culture, society, and politics (Hossler, Schmit & Vesper, 1999; Willie & McCord, 1972).

Because as Silver (1964) writes, "Racial bigotry transcends reason in Mississippi" (p. 34), a critical theory study of college choice opportunities in Mississippi

must include a portrait of the cultural, political, and social climate of the era under investigation (Mertens, 1998).

The study provides an opportunity to learn how the social, cultural, and political environment influences college choice and how Mississippi's Black women, from two different generations, made their decisions about which college to attend.

**Identifying constituencies.** The constituencies identified for this study were those closest to the phenomenon. The mothers, it was determined, must have attended college in Mississippi during the Civil Rights Movement. It was decided that comparing mothers to their daughters would provide a unique perspective not attainable using random daughters for the study.

**Research questions.** What social, cultural, and political factors influenced college choice for the mother and daughter pairs?

How were their experiences similar and/or different?

**The participants.** Two focus groups were interviewed to gather data about their experiences in choosing a college. Two groups of Black women who attended Mississippi colleges after 1962, were interviewed to collect their reflections about the social, cultural, and political factors that influenced their college choice.

The mothers' focus group included women from Mississippi who attended college after 1962. After 2 days of recruiting at a statewide teachers' meeting in Jackson, Mississippi, this researcher identified four women to participate in the focus group. Although these women were not part of the final study, their insights generated the affinities used in the individual interviews.

The daughters' focus group was a larger group of young women, all from north Mississippi and all under the age of 25. These participants were recruited from the campus of the historically all-Black campus of Coahoma Community College, in the northwestern part of the state of Mississippi. Their input was used to develop the affinities for the daughter interviews.

### **Identifying the affinities.**

*Mothers' focus group affinities.* The mothers' focus group generated the following list of affinities.

1. Mississippi—Life outside Mississippi
  - Separate, don't rock the boat
  - Military
  - Tumbleweed, copycat, imitation of life, etc.
  - Blinders on, blinders off
2. Civil Rights
  - MLK
  - To make a better life for myself geared to civil rights
3. Location to home
  - Near home
  - To have self identity from siblings
  - College choice to gain a sense of responsibility away from home
4. Influencers
  - Choices, Parents, Home-School or Work—School because I couldn't go to the military
  - Mama, mother, teacher, Uncle Bud
  - Parents
  - High School teacher
5. Finances
  - Financial status
  - Could not attend all colleges
  - State college
  - Student loan
  - Financial assistance (easy to get)

6. Limited Opportunities
  - Librarian (degree not available at a Black MS college)
  - Home Economics-Physical Education inspired by a teacher-athletics
  - Could not attend all universities
  - Home economics
  - Nurse (not allowed to go to nursing school in Mississippi, couldn't afford to go out of state)
  - Limited careers (teaching)
7. Support system/life style/quality of life (rural)
  - Helped each other
  - To be able to leave the cotton fields
  - Community
  - Rural areas
  - Shared resources (money, possessions-table cloth)

***Daughters' focus group affinities.*** The daughters' focus group generated the following affinities.

1. Career
  - Be my own boss
  - License in my career
  - Teach others
  - Music
  - Nursing
2. Adulthood
  - Gain independence
  - Wanting to feel like an adult
  - Gain responsibility
  - Needing to learn more about life
3. Ambition
  - Combat my own laziness
  - Become a better person
  - Earn money
  - Expand my horizons
  - Better myself
  - Want to be successful
4. Finance
  - Scholarships (came here because I got a scholarship here)
  - Money

5. Benefits of College

- Support my family and myself
- Better car
- Better jobs
- Own a house
- Support a family

6. Social life

- Meet new people
- Wanting to learn to work with others
- Wanted to have fun

7. Education

- To know more about career
- Higher education
- Further education

8. Location

- Not too far or too close to home
- Close to home

9. Inspirations

- Teachers and church members, Pastor
- Friends, Parents, brother, Family members
- God wants his people to have knowledge
- My jobs I had in the past
- My boss man

**Interview protocol (axial).**

*Interview protocol for the mothers.* The following is a list of the questions asked of the individual mothers interviewed. The interviewer opened the interview with this statement, “The purpose of this interview is to establish the social, cultural, and political factors that influenced your decision about which college to attend.”

Question 1:

The focus group identified **Mississippi** itself as a factor in college choice. What are your thoughts about Mississippi as an influence on college choice?

Question 2:

The focus group identified **Civil Rights**' issues as a factor in their college decision-making process. When I say Civil Rights, what does that mean to you?

Question 3:

The focus group identified **location to home** as an influential factor in their college decision-making process. When you think about the location of the college in relationship to home, what does that mean to you?

Question 4:

The focus group identified **influencers** in their lives: people who helped them make their choices. Please talk about the people who helped influence your decision about which college to attend.

Question 5:

The focus group identified **finances** as a factor in their choice about which college to attend. What comes to mind when you think about how finances influenced your decision of which college to attend?

Question 6:

The focus group identified **limited opportunities** as a factor in their decision-making process. Please share your thoughts on what limited opportunities meant in selecting a college to attend.

Question 7:

The focus group identified “**support system/life style/quality of life**” as factors that influenced college choice in Mississippi. When you think about the support systems, life style, and quality of life at the time you were selecting a college, what were the factors that influenced your choice of which college to attend?

*Interview protocol for the daughters.* The following is a list of the questions asked of the individual daughters interviewed. The interviewer opened the interview with this statement, “The purpose of this interview is to establish the factors that influenced your decision about which college to attend.”



Question 1:

The focus group identified **Career** as a factor in college choice. What are your thoughts about career as an influence on college choice?

Question 2:

The focus group identified **Adulthood** as a factor in their college decision-making process. What does adulthood mean to you?

Question 3:

The focus group identified **ambition** as an influential factor in their college decision-making process. What does ambition mean to you?

Question 4:

The focus group identified **finances** as a factor in their choice about which college to attend. What comes to your mind when you think about how finances influenced your decision of which college to attend?

Question 5:

The focus group identified **benefits of college** as helping them make their choices. Please talk about the benefits of college and how that helped you decide which college to attend.

Question 6:

The focus group identified **social life** as a factor in their decision-making process. Please share your thoughts on what social life meant to you in selecting a college to attend.

Question 7:

The focus group identified **education in general** as a factor that influenced college choice in Mississippi. When you think about education in general, at the time you were selecting a college, what factors influenced your choice of college?

Question 8:

The focus group identified **location** as a significant contributor in the college choice decision-making process. How did location influence your choice?

Question 9:

The focus group identified **inspiration** as a factor in college choice. Who or what provided inspiration for your college choice?

**Focus group composite affinity descriptions.** The mothers' focus group consisted of teachers attending a teachers' conference in Jackson, Mississippi. They created the following affinities.

*Mothers' focus group composite affinity descriptions.* The affinity–*Mississippi*– was used to describe how the women, in looking back, were able to cluster what they knew, and did not know, about the world outside of Mississippi. They knew not to rock the boat too much, and they lived in a separate world within the same state. Included in this reflection is their reference to living an “imitation of life” as copycats of White people. They perceived the military as an option after high school, and this allowed them to take their blinders off; for many, it was their first experience beyond their life in Mississippi.

*Civil Rights* as an affinity to this focus group meant they wanted to have a better life as a result of the sweeping changes promised in the Civil Rights Movement. They revered Martin Luther King and admired his bravery. This encouraged them to seek opportunities to make a better life.

The *location of the college* in relationship to their home was important to these women, either as an opportunity to have their own identity by being far from home, or it was important for them to be near their home. Some women stated that they needed to be away from home to gain some sense of responsibility.

*Influencers* as an affinity referred to people who had a powerful influence on college choice. The focus group identified parents and teachers as positive influencers. One woman identified “Uncle Bud” as an influencer as he told her she was not college material, could not be successful, had too many “fancy” ideas in her head, and needed to stay home and work. This woman related that his negative comments only inspired her to try harder to make something of herself.

*Finances* were identified as a factor in college choice, as these women could not attend all colleges, so they had to attend a state college. They did indicate that finances were not really a factor in keeping them out of college, as student loans and scholarships were plentiful. They all indicated that financial aid was easy to get, and therefore, being poor did not keep them from attending, actually, it was important because it was relatively easy to get financial assistance.

*Limited opportunities* were listed as an affinity because Black women had very few opportunities for a professional career in the early 1960s. In fact, they felt they only had three choices after high school—stay home, work, or go to school. Many said that having only those three options inspired them to go to college. All women in their era generally were limited to becoming teachers, nurses, or librarians. In Mississippi, these women could not enroll in all universities, were not allowed to go to nursing school in Mississippi, and degrees in home economics and physical education were not available at HBIs.

The affinity *support system* was defined by the focus group as those factors that allowed them to “leave the cotton fields.” A support system thrived in the Black

community and reached out to help college-bound children. Partly, the women interviewed attributed that support system to being in small towns and rural communities—where everyone shares their resources, money, possessions, and other goods to provide opportunities for college-bound students.

*Daughters' focus group composite affinity descriptions.* These young women identified the factors that influenced what college they attended. Some of their affinities were similar or identical to the mothers' focus group, but had a different meaning for this generation. Some of the factors identified by this mothers group were very different and indicated a much less practical viewpoint than the mothers' viewpoint. The daughters had the luxury of more choices and could factor “social life” into their selection process.

The daughters identified the affinity career as a factor that influenced their choice of colleges. The daughters indicated that being their own boss, getting licensed or certified in an occupation, and teaching others, were important factors in their choice of degrees and colleges to attend.

The affinity *adulthood* meant they wanted to go to college as a way to gain independence. They indicated a desire to feel like an adult, gain a sense of responsibility, and spoke of needing to learn more about life.

*Ambition* was important to this generation of women as indicated by their thoughts about their future. One woman laughingly said she chose to go to college to combat her own laziness; others stated they went to become better people, earn more

money in the future, expand their horizons, and better themselves. This group indicated a strong desire to be successful.

The women reported that *finances* were significant in their decision of where to attend college, as one woman stated she was at the college she was attending now because she got a scholarship. These women indicated money was an important factor in selecting a college.

Typical of these interviews was a spillover into why they chose to go to college at all, as is indicated in the affinity identified as *benefits of college*. The focus group indicated the benefits of attending college were that they would be better equipped to support themselves and a family, could have a better car and a better job, and own a home.

Unique to this focus group was the affinity, *social life*. This group of young women identified the opportunity to meet new people, wanting to learn to work with others and having fun as important factors in choosing a college.

The daughter focus group used the affinity title *education* to indicate their desire to know more in their careers, and the need for, and importance of, education beyond high school.

Similar to the mothers' focus group, this generation also indicated that *location* was important in selecting a college. In their discussion, the college had to be either close to home or not too close to home, depending on the different needs of each woman.

The final affinity this group identified was the people who *influenced* them. Like the mothers' group, teachers, ministers, friends, and family had some influence on their college choice. They also indicated negative experiences in former jobs and with former coworkers propelled them to attend college, once again spilling over beyond the research questions asked.

The affinities defined by the focus groups were used to create an interview protocol for the mothers' and the daughters' individual interviews. These interviews added depth, richness, and detail to the affinity descriptions. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Axial Code Tables and Theoretical Code Tables were constructed for both groups. The mothers' combined affinity descriptions are summarized in the Mothers' Composite Axial Coding Summary. The daughters' combined affinity descriptions are summarized in the Daughters' Composite Axial Coding Summary later in this chapter.

### **Composite affinity descriptions.**

*The mothers' composite affinity descriptions.* The individual mothers in the study expressed a deep affection for living in Mississippi. For the most part, that meant leaving the state for an education was not an option they considered. The women in the study also believed that education would change things in Mississippi and that there were no opportunities for them without an education. They felt obliged to do well in school, not be a burden on their families, earn their degree on time, but stay in Mississippi near family.

Most of the participants grew up in segregated neighborhoods, churches, and schools in the early 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement was in full swing during their high school years, and for the most part, they were attending college 4 or 5 years after James Meredith entered Ole Miss. But because the state was lagging behind the nation in implementing desegregation, many HWIs were still not desegregated at the time these women were enrolling in college.

Opportunities were generally limited for women in the 1960s. Degreed White or Black working women were likely to be teachers or nurses, as those jobs were open to educated women and considered respectable professions by the community.

Mississippi is the poorest state in the union by any standard, and accordingly, some of the women in the study were raised in extreme poverty. However, several participants were raised in more moderate-income families. Most of the mothers had many siblings and lived in a one-parent or one-income family, where extra money for college tuition presented an extreme, nearly impossible, financial hardship.

*Mississippi. Mississippi was home. Things were changing* for the better; however, it was still a *segregated* world. Parents protected their children from the *hatred* and taught them not to be *afraid*. College bound students felt a sense of *responsibility* to do well and stay in Mississippi.

*Mississippi feels like home.* There was a deep affection for Mississippi, because it was *home*, that feeling excluded other options from consideration.

I didn't want to live anyplace else, and leaving wasn't an option. What was accepted at that time was not to venture too far from home. I couldn't visualize living anyplace else. I needed to stay in Mississippi to be near my family.

*Baby, someday, that bus will stop and pick you up.* There was faith that education would *change things*.

I was caught in a storm once out on the road, a red clay dirt road, rain so hard it was just pushing you down on the ground in the ditch. I had never ridden on the school bus, because there were no colored school busses back then. The yellow school bus had gone by. I am about 5 years old and it's a mile walk to the school and no houses on the road. The bus goes by and I get up, and I am flagging the bus, flagging the bus to stop for me and it didn't stop. I was just devastated that bus didn't stop. Then I got back in the ditch because the wind was just blowing very, very hard. Then I hear these steps, slosh, slosh, and I look up and it was my daddy. I said, 'Daddy.' He says, 'Girl you look like a little red dirt dobber.' While the rain is coming down I said, 'The school bus came by and it didn't stop to pick me up.' He said, 'Baby, someday, that bus will stop to pick you up.'

*He didn't say I was different; he didn't make me hate anything or anyone.*

Parents protected their children from the *hatred*. "When the school bus did not pick me up my dad didn't say I was different; he didn't make me *hate* anything or anyone he just told me someday that bus will stop to pick you up."

*My parents didn't teach me to be afraid.* Parents protected their children from the worst of the news stories, and taught their children not to be *afraid* by not showing fear themselves.

One of the reasons I was never afraid was because my parents didn't teach me to be afraid; they never showed fear. They knew how far to go and what to do to protect their children. But I never felt fearful in all of the things that went on, and I remember when James Meredith was at Ole Miss, the atmosphere was tense; we knew not to take any chances. My parents told us not to go to Oxford. My daddy didn't go to Oxford. You just knew those things were going on so we just stayed on the farm and kept doing our work. We didn't feel like somebody was going to come and bother us, or anything like that. I was born in 1950 and I just never grew up with fear. I don't believe that any of my brothers or sisters grew up with fear. We talk about it now and we don't have this fear of people or fear of situations. It just wasn't a part of growing up. Our parents protected us and there wasn't any fear.

*This was the 60s; there were no Whites in my school. Mississippi schools were still segregated.*

I lived in an all-Black community, went to an all-Black church, and at the time there were only three or four Black colleges that you could attend. My high school class was the last class to attend a totally segregated high school. Some of my friends, in the class that followed me, dropped out of school because of the stress and strain of integration.

*The ones who stayed are my heroes. There was a sense of responsibility to do well—in Mississippi.*

I felt like my ancestors wanted me there; it was like they didn't want to have died in vain, and wanted to make sure that the next generation was carrying the load. I figured everyone can't run away to the North, and the people who stayed in the 60s went through hell. They should be commended. I see them in church and think they are the heroes. I thought, man, there is something to sticking around fighting the fight.

*Civil rights.* The Civil Rights Movement *opened doors* formerly closed to Black students. If they were *not afraid* to be part of the sweeping changes taking place in Mississippi; they could be *leaders*. Some students did not have the time, the luxury, or the option to *pave the way* for others. Some could not *wait* until the changes took place. Those students had to finish college quickly. Some students did not bother to apply. It was too much of a battle for *acceptance* to go to a White college, while some students felt a degree from a White institution would be better received.

*The door is open; this is a privilege; take advantage of it. As new doors opened,*  
new options were fearlessly considered.

I guess my class was the first to send anyone to Ole Miss. I think enough time had passed since the James Meredith years, that my parents were saying the door is open, take advantage of it. I was the only Black student in some of my classes; and even though it was a struggle, I am glad I did it; it was worth it.

*If you are afraid to take a chance, then the next generation may be afraid also.*

They had to be the *leaders*. Having the decision to go to an historically White college was a new privilege. The first ones to take advantage of it had an obligation to the next group of students to seize the opportunity. The fear was that if this group did not take the opportunity, then perhaps the next generation would not either. “My momma told me, there are more kids coming along behind you, and if you are afraid to take a chance, then the next generation may be afraid also.”

*We could see the bullet holes in the building from the riots.* The students and their parents had faith that the riots were an isolated incident, and they went to the school of their choice *anyway*.

I graduated from high school the year of the shootings, and I went to school there anyway. My sister was there with me, but my parents knew that this was not ordinary. Normally, if a shooting of that magnitude had just occurred, they would have been a bit hesitant about me going, but they knew that this was an isolated incident. This stuff just does not happen every day. They were all for us going. I was living in the same dorm where the people had been shot. We could see the bullet holes in the bricks. It didn't bother me at all. I think they lived in fear that they're going to come back and do this every night. It just wasn't like that, not at all.

*The cause is going have to wait.* Some students did not have time to pave the way for others. “I’ll fight that battle another day. I’ll fight it as it comes in, but I don’t have the luxury or the option to *pave the way* for everybody else. I’ve got to pave the way for those six kids that are behind me in my own family.”

*It’s like, why apply?* Some students went where they were *accepted*.

I’m saying you didn’t even apply. You know they’re gonna turn you down. You see? You knew it. You’re wasting your time. You’re looking for your career, and you’re looking to be trained, so you go where you know you’re gonna be accepted. Remember this was 1966, and I’m the first one in the family to go to college. I had to get an education, get a job, and then help my mom with my sisters and brothers.

*I could leave with a degree that would not be questioned.* There was the perception that a degree from an historically White institution was more valuable.

I knew that I could get a good education at Ole Miss. I could leave with a degree that would be recognized anywhere in the United States; it would be not questioned as to what the value of that education actually was. So I decided that even though it may be uncomfortable, and I may run into some difficulties, I had the right to choose, and I was going to choose where I wanted to go.

*Location.* Location of the college referred to the distance from home. Some students wanted to be able to *come home* either by getting a ride with a friend, or taking the bus home. Some students wanted to go to school out of state, but knew it would be expensive to travel home on top of paying out-of-state tuition. The affinity location also referred to the *sense of belonging* they felt when they visited the campus.

*I have to be able to get home. Family was important.*

I wanted to get away where there were big lights, a big city, but not to get away from my family. I was able to ride the bus home on the weekends when I wanted to come home, or I could catch a ride with someone from home.

*When I went to visit on high school day, there was a sense of community, a familiar flavor; it felt like a close place. Sense of belonging was a factor in choosing a college.*

It was important that I felt I belonged on that campus. When I went in the fall, I had never been that far away from home. It was all the way down South, and I was going somewhere special. It was such a beautiful place, and I fell in love with it.

*Influences.*

*It was understood. The community had expectations, and provided positive role models.*

Teachers, librarians, counselors, and principals all lived in our community, attended our churches, and were influential and respected members of our community. They expected us to do well and go to college. My home economics teacher was fantastic; she influenced what I majored in but not what college I attended.

*Girl, you can't pick cotton, and you can't hoe; you need an education. The family had expectations and provided inspiration.*

My mother had an eighth grade education, and my dad finished the third grade, but they wanted us to do better. I remember my grandfather told me, 'Girl, you can't pick cotton, and you can't hoe; you need an education.' He was right; I needed to go to college. My sister had traveled and knew exactly what I needed, so she, my cousin, and I went to college and were roommates. My uncle was die-hard alumni, and helped finance a lot of our little things, like groceries, during the week. He walked me around campus the first day and showed me the bullet holes in the pillars of one of the buildings and said, 'These are from the riots, this is where it really happened, and it's our history.'

*The hostess made fun of me because I corrected the spelling of the word Hors d'oeuvres on the menu. Negative experiences and negative people were influential.*

My boss told me I had a real flair for food, and could work for them full-time rather than going back to college. They were offering me a job to be a salad girl for the rest of my life. I knew right then and there that I had to get out of there.

*Finances.* Money for tuition and books was generally not a barrier to getting an education. But the financial situation of the family often meant that there was no extra *money to go home*. It meant *personal sacrifices* were made for education, and *deferred gratification* was practiced.

*I applied for everything, and I got everything. Money was not a problem as* scholarships, grants, and loans were available, but transportation home was a problem.

I couldn't go far away even if I got a scholarship, as I wouldn't be able to go home very often if I accepted the scholarships, so I turned some down. My parents were poor and struggling, and money was tight. My mom worked as a maid, and my dad worked at a sawmill. They had no money, but somehow they helped. They would pay my room and board, which at that time, was \$30 a month and they would send an extra \$10 for my spending money for the month. I was able to make it on that, but it was hard.

*When I put that sack of cotton down, I thought, this is my last bale of cotton; I* am going to see if I can do something better. *Personal sacrifice* was required to get an education.

I can remember my parents and I picked a bale of cotton, and we sold that bale for my tuition for the year. I didn't know anything about scholarships, but I found out about financial aid when I got to college. I learned about work-study so I could pay my own way. I didn't see where it was necessary for my parents to continue to pay my way.

*I will suffer now for what I want. Deferred gratification* was part of the experience.

I can remember when I was working on my undergraduate degree; I had no money to buy soap because all of my money went toward tuition and books. I remember not interacting with the students because I smelled bad. I didn't have soap to take a bath, so I had to take a bath in plain water. I pretty much stayed to myself because I was so poor. I existed. Everything went to my education. A cold bath—that was secondary to doing what I needed to do. Besides, I knew this is the real cost of my education.

*Opportunities.* The affinity opportunity referred to a *lack of choices and limited options* for women of that era. The opportunity to go to college meant they could escape a life of *poverty* and have a more *secure* financial future. The opportunity to attend college provided *hope* for a better future.

*All you could do was pick cotton.* There were no *choices* for poor people without an education.

We were poor. We had no money, no choices, and no options. My parents were uneducated, and all you could do was pick cotton if you weren't educated. We went to an all Black school with grades 1 through 12 housed in one old building. We always had second-hand books and manual typewriters; we were poorly prepared for college, but encouraged by our parents to get more education. I knew if I had no money, I would have no choices in life. I had to find a way to get a college degree. I figured that was the only way out of *poverty*. I had nothing else to do, no job, no work, no potential, and nothing to lose.

*We were limited by the times, but not limited in our minds.* There was *hope* for a better life.

Forty years ago our choices were to go to Alcorn College, Jackson State, or Mississippi Valley State. We weren't allowed to go to the White colleges. In fact, we were told, 'Why apply? They gonna turn you down.' Very few careers were open, not just for African American women, but all women. You could go into teaching, nursing, or be an undertaker. That is what my cousin chose; he said there would always be dead people needing his services! But honestly, after integration it was easier, and teachers were revered and looked up to in the community.

*Personally, I did not want to be a teacher. Career choices were limited for women.*

But that's what my mom said for me to do. Back then there weren't a whole lot of choices that you could make, so far as your occupation, and teachers were revered in our communities. Most of our parents looked up to them, and so they looked at the teacher as somebody to emulate. So that is what my mom wanted her children to be. This was the 60s. This was the beginning of the Civil Rights era. Everything was basically going on at that time. In fact, in the high school from which I graduated, I was in the last class that was totally segregated.

*Support system, life style, quality of life.*

*Support system.* Support system was defined as *hope for the future*, and the community *was vested* in the children going to college. There was great *pride* in producing a college bound child, and everyone wanted to see that child succeed. The *church* played a spiritual and financial role in the Black community.

*You were everybody's children.* The children going to college were the community's *hope for the future*.

It was known if anyone went to college you got gifts, lunch money, and some groceries from friends and neighbors. It was nice because you didn't have to ask for things. The people in the community looked out for you, respected you, and put you above the rest because you were going to college.

Mostly everyone wanted to see you succeed, so they were behind you in whatever you chose to do to be successful. And I think that was extremely important then. I think you probably had a lot more sense of community then, than you do now, because everybody felt like they had something *invested* in the children coming out of their community. It's a lot different from today. You don't have nearly as much support, because when I was growing up you were not just your mother and father's children; you were everybody's children.

*Make us proud.* The parents were committed, and the community was invested in the success of the students.

Of course, our community, like so many other communities, built its own schools during that time. The parents were on the school board. The parents were the bus drivers, the principals, or the teachers. *Parents were supportive.* If anything needed repairing in the school, *the parents did it.* Because of that we got support, as far as education was concerned. It was a great *privilege* to have a child say they were going to go on to college. That's the reason parents would do all they could to encourage that.

The gossips in the town would always say, 'That girl is really smart.' Nobody calls you by your name. They would call you by your last name. The old drunks on the corner didn't know your name, but they would say, 'That little girl is really smart. She's gonna go far; she's in college.' If you came home for the summer the folks in town would say, 'Now you do good, you *make us proud* of you.' You know, that's the kind of stuff they would say.

*Church was more important than school.* The church was a community resource.

It supported families spiritually and financially.

Everybody in the community would go to church before they would go to school. That basically was the priority. If you went to school, that's fine, but you had to go to church. Because it was a close-knit community, you had support from several people in the community. Of course, church was our major support system, and the school was next.

*Lifestyle and quality of life.* Lifestyle referred to not living in *poverty*, *sharing* blessings with their family, and having a better life for their children. For some women it meant perpetuating and maintaining the quality of life they had grown up knowing.

Parents demonstrated a good *work ethic*, and that, paired with an education, was perceived as the keys to the good life.

*What I had seen wasn't an option.* Education was a way out of *poverty*.

The lifestyle that I had seen wasn't an option for me. It wouldn't be an option for my kids either. So, I decided to make a difference. My oldest sister said to me, 'The White folks aren't going to hire you for no job. What are you going to college for?' And I didn't even bother to respond.

*You had to send some of that money home.* Everyone *shared* assets and resources.

When you make the President's list, even though you have a loan and a scholarship, they would give some of it back to you. So you know what you had to do with that money; you had to send some of that home. So that's what I would do.

*Growing up we had a nice lifestyle.* It was known that you needed to have an education and a *strong work ethic* to maintain a nice lifestyle.

My mother had all kinds of style and a *strong work ethic*. She worked hard. She taught summer school; she taught adult education at night. She taught the regular school year. We had a nice lifestyle. We always had nice clothes; we always had food. We always went to the ball games, like all the other kids, even though she was a single parent. We always had the best of the best. We lived in the better neighborhood. I had a good childhood. I had a great lifestyle. I knew, even when I grew up, it was good, but I still knew that I had to get an education in order to maintain the lifestyle that I just grew up with. Even now it's better than when I grew up.

*Quality of life.* In general, when the women spoke about quality of life, they were referring to having a *better life*. They referred to *being poor, having no money, suffering,* and doing without basic necessities to get an education and break the cycle of poverty.

*I didn't have a quality life.* They wanted a better life, a life without poverty.

My family was too poor, too illiterate and uneducated to understand anything. I knew that I would not spend my life mopping White folk's house, or cooking their food, or cleaning their babies. I wouldn't do that; it wasn't an option for me. I had to do something better.

The affinities defined by the daughter focus group were used to create an interview protocol for the daughters' individual interviews. These interviews added depth, richness, and detail to the affinity descriptions. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Axial Code Tables and Theoretical Code Tables were constructed for the daughters. The daughters' combined affinity descriptions are summarized below in the Daughters' Composite Axial Coding Summary.

**The daughters' composite axial coding summary.**

*Daughters' composite interview.* The daughters were interviewed in person, over the phone, and on their respective college campus.

*Career.* The daughters frequently referred to preparing themselves for a career they would enjoy, as well as earning enough money to take care of their family. They all assumed they would have to work after college, and they wanted some control over what they did from nine to five each day.

*I wanted a career that I would enjoy.* The daughters had back-up or alternate plans, but wanted both plans to lead to a career they would enjoy.

I wanted to major in something where in case I didn't get into medical school I would have a *career that I would enjoy* . . . making *enough money* to take care of me and my family. We all kind of had in our minds that we wanted to go to a college where we could get what we wanted out of the degree that we were pursuing. So those were basically my thoughts then.

*I used to write notes for myself: "Go back to college."* Daughters were inner-motivated to get a college degree.

I ended up getting my GED in 1999, and pretty much what I did between that time before I actually went to college was I worked for a casino as a hostess. I hated that job. I enjoyed talking to the elderly people. But as far as the management, I don't know, the whole environment just wasn't great. At that time I was 18, and I used to write poetry on napkins. I used to write notes for myself. I wrote, 'Go back to college.' I also just realized that the reality in America is that you *have to work*. I knew that college would give me a better chance to make a decision as to what it was that I would be doing nine to five every day. You've got to do it. If I went to college, I would have a better chance of doing something that I enjoy. I wanted a *career that I would enjoy, you know, making enough money to take care of my family and me.*

*Adulthood.* The daughters were split on the affinity adulthood. Some felt they had been given enough *responsibility at home*. Some daughters reflected that this affinity highlighted their need to get away from home, to gain a greater sense of *responsibility, independence, and self-respect*. These daughters talked about *feeling important* because they were going to college, and their choice was a mature choice, like an adult might make.

*We had responsibilities at home.*

I think one of the big reasons why this affinity didn't really influence my decision about college, is because when we were *at home we had responsibilities*, great responsibilities, and small responsibilities. Of course, our responsibilities started out small, and as we got older, we acquired more. We were taught how to survive on our own. I had gone away for a week, or weeks at a time, and I did fine away from home. So that did not play a large part in my college choice.

*I needed to get away to grow up.* "Well, I didn't want to stay close to home because I felt that by doing that I would not gain *independence*. So by choosing to go out of state and to live on campus in a dorm, I felt that would encourage my independence, and I would be pretty much forced to be *independent and to function more as an adult.*"

*When I went to college, I felt more like an adult.*

Well, I think as far as feeling like an adult . . . going to college made me feel *more worthy of respect*, and I guess you can correlate that to being an adult. But I actually had already moved outside of the home at the age of 17. My whole senior year I didn't live with my mother. So for me, at that point in my life, I somewhat felt like an adult.

*College gave me a sense of self-esteem at that time, a sense of worth.*

I had been on my own before high school, but I'm sure [attending] college made me *feel important*. It made me feel empowered. It made me feel looked up to. I know that my family members were proud of me, not just my mother and brother; they were all excited and proud of me. Others in my family were always so happy to hear about what was going on at school. They would get reports about how I'm doing at college. It definitely made me feel intelligent. It made me feel smart. I think college gave me a sense of self-esteem at that time, a sense of worth.

*Ambition.* The daughters felt that the affinity ambition meant *proving* that they could become a college graduate and make a *comfortable* life.

*If I had any ambition at that point in time, it was to prove myself.*

I guess I would have to say, when I first started college I was ambitious to *prove myself*. . . Dropping out of high school three months before graduation was a thorn in my side. It was very embarrassing for me just because I knew a lot of people in my hometown, and I had gone to schools in every district in my hometown, so I knew a lot of people. I was involved in organizations. I made the tennis team. I was one of those people that [others] respected, feared, whatever, just really kind of admired. So for me to drop out, there was a point in time that I didn't want to show my face at Target. I'd see a former schoolmate, and think, 'Let me hide.'

I think as far as staying in college, what propelled me for the first couple of years was I just refused to quit. I had quit high school and hated the fact that I had gotten a GED. Not so much that people would call it to my face, but I would hear comedians on TV say it was a good enough diploma, that kind of thing. And it would just burn me. I guess I was just really determined to *prove* that I was just as intelligent as anyone else.

*I don't have a desire to be rich.*

I don't have a desire to be rich. I just desire to be *comfortable*, to have a home or townhouse, and money to travel. I love to travel. I have a Volkswagen Jetta, and I love it. If it lasts me a long time, I would probably be really happy. But I don't dream of having a Jaguar or anything crazy. Just seeing my mom raising three kids as a single mother, I thought, she is an artist and very creative. I saw her make our house look extremely nice like on the TV show, 'Design on a Dime.' We were doing that in the 80s. We were doing that throughout my childhood. I know that you don't have to have a lot of money in order to have a good-looking home, or to feel comfortable.

*Finances. Money was an issue* for most of the daughters. The daughters were looking for the best *financial package* offered by the colleges they were considering. They applied for *scholarships, grants, and loans*, and discussed the benefits of *in-state tuition*.

A few daughters had financial assistance from their family, but stated that they knew *getting a college degree was worth the investment*.

*I couldn't afford it; my mom couldn't afford it.*

Money was an issue for me; definitely *money was an issue*. I knew that I could get *in-state tuition*. I had heard some things about Jackson State, and I think for me, truthfully, at that age, I felt like I had to do it. I remember my mom, growing up, always told us, you can't live at home unless you are A, working, or B, going to school.

But financially we just couldn't afford it. I couldn't afford it; my mom couldn't afford it. That's just an expensive school. And even the financial aid lady said, 'You got a pretty good package, one of the best packages.' I'm thinking, even with the good package, I can't afford the part that the package doesn't cover. So more than anything I just wanted to get the ball rolling.

My family didn't have a lot of money, and I've been paying for college with *scholarships, loans, grants, financial aid*, and working part time. One of my choices for college was Emory in Atlanta, but I knew I really couldn't afford to go out of state, and travel back and forth home, and paying all those fees. There were a lot of scholarships available at USM. I really didn't want to start at a junior college, even though I know it probably would have been fully paid for, but I wanted to go to a university, and USM was the most cost [effective] university as far as universities go.

*Whatever the price was it would be worth paying.*

Well, in deciding on college, my parents said I could go wherever I wanted to go, and I knew that they were going to help me pay for my education. So I never really looked at the price of education, because I knew that it would be an investment that would follow me the rest of my life. So whatever the price was, it would be worth paying, so that really wasn't a factor at all.

*I got a scholarship to go, so that basically nailed down the school that I finally selected as being my number one choice.*

I did want to go to a small college in Louisiana for a while, Dillard University, but the out-of-state fee was going to be extremely rough for my parents to afford. Mom and Dad always said, 'You're going to a Black school; *whoever offers you the most money that's where you're going.*' I had a 26 on my ACT, and I graduated in the top 10% of my class, so scholarships were not really an issue. Rust College did that for me; I went on a full scholarship. I did not have to pay for my books, or my room and board, but I had to maintain a 3.5 GPA to stay. *I got a scholarship to go, so that basically nailed down the school that I finally selected as being my number one choice.*

*Education.* The daughters' parents stressed the importance of getting an education. The daughters knew they needed to get a degree from a college that would be respected. Many daughters reflected on their thoughts about the pros and cons of going to an HBI at this point in the interview. Some wanted the experience, and some feared the reputation of the school might harm them later in life. The daughters also discussed their expectations that college would be hard and challenging.

*We were not rich or anything.*

I guess the desire to have an education, and my parents instilling in me that you need an education to be able to live the type of lifestyle that we had become accustomed to. We were not rich or anything, but just being comfortable you needed a degree to do that, so it was never really a discussion or argument whether I would go to college. It was just deciding what I wanted to do, or where I wanted to go.

*Hello, I'm a minority. Hello, I'm Black.*

One drawback, and I knew this even before I was going, was *my fear of actually going to JSU was that when I did transfer, that I would maybe be discriminated against because I had gone to an historically Black university.* I felt that if I applied to a big ten or big twelve university, they would know that I was African American. It's just kind of a flag. Hello, I'm a minority. Hello, I'm Black. And also the fact that it is a college in Mississippi. Mississippi is typically ranked as one of the lowest and poorest in education. That was also a fear of mine as well. I was like, oh, gosh, *they're going to think that I'm some uneducated Black person basically trying to get into their university.* I was afraid that I would be labeled that way because of going to JSU. But as far as my decision, or *my desire to want to be at an historically Black university, that was decided.* I remember looking at the ratio of race. I remember looking at where a lot of Blacks are at, at universities. I remember too, before I went to college, getting a book written by a Black professor or administrative person at one of the HBCUs, but basically it was a book on just information about HBCUs across the nation. And so, I always just kind of felt like going to a Black university, I just felt like I wouldn't feel like a percentage or a ratio.

But as far as the higher education expectation, I don't know if I really had any. I guess I just felt like *I would be challenged,* or in a position where it would be *hard for me* to keep up, or something like that. Those are fears that I had, but I don't know if I had, at that time, any expectations. I think as I've grown older it's changed for me, but at that time, I didn't really expect it; I just expected for it to be hard more than anything.

*Benefits of college.* The daughters reflected on the benefits of college as it related to future earning power later in life.

*I can't make this kind of money for the rest of my life.*

I had never had a job until I went to college, and I didn't know how people got along on \$7 an hour. I couldn't see it. I'd never had a job, and here I am thinking, I can't make this kind of money for the rest of my life. It was an eye-opener.

*Social life.* Social life, as criteria, was an afterthought for some daughters when they reminisced about choosing a college. For some daughters, it was part of the decision, and an important part of the attraction to a particular school. Several daughters talked about going to a Homecoming game and witnessing the feeling of extended family at HBIs. Some reflected that the Black college experience was important, because they might be more likely to meet someone who would complement their dreams and aspirations.

*Social life was an afterthought.*

In high school I was a very social person. I loved meeting new people and I never met a stranger. My mom always said she was scared for me because of that. I knew wherever I went I would fit in, because I can adjust just about anywhere. I feel everything that happens has some good in it. So whatever situation, whatever environment I am in, I think I can adjust to it. So the social aspect of it was more of an *afterthought*, and I just knew wherever I would be I would fine.

Social life was part of the decision for some and an *important part of the attraction to an HBI*.

Education in a Black school is interesting. *There's a lot of attention to social status at a Black school . . .* you have all these little issues, I guess. Anybody that's anybody is part of a fraternity or sorority. It's a good experience, and I don't regret being a part of a sorority, but it is a *major part of the Black college experience* because the Greek organizations basically run all of the social stuff on campus. So-and-so sorority is having a party, and that's the place to be, and you have to be dressed to the nines; but then through those organizations you get a chance to do different things. For example, I'm a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha, and there were years we had meetings in places like Washington and Chicago. Because I was a member, I was able to be a delegate and go to those meetings versus never being able to do that on my own. The sorority paid a part, and you paid your little part whenever you got the chance to go.

Dating on the Black college campus is not hard but is very strict. You get to see things that you hear about, for example, how a guy can live in one dorm and have a girlfriend in every dormitory, and then they all meet up in the cafeteria. You know, it's funny stuff, and I have some very fond memories of the social stuff. Overall it's good.

*Homecoming is a big deal at Black colleges.*

*Homecoming is like a big family reunion*, because everybody comes back and gathers around the sororities and fraternities, all the new and old members get together, but at the same time you have tail-gating and all the good parties on-campus and, of course, the off-campus parties. It's a wonderful thing, and I never thought that my family could grow as large as it has, but through college and Homecoming on our college campus, my family is just huge. It's just like having a bunch of brothers and sisters, and when the older ones come back they're like your uncles and aunts. I have parents all over the world, because I have those people who kind of drew me in when I went to college and took care of me, and that kind of thing. Some of them are still at Rust, but some are gone now. I enjoyed the social side of college, but I was not the person who went to college and had that 1.0 GPA at the end of the semester because I got wild with the parties.

*I wanted to go to an historically Black college.*

That was something that was important to me just because of everything that I had heard, and that was kind of a buzz in my family. Not that it was, you need to go, it was, you will get a *different experience*, which I totally did. I mean, the sororities are very active, and it was a small college. When I enrolled it was like 1,000 students, and that was also nice because I wasn't overwhelmed with going to a huge school.

*I could have a social life there.*

I think at that age [I was] wanting to meet my future husband, that kind of thing. My experiences in the South were that men seem to find me attractive. That's really anywhere I go, but the men in Mississippi just really seemed to swoon over me. So I think at that time for me, I just kind of felt like, tuition-wise I could get in-state tuition. As far as where my heart really was, I think for me, [the decision] was for personal reasons too. I think I was looking for some sense of security. And at an HBI I felt *I had a better chance of meeting a Black man [who] was about doing something with his life, [who] had goals, [who] would compliment the dreams that I had.*

*Location.* The daughters either wanted to be close to home, far from home, or it didn't really matter in choosing a college. What mattered more was the size of the college and/or the town. Most daughters did not consider leaving the South or Mississippi for that matter. Another consideration was whether or not they would be attending a majority minority college.

*I knew I didn't want to be close to home.*

This is really not considered close to home, and being further away would not have mattered to me. Being far away from home or from under Mom and Daddy *never really played a part in my decision.*

*I didn't want to be too far from home.*

Well, honestly, I knew *I didn't want to be too far* from home. I probably wouldn't have gone to Florida straight from high school. I wasn't ready to go that far. But I wanted to be far enough that when I wanted to go home I could, I could drive there. That was probably the main thing.

I went to college 10 minutes from the house. I wanted to move away, but I wasn't quite ready. Living at home and still having one foot in the house and one foot out in the real world helped me mature at my own pace.

*It wasn't necessarily the location; it was more about the size of the school.*

Like I said, I came from a small town, and I knew right off I didn't want to be in an enormously large institution. So my decision was *based more on the size of the school as opposed to the location*. I wouldn't mind wherever the location would be. It's just more the size. I wanted to be able to have an individual relationship with my instructor.

*I wanted to stay somewhere where if we did get some snow I'd be excused from class until the snow melted.*

I stayed in the *South* 'cause I hate to be cold. Mississippi was about as cold as I could stand it. I was willing to go to Nashville, but they have a tendency to get a lot of snow, depending on the years, but I never wanted to go to a place like Kansas, or Minnesota, or Chicago; I couldn't handle the snow. I just couldn't imagine waking up and they said, oh we have 7 inches of snow and everything's moving smoothly. You know, everything shuts down in Mississippi when we get 3 inches, so I wanted to stay somewhere where if we did get some snow I'd be excused from class until the snow melted.

*I didn't want to go to a school where I would be a real minority.*

I didn't want to go to a school where I would be a real minority, especially in the South. So I really didn't want to put myself in a position where I wouldn't feel some sense of familiarity, but as far as JSU, it just seemed like a cool school.

*Inspiration.* The daughters all indicated that their mothers were their dominant role model and inspired them to find a career they enjoyed.

*But as far as who inspired me to go to college; it would have to have been my mom.*

My father is a college graduate, but *seeing my mother going to college had been a part of my life growing up*. It wasn't like she went to college before I was born. When I was like 5, 6, and 7 years old, she was working on her bachelor's degree. When we moved to Chicago she was working on her master's degree. When I was in high school she was working on her second master's. So it was like I had always seen her as a student to some degree. My mother has a learner's heart. Still to this day, she has never failed to try to create something new. It's funny because my mother is legally blind. That part is not funny, but what I was going

to say is, being legally blind there were times . . . when I was a kid, 8 and 9 years old, when she would ask me to read for her, because sometimes she would pay people to read books for her, or pay a reader, or she would ask me. At times I didn't want to, but other times I was honored to do that for her. So even as a kid I was reading on a college level. Of course there were a lot of words that I didn't understand, but she would be patient with me, and she would tell me to spell it out first of all, and then she would pronounce it. She would make sure that I knew how to pronounce it, and then she would tell me what it meant. So for me, college had always been important. I was used to being around college campuses, and I felt like my mom really incorporated a lot of the things she was learning into our home. I think that's who gave me the confidence and a lot of my inspiration to go to college.

*You shouldn't settle; if you want to be a doctor, then be a doctor.*

My mother always *influenced me to do something that I would enjoy* and never settle for just anything just to say you have a job, but she wanted me to do something I really enjoyed doing. I found that most people say I want to be a doctor 'cause they make all this money, but as I grew older I found that I really love children and the health field is something I really enjoy. I can remember a couple of people were like, 'Why don't you become a nurse practitioner? They do the same thing as a doctor.' But my mom said, 'You shouldn't settle; you want to be a doctor then be a doctor.' And so she always said it doesn't matter how long it takes you. Just do whatever it is you want to do so you don't get older, look back, and wish you had done what you wanted to do.

## **Group Reality: System Elements**

**Interview protocol (theoretical).** This step in the IQA process requires all individual theoretical interview data be combined into a single Composite Theoretical Code Table. The coding included an analysis of the frequency the participants agreed and disagreed on the direction of the affinity relationship. The frequencies were reconciled using the Pareto protocol. The most frequent affinity relationship pairs were chosen for both the composite mothers and composite daughters Affinity Relationship Tables (ART) and reconciled in their respective System Influence Diagram (SID).

***Mothers' composite theoretical coding summary.*** The next step in the IQA process was to combine all individual theoretical interview data into a single Composite Theoretical Code Table (Table 4.1) before creating the Mothers' System Influence Diagram (SID). The frequencies were determined for each affinity pair and reconciled using the Pareto protocol. The affinity pairs identified as conflicts to be reconciled were: 7—Support Systems and 4—Influencers, 5—Finances and 3—Location, and 2—Civil Rights and 1—Mississippi.

The most frequently occurring affinity relationship pair was chosen for the Mothers' Composite Affinity Relationship Table (ART), and conflicts were reconciled in the Mothers' System Influence Diagram (SID). The following theoretical analysis includes the Composite Mothers' ART, IRD, and cluttered and uncluttered SID.

Table 4.1

*Mothers Composite Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table*

Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency
1 → 2	5	2 → 4	3	3 → 7	4
1 ← 2	4	2 ← 4	9	3 ← 7	8
1 → 3	0	2 → 5	1	4 → 5	10
1 ← 3	12	2 ← 5	12	4 ← 5	3
1 → 4	1	2 → 6	2	4 → 6	9
1 ← 4	11	2 ← 6	9	4 ← 6	4
1 → 5	1	2 → 7	2	4 → 7	4
1 ← 5	10	2 ← 7	11	4 ← 7	9
1 → 6	7	3 → 4	4	5 → 6	8
1 ← 6	4	3 ← 4	9	5 ← 6	5
1 → 7	2	3 → 5	6	5 → 7	6
1 ← 7	9	3 ← 5	7	5 ← 7	7
2 → 3	4	3 → 6	7	6 → 7	3
2 ← 3	9	3 ← 6	5	6 ← 7	10

*Affinity relationship table.* The theoretical coding process resulted in determining the relationships most frequently identified by the mothers and are shown in the Mothers Composite Interview Affinity Relationship Table (ART) (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

*Mothers' Composite Interview Affinity Relationship Table*

Affinity Name	Possible Relationships
1. Mississippi	$A \rightarrow B$
2. Civil Rights	$A \leftarrow B$
3. Location to Home	$A \diamond B$ (No Relationship)
4. Influencers	
5. Finances	
6. Limited Opportunities	
7. Support System, lifestyle, quality of life	

Affinity Pair Relationship	Affinity Pair Relationship
1 > 2	4 > 5
1 < 3	4 > 6
1 < 4	4 < 7
1 < 5	5 > 6
1 > 6	5 < 7
1 < 7	6 < 7
2 < 3	
2 < 4	
2 < 5	
2 < 6	
2 < 7	
3 < 4	
3 < 5	
3 > 6	
3 < 7	

**Interrelationship diagram.** The Mother's Composite Affinity Relationship Table

(ART) (Table 4.2) was used to create the unsorted Interrelationship Diagram (IRD)

(Table 4.3). The sorted Composite IRD for the mothers is shown in Table 4.4

Table 4.3

*Mothers' Composite Affinity IRD Unsorted*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
1		↑	←	←	←	↑	←	2	4	-2
2	←		←	←	←	←	←	0	6	-6
3	↑	↑		←	←	↑	←	3	3	0
4	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑	←	5	1	4
5	↑	↑	↑	←		↑	←	4	2	2
6	←	↑	←	←	←		←	1	5	-4
7	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		6	0	6

Count the number of up arrows (↑) or *Outs*

Count the number of left arrows (←) or *Ins*

Subtract the number of *Ins* from the *Outs* to determine the ( $\Delta$ ) *Deltas*

$$\Delta = \text{Out} - \text{In}$$

Table 4.4

*Mothers Composite IRD Sorted*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
7	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		6	0	6
4	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑	←	5	1	4
5	↑	↑	↑	←		↑	←	4	2	2
3	↑	↑		←	←	↑	←	3	3	0
1		↑	←	←	←	↑	←	2	4	-2
6	←	↑	←	←	←		←	1	5	-4
2	←		←	←	←	←	←	0	6	-6

The delta values listed in the right column of Table 4.3 were sorted in descending order and used to identify the relative positions of the affinities in the system. The larger

numbers identified the primary drivers, and the smallest numbers indicate the primary outcomes. The left column indicates placement and order of the affinities. The position of these affinities is listed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

*Mothers' Composite Tentative SID Assignments*

<b>7</b>	Primary Driver
<b>4</b>	Secondary Driver
<b>5</b>	Secondary Driver
<b>3</b>	Circular/Pivot
<b>1</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>6</b>	Primary Outcome
<b>2</b>	Primary Outcome

*System influence diagrams.* The System Influence Diagram (SID) is a visual representation of the cause and effect relationships between the seven affinities. The following SID analysis is based on a compilation of the individual realities of the Mothers who participated in the individual interviews.

*Cluttered SID.* All links described in the Mothers' Combined IRD Sorted (Table 16) are represented in the uncluttered SID shown in Figure 4.1.

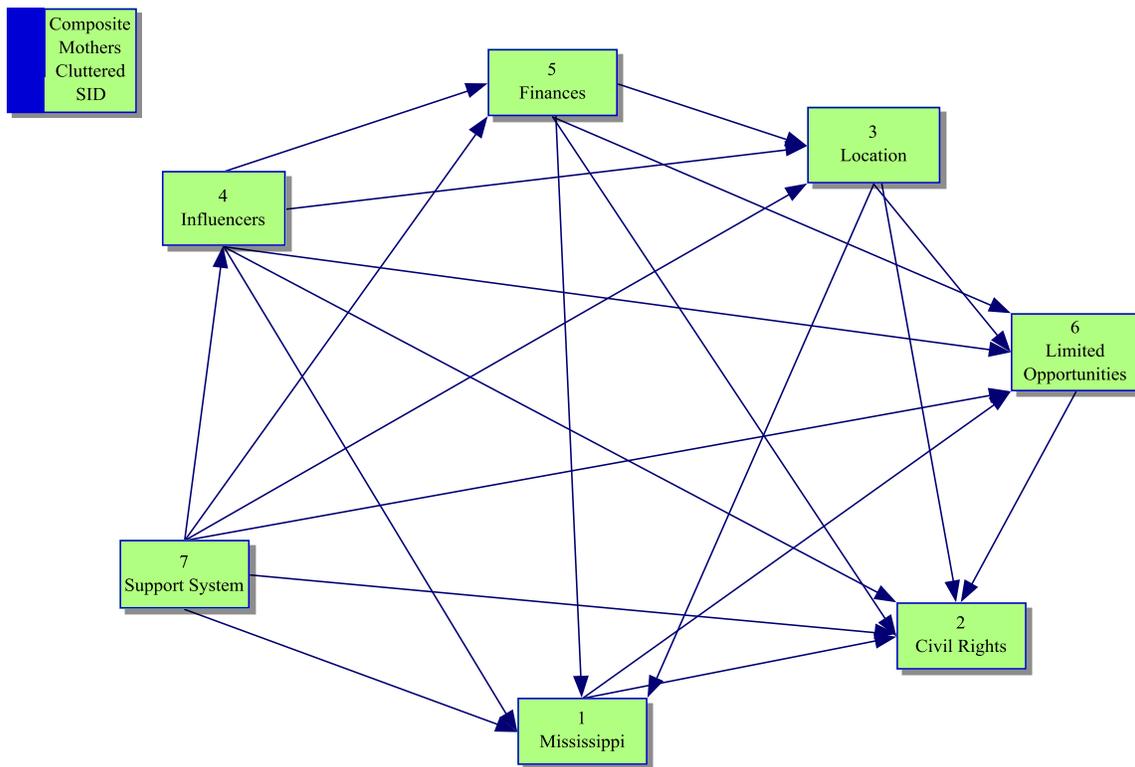


Figure 4.1. Composite Mothers' Cluttered SID

*Mothers' uncluttered SID.* Removal of redundant links produces a simplified system without altering the relationships of the affinities. The resulting uncluttered SID is the simplest possible conceptual map indicating all relationships contained in the IRD and is shown in Figure 4.2.

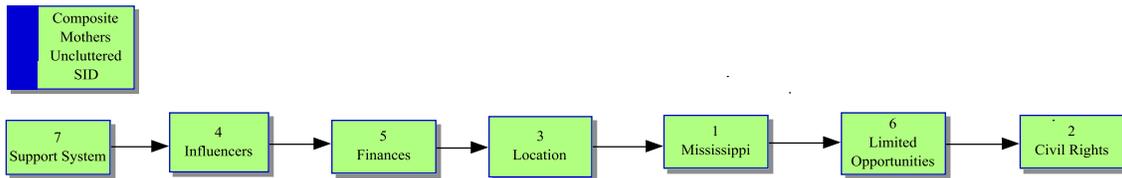


Figure 4.2. Mothers' Composite SID Pareto Reconciled

Once the researcher had removed all redundant links, the Pareto Protocol was examined for conflicting relationships, which occur when the same affinity pair has relationships occurring with a significant frequency in both directions. The lesser frequency was ignored in the IRD but was reconciled in the uncluttered SID. Because a SID must be consistent with its associate IRD, three links not directly described in the composite theoretical descriptions were added back to the SID.

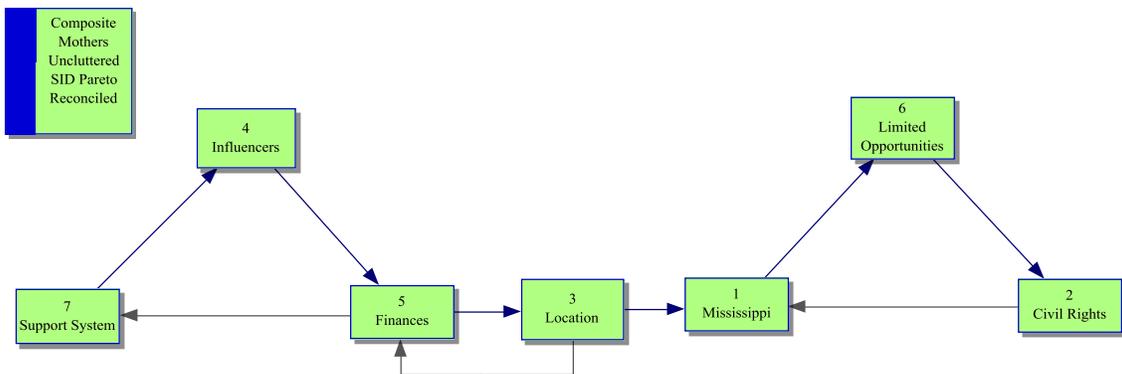


Figure 4.3. Composite Mothers Uncluttered SID Pareto Reconciled

*A tour through the system.* The Mothers' perception of their experience in choosing a college begins with the primary driver, Support System, and ends with the primary outcome, Civil Rights. Both positive and negative perceptions of an affinity can influence the experience of the next affinity (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). A visual tour of the system is shown in Figure 4.3.

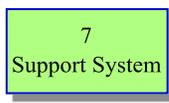


Figure 4.4. Support System

*Composite mothers tour through the system.*

*Support system.* Support System was the primary driver of the Mothers' system. The Mothers believed that their support system had a direct influence on all other factors related to college choice. The children going to college were the community's hope for the future, and the Black community was invested in the success of college bound students. "Everyone wanted to see you succeed, so they were behind you in whatever you chose to do. When I was growing up you were not just your mother and father's children; you were everybody's children."

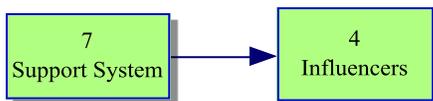


Figure 4.5. Influencers

*Influencers.* This affinity refers to the people who influenced and inspired the Mothers to go to college and influenced the college they chose to attend. It is a secondary driver in the Mothers' system. This affinity is driven by the affinity Support System. The family and the community had expectations, provided positive role models, and inspiration. Negative experiences on the job and negative people were influential in providing additional determination and inspiration to go to college.



Figure 4.6. Finances

*Finances.* Finance is a secondary driver in the system. Support System and Influencers drive it. Finance drives the remaining affinities. Tuition money was generally not a problem as scholarships, grants, and loans were available. However, money to travel home was not readily available and influenced how far away a college could be located from home and still be considered. In general, the mothers grew up in poor families where personal sacrifice and deferred gratification was not uncommon. “When I put that sack of cotton down, I thought, this is my last bale of cotton, I am going to see if I can do something better. I will suffer now for what I want.”

After the Pareto Protocol was reconciled, an arrow was added from Finances to Support System, because the mothers were split on which direction the arrow should point. With the arrow added to the Uncluttered SID a recursion is created. This recursion is one of three, and all three will be addressed later in the study.

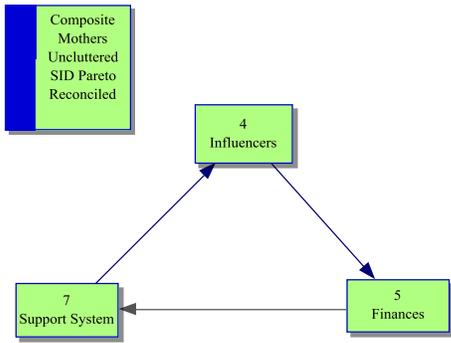


Figure 4.7. Finance Reconciled

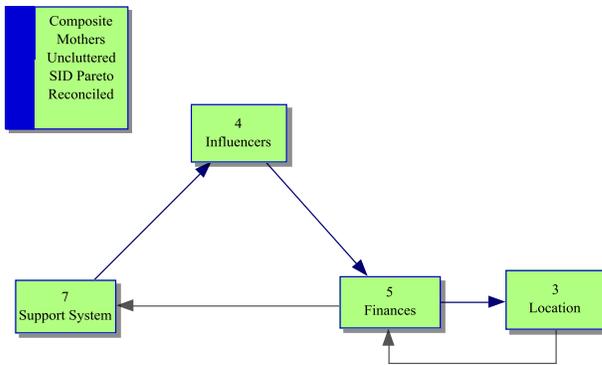


Figure 4.8. Location Reconciled with Finances

*Location.* Location was a circular pivot in the Mother’s system. It is driven by Support System, Influencers, and Finances, and acts as a pivot because there were an equal number of ins and outs on the IRD. For this reason, an arrow from Location to Finances was added. This is consistent with the Pareto Protocol. For the mothers in this study family was important, and they wanted to be able to get home from school occasionally, which meant they would not be going too far from home. “I wanted to get away to a big city, but I didn’t want to get away from my family.” Also, many described a feeling of community and a sense of belonging as a factor.

It was important that I felt that I belonged on that campus. When I went in the fall, I had never been that far away from home, but I knew I was going somewhere special. It was a beautiful place, and I fell in love with it.

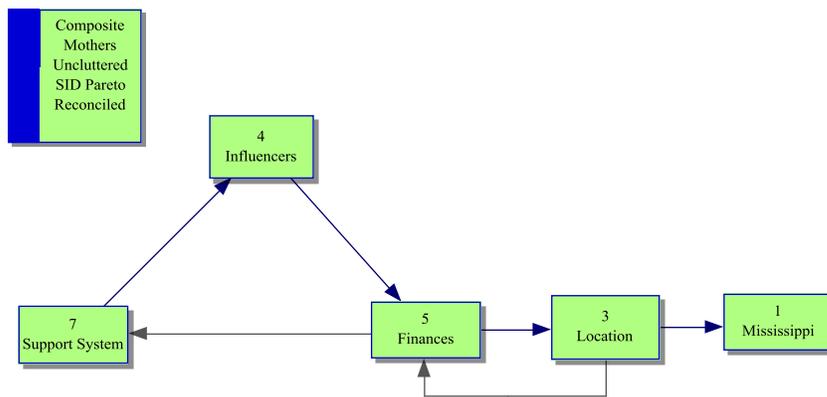


Figure 4.9. Mississippi

*Mississippi.* Mississippi was a Secondary Outcome for this system influenced by Support System, Influencers, Finances, and Location. The affinity Mississippi influences Limited Opportunities and Civil Rights. There was a deep affection for Mississippi that excluded other options from consideration. “I didn’t want to live anyplace else, and leaving wasn’t an option. I couldn’t visualize living anyplace else. I needed to stay in Mississippi to be near my family.” There was faith that education would change things. “One day when I was little, the school bus (for White children only) passed by me and didn’t pick me up. I was devastated, but my Daddy told me, “Baby, someday that bus will stop and pick you up.”

Mississippi was lagging the nation in implementing desegregation, and many women never attended an integrated school or church. “I lived in an all Black community, went to an all black church, and at the time there were only three or four colleges to chose from that would accept Black students, and they were the historically Black colleges. In some instances the mothers were in still in high school when segregation ended and the public schools became fully integrated.

Some mothers indicated that it was important to do well in Mississippi. “I felt like my ancestors wanted me there; it was like they didn’t want to have died in vain. I figured everyone can’t run to the ‘North,’ and the people that stayed in Mississippi in the 60s went through hell. There is something to sticking around and fighting the fight.”

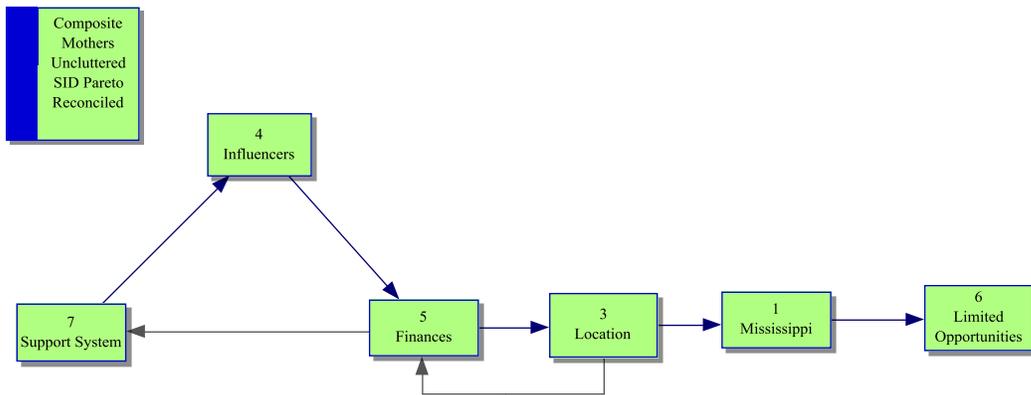


Figure 4.10. Limited Opportunities

*Limited opportunities.* Limited Opportunities was a Primary Outcome in this system. It is influenced by the affinities Support System, Influencers, Finances, Location, and Mississippi. It influences the affinity Civil Rights.

There were no opportunities without an education. “We were poor; we had no money, no choices, and no options. We were limited by the times but not limited in our minds.” There was hope for a better life.

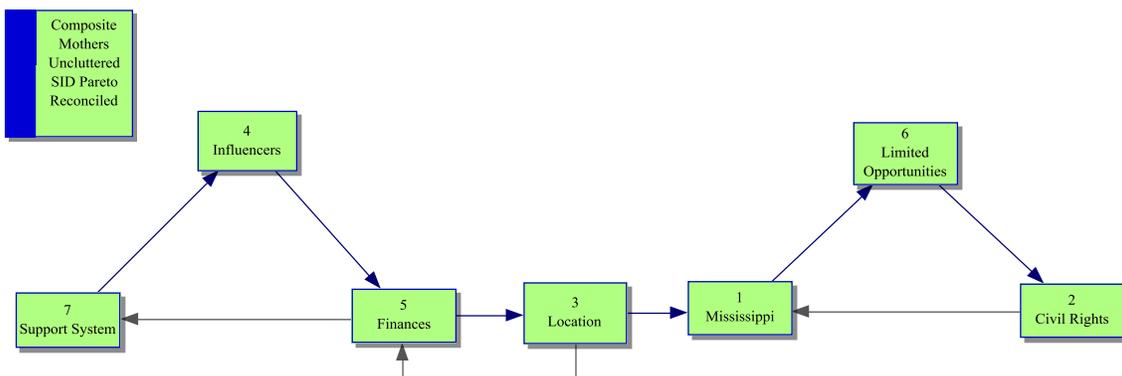


Figure 4.11. Civil Rights Reconciled with Mississippi and Limited Opportunities

*Civil rights.* The affinity Civil Rights was a Primary Outcome of the system. It is influenced by all other affinities. However, the mothers were very closely split on the direction of the arrow between Civil Rights and Mississippi, so in keeping with the Pareto Principle an arrow has been placed back into the system, creating another recursion. The recursions will be addressed later in the study.

New opportunities were fearlessly considered. My mom said, “The door is open; this is a privilege; take advantage of it.” These women were expected to lead by example and not to be afraid. Their mothers told them, “There are more children in the family coming along behind you, and if you are afraid to take a chance, then the next generation may also be afraid.” For some, the “cause was going to have to wait,” because there were other children still at home, the family was poor, and could not risk losing scholarships. For other mothers,

We didn’t even apply to White colleges, it was like, why bother, you knew you wouldn’t be accepted. We were the first generation in our family to go to college; we had to get an education, get a job, and help our mothers pay bills.

***Final tour of the composite mothers’ system.*** A final tour through the system is explained in the Composite Mothers’ Interview Theoretical Summary in Figure 4.12.

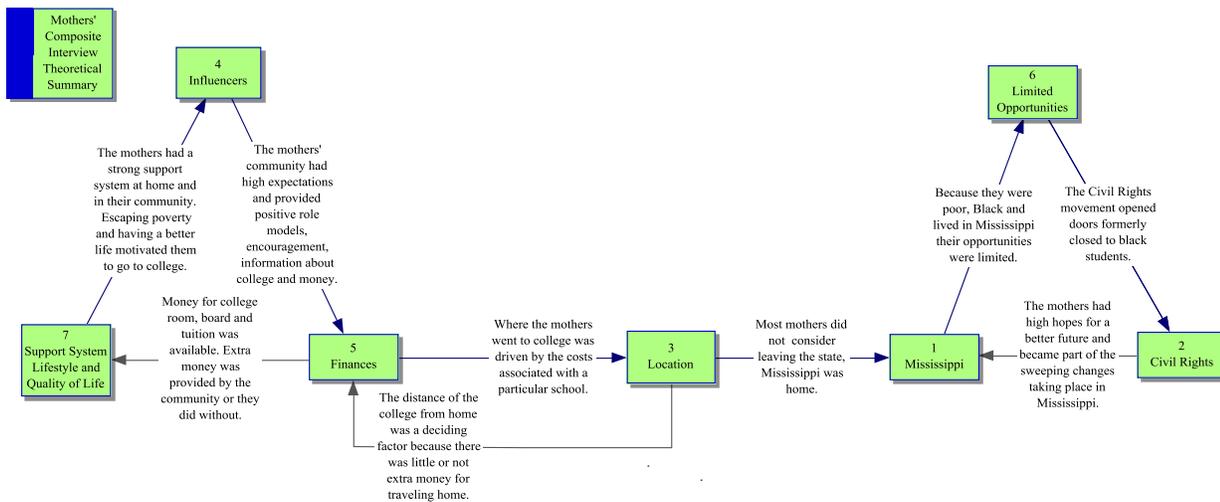


Figure 4.12. Composite Mothers' Interview Theoretical Summary

The support system that most mothers had from their families and their community created an environment that influenced these women to go to college. The quality of life that these women desired for their families also propelled them to go to college. Community members who were college alumni encouraged the college bound students to visit their alma mater, told stories of their college experience, and assisted the student with the college application process. Once the decision to go to college was made, the student, her family, and her supportive community members began examining the costs associated with attending college. All of the women were able to get some financial aid, but there was very little for the extra expenses, such as money for traveling home, spending money, and the “little niceties.” This affected how far from home a college could be and still be a viable option. The mothers did not consider, at least for more than a moment, going to college out-of-state. Mississippi was home, and leaving was not an option these mothers seriously considered. Generally, the mothers were

from very poor, uneducated families and lived in communities that offered very few job opportunities for educated Black women, other than teaching or nursing. At the time these were considered good, respectable jobs and worth the cost and the effort to acquire the degree. The Civil Rights Movement opened doors to colleges formerly closed to Black students and created opportunities in Mississippi that had never existed. The mothers became part of the sweeping changes taking place because they did not leave Mississippi.

*Daughters' composite theoretical coding summary.* The next step in the IQA process was to combine all individual theoretical interview data into a single Composite Theoretical Code Table (Table 18) before creating the Daughters' System Influence Diagram (SID). The frequencies were determined for each affinity pair and reconciled using the Pareto protocol. The affinity pairs identified with conflicts to be reconciled were: 1—Career and 2—Adulthood, 4—Finances and 9—Inspiration, 6—Social Life and 8—Location, and 7—Education and 9—Inspiration.

Table 4.6

*Daughters Combined Interview Theoretical Code Frequency Table*

Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency	Affinity Pair Relationship	Frequency
1 → 2	5	2 → 7	2	4 → 8	6
1 ← 2	6	2 ← 7	9	4 ← 8	5
1 → 3	5	2 → 8	6	4 → 9	5
1 ← 3	5	2 ← 8	5	4 ← 9	6
1 → 4	4	2 → 9	2	5 → 6	7
1 ← 4	6	2 ← 9	8	5 ← 6	4
1 → 5	2	3 → 4	5	5 → 7	5
1 ← 5	8	3 ← 4	6	5 ← 7	6
1 → 6	7	3 → 5	3	5 → 8	8
1 ← 6	4	3 ← 5	8	5 ← 8	3
1 → 7	1	3 → 6	6	5 → 9	7
1 ← 7	9	3 ← 6	4	5 ← 9	4
1 → 8	5	3 → 7	2	6 → 7	3
1 ← 8	6	3 ← 7	8	6 ← 7	8
1 → 9	3	3 → 8	4	6 → 8	5
1 ← 9	8	3 ← 8	5	6 ← 8	5
2 → 3	2	3 → 9	4	6 → 9	2
2 ← 3	9	3 ← 9	7	6 ← 9	9
2 → 4	4	4 → 5	6	7 → 8	9
2 ← 4	7	4 ← 5	5	7 ← 8	0
2 → 5	1	4 → 6	8	7 → 9	5
2 ← 5	10	4 ← 6	3	7 ← 9	6
2 → 6	6	4 → 7	4	8 → 9	1
2 ← 6	4	4 ← 7	6	8 ← 9	10

The most frequently occurring affinity relationship pair was chosen for the Daughters' Composite Affinity Relationship Table (ART) (Table 4.6), and conflicts were reconciled in the Daughters' System Influence Diagram (SID). The following theoretical analysis includes the Composite Daughters' ART, IRD, and cluttered and uncluttered SIDs.

**Affinity relationship table.** The theoretical coding process resulted in determining the relationships most frequently identified by the daughters and are shown in the Daughters' Composite Interview Affinity Relationship Table (ART) (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

*Daughters' Composite Interview Affinity Relationship Table (ART)*

Affinity Name	Possible Relationships
1. Career	$A \rightarrow B$
2. Adulthood	$A \leftarrow B$
3. Ambition	$A \diamond B$ (No Relationship)
4. Finance	
5. Benefits of College	
6. Social Life	
7. Education	
8. Location	
9. Inspiration	

Affinity Pair Relationship	Affinity Pair Relationship	Affinity Pair Relationship
1 ← 2	3 ← 4	6 ← 7
1 ← 3	3 ← 5	6 ← 8
1 ← 4	3 → 6	6 ← 9
1 ← 5	3 ← 7	7 → 8
1 → 6	3 ← 8	7 ← 9
1 ← 7	3 ← 9	8 ← 9
1 ← 8	4 → 5	
1 ← 9	4 → 6	
2 ← 3	4 ← 7	
2 ← 4	4 → 8	
2 ← 5	4 ← 9	
2 → 6	5 → 6	
2 ← 7	5 ← 7	
2 → 8	5 → 8	
2 ← 9	5 → 9	

*Interrelationship diagram.* The Daughters' Composite Interview Affinity

Relationship Table (ART) (Table 4.7) was used to create the unsorted Interrelationship

Diagram (IRD) (Table 4.8). The sorted Composite IRD for the daughters is shown in

Table 4.9.

Table 4.8

*Daughters' Composite Affinity IRD*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
1		←	←	←	←	↑	←	←	←	1	7	-6
2	↑		←	←	←	↑	←	↑	←	3	5	-2
3	↑	↑		←	←	↑	←	←	←	3	5	-2
4	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑	←	↑	←	6	2	4
5	↑	↑	↑	←		↑	←	↑	↑	6	2	4
6	←	←	←	←	←		←	←	←	0	8	-8
7	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		↑	←	7	1	6
8	↑	←	↑	←	←	↑	←		←	3	5	-2
9	↑	↑	↑	↑	←	↑	↑	↑		7	1	6

Count the number of up arrows (↑) or *Outs*

Count the number of left arrows (←) or *Ins*

Subtract the number of *Ins* from the *Outs* to determine the ( $\Delta$ ) *Deltas*

$$\Delta = \text{Out} - \text{In}$$

Table 4.9

*Daughters' Composite Affinity IRD Sorted*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT	IN	$\Delta$
7	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑		↑	←	7	1	6
9	↑	↑	↑	↑	←	↑	↑	↑		7	1	6
4	↑	↑	↑		↑	↑	←	↑	←	6	2	4
5	↑	↑	↑	←		↑	←	↑	↑	6	2	4
2	↑		←	←	←	↑	←	↑	←	3	5	-2
3	↑	↑		←	←	↑	←	←	←	3	5	-2
8	↑	←	↑	←	←	↑	←		←	3	5	-2
1		←	←	←	←	↑	←	←	←	1	7	-6
6	←	←	←	←	←		←	←	←	0	8	-8

The delta values listed in the right column of Table 4.9 were sorted in descending order and used to identify the relative positions of the affinities in the system. The larger numbers identified the primary drivers, and the smallest numbers indicate the primary outcomes. The left column indicates placement and order of the affinities. The position of these affinities is listed in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10

*Daughters' Composite Tentative SID Assignments*

<b>7</b>	Primary Driver
<b>9</b>	Primary Driver
<b>4</b>	Secondary Driver
<b>5</b>	Secondary Driver
<b>2</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>3</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>8</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>1</b>	Secondary Outcome
<b>6</b>	Primary Outcome

*System influence diagrams.* The System Influence Diagram (SID) is a visual representation of the cause and effect relationships between the nine affinities. The following SID analysis is based upon a compilation of the individual realities of the daughters who participated in the individual interviews.

*Cluttered SID.* All links described in the Daughters' Combined IRD Sorted (Table 4.9) are represented in the uncluttered SID shown in Figure 4.13.

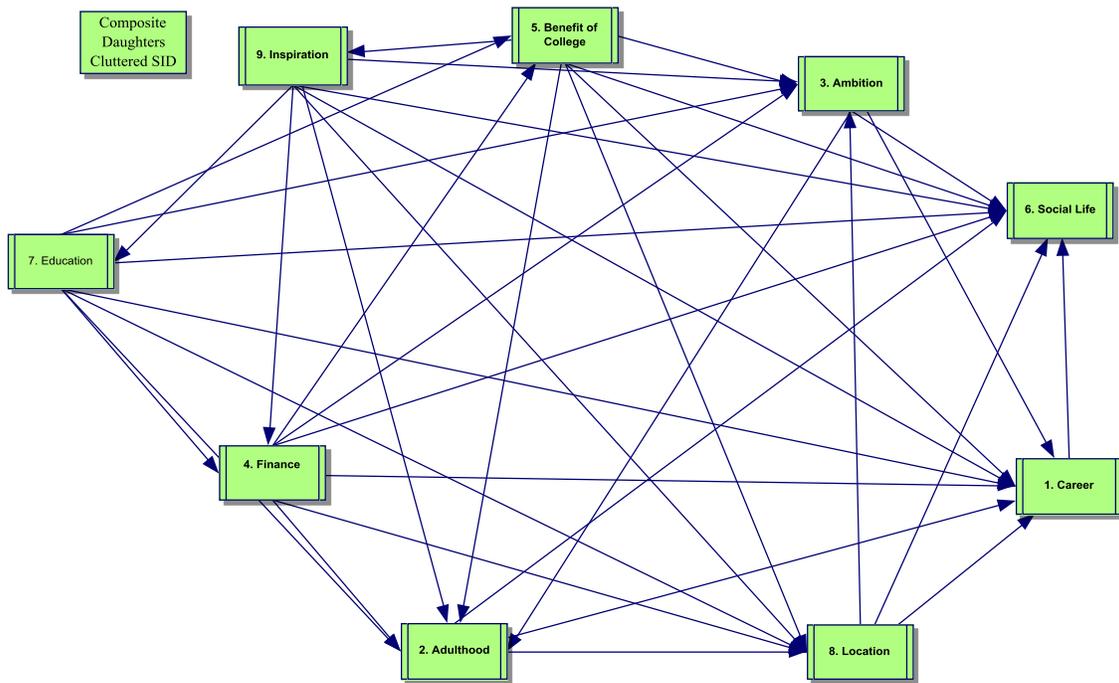


Figure 4.13. Daughters' Composite Cluttered SID

*Daughters' uncluttered SID.* The removal of redundant links produced a simplified system without altering the relationships of the affinities. The resulting uncluttered SID is the simplest possible conceptual map indicating all relationships contained in the IRD and is shown in Figure 4.14.

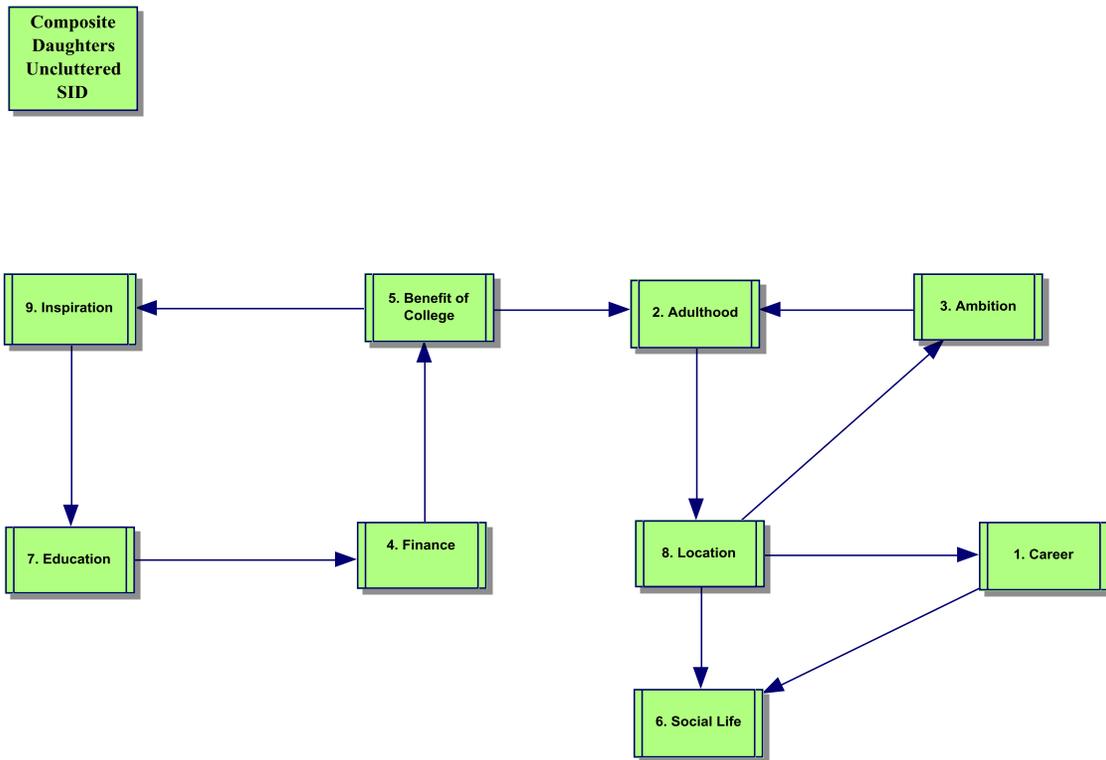


Figure 4.14. Daughters' Composite Uncluttered SID

*Pareto reconciled SID.* Once the researcher had removed all redundant links, the Pareto Protocol was examined for conflicting relationships, which occur when the same affinity pair has relationships occurring with a significant frequency in both directions. The lesser frequency was ignored in the IRD but was reconciled in the uncluttered SID. Because a SID must be consistent with its associate IRD, two links not directly described in the composite theoretical descriptions were added back to the SID.

The affinity pairs identified with conflicts to be reconciled were: 1—Career and 2—Adulthood, 4—Finances and 9—Inspiration, 6—Social Life and 8—Location, 7—Education, and 9—Inspiration. The relationship, Career and Adulthood, was resolved by

adding a connecting relationship line from 1 toward 2. The second relationship, Finance and Inspiration was resolved in a feedback loop so no additional relationship line was necessary. The third relationship, Social Life and Location, was resolved by adding a connecting relationship line from 6 toward 8. The final conflicting relationships, Education and Inspiration, were resolved in a feedback loop so no additional relationship line was needed.

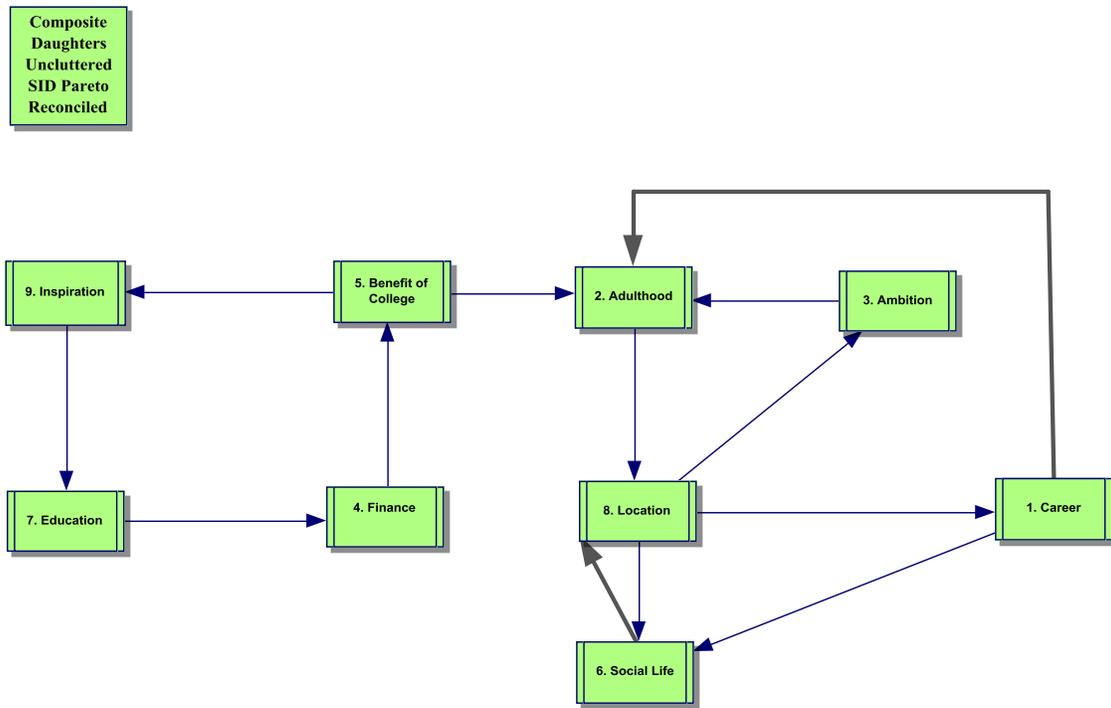
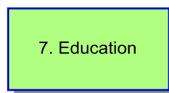


Figure 4.15. Daughters' Composite Uncluttered SID Pareto Reconciled

*A tour through the system.* The Daughters' perception of their experience in choosing a college begins with the primary driver, Education, and ends with the primary outcome, Social Life. Both positive and negative perceptions of an affinity can influence the experience of the next affinity (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). A visual tour of the system is shown in Figure 4.16.



*Figure 4.16.* Education

*Education.* Education was a primary driver of the Daughters' system. The Daughters believed that their innate desire for higher education had a direct influence on all other factors related to college choice.

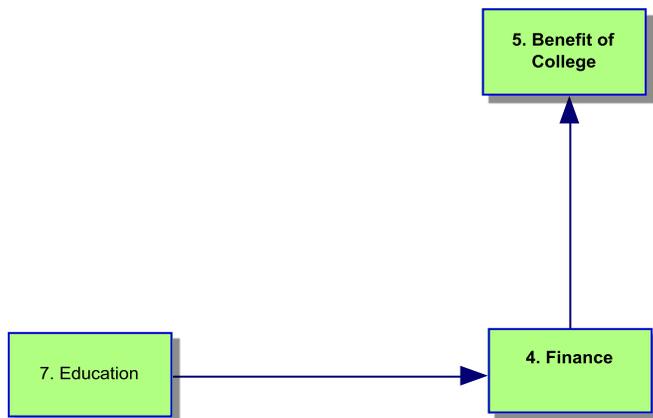
I guess the desire to have an education came from my parents instilling in me that I needed an education to be able to live the type of lifestyle that I had become accustomed to living. That was certainly part of my decision. We were not rich or anything, but just to be comfortable you needed a degree. It was never really a discussion or an argument whether I would go to college; it was just a matter of deciding what I wanted to major in and where I wanted to go to college.



*Figure 4.17.* Finance

*Finances.* This affinity refers to the cost to attend a college and the financial situation of the family. It is a secondary driver in the Daughters' system. The affinity is driven by the affinity Education.

I couldn't afford it; my mom couldn't afford it. Money was an issue for me even though I knew I could get in-state tuition, grants, scholarships, and loans. My family didn't have a lot of money, but I knew that whatever the price it would be worth it to have a college degree. Getting the best financial package helped me decide which school to attend.



*Figure 4.18.* Benefit of College

*Benefit of college.* Benefit of college is a secondary driver in the Daughters' system. It is driven by the affinities Education, Finance, and Inspiration. The daughters reflected on the benefits of college as it related to future earning power. "I didn't know how people could get along on \$7 per hour. I kept thinking I couldn't make this kind of money for the rest of my life. I knew I had to go to college."

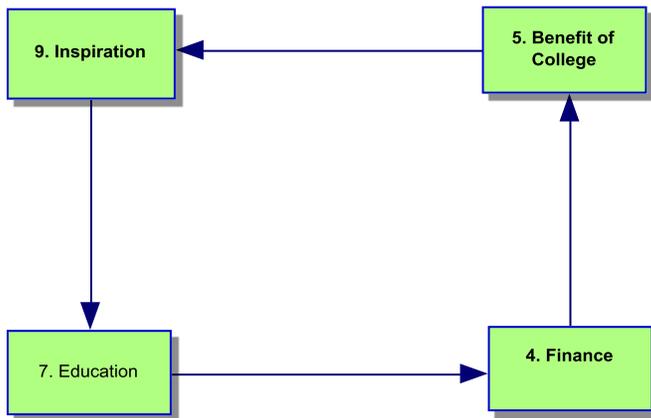


Figure 4.19. Inspiration

*Inspiration.* Inspiration is also a primary driver in the daughters’ system. It is driven by the affinity Education. The daughters indicated their mothers were the most inspiring and influential individuals in their college decision process. A common reflection of the daughters was that their mothers also encouraged them to find a career that they could enjoy.

My mother inspired me to go to college; she has always had a learner’s heart. I can remember as a child reading her textbooks out loud to her as her vision began failing. We were always around some college campus so that gave me the confidence to go to college. My mother wanted me to do something I would enjoy and taught me not to settle for just anything.

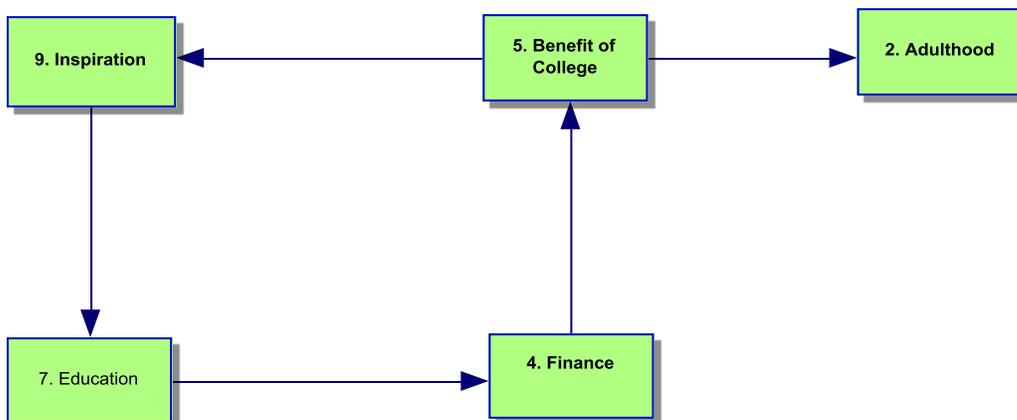


Figure 4.20. Adulthood

*Adulthood.* The affinity Adulthood is a secondary outcome in the daughters' system. It is driven by all the affinities before it, Education, Inspiration, Benefit of College, and Finance.

I had responsibilities at home, but I needed to get away to grow up. I also wanted to be more independent, and knew I needed to go away to college to do that. Going to college gave me a sense of self-esteem, self-respect, and I felt more like an adult.

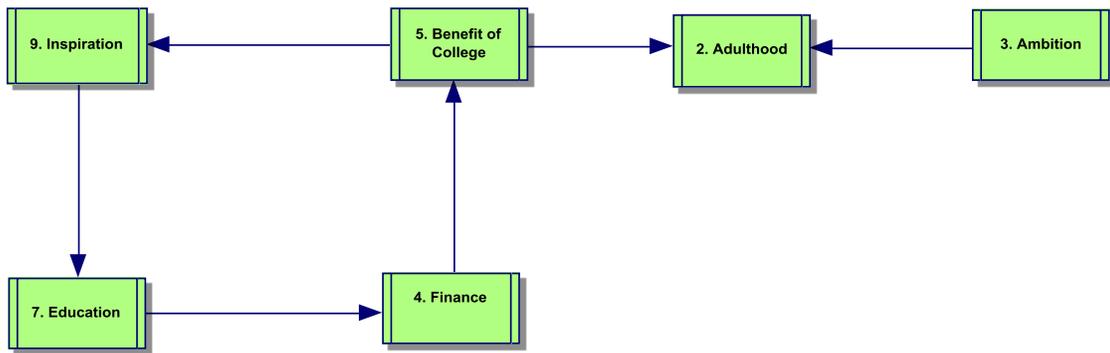


Figure 4.21. Ambition

*Ambition.* Ambition is a secondary outcome in the daughters' system. It is driven by four of the preceding affinities, Education, Inspiration, Benefit of College, and Finance. The daughters felt that the affinity ambition meant proving they could become a college graduate, and they wanted a comfortable life.

If I had any ambition at that point in my life it was to prove myself to the world. I didn't really want to be rich. I just wanted to be comfortable. I wanted to have a home and money to travel. I knew I didn't need a lot of money to have a nice home and live a comfortable life.

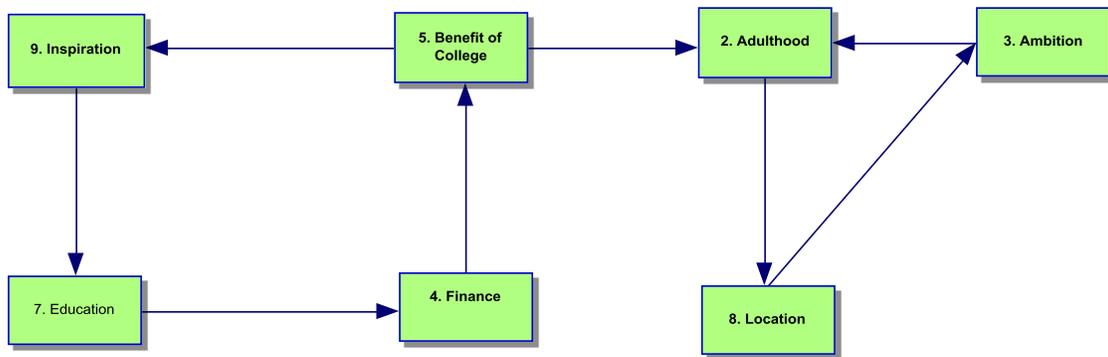


Figure 4.22. Location

*Location.* Location was also a secondary outcome in the daughters' system. It is driven by the five affinities: Education, Inspiration, Finance, Benefit of College, and Adulthood. The daughters either wanted to be close to home, far from home, or it did not matter. What mattered more to them was the size of the college, and whether it was a majority minority campus.

I knew I didn't want to be too close or too far from home. I wanted to be able to come home easily. I liked that some of my friends were going to the same school, so we could ride back and forth together. What mattered a lot to me was the size of the college more than the location of the college. I didn't want to go somewhere where I would be in a minority environment.

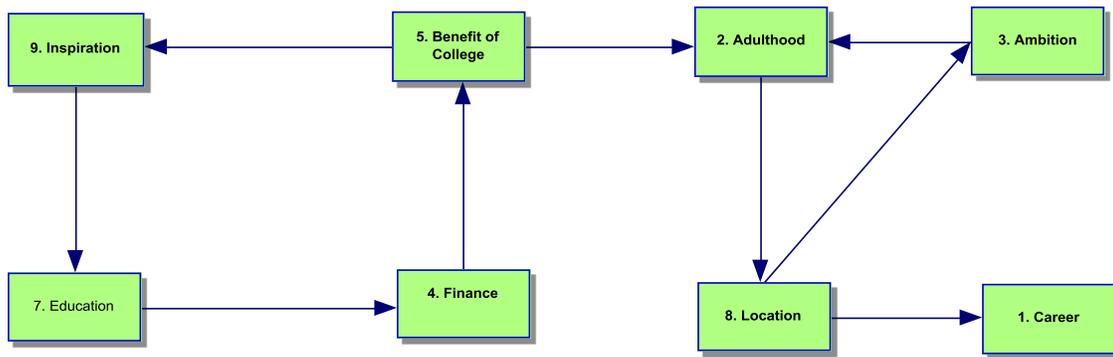


Figure 4.23. Career

*Career.* Career was a secondary outcome in the daughters’ system. It was driven by the affinities Education, Inspiration, Finance, Benefit of College, Adulthood, and Location. Because of the feedback loop created, it was also influenced by the affinity Ambition. The daughters frequently referred to preparing themselves for a career they would enjoy, as well as, earning enough money to take care of their family. “I wanted a career I would enjoy, and I wanted to make enough money to take care of my family.”

After the Pareto Protocol was reconciled, an arrow was added from Career to Adulthood, because the daughters were split on which direction the arrow should point. When there was a tie or a close tally, the researcher went back to the Focus Group to determine the direction of the relationship, if there was still a tie the linking relationship was added back to the SID (see below).

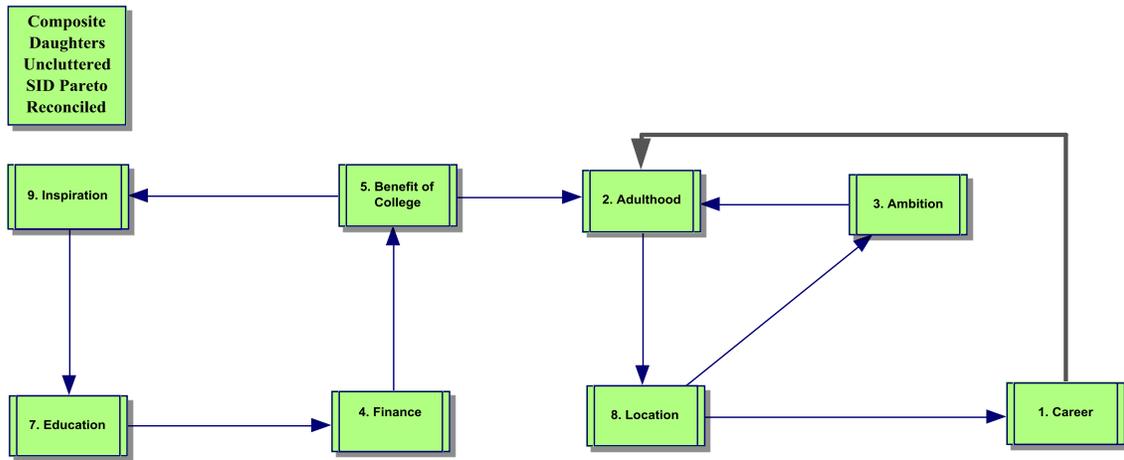


Figure 4.24. Daughters' Composite Uncluttered SID with Career Pareto Reconciled

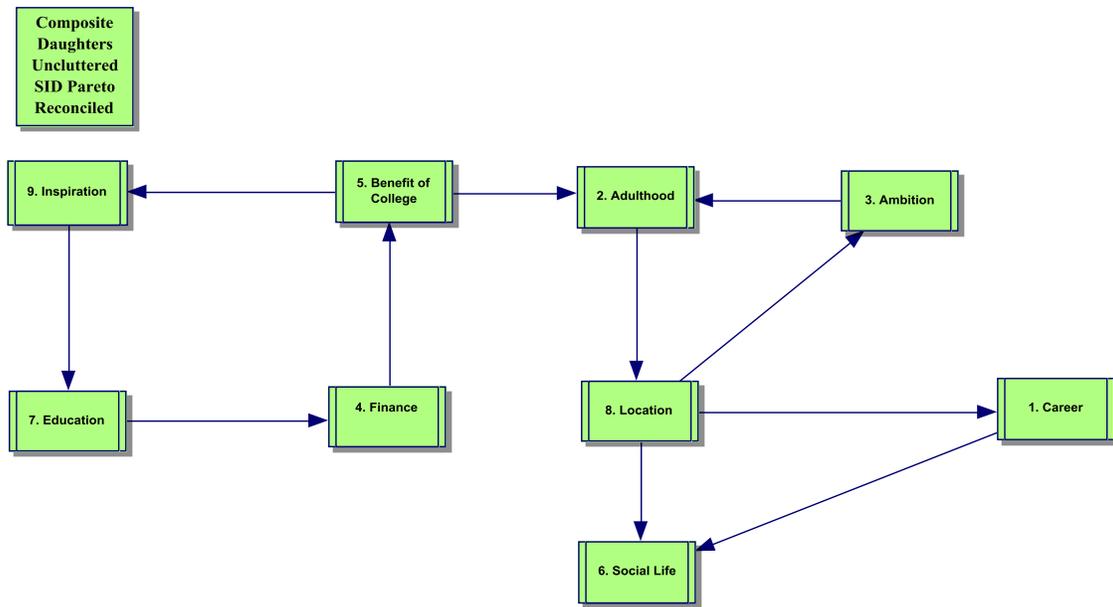


Figure 4.25. Social Life

*Social life.* Social Life was a primary outcome in the daughters' system. It is a significant effect that is caused by many of the affinities, but does not affect others.

College is a good place to meet someone with similar ambition and a person who would compliment my dreams. That is one reason I went to an historically Black college. Homecoming is a big deal at a Black college; it's like an extended family reunion. You feel at home there. For me though, social life was an afterthought. I make friends easily, and I just assumed I would make friends wherever I went.

After the Pareto Protocol was reconciled, an arrow was added from Social Life to Location, because the daughters were split on which direction the arrow should point. When there was a tie or a close tally, the researcher went back to the Focus Group to determine the direction of the relationship. If there was still a tie, the linking relationship was added back to the SID as is shown below in Figure 4.26.

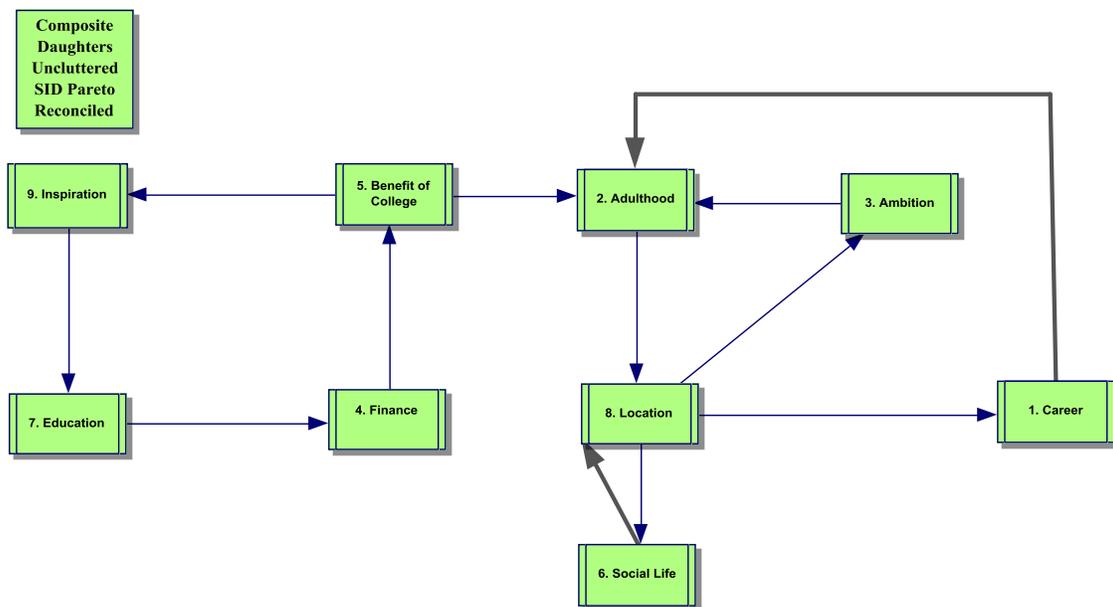


Figure 4.26. Social Life with Pareto Reconciled

When both reconciled links were added to the system, the link from Career to Social Life could be removed as it became redundant.

*Final tour of the composite daughters' system.* A final tour through the system is explained in the Composite Daughters' Interview Theoretical Summary in Figure 4.27.

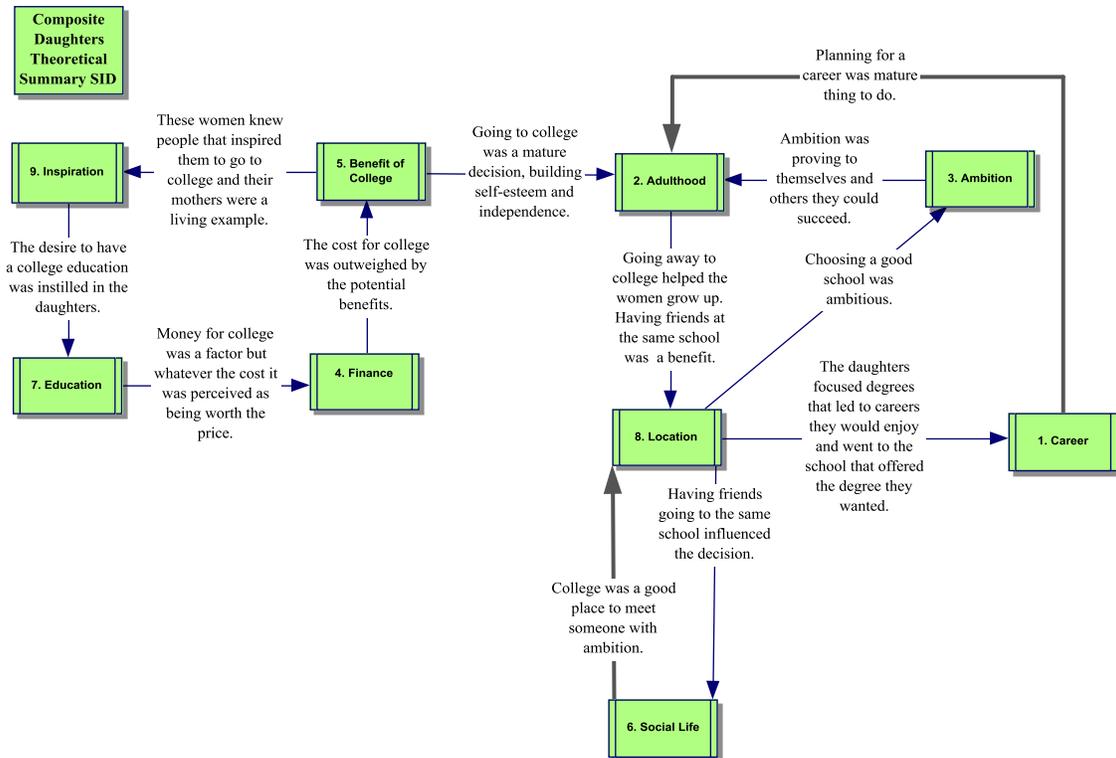


Figure 4.27. Daughters' Composite Interview Theoretical Summary

The daughters' view of college choice begins with the inspiration they received from people they knew and their deep-rooted desire for a college education instilled in them by their families. The daughters had "college savvy" mothers that understood the system and knew how to apply for scholarships, loans, and grants. The cost of college was a factor for the daughters, and financial aid packages influenced their choice of what

school to attend. The daughters knew the benefits of college outweighed the cost, because they had seen the difference it made in their mother's lifestyle. The daughters felt that going away to college, even if it was not very far away, was an important factor in their personal development as they would gain independence, self-esteem, and meet people with similar goals while living away from the family. Having friends going to the same college was perceived as a benefit to the daughters and was weighed favorably when selecting a college.

The daughters were ambitious. They wanted to go to a good school to prepare for a good career, one that would provide a comfortable lifestyle for their own family. The daughters sought out colleges that offered the degrees they wanted for their careers, and were proud that they had weighed so many factors into their choice of colleges. They said making good, solid decisions was a "grown-up" thing to do.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the results of the Mothers' and Daughters' focus group interviews where the affinities were identified initially and described as important factors in choosing a college. Data provided by the two focus groups were used to generate the interview protocols for the individual interviews. The axial and theoretical interviews allowed the researcher to obtain, rich, personal descriptions of each person's perceptions of the college choice process. Composite descriptions were created for both the mothers and the daughters. The data were used to create composite mind maps of each group, providing a visual image to compare the mothers' and the daughters' experience with choosing a college. Chapter six will highlight feedback loops,

comparisons between the mothers and daughters, and describe how the system can be used outside the context of this study (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

## **Chapter Five: Implications**

### **Introduction**

This chapter provided the researcher an opportunity to analyze and interpret the data to begin to draw conclusions. This was accomplished by describing the overall placement of the affinities in the uncluttered, Pareto Reconciled system from Primary Driver to Primary Outcome. The researcher analyzed, collapsed, and named feedback loops, creating, what IQA refers to as super affinities. Zooming and the telephoto view of a System Influence Diagram (SID) are introduced in this chapter to prepare the system to be stretched and exercised in Chapter six.

The final chapter will focus on how the system can implode or go negative, how to escape from a feedback loop, and provides some possible intervention strategies presuming some given conditions. The model will be exercised by tinkering with the primary drivers and the primary outcomes to help predict when a student might need intervention strategies to escape a negative feedback loop or explain why a student never enrolls or never graduates. A final comparison of the mothers and daughters is provided, and the research questions are reviewed once more (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

### **Feedback Loops and Zooming of the Mothers' Composite Affinity Relationships**

An analysis of the direction of the Mothers' affinity relationships indicated there were three relationships that either resulted in a tie, or a closely split decision by the mothers on the direction of influence. Those three affinity relationships were Finances to Support System, Location to Finances, and Civil Rights to Mississippi. When the Mothers' SID was reconciled using the Pareto Protocol, three feedback loops were created in the Mothers' system. Within a feedback loop the distinction between drivers and outcomes is blurred because they influence each other. The Mothers' SID suggested these affinities operated together and interacted with each other creating a new super affinity (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004).

Zooming, in an IQA study, is the process of "naming feedback loops by substituting the name of the feedback loop for the names of the individual components," creating a super affinity. The super affinity has less detail and is a good interpretive tool for the researcher (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004, p. 335).

Figure 5.1 shows the Composite Mothers' SID Pareto Reconciled with three feedback loops.

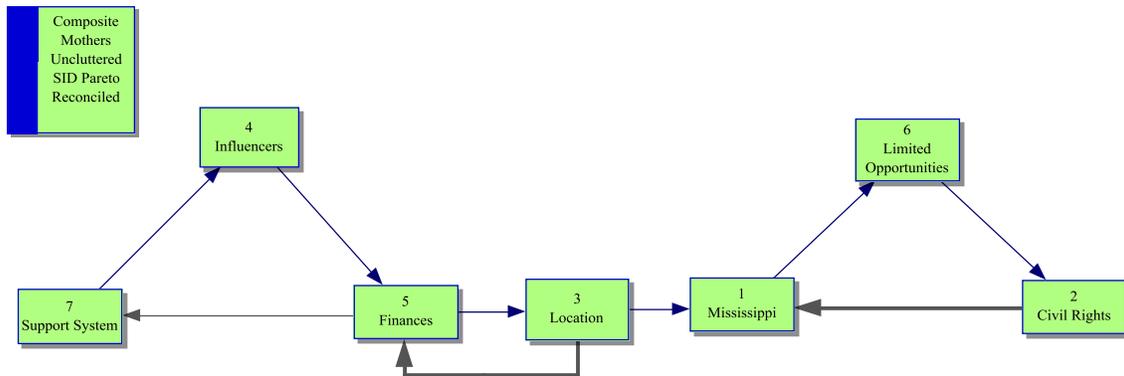


Figure 5.1. Composite Mothers’ Uncluttered SID Pareto Reconciled

The first feedback loop addressed consisted of two affinities, Finances and Location. The SID suggested these two affinities operated together and interacted with each other, thereby allowing the researcher to rename the subgroup “cost-benefit analysis” (shown in Figure 5.2).

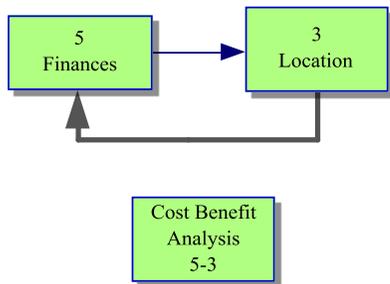


Figure 5.2. Super Affinity Cost Benefit Analysis

The next feedback loop addressed (Figure 5.3) consisted of three affinities, Support System, Influencers, and Finance.

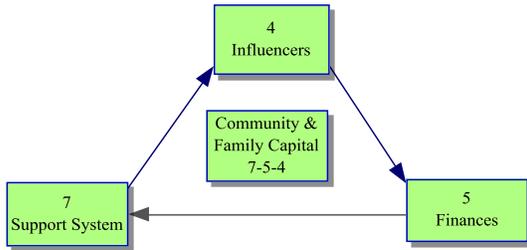


Figure 5.3. Super Affinity Community & Family Capital

The SID suggested these three affinities operated together and interacted with each other. This allowed the researcher to create the subsystem Community and Family Capital. This super affinity replaced the feedback loop 7—4—5 by substitution. The new, zoomed-out view is shown in Figure 5.4 with the substitution of the new super affinity Cost Benefit Analysis plugged into the system.

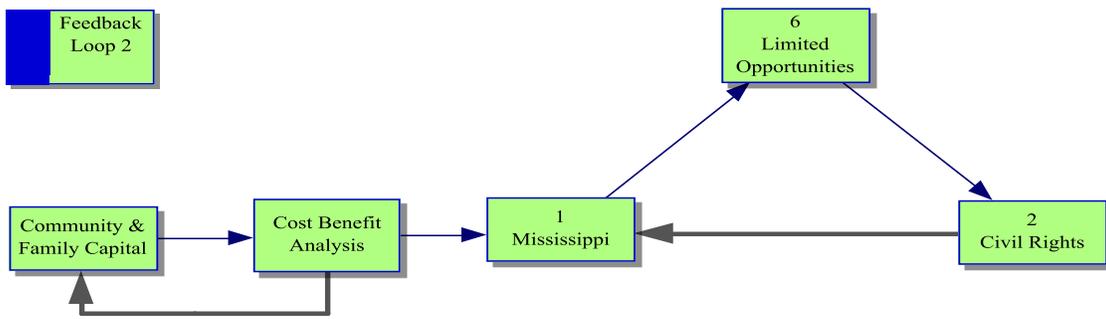


Figure 5.4. Zoomed Out View with Two Super Affinities

This still leaves a feedback loop in the system. This is resolved by merging the super affinity cost benefit analysis into Community and Family Capital and renaming this new super affinity Community, Family, and Economic Capital as depicted in Figure 5.5.

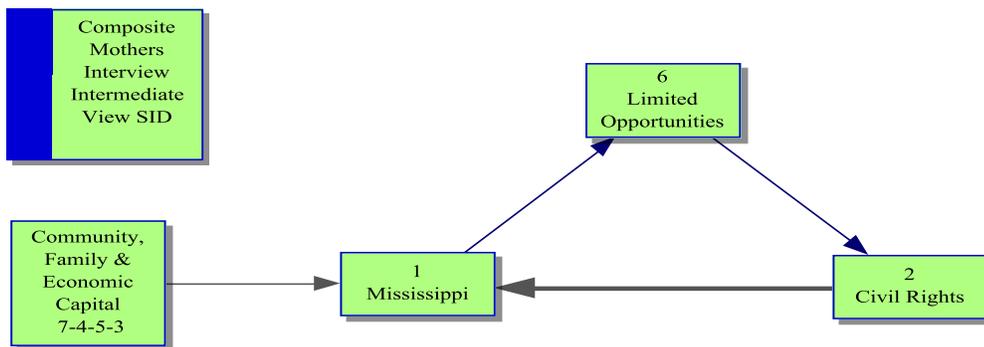


Figure 5.5. Super Affinity Community, Family, and Economic Capital

The last feedback loop consisted of the affinities Mississippi, Limited Opportunities, and Civil Rights, renamed Social, Cultural, and Political Reality, and is shown in Figure 5.6. This is immediately followed by Figure 5.7, depicting the telephoto view of the system zoomed and condensed to the simplest format possible, still containing all the relationships indicated in the IRD.

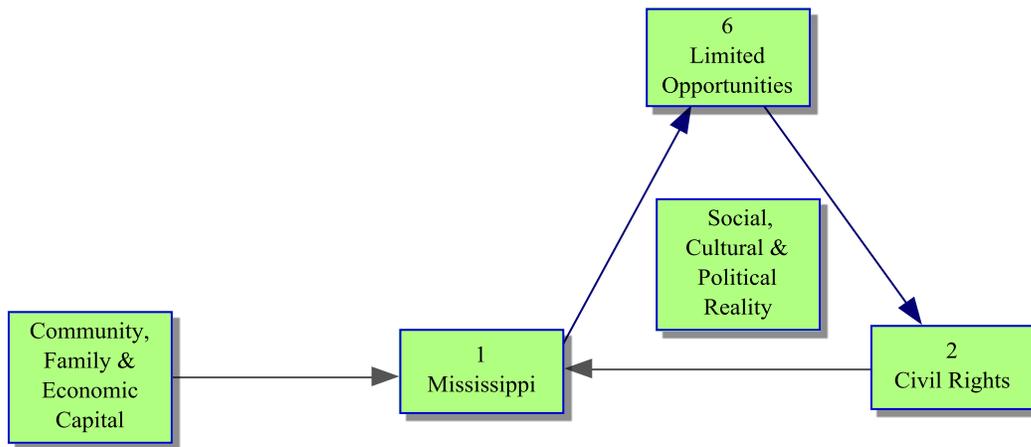


Figure 5.6. Super Affinity Social, Cultural, and Political Reality

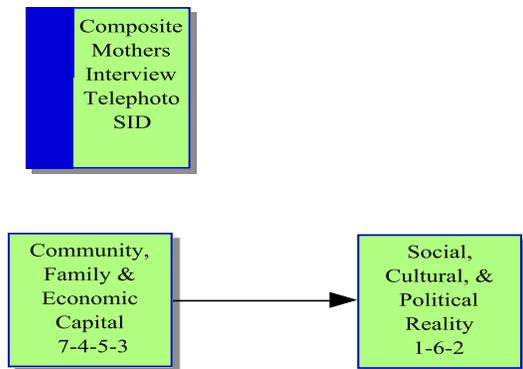


Figure 5.7. Super Affinity Social, Cultural and Political Reality Telephoto SID

This completes the description of the overall placement of the affinities in the mothers' system. The links were visually described starting with the primary drivers working left to right, ending with the primary outcomes. The feedback loops were identified, named, and given super affinity status. The mothers' summary is the next step in the IQA process, and the process will be repeated with the daughters' affinities.

### **Mothers' Summary**

The mothers were asked to redefine, in their own words, the seven affinities described by the mothers' focus group. Analysis of the systems using System Influence Diagrams (SIDs), combined with axial and theoretical quotations from the mothers, resulted in the identification of interrelated subsystems. Cost Benefit Analysis was a subsystem composed of two affinities: Finances and Location (Figure 5.2). A second subsystem composed of the affinities, Support System, Influencers, and Finances, was renamed Community and Family Capital (Figure 5.3). Substitution of this super affinity in the diagram results in a third subsystem created from the two new super affinities Community and Family Capital, and Cost Benefit Analysis (Figure 5.4). These two super affinities were collapsed into one super affinity—Community, Family, and Economic Capital (Figure 5.5). The last feedback loop consisted of the affinities Mississippi, Limited Opportunities, and Civil Rights, renamed Social, Cultural, and Political Reality, and is shown in Figure 5.6. The telephoto view of the Combined Mothers' SID with Pareto reconciliation and the super affinities named is shown in

Figure 5.7 and is consistent with the Composite Mothers' Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) depicted in Table 4.4.

This model was converted into the following if-then statement: If a female, a Black, college-bound student possessed community, family, and economic capital, then this first-generation student could successfully overcome the social, cultural, and political reality of attending college in Mississippi in the 1960s, whether or not she chose an HBI or an HWI.

### **Feedback Loops and Zooming of the Daughters' Composite Affinity Relationships**

An analysis of the direction of the Daughters' affinity relationships indicated there were two relationships that either resulted in a tie, or a closely split decision by the daughters on the direction of influence. Those two affinity relationships were Career to Adulthood and Social Life to Location. The original Composite Daughters' SID had three feedback loops (Figure 5.8); and when the SID was reconciled using the Pareto Protocol (Figure 5.9), it eliminated the need for the arrow from Career to Social Life as it became redundant. However, it did create two new feedback loops in the daughters' system, as shown in Figure 5.9. The first new feedback loop is created by linking the affinities Career to Ambition and the second feedback loop is created by linking from the affinity Social Life back to Location as is shown in Figure 5.9.

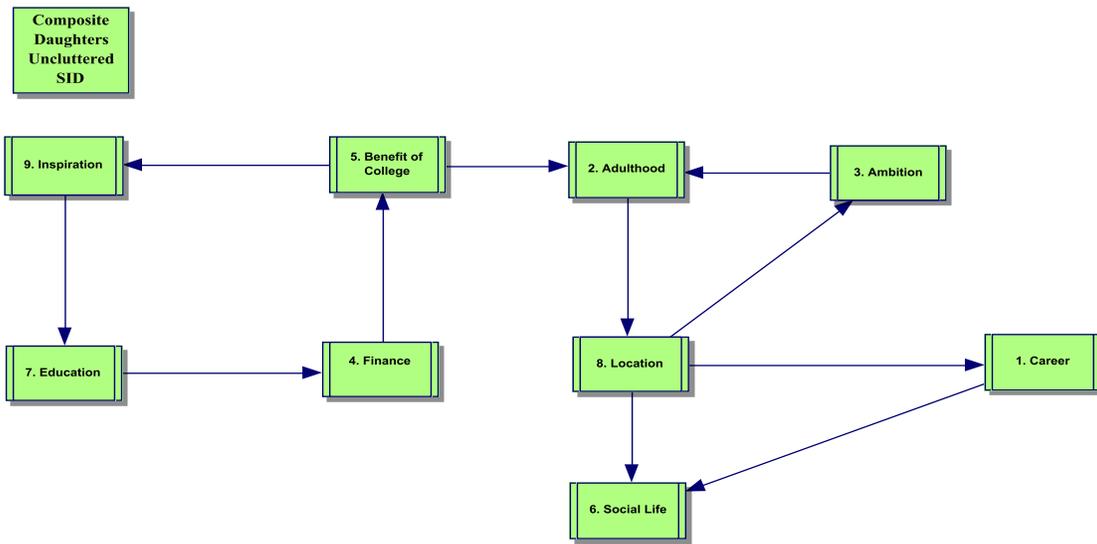


Figure 5.8. Composite Daughters' SID before Pareto Protocol

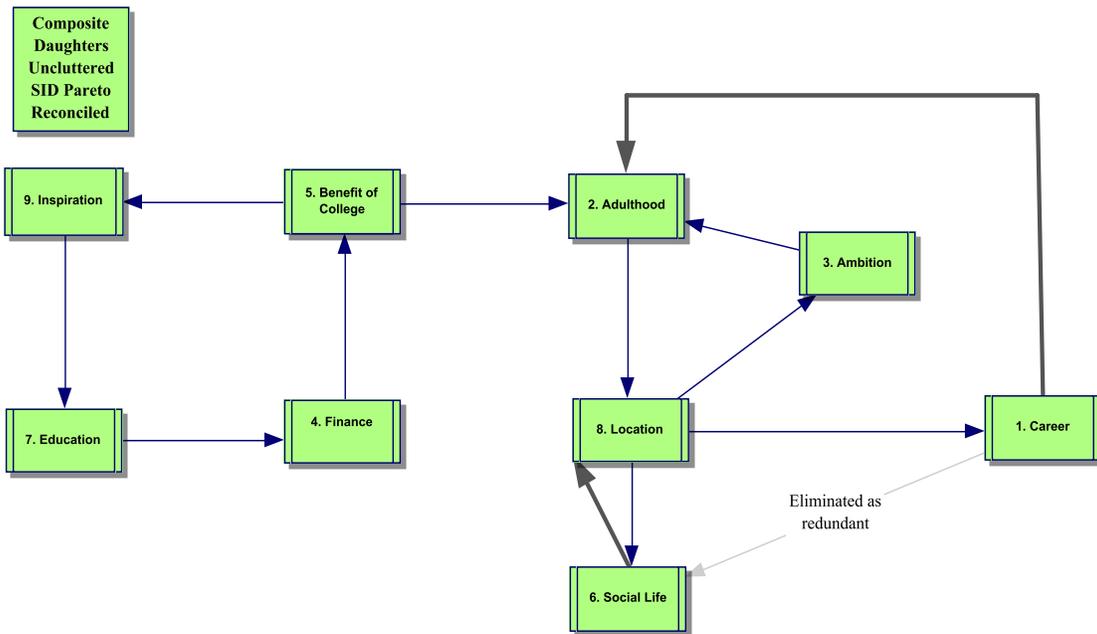


Figure 5.9. Composite Daughters' SID Pareto Reconciled with Four Feedback Loops

Zooming out from the system, as was done with the mothers' composite SID (Figure 5.7), allows the researcher to focus on the super affinity, which has far less detail and is a good interpretive tool (Northcutt & McCoy, 2004). This is done by collapsing and renaming a feedback loop. This process is demonstrated for the daughters' feedback loops.

The first feedback loop addressed in the Composite Daughters' system included the affinities Education, Finance, Benefits of College, and Inspiration, as shown in Figure 5.9. This affinity was renamed Family Capital.

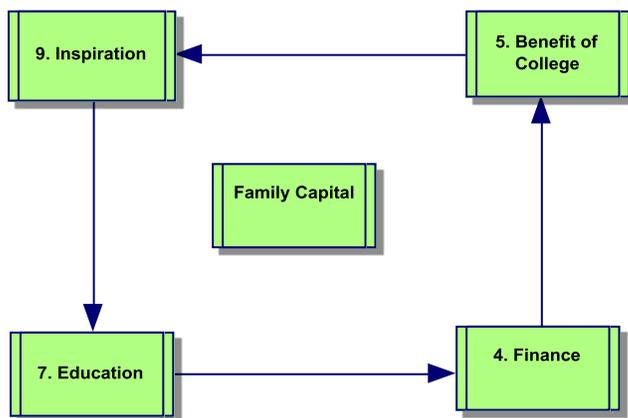


Figure 5.10. First Feedback Loop Family Capital

The general theme of this recursion is Family Capital. The family provided the student with inspiration to attend college, and either provided their daughter with financial assistance or the knowledge of how to access financial aid programs. The benefits of college and need for an education were ingrained into the daughter's consciousness by the family.

These daughters did not have unrealistic income expectations or aspirations. They were realistic in their assessment of their future earnings, practical in their choice of colleges, and aware of the financial implications of attending a particular college. Generally, the daughters looked for and expected some financial assistance in the form of a scholarship, grant, or loan to come from the college. “Whatever college gave me the best package was where I was going to go.”

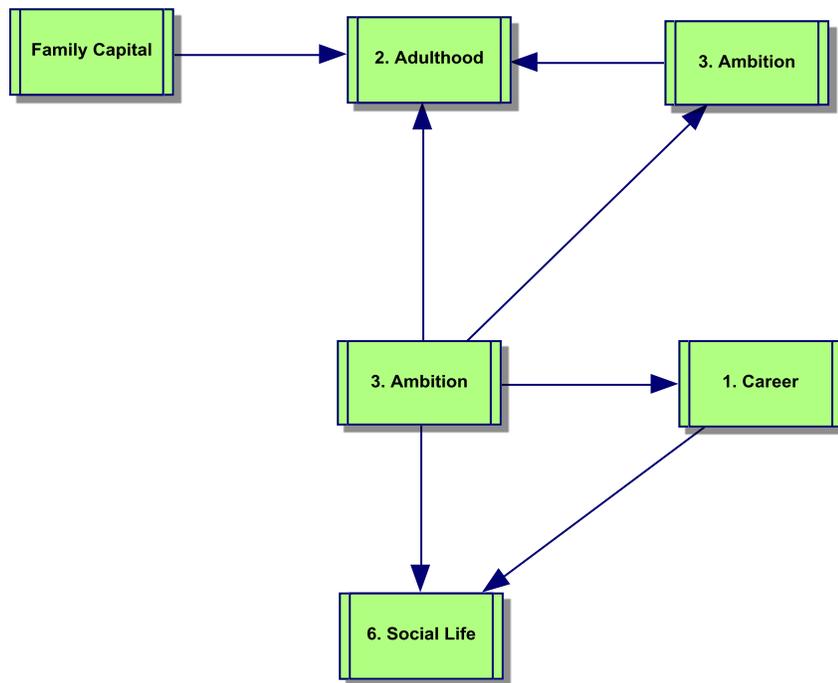


Figure 5.11. Family Capital Incorporated into the Daughters’ SID

The next feedback loop addressed included the affinities Adulthood, Location, and Ambition (Figure 5.12).

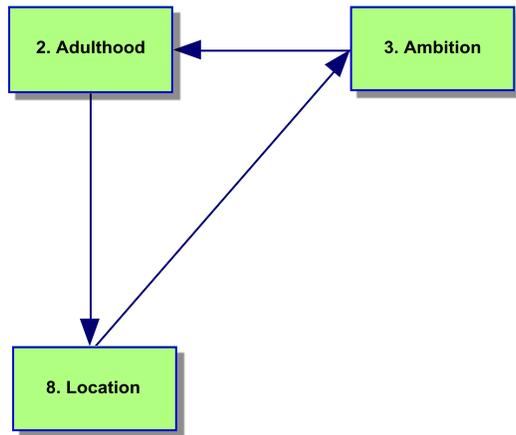


Figure 5.12. Daughters' Second Feedback Loop

The daughter's focus group named the affinity adulthood; but throughout the individual interviews with the daughters, they used the word *independence* when describing this affinity and its relationship to other affinities. That being said, the researcher changed the title of the affinity adulthood to independence and then zoomed out and renamed the recursion Individual Capacity (Figure 5.12).

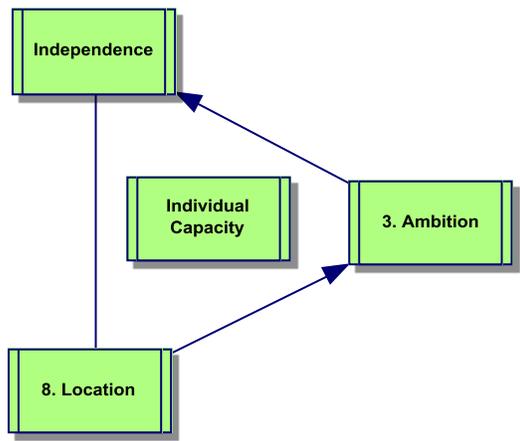


Figure 5.13. Daughters' Second Feedback Loop Individual Capacity

Simplifying this recursion required examining the meaning of each word in context of the entire interview of each individual daughter. There was a strong desire for respect (self-respect and respect of others) for their good decision to go to college and recognition of their academic accomplishments. The affinity location lives in this loop and is tied to independence and ambition. The location of the college was important for some daughters. They needed to get away from the family to gain independence, but they still wanted to be able to go home easily. One daughter stated it was nice to have one foot in college and one foot at home—meaning she could gain independence with the security of her family nearby. The daughters indicated there was a desire to develop their individual capacity; therefore, the feedback loop was renamed Individual Capacity. The two super affinities are shown in Figure 5.14, with the rest of the Daughters’ Composite SID attached.

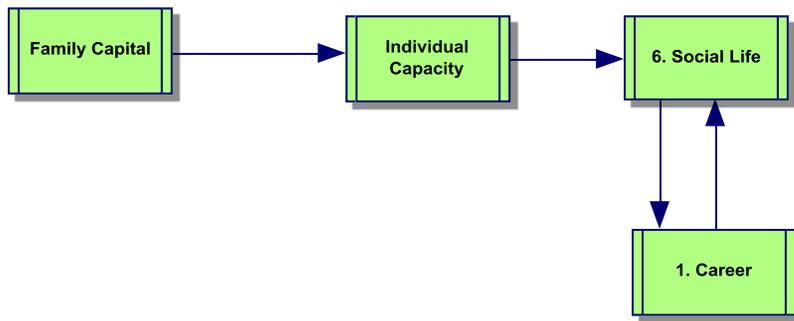
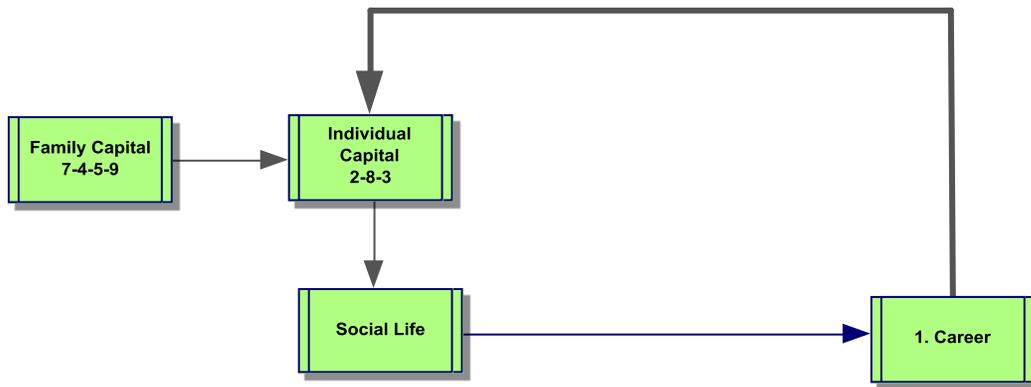


Figure 5.14. Super Affinity Individual Capacity

The next affinity relationship to resolve in this model is Career. The daughters talked about their families encouraging them to find a career they would enjoy. When

the Daughters' Composite SID was reconciled using the Pareto Protocol, another feedback loop was created, as shown in Figure 5.15.



*Figure 5.15. Career Feedback Loop*

The last affinity to bring back into the model is Social Life. The daughters said this was not a determining factor in choosing which college to attend, but having fun and making friends was assumed to be a positive part of the college experience. They also assumed they would meet people with similar aspirations. The feedback loop created between the affinities Location and Social Life was resolved by the new feedback loop created by the application of the Pareto Protocol to the affinities Career and Individual Capital.

The final feedback loop resolved was the one shown in Figure 5.15. In that system, there was a feedback loop consisting of Individual Capacity, Social Life, and Career. Those affinities related to and interacted with each other requiring naming the new feedback loop Individual Capital. This new super affinity describes all of the relationships present in the Composite Daughters' IRD (Table 4.9).

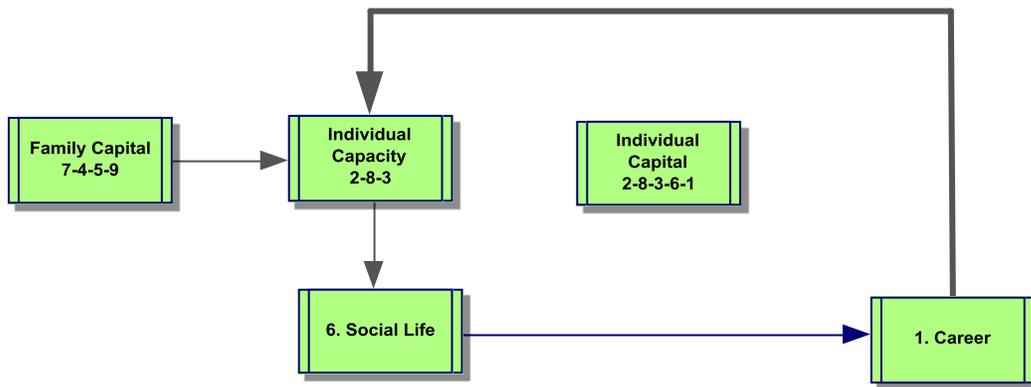


Figure 5.16. Super Affinity Individual Capital

The telephoto view of the Composite Daughters' SID is shown in Figure 5.17.



Figure 5.17. Composite Daughters' Telephoto SID

### Daughters' Summary

The daughters were asked to redefine in their own words the nine affinities described by the Daughters' Focus Group. Analysis of the system using System Influence Diagrams (SIDs), combined with axial and theoretical quotations from the daughters, resulted in the identification of interrelated subsystems. Family Capital is a subsystem created by combining the affinities Education, Finance, Benefit of College, and Inspiration (Figure 5.10). The second subsystem was composed of the three affinities, Adulthood, Location, and Ambition and renamed Individual Capacity (Figure 5.13).

The next step was to address the new feedback loop created when the Pareto Protocol was applied to the affinities Individual Capital, Social Life, and Career. The

feedback loop was renamed Individual Capital (Figure 5.16). The newly created telephoto view of the Composite Daughters' affinity relationship (Figure 5.17) provided the researcher with a very simple Composite System Influence Diagram (SID) for the daughters that was consistent with the Composite Daughters' Interrelationship Diagram (IRD) depicted in Table 4.9.

This system was converted into an if-then sentence and read as follows: If a Black, female, college-bound, second-generation student had solid family capital, then that student would choose a college that offered them three key opportunities. Those opportunities would include a positive way to develop their individual capacity, a path to a career they would enjoy would be evident, and a place where they could assimilate and meet people with similar goals and aspirations.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter presented the results of the mothers' and daughters' focus group interviews where affinities were identified as important factors in choosing a college in the state of Mississippi. The focus group interview data were used to generate an interview protocol for the mothers' and daughters' individual interviews. These individual axial and theoretical interviews allowed the researcher to obtain rich descriptions of each person's recollections of the college choice process. The interviews were then compiled into descriptive composite data sets, and composite mind maps were created for each group. The visual comparison of hundreds of pages of transcripts was condensed into two telephoto versions of the complex System Influence Diagrams (SIDs) for comparison and interpretation in Chapter six.

## **Chapter Six: Theoretical Implications**

### **Introduction**

Understanding why a student chooses a particular college over another has been studied in depth. A literature review revealed social psychological, economic, and aspirations studies have been conducted to explain why a student chooses one college over another college. This study zoomed in on college choice decisions of African American women who attended college in Mississippi after James Meredith was admitted to the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss). This cross-generational study included interviews with the daughters of those same African American women. Billingsley (1992) wrote, “Education is the traditional opportunity through which Black families find their place in life. And having found it they replicate their experience again and again through their children” (as cited in Freeman, 2005, p. 172).

The research study was designed to determine if there was a difference between the mothers’ and daughters’ decision making process as it related to the social, cultural, and political factors that influenced college choice. Hood (1968) determined that students consider cost, quality of student body, curriculum, size, religious affiliation, geographical location, prestige, living accommodations, social life, athletics, financial aid, and social and intellectual attitudes of the students before deciding where to attend college (as cited in Freeman, p. 4). The mothers interviewed were in college when the Hood study was published, but their list is slightly different, perhaps because they were enrolling in college in the midst of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi. The participants considered cost, size, location, and financial aid as college choice

determinates, as is listed by Hood (1968); however, the rest of the participant list is different. Participants identified influencers (people that motivated or inspired them), a support system of community and family members, quality of life issues (having a better life), limited opportunities, the Civil Rights Movement, and living in Mississippi as having influenced their college choice decision.

Several of the participants enrolled in predominately White colleges in Mississippi, and they were of particular interest because it occurred in the mid-1960s, during the initial stages of desegregation of the PWIs in Mississippi. The mothers talked freely about their experiences at PWI's and shared their reflections on being a virtual "only" in an all White institution. The participants also discussed their parents' feelings on their choice to go to a PWI in Mississippi, and as Meier noted in 1989, "Black parents feared exposing their children to the dangers and tensions of being pioneers in school desegregation" (Meier et al., 1989, pp. 46-47).

This study supports Freeman's (2005) premise; "College choice theorists recognize that the family plays a huge role in influencing students postsecondary plans" (p. 12). Both groups ranked family influence as a major factor in choosing a college. According to Freeman, "Education has always been a matter of interest for the entire family and community. The church, the extended family, and the immediate family have always been involved in the education of African American children" (Freeman, 2005, p.13). Although community and church involvement was evident in the stories and recollections of the mothers, there was no mention of community involvement in the daughters' interviews.

Carter (2001) suggests that measures related to choice include the reputation of the institution, relative closeness to home, and whether the selected institution was less expensive than other institutions (p. 59). This study maintains the college being close to home and the cost to attend were priorities for both sets of participants. There were scattered comments from both the mothers and the daughters related to institutional reputation being a factor in choosing a college, but the comments were associated with their struggle to decide between an HBI and a PWI.

Boyd (1980) identifies the top three characteristics Black students considered important in their choice of colleges. In 1973, students ranked financial aid as the most important factor. Proximity to home and academic reputation were ranked second and third, respectively. In 1977, the order of importance was reversed, and academic reputation was considered most important to Black students, followed by financial aid and proximity to home. In 2003, the mothers in this study ranked support system, influencers, and finances as the most important aspects in choosing a college. The daughters ranked education, inspirational people, and finances as the most important factors in choosing a college. The common theme for both sets of participants in this study was family capital (support system, quality of life, and influencers). According to Gurin and Epps, 1975 (as cited in Freeman, 2005 p. 84), “the extent to which financial aid is available to African American students has likely influenced their selection of higher education institutions. Financial considerations have also tended to influence their consideration of colleges close to home.” This is consistent with the information provided by the mother and daughter pairs during their individual interviews.

Levine and Nidiffer (1996), in their book, *Beating the Odds: How the Poor Get to College*, as cited in Freeman (2005), revealed that college bound students encountered an “individual who touched or changed their lives” (p. 65). The women in this study recalled a special teacher, principal, or guidance counselor talking with them about going to college in general. They shared information, and told the young women stories about the college they attended. Interestingly, there were as many stories about negative comments or people who also inspired the young women to go to college.

This qualitative research design study compared and analyzed the differences in the mothers’ and daughters’ choices, and illustrated how social, cultural, and political factors affect college choice. The researcher used archival records, focus groups, and individual interviews to capture the data. Conceptual mind maps were created to represent the perceptions of each generation visually. These perceptions were compared to develop a grounded theory of college choice in Mississippi.

Interpretation of the results involved comparing the experiences of the mothers and daughters and drawing conclusions that answer the research questions. What social, cultural, and political factors influenced college choice for the mother and daughter pairs? How were their experiences similar and how were they different?

This chapter begins with brief descriptions of the mothers and daughters, followed by a comparison of the conceptual mind maps for each group. Structural and theoretical comparisons of the two systems provide a basis for theory and implications for colleges engaged in attracting minority or first-generation students. The study addressed the two research questions posed at the beginning of the study. What social,

cultural, and political factors influenced college choice for the mother and daughter pairs? How were their experiences similar and how were they different?

### **Comparing the Mothers to the Daughters**

Some of the mothers, all first-generation college students, chose to attend historically Black colleges (HBIs), and were among the first Black women to enroll in Mississippi's historically White colleges (HWIs). Some of the daughters, all second-generation college students, chose to attend HBIs, and some chose to attend HWIs. Some were traditional students, and some were non-traditional students. Unlike the mothers, several of the daughters chose to begin their academic career at a community college, several went directly to a university from high school, and the rest transferred to several universities before completing their academic degree. Like the mothers, some of the daughters chose to attend HBIs, and some chose to attend HWIs, although for different reasons.

Women were selected from rural, suburban, and urban parts of the state; and the study was limited to the experiences of two generations of Mississippi's African American college women. The study specifically included the perspective of African American women who were among the first to attend (1962-1974) HWIs, followed, 20 years later, with the perspective of their daughters, Mississippi's next generation (1975-2002) of African American college women. The mothers' focus group interview took place in a meeting room at a hotel in Jackson, Mississippi. The participants were attendees of a teachers' conference in the same hotel. The daughters' focus group was conducted on the campus of Coahoma Community College in the northwest region of

Mississippi, generally referred to as the Delta. The individual mothers' interviews took place in either their home or at a small middle school in southwest Mississippi. The individual daughters' interviews were held in a variety of places including over the phone, on the campus of their college, or at their mothers' homes.

**The mothers.** The individual mothers in the study expressed a deep affection for living in Mississippi, and, for the most part, that meant leaving the state for an education was not an option they considered. The women in the study also believed that education would change things in Mississippi, and that there were no opportunities for them without an education. They felt obliged to do well in school, not be a burden on their families, earn their degree on time, but stay in Mississippi near family.

Most of the mothers were reared in segregated neighborhoods, churches, and schools in the early 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement was in full swing during their high school years, and, for the most part, they were attending college four or five years after James Meredith entered Ole Miss. Because the state was lagging behind the nation in implementing desegregation, many HWIs were still not desegregated at the time these women were enrolling in college.

Opportunities were generally limited for women in the 1960s. Degreed White or Black working women were likely to be teachers or nurses, as those jobs were open to educated women and considered respectable professions by the community.

Most of the women in the study were raised in extreme poverty. However, several participants were raised in more moderate-income families. Most of the mothers

had many siblings and lived in a one-parent or one-income family, where extra money for college tuition presented an extreme financial hardship.

**The daughters.** The daughters' view of college choice began with the inspiration they received from people they knew and their deep-rooted desire for a college education, instilled in them by their families. The daughters had "college savvy" mothers that understood the system and knew how to apply for scholarships, loans, and grants. The cost of college was a factor for the daughters, and financial aid packages influenced their choice of what school to attend. The daughters knew the benefits of college outweighed the cost because they had seen the difference it made in their mother's lifestyle. The daughters felt that going away to college, even if it was not very far away, was an important factor in their personal development as they would gain independence, self-esteem, and meet people with similar goals, while living away from the family. Having friends going to the same college was perceived as a benefit to the daughters and was weighed favorably when selecting a college.

The daughters grew up in mixed income neighborhoods and never attended a segregated school. The daughters were in high school in the 1980s and 1990s, at least 20 years after Mississippi desegregated its higher education system. Their mothers generally held more than one college degree, often one from an historically Black college and one from an historically White college.

### **Comparing Composite Affinity Descriptions**

The mothers and daughters Theoretical Summaries (Figures 6.1 and 6.2), developed in chapter five, explain the reconciled composite interviews visually. Because

the focus groups did not generate identical affinities, the researcher concentrated on the similarities and differences between the two groups.

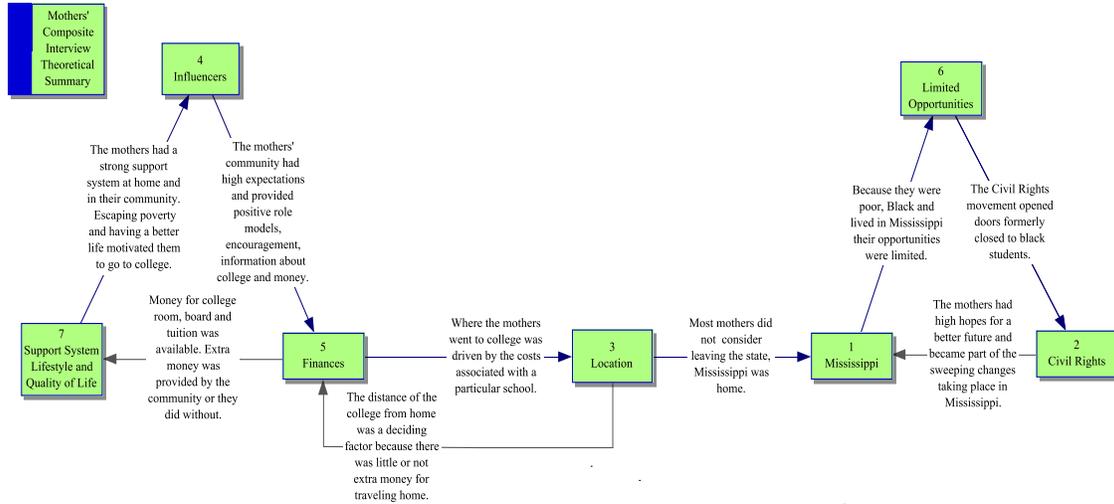


Figure 6.1. Composite Mothers' Theoretical Summary SID

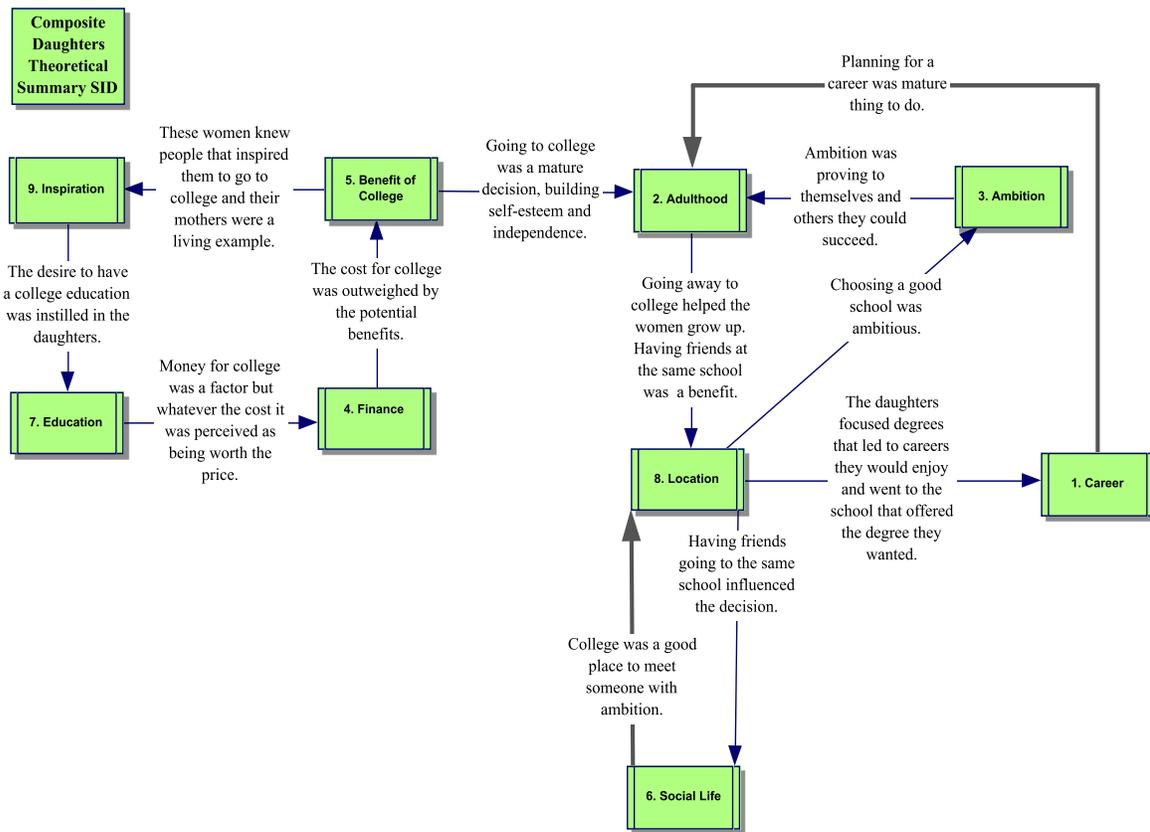


Figure 6.2. Composite Daughters Theoretical Summary SID

In comparing the mothers and daughters, it is noted that the influence of the *family* is strong in both cases; however, the mothers received additional support from community members including small gifts, spending money for food and other amenities, reinforcing verbal encouragement, and self-esteem generated by the great pride the community openly displayed in their accomplishments. The daughters did not mention receiving support from within their community.

Another key difference between the mothers and daughters was the affinity *finances*. The mothers stated: “There was money available if you wanted to go to college.” However, the daughters talked much more about weighing the cost of college

(cost-benefit analysis) into their decision and admitted that a combination of financial aid helped them decide which college to attend. The mothers' interviews indicated that although there was money for tuition, room and board, and books, there was little other money for day-to-day expenses. Community members contributed small amounts of money toward this expense. The daughters never mentioned needing spending money or where it came from; therefore, it was assumed that this issue was not relevant.

The daughters were different from their mothers because they were raised in a more middle-class home and in an environment where college attendance was expected, and at least one or both parents had college degrees. This was a vastly different home environment than the environment of the mothers. The mothers were reared in poverty, or near poverty—circumstances, by parents who had not graduated from high school.

The affinity *location* had similar meanings to both groups. To the mothers location was a consideration because both they, and their families, wanted them to be able to come home either by getting a ride with someone or to get an affordable bus ticket home. To the daughters, location was a factor for the same reason—the ability to come home relatively easily.

The daughters' affinity *adulthood* was not mentioned in either the mothers' focus group interview or the mothers' individual interviews. The mothers' generation had a more difficult childhood, and it could be assumed they were more mature than their children when they were preparing to go to college.

Although the mothers' focus group did not generate an affinity similar to *career*, in the mothers' individual interviews going to college to get a *good job* was mentioned

often. The mothers also did not identify *ambition* as a motivation for choosing a college; however, they were very ambitious. But the difference was the mothers were trying to escape the life of poverty they had known as a child, and the daughters were trying to find a career they could enjoy and have a comfortable life, similar to the one they grew up experiencing.

It is interesting to note that the mothers did not have the affinity *social life* to choose from, but most were heavily influenced in choosing a college by alumni (teachers, principals, and other community members) of the institution they attended. In the interviews the mothers discussed receiving information from friends and family, encouraging them to attend a certain school because they would have fun, know other people, and would know someone at the school so they would have a ride home on occasional long weekends. The daughters said the affinity social life did not influence their choice of colleges, but they mentioned that having friends attending a particular college did get factored into their analysis but did not sway them to attend the same school. That is supported in the fact that the daughters rated social life last, as a primary outcome.

This model does not capture several key ingredients in the mother's stories, however. The first is the compelling story of their personal sacrifices and of their willingness to delay gratification to complete college. The second part of their story that is relevant in comparing the mothers to the daughters is the mother's goal to get a good job, and the daughters' goal to get a degree that would lead to a career they would enjoy. Although these are similar objectives, the mothers said they wanted to get a good job

when they got out of college; not one daughter said the words “get a good job”—they all used the words “I wanted a career I could enjoy.”

Another significant difference between the mothers and the daughters is that about half of the daughters were non-traditional students and went to more than one college before graduating with a bachelor’s degree. The rest of the daughters went straight through one university in a traditional manner. In comparison, only two of the mothers went to more than one college before earning their undergraduate degree.

It is this researcher’s conclusion that the two most influential differences between the mothers and daughters is the community support the mothers received and the socio-economic differences in the two generations’ upbringing. The community support the mothers received empowered the mothers to be bold enough to overcome the economic, political, and social barriers facing them in the 1960s, and they made some courageous choices about the college they chose to attend as a result of that support. The daughters did not have the same difficulties as their mothers. They were not the first members of their families to attend college, they did not grow up in poverty, they did not have to break down racial barriers, and they never attended a segregated school.

### **Comparing Systems**

The nature of the mothers’ and daughters’ perceptions is explored further by comparing their composite System Influence Diagrams (SIDs). A structural analysis compares the properties of these two groups. This is followed by a theoretical analysis examining the two systems in light of current college choice theories. The two systems are illustrated in Figures 6.3 and 6.4.

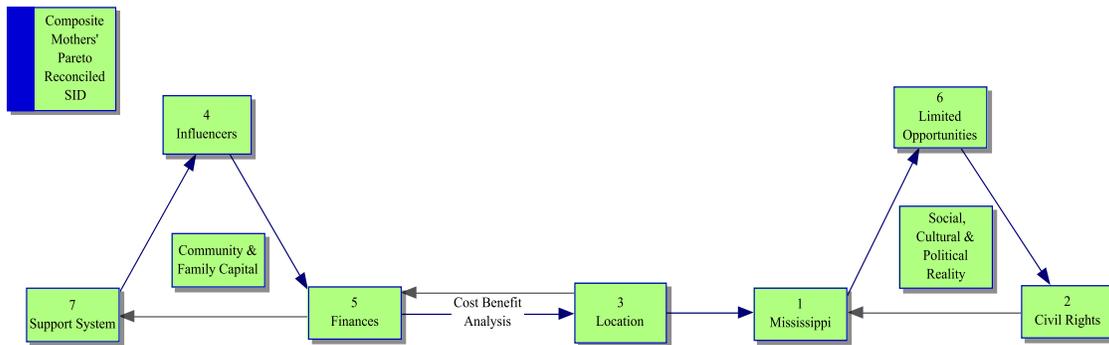


Figure 6.3. Composite Mothers' SID with Loops Identified

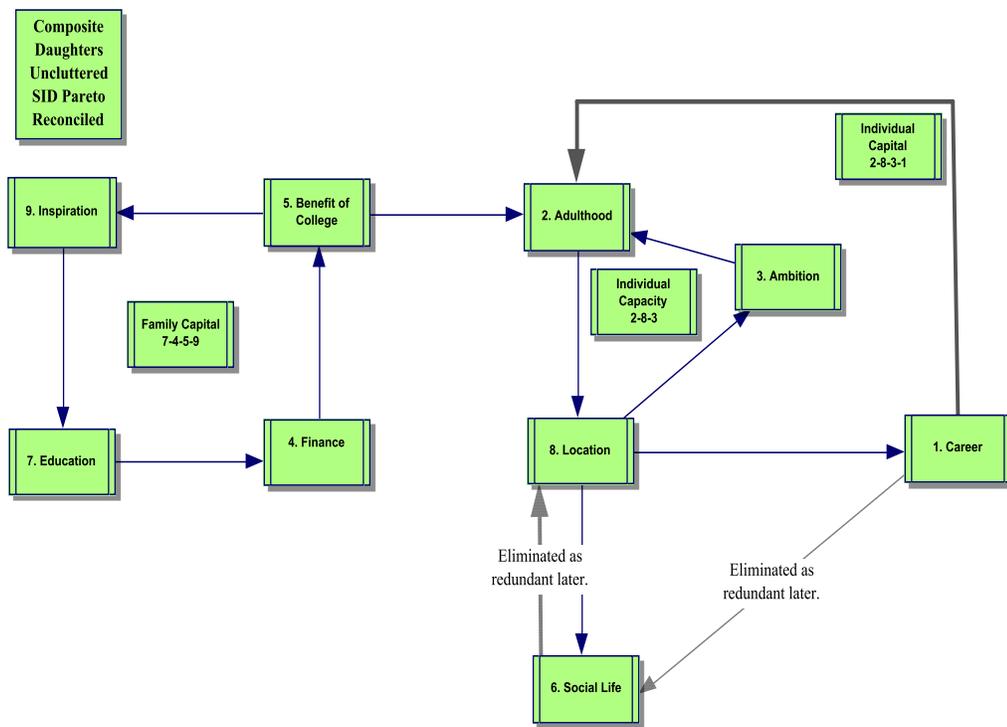


Figure 6.4. Composite Daughters SID with Loops Identified

The family of the prospective student heavily influenced college choice decisions. The mothers and daughters both perceived that their families influenced them

to go to college and weighed in on which college to attend. *Family influence* is a primary driver for college choice in both systems. In the mothers' system this is referred as *support system* and in the daughters system this falls under the category *inspiration*, but they both indicated family influence as an important component of their decision making process. The researcher renamed feedback loops that included the affinities support system and inspiration to *Family Capital*.

Imbedded in the mothers' support system affinity are the *quality of life and lifestyle*, descriptions that are almost identical to the daughters' descriptions of the affinities *education and benefits of college*. The *benefits of going to college* were discussed in both the mothers' and the daughters' interviews and became entangled in the topic of how they decided *where* they were going to college.

The affinity *finance* was a secondary driver in both systems, falling into third place for both groups. The mothers faced an additional financial problem the daughters did not mention. The cost to travel home and the need for some spending money was factored into the mother's financial cost benefit analysis. There was no grant or student loan money for those types of expenses. One mother said, "Tuition money wasn't a problem, I could get grants and loans, but I didn't have money for soap." Whereas one daughter stated,

I went to the school that offered me the best package or at least some kind of scholarship money to go with my grants and loans. I didn't necessarily take the best offer, because I wanted to go to the university instead of the community college, but the university gave me enough of a scholarship that I could make that choice and not feel bad about it.

The affinity *location* meant essentially the same to both groups. However, the mothers ranked it higher in importance—directly after finances. The interviews revealed that both mothers and daughters weighed the distance from home as an important factor when considering a college. Neither group wanted to be too far from home. The mothers did not consider out-of-state colleges because of the cost of out-of-state tuition, the distance to travel home, not being able to go home very often, and loving Mississippi. As one mother stated, “I love Mississippi. It's my home. I didn't think of going to college anywhere else.” The daughters looked for a school that offered the degree they wanted, was not too far from home, and was a Mississippi college or university because of in-state tuition. Both groups considered the size of the school as important, and both groups raised this topic under the affinity location. As one daughter stated, “It wasn't the size or location of the town that was important to me, it was the size of the school. I wanted my teachers to know my name.”

The affinities *Mississippi*, *limited opportunities*, and *Civil Rights* were specific to the mothers. In the composite mothers' System Influence Diagram (SID), this group of outcome affinities was clustered into the super affinity Social, Cultural, and Political Reality (of Mississippi in the 1960s). The focus group members were just a few years older than the mothers in the individual interviews, but they were much more aware of the activities and significance of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi.

A look back at the mothers' focus group SID showed that the affinity Civil Rights was a primary driver in their system and was a primary outcome in the mothers' composite system. Because it was so different, the researcher went back and compared the mother's focus groups' drivers and outcomes to the oldest individual mother and found those two SIDs had the most similar rankings.

This exercise pointed out that in studying the 1960s, in Mississippi, if the individual participants are a few years younger than the focus group it could make a significant difference in the rankings of the affinity Civil Rights, changing it from a primary driver to a primary outcome. The historical timeline presented in Chapter two substantiates the dynamic changes occurring in the 6-year time span from 1962 to 1968.

Consider this fact, when the Class of 1962 was graduating from high school the Class of 1968 was in the sixth grade, which explains why so many of the mothers were so sheltered, most of them were very young. Although most of the individual mothers were not aware of the riots, marches, and other civil rights activities taking place in Mississippi, their parents were aware. The parents' awareness showed up in the individual interviews. One mother said, "My mom told me, 'I want you to go to college and not get killed; you are not going to a White college.'" The conclusion, implied by this and other similar statements, means although the mothers may not have considered civil rights as a primary driver in choosing a college, their parents were factoring the civil unrest into the decision of where their child went to school. There was one mother interviewed that was the same age as the focus group, and her SID is most similar to theirs. She was the first Black student to attend the University of Southern Mississippi

(USM), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) paid her tuition. Most of the individual mothers interviewed said they were sheltered by their parents, and as a composite group, ranked Civil Rights as a primary outcome, in exactly the opposite position of mothers' focus group. The mothers did recognize the *limited opportunities* available to them in Mississippi without a college education, and they ranked that affinity as a primary outcome, exactly like the mothers' focus group ranking.

The daughters' affinity *ambition* was imbedded in the mothers' affinity *limited opportunities*. The mothers had a great deal of ambition, but because the focus group did not identify it as an affinity, they could not react to it specifically. The mothers were desperate to go to college, get a good job, and break the cycle of poverty their family had lived with for generations. There is a subtle, but significant, difference in these two groups. The daughters were not raised in poverty and had aspirations beyond getting a good job when they got out of college; they wanted a career they could enjoy and wanted a comfortable life for their families. The affinity *ambition* was absorbed by the super affinity *Individual Capital* in the daughters' system; and the affinity, *limited opportunities*, was absorbed into the mothers' super affinity *Social, Cultural and Political Reality*.

The mothers' focus group developed the affinity *Mississippi*. They defined it as being all that they knew about Mississippi, good and bad, and all the things they did not know about the outside world. They said they did not know how different the rest of the world was compared to Mississippi. Most of the individual and focus group mothers had

never been out of the state of Mississippi at the time they were making their decision about going to college. Most had never visited the state capital in Jackson, Mississippi, nor travelled to bordering cities, such as New Orleans, Louisiana, or Memphis, Tennessee. They did not know a world outside of their home state, and some had never been beyond the county border until they went to college. The college educated Black people they knew were mostly teachers, principals, school counselors, or nurses. The mothers' aspirations were similar to those of people they knew in their community. The daughters, however, were encouraged to select a degree that would lead to a career they would enjoy. The daughters were exposed to a more diverse group of educated people, and opportunities were wide open by the time they began the college selection process. The daughters were encouraged to be doctors instead of nurses or lawyers instead of teachers. As one daughter put it, "My mom told me I didn't need to be a nurse; I could be a doctor if that is what I wanted to do. She just wanted me to find a career I would enjoy."

When the two systems are zoomed out and examined from a telephoto view, the similarities in the drivers are evident, and the differences in the outcomes more stark, as shown in Figures 6.5 and 6.6.

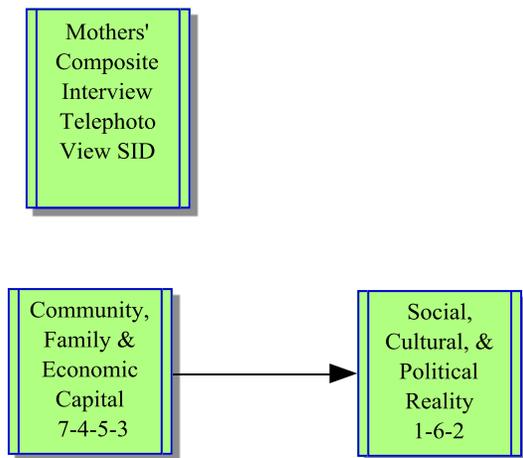


Figure 6.5. Mothers Composite Interview SID Telephoto View

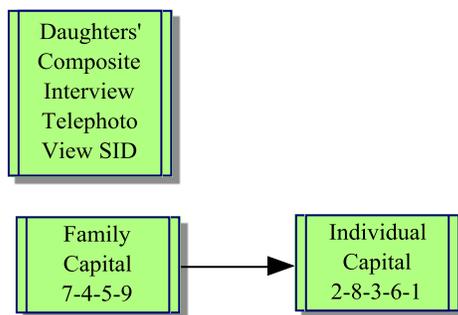


Figure 6.6. Daughters' Composite Interview SID Telephoto View

The common element in both systems lives in the super affinity driver *family capital*. Although the mothers and daughters described family capital differently, there was still a strong family influence in choosing a college to attend. The starkest differences in the two systems are the outcomes, Social, Cultural, and Political Reality vs. Individual Capital. This variation can best be explained using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs pyramid (Figure 6.7) to understand the divergence.

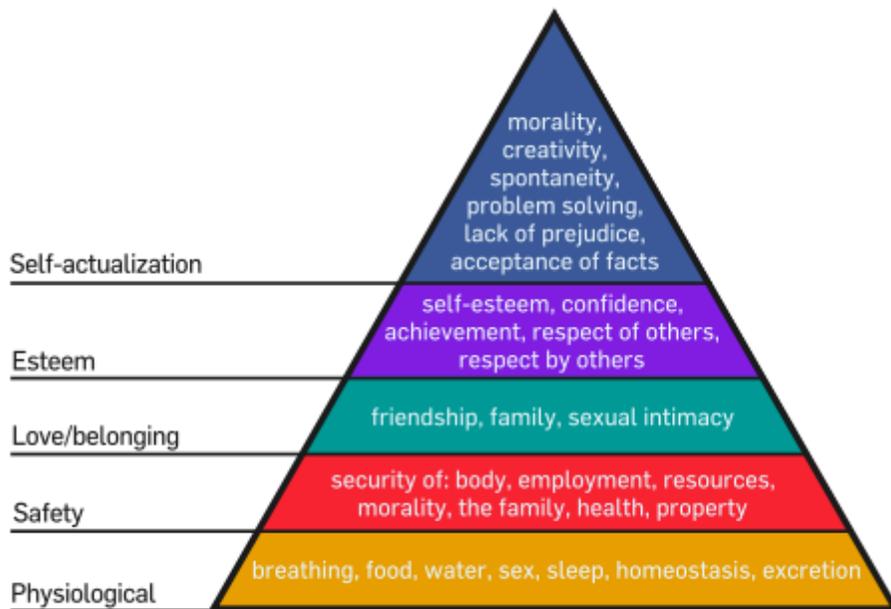


Figure 6.7. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s\\_hierarchy\\_of\\_needs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs) accessed March 31, 2010)

The mothers, as first-generation college students from poor families, were operating from the perspective of the safety and love/belonging levels. With their physiological needs met, they could focus on their safety needs. The mothers' priorities were their families and secure jobs. A young Black woman also had to consider her personal safety when choosing to attend a Mississippi college or university during the 1960s. The members of their family and community provided esteem-level moments to them. They were proud to be a college-bound student, and they earned respect from their community because they had chosen to go to college.

The daughters vacillated between the Esteem and Love/belonging level. The daughters' individual interviews brought out words such as ambition, self-esteem, and respect of others, and this was evident in the choice of the affinity Ambition. During the

individual interviews the daughters also talked about going to schools that accepted them, acted like they wanted them to attend, and where they felt like they belonged.

### **Exercising the Model**

**Mothers model.** Although this study was on college choice, the subjects also explained why they went to college. One simple way to explain differences in the participants' composite SIDs telephoto view (Figures 6.5 and 6.6) is to look at *why* they went to college. The mothers stated they went to college to get a good job (safety level), the daughters stated they went to college to find a career they could enjoy (esteem level). Another simple way to explain this phenomenon is to create a visual map as is shown in Figure 6.8.

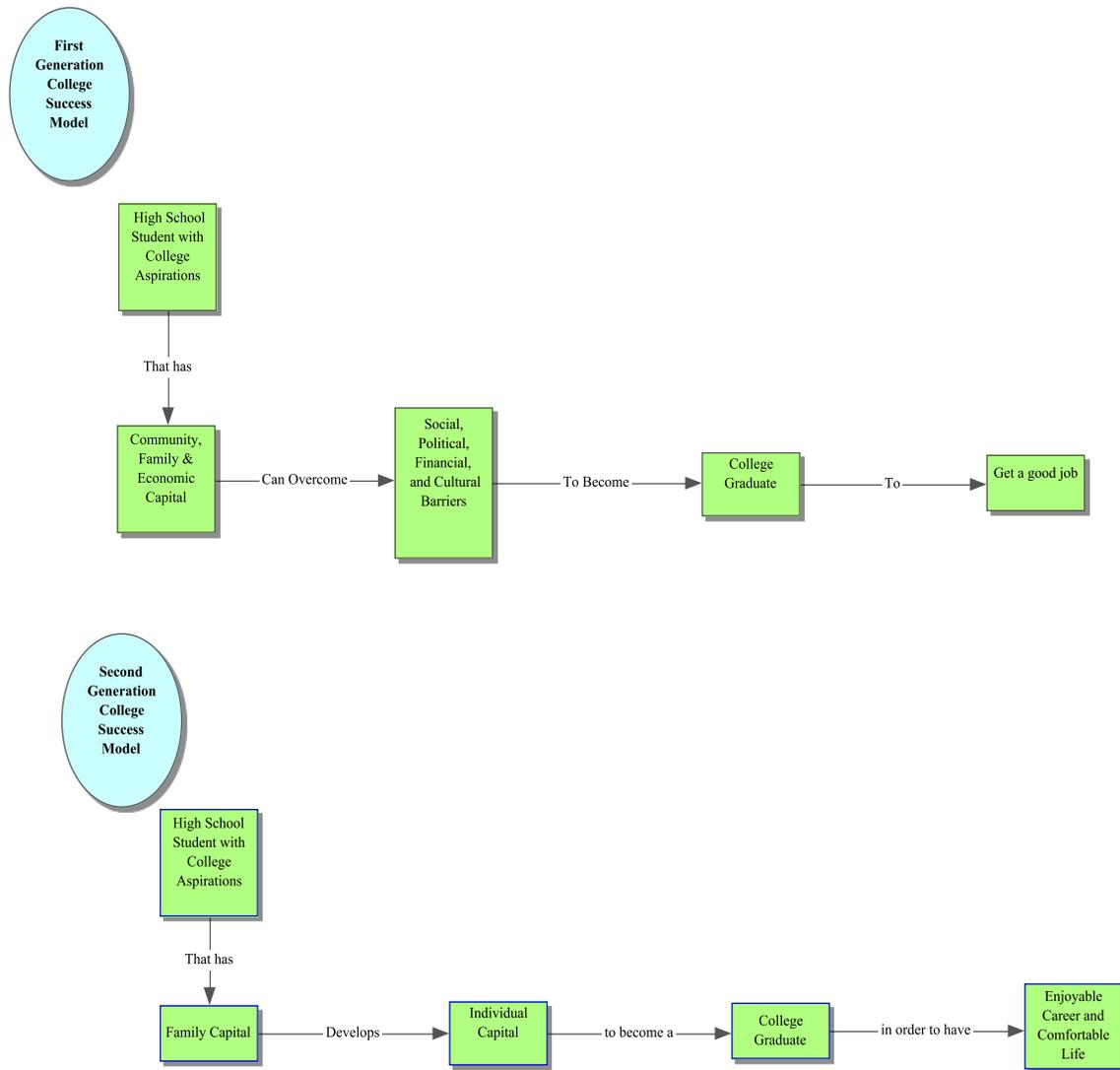
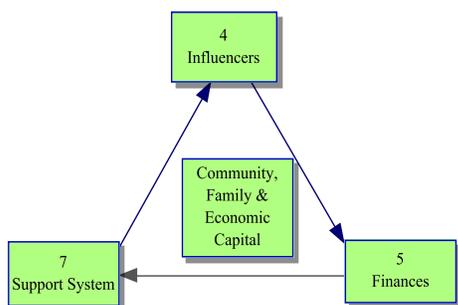


Figure 6.8. Generational Models of College Success

These two “road maps to success” create a visual aid to assist in understanding first- and second-generation college student success. The first-generation student has a unique set of obstacles to overcome to be successful. A student could have difficulty moving from one affinity to the next if one affinity is weak or missing altogether, because the super affinities were initially created out of one or more feedback loops. For

example, the mothers' SID was used to create the super affinity Community, Family, and Economic Capital by blending the affinities Support System, Finances, and Influencers (Figure 6.9).



*Figure 6.9. Community, Family, and Economic Capital Feedback Loop*

In this study the mothers interviewed were all college graduates with good jobs. They negotiated their way successfully through the first feedback loop (Figure 6.9), and moved on to the next step in the process which was the cost benefit analysis (imbedded in the super affinity Community, Family and Economic Capital) phase, then dealt successfully with the Social, Cultural, and Political Reality (barriers/opportunities) of living in Mississippi in the 1960s. When they graduated and found a stable job as either a teacher or a nurse, they completed the cycle of success depicted in Figure 6.8.

However, this same model can be used to understand what could happen to the unsuccessful student (one that does not graduate or does not enroll), and this may give high school counselors or college recruiters an opportunity to either develop intervention strategies to extricate the student from the feedback loop or develop new recruiting

strategies to attract first-generation students. Assuming this model represents the key ingredients for first generation student success, if any element is missing or weak, it could affect the outcome or increase the level of difficulty in achieving success. If one leg of the tripod (Support System, Influencers, and Finances) is missing, will the student be able to move to the next step? That will depend on the strength of the other legs (affinities), where that affinity is placed in the system, and whether there is another unknown compensating factor.

In Figure 6.10, the affinity influencers has been removed weakening the model. A first-generation student that does not have an encouraging and inspiring person in her life is not likely to succeed (enroll or graduate). This is because the student would not have the synergy created in the first feedback loop and there is no path from Family, Community, and Economic Capital to Social, Cultural, and Political Reality as shown in Figure 6.11.

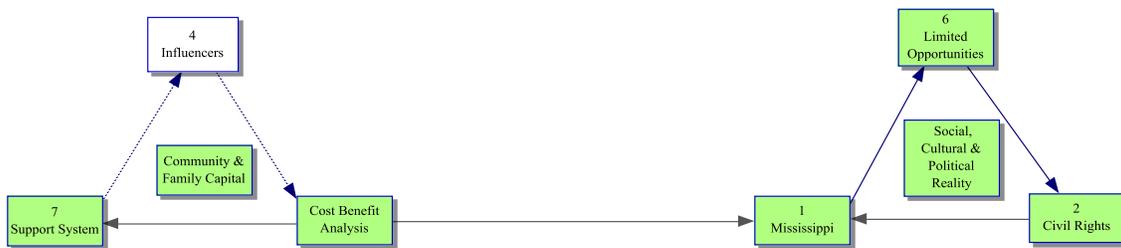
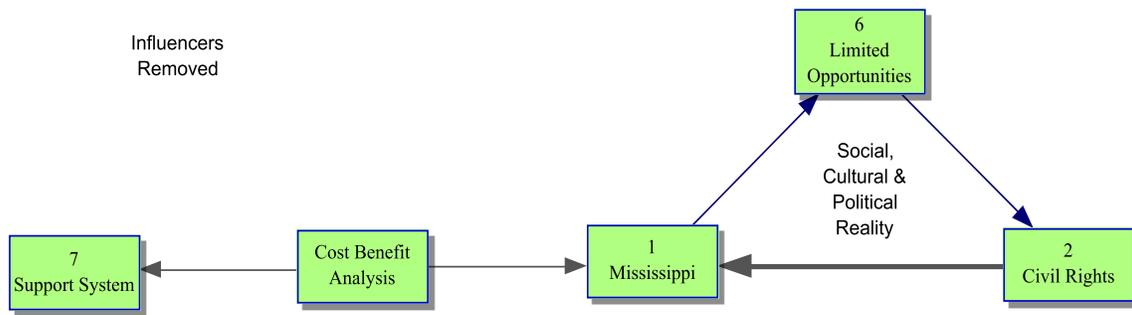
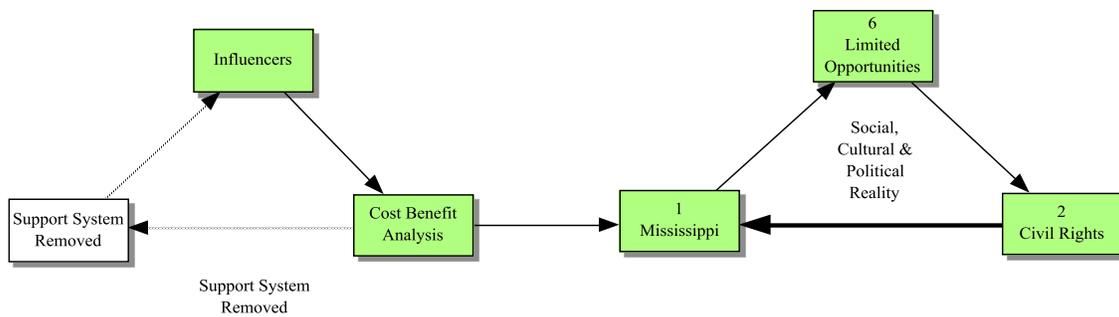


Figure 6.10. Influencer Affinity Removed—Negative



*Figure 6.11. The System Fails*

Using the same feedback loop, Community, Family, and Economic Capital (Figure 6.12), and removing a different leg of the feedback loop, the researcher will demonstrate how the system might not always fail if one affinity is missing. In the example (Figure 6.12), the affinity Support System has been removed, and Figure 6.13 illustrates how the system can still function with one affinity not present.



*Figure 6.12. Support System Affinity Removed—Negative Scenario*

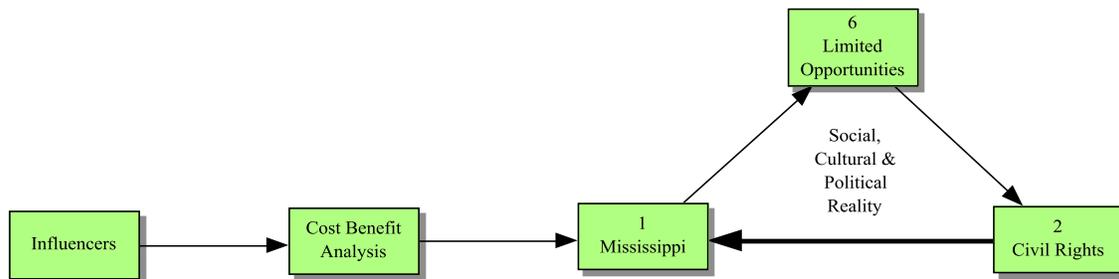


Figure 6.13. The System Works

In this scenario, when the affinity support system is removed, there is not the same impact on the student because of the difference in the direction of the arrow from Influencers to Finances. In Figure 6.11 the arrow was pointing away from the affinity Cost Benefit Analysis, never allowing the student a straight road to success as is shown in Figure 6.13.

### Implications for a College Relations or Admissions Department and Others

A college or university recruiting first-generation students could use this same exercise. The previous example implies that if the affinities are correct (for a particular population), and the recruiter exercises the model properly, the recruiter could determine what key ingredients must be present to attract that first-generation student. The College Relations Department could develop outreach promotional materials targeted at first-generation students, using words that appealed to their safety needs, as was discussed earlier in this chapter. High school counselors could also use this system to develop support systems or mentors for first-generation students with college aspirations. This information could be useful for other groups working with first-generation college-bound students such as parent groups, churches, and private and non-profit organizations.

The first two scenarios dealt with the results of interference of a primary driver feedback loop; however, the model can be “exercised” from the outcomes end of the mind map as well. The next example (Figure 6.14.) demonstrates how the system can fail if an outcome feedback loop is not resolved. In this scenario the outcome Limited Opportunities is removed, breaking the feedback loop as is shown in Figure 6.15.

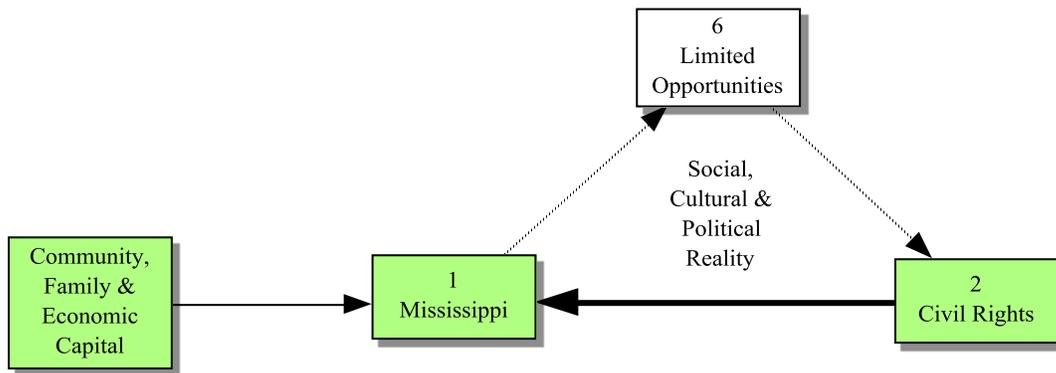


Figure 6.14. Social, Cultural, and Political Reality Feedback Loop

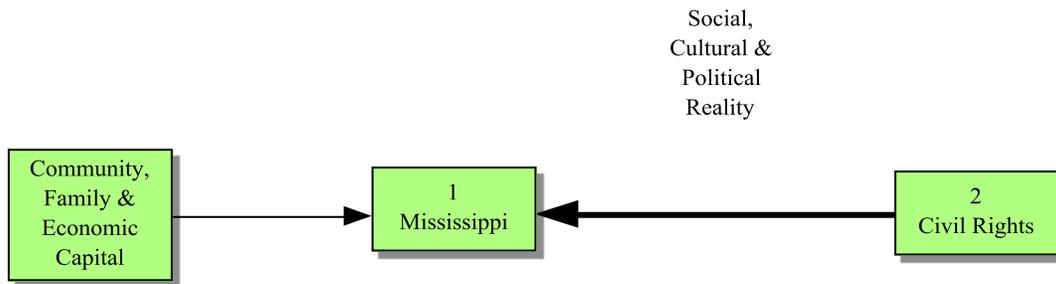
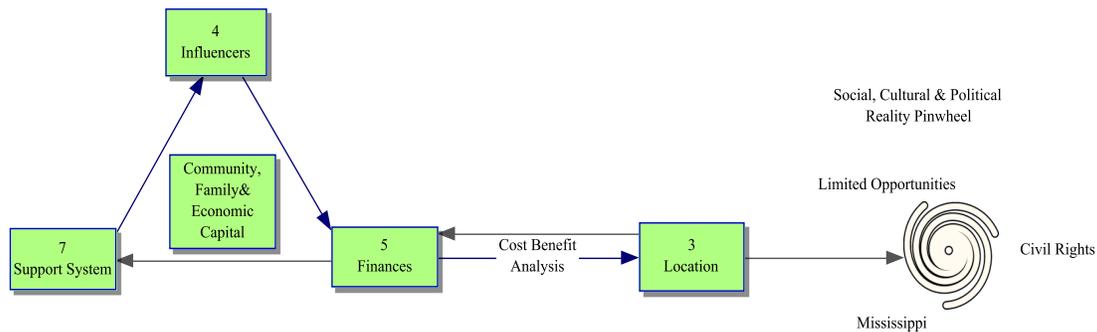


Figure 6.15. Broken Social, Cultural, and Political Reality Feedback Loop

In interpreting the impact of one outcome being removed, in this scenario, the affinity limited opportunities is gone, leaving a situation that might replicate James Meredith’s experience in attempting to enroll in Ole Miss Law School. Mr. Meredith had community support (Civil Rights activists, Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King), family, and the funds to go to the school of his choice—Ole Miss, but there were

no opportunities in Mississippi for James Meredith. The Civil Rights Movement was pressuring Mississippi from one side of the mind map, and James Meredith was knocking on the door on the other side. In this scenario, there is an impasse and further progress is stymied, until the affinity limited opportunities is put back into the feedback loop. In the Meredith scenario, once one Black student was admitted to an historically White institution, the feedback loop was repaired and began working again creating more limited opportunities for other students following behind Mr. Meredith. More civil rights activities took place in Mississippi, and more limited opportunities followed. This feedback loop can also be depicted in the SID with a pinwheel instead of a box, as is shown in Figure 6.16.



*Figure 6.16. Outcomes Pinwheel for Social, Cultural, and Political Reality*

The telephoto view of the Mothers Composite Clean SID using the pinwheel is shown in Figure 6.17.



*Figure 6.17.* Mothers’ Telephoto View Social, Cultural and Political Reality Pinwheel

The inference that can be made regarding this model, and the exercises earlier in this chapter, are represented by the following statement: “For a student to have been successful (enroll or graduate) in college in Mississippi in the 1960s, the affinity *Limited Opportunities* must have been present in the system.” The removal of the affinity *Civil Rights* would create the same scenario for a student wishing to attend an HWI. In that case the statement would read: “For a Black student to have been successful in enrolling in an HWI in Mississippi in the 1960s, the affinity *Civil Rights* (Movement and Legislation) must have been present in the system.”

### **Daughters Model**

Looking back at the College Success Model (Figure 6.9) and the Daughters’ Uncluttered SID (Figure 4.14), it is possible to zoom in and learn how interruptions to the model could affect the daughters’ system and success. Because the super affinities were initially created out of one or more feedback loops, a student could have difficulty moving from one affinity to the next, if one affinity is weak or missing altogether. For example, using the daughter’s SID, the super affinity Family and Economic Capital was

created by blending the affinities Inspiration, Education, Finance, and Benefits of College, and one by one the affinities are removed to see if the system will work without one of the affinities. As shown in Figure 6.18, regardless of which affinity is removed from the system, although possibly weaker, it still works; and the student can escape the feedback loop.

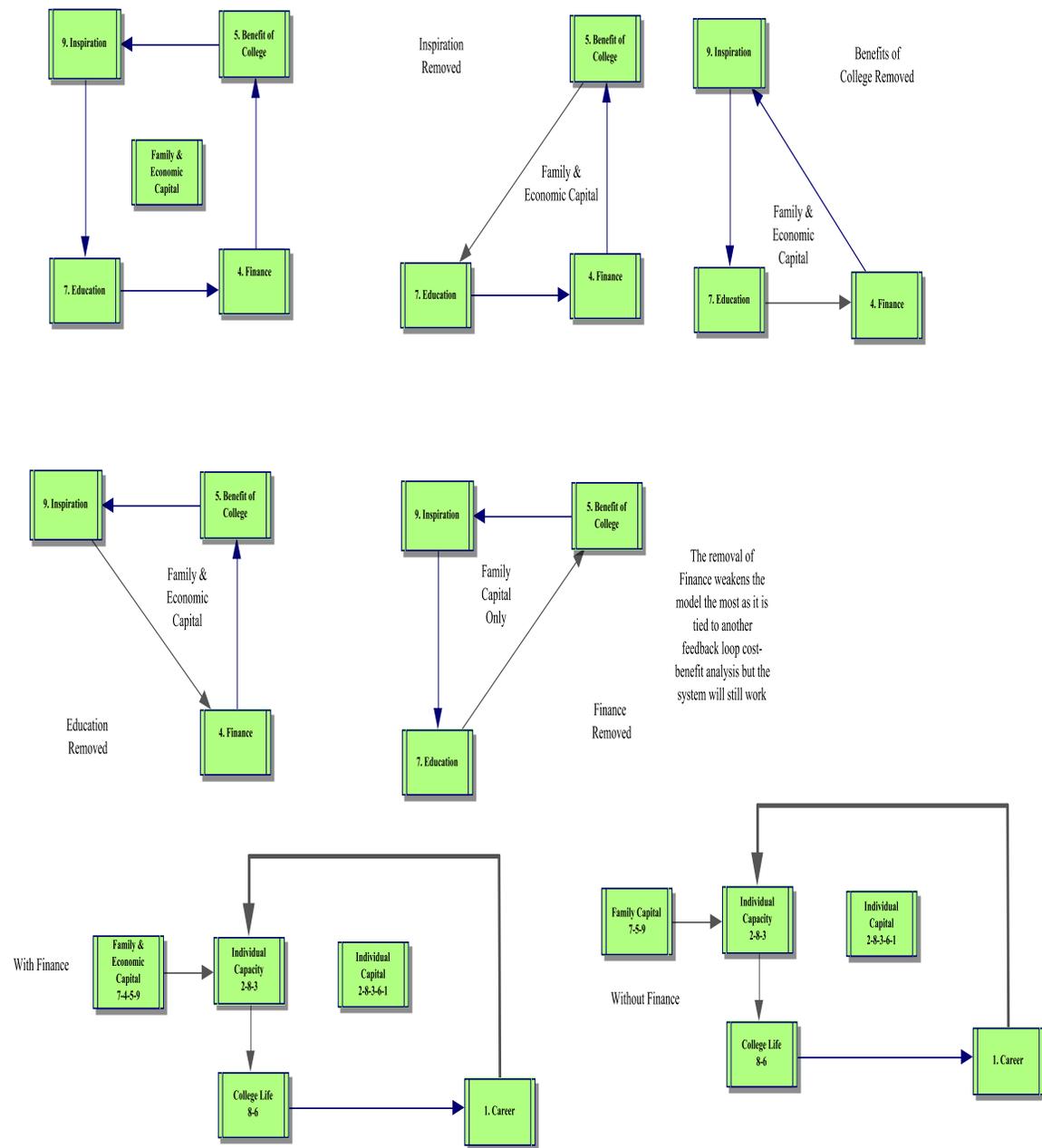


Figure 6.18. The System Works

The first four scenarios dealt with interference of a daughters’ primary driver feedback loop; however, the model can be “exercised” from the outcomes end of the mind map. The next example (Figure 6.19) demonstrates how the system can fail if an outcome feedback loop disruption is not resolved. In this scenario the outcome Career is going to be removed breaking the feedback loop.

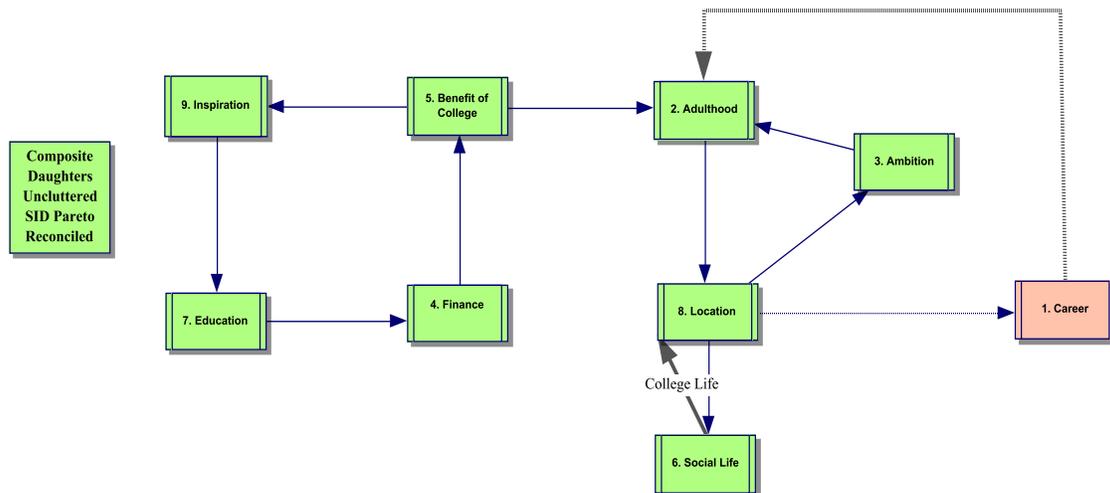


Figure 6.19. Composite Daughters SID with Career Reconciled with Career to be Removed

Once the arrows pointing to career and from career are removed a feedback loop is broken, which does not mean the student will be unsuccessful; however, the outcome affinity career was part of the telephoto view SID *Individual Capital*. Without the career component, the student is left with Individual Capacity and College Life, and not necessarily enough power in the system to produce a graduate. The system is substantially weaker without the affinity career. This scenario is played out in gradual steps in Figure 6.20. This is a good example of what might happen to a student that has all the potential needed to succeed but gets caught in the “party girl” feedback loop or has no real direction or goals.

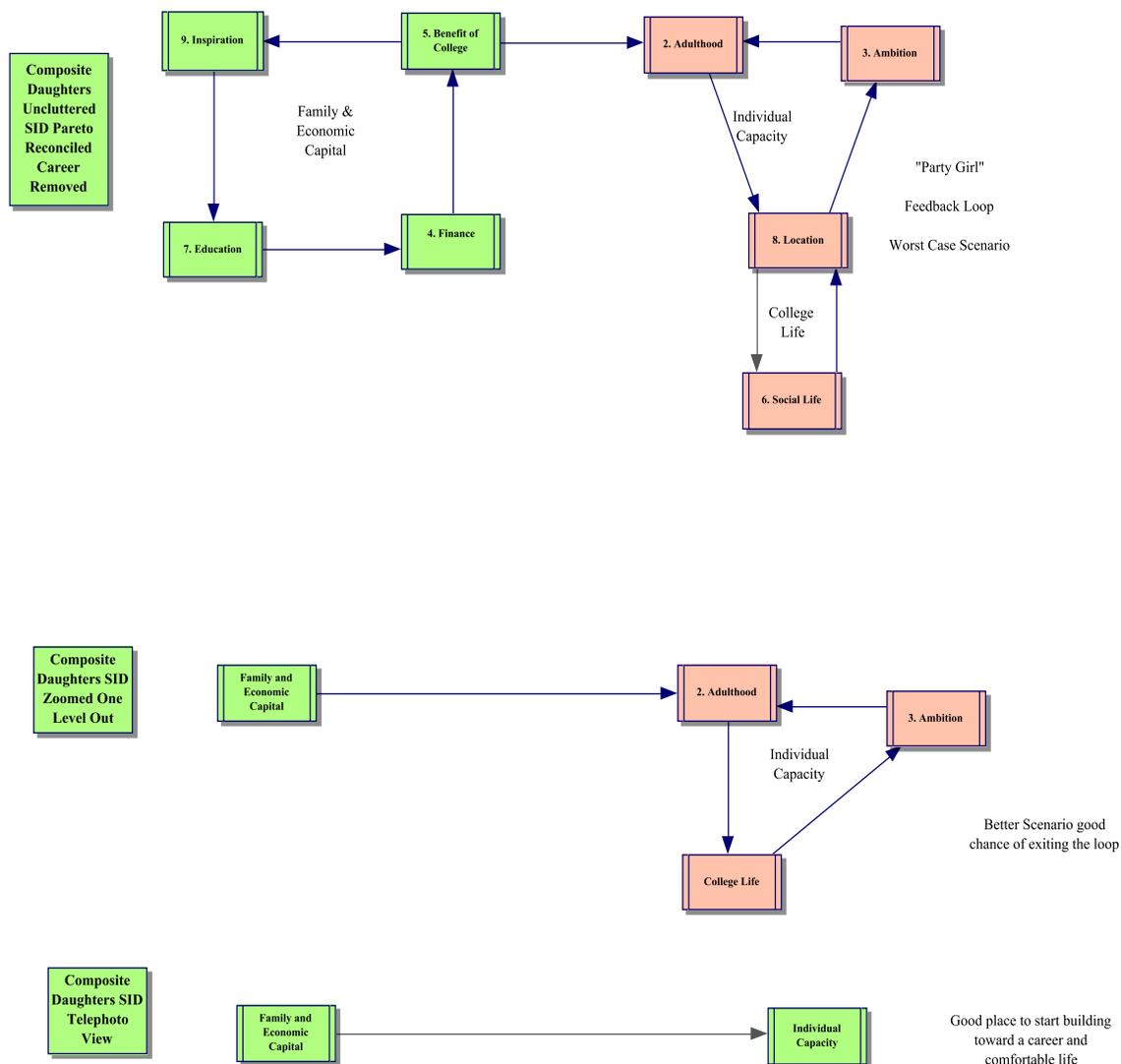


Figure 6.20. Daughters' Composite SID with Career Removed

In this scenario, the affinity Career was removed, creating a possibility of a student entering into an endless feedback loop. This map could represent the path of the aimless student that goes to college but has no direction and might not graduate on time, or ever, because she does not have a career goal. This student has enough ambition to enroll in college and is trying to grow up, but perhaps, is attending a “party school”

(location and social life feedback loop) and cannot break out of the loop. This student might have good enough grades to enroll semester after semester but finally either “steps out,” “flunks out,” or “drops out” of college. For this model to work at peak power, the affinity career must be added back to the system, as that will collapse the feedback loop between social life and location into a newly named super affinity *College Life*, as is shown in Figure 6.21. Adding the affinity career and all of its relationship arrows back to the system creates a new more powerful super affinity *Individual Capital*. The telephoto view of the Daughters SID is represented in Figure 6.22.

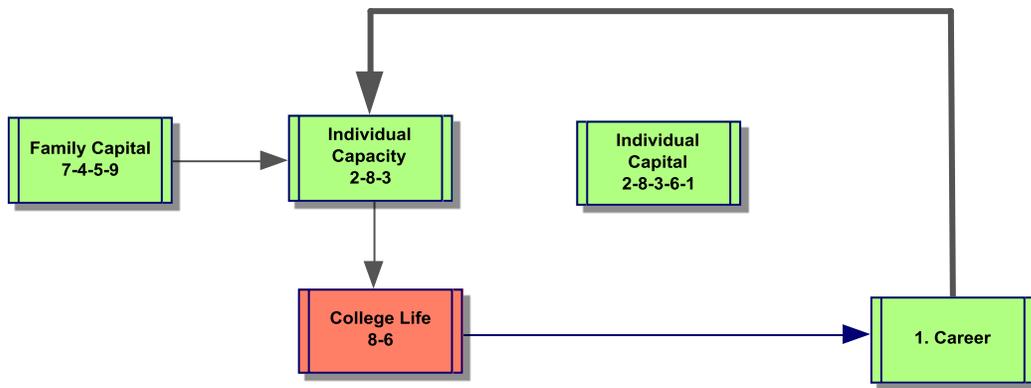


Figure 6.21. Feedback Loops College Life and Individual Capital

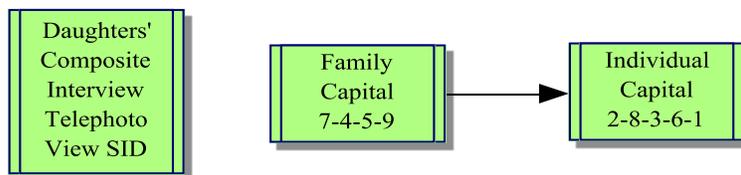


Figure 6.22. Daughters Composite Interview Telephoto View SID

This exercise demonstrates how removing or weakening outcomes can affect the efficiency and power of a system and highlights opportunities for intervention strategies.

## **Implications**

A college or university can apply this theory to develop intervention strategies for students caught in the “party girl feedback loop.” The examples presented in this chapter imply that if the affinities are accurate (for a particular population) and the model is exercised properly, the key ingredients needed to attract a second-generation student could be determined. Equally important, given the same assumptions of accurate data, the key ingredients for that same student to be successful could also be determined. High school counselors may find this useful to develop programs for students with college aspirations.

This example also shows how a returning undergraduate student might re-enter college with a career goal and be very successful as a non-traditional student, given she became aware of a career opportunity, new information, or some other kind of motivation.

Finally, with a little stretching, it is not unrealistic to expect a first-generation student to become more like a second-generation student when applying to graduate school. It is no longer their first exposure to college; they are now “college savvy” and confident. The first-generation student that returns to college for a second degree is moving up Maslow’s pyramid and operating at a higher level. These kinds of data are very rich and valuable to college marketing and public relations professionals, alumni groups, college recruiting officers, and student-success advocates.

## **Conclusion**

The research questions posed at the beginning of this study were: What social, cultural, and political factors influenced college choice for the mother and daughter pairs? How were their experiences similar and how were they different?

All of the social, cultural, and political factors mentioned in the study impacted the mothers to some degree. Some mothers did not have a solid support system (no community, family, or economic capital), but they did have a strong desire to improve their lifestyle (cultural). Some participants were willing to go to historically White Institutions (HWIs) (political), but needed police escorts to go to class (civil rights). Some of the mothers went to colleges where they were welcomed with open arms (social), and others went to colleges where they were tolerated or ignored (social). All of the participants lived in Mississippi and went to colleges in Mississippi (cultural). The mothers all had financial assistance (finance). All of the mothers had someone that inspired them (influencers and community and family capital). Although their experiences were very different and their individual mind maps are very different, when viewed as a whole, they share an extraordinary experience that took place during an extraordinary era in Mississippi's history.

The social, cultural, and political factors mentioned in the study influenced the daughters as well. Some of the daughters had positive inspirations from observing their mothers' academic journey (family capital), and some daughters turned negative comments or dead-end jobs into ambition (individual capital). All of the daughters were reared in homes where going to college was expected; they knew the benefits of college

and came from a college-educated family (family capital). The daughters attended desegregated high schools, and some chose to attend an historically Black college (HBC) to experience a different environment (individual capital). Having friends attending the same college was considered an advantage but not a driving force in the college choice process. Selecting a college because it offered a degree that would prepare a student for a career she could enjoy and earn enough money to live a comfortable life, influenced college choice for the daughters.

With the initial research questions answered and because all of the participants were college graduates, the model was stretched beyond college choice to include why they succeeded. Possible success and failure scenarios, intervention programs, and recruiting strategies were proposed for further discussion.

It is also possible that these same models could be adapted for ABD and/or graduate students using the second-generation student model (because they already have a degree, they lose some of the naiveté of a first-generation student) or replicated for a study of first- and second-generation White, Asian, or Hispanic women or men.

The researcher credits much of the success of the first-generation women to the extraordinary generosity, spirit, pride, and good will of their community. It is unfortunate to note that this same community spirit was not present one generation later.

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## VITA

Wendy McDonald was born on June 3, 1952 in Houston, Texas. After receiving a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1974, and a Master of Science in 1989, she worked as a high school marketing teacher in Mississippi and Texas for 11 years. In 1997 she accepted the position of Associate Professor of Marketing at the Tomball College campus of the North Harris Community College District. Two years later, in 1999, she accepted the position of Director of College Relations at Tomball College. In 2003, while enrolled in the Community College Leadership Program at the University of Texas at Austin, she accepted the position of Dean of Arts and Technology at North Harris Community College District's newest college, Cy-Fair College. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, she returned to South Mississippi to help with the rebuilding effort in her hometown on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. She currently serves as Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity Bay Waveland Area. In 2009 she was elected to the City Council for Bay St. Louis, Mississippi representing the Historic District of that resort community.

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