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Late to Launch: The Post-Collegiate Struggle

Despite a low unemployment rate, many young adults lack job prospects that mesh with their idealized vision of the post-college world.

Natascha F. Saunders, a career coach specializing in teens and adults who is based in Boston, said over-involved parents can hamper a job search. She recalls one parent who showed up with her child at a job interview. Ms. Saunders insisted she wait in the lobby, but the parent approached her daughter right afterward and wanted to know exactly what happened: what was said, what questions were asked and how she responded to those questions. Ms. Saunders said she has also seen parents attend career networking events geared to

Krumboltz, Career Decision Making, and METCO: A Portraiture Study Among Alumni

Doctoral Thesis Defense
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June 21, 2021

Agenda

- Chapter I .　　Problem, Question, Framework, Background, Significance
- Chapter II.　　The Theories
- Chapter III.　　Research Design
- Chapter IV.　　Findings and Data Analysis
- Chapter V.　　Discussions and Recommendations
- Questions
- References

BACKGROUND

- ❑ Founded at the pinnacle of the Civil Rights Movement, the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity Inc. program (METCO), has been integrating school classrooms since 1966. (METCO News Archives, 2020)

- ❑ Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity, Inc. (METCO) was created by educational collaborators, parents, leaders, and citizens from Boston.

- ❑ The first iteration of the METCO program was first referred to as **Operation Exodus**, which oversaw the **voluntary busing** of primarily children of color (Apfelbaum & Ardon, 2015). Two African-American parents, Ellen Jackson, and Elizabeth Johnson organized Operation Exodus.

- ❑ The METCO program was under the Operation Exodus leadership of **social activists** Ruth Batson and Ellen Jackson and had cooperation from parents, liberal Whites, community activists, and citizens (Apfelbaum & Ardon, 2015).

- ❑ In 2020, there were 3,300 families supported in the METCO program (METCO News Archives, 2020).
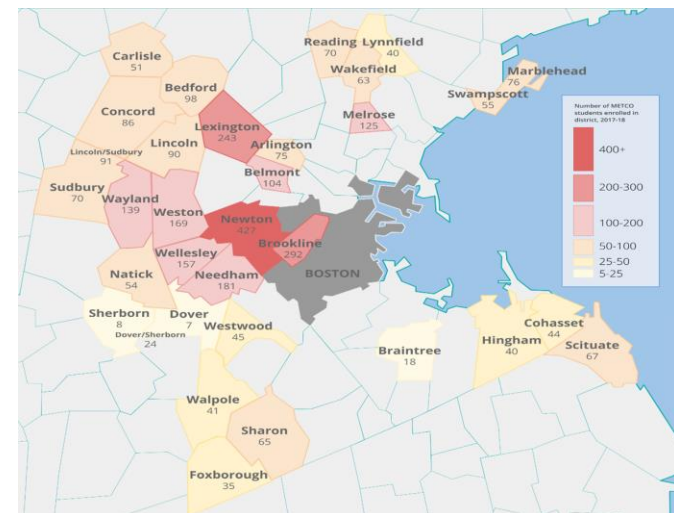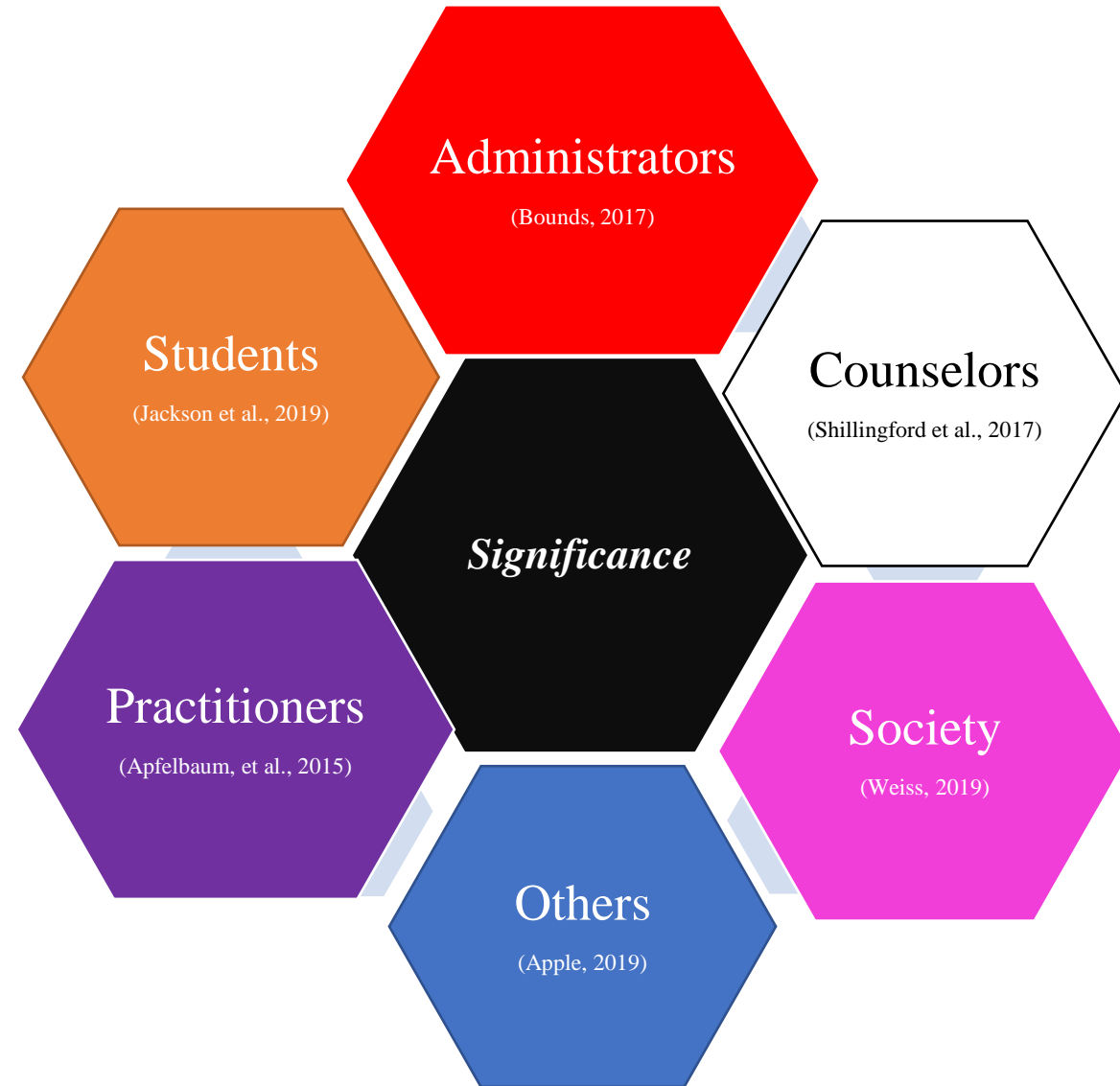
Figure 1. METCO Partner Districts. Number of METCO students enrolled in district 2017-2018 (METCO, 2019)

➢ There is a **substantial social concern** that education inequality limits the career opportunities of students within certain socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

➢ Developing **vocational identity takes time, as well as adequate resources and support**, which are not equitability distributed (Jackson, Regis, & Bennett, 2019).

➢ High school students of color with sociopolitical barriers in school systems and education are **underserved in regards to access** to career development and counseling (Jackson, Regis, & Bennett, 2019).

➢ METCO students are primarily students of color with systemic barriers, economic and environmental effects, and unique needs.

➢ **With inadequate data on understanding the career decision making** of METCO alumni this research aimed to highlight the impact and influence of METCO on their career decision-making, which benefits many stakeholders.

Administrators
(Bounds, 2017)

Students
(Jackson et al., 2019)

Counselors
(Shillingford et al., 2017)

Significance

Practitioners
(Apfelbaum, et al., 2015)

Society
(Weiss, 2019)

Others
(Apple, 2019)

PROBLEM	RESEARCH QUESTION	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
To advance current research on Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity, Inc. (METCO) and similar programs, this qualitative study aims to examine and describe how participating in the social structure of METCO impacted and influenced the career decision-making of their former students.	How did participating in METCO impact and influence the career decision-making processes of its alumni?	Krumboltz's theory provides interpretations on how to understand ones educational and occupational choices (Krumboltz, Mitchell, & Jones, 1976).

Theoretical Framework

GENETICS

physical appearance, inherited qualities, talent, innate abilities, race, and gender

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS AND EVENTS

social, cultural, political, economic forces, and natural resources
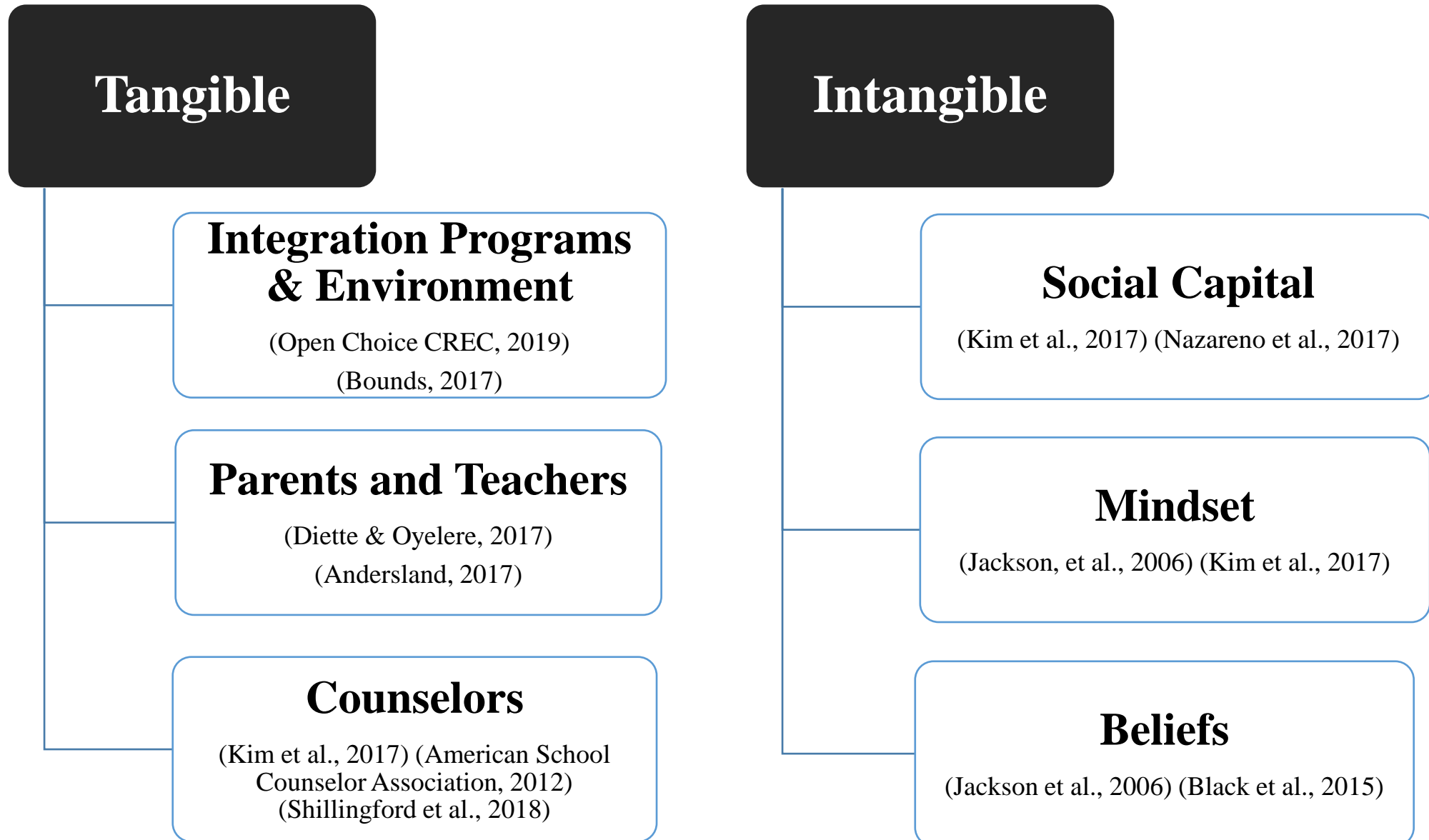
Career Decision Making

TASK APPROACH SKILLS

personal standards of performance, habits, goal setting, attitudes, problem solving, and information seeking

INSTRUMENTAL & ASSOCIATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

as we watch, listen, talk, or read about others, preceding circumstances/stimulus, behavior

Krumboltz, Mitchell, & Jones, 1976

What the literature says are some factors that impact and influence career decision making.
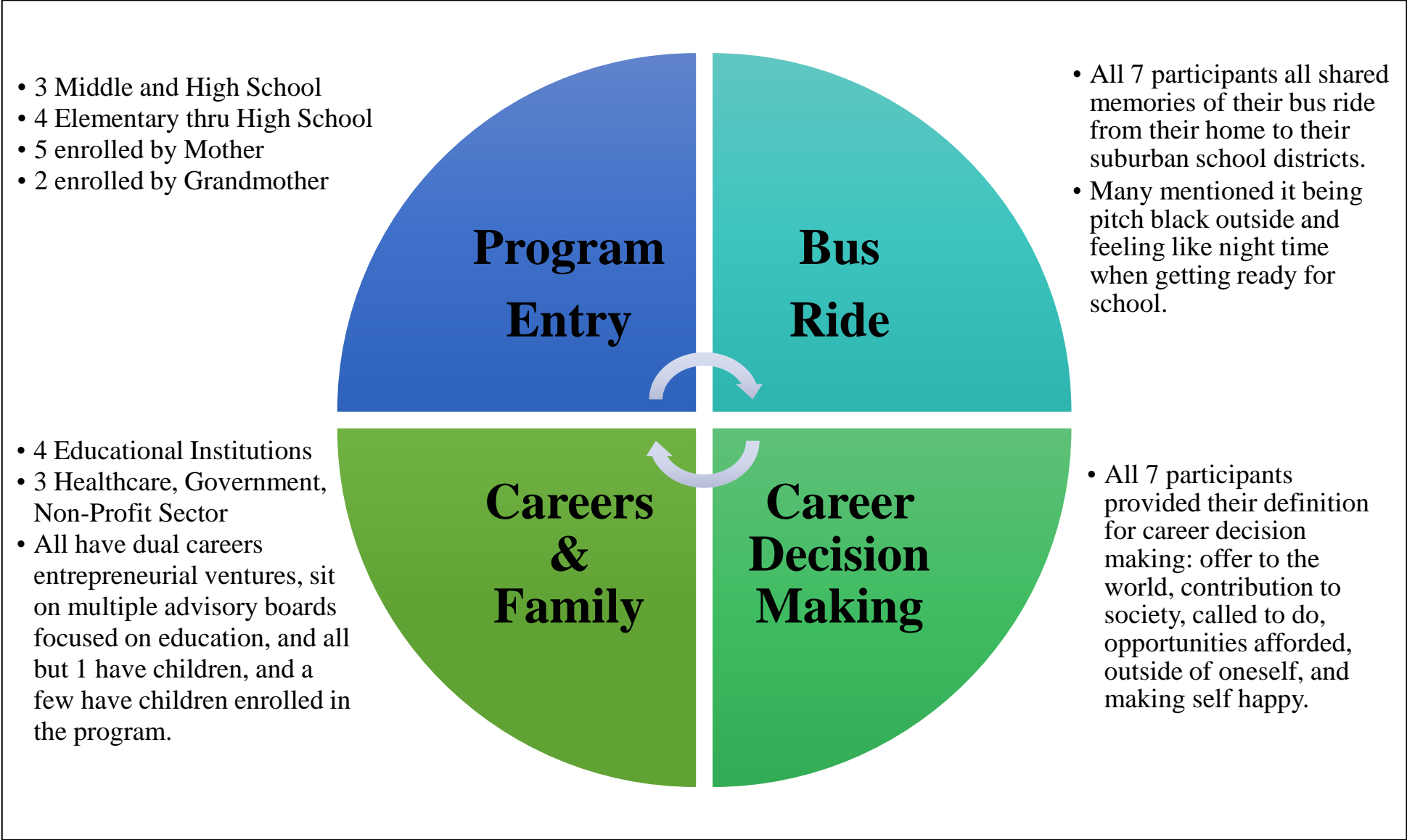
Tangible

- **Integration Programs & Environment**

  (Open Choice CREC, 2019)

  (Bounds, 2017)

- **Parents and Teachers**

  (Diette & Oyelere, 2017)

  (Andersland, 2017)

- **Counselors**

  (Kim et al., 2017) (American School Counselor Association, 2012)

  (Shillingford et al., 2018)

Intangible

- **Social Capital**

  (Kim et al., 2017) (Nazareno et al., 2017)

- **Mindset**

  (Jackson, et al., 2006) (Kim et al., 2017)

- **Beliefs**

  (Jackson et al., 2006) (Black et al., 2015)

RESEARCH DESIGN

Method	A qualitative, portraiture study to explore how METCO, an educational voluntary desegregation program, impacted and influenced the career decision making of its alumni.
Participants	(7) female and male, persons of color, New England, graduated from a METCO high school between 1990 – 2000
Procedures	Email. Consent. Random. Answer questions. Provide timeline. 90 days for up to 3 interviews, 60-90 minutes. Recorded.
Data Analysis	Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis (1991) used interpretative analysis method, which seeks "explanation within the realm of individual consciousness (influenced by)." (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 28). *Phase 1:* Capture Narrative (Multiple engagements phone, zoom, email) | *Phase 2:* Transcription | *Phase 3:* Review Artifacts / Documents (Career Timeline / Resume, Pictures, etc.) | *Phase 4:* Examine Codes & Thematic Analysis | *Phase 5:* Comparison | *Phase 6:* Theoretical Implications
Research Paradigm	Portraiture was developed by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, a sociologist known for examining the culture of schools, including desegregation programs such as METCO, and the comprehensive ecosystem of education; while looking at the relationship between human development and social change (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). **Eight (8) reasons why this methodology is a fit:** 1. Explains educational effectiveness influencing **students of color** 2. Uses a narrative framework to **explain individual experiences** 3. Identifies, extracts, and documents **relationships between external influences** 4. Makes use of context such as making a detailed description of the physical setting 5. Notes the **researchers' perspective** and point of view 6. Underscores the history, **culture,** and ideology of the **setting and environment** 7. Identifies symbols and metaphors that shape the narrative 8. Addresses subject's role in context (where, who, what, +symbols, artifacts, etc.)

Name	Age	Gender / Race	Location	METCO School / Year	College Type	Highest Level of Education	Current Role / Field	Artifacts
Resa	43	Female / African American	New England	Field Mid-1990's	Private research university	Master's in Education	Patient Access Representative | Healthcare	Photos of her holding winning gold trophies standing next to her mother at a ceremony illustrating her happiness while on the track team
Ricks	43	Male / African American	New England	Sley Mid-1990's	Private Christian college	Bachelor of Science	Job Coach & Owner | K-12 Education & Media	A photo 'vote for' when he ran for vice president of his student class; a photo of a published poem.
Esir	40	Male / African American / West Indian	New England	Ford Late-1990's	Community college, four-year college, and private nonprofit	Master's in Education	Administrator | Residential Care Specialist | K-12 Education & Human Services	A plaque photo of an article published about him in the local school district newspaper that shared his high school journey
Elle	38	Female / African American	New England	Orth Early 2000's	Private Christian college	Master's in Management	Clinical Social Worker | K-12 Education	A jacket photo to illustrate her passion for the step squad—one of her teachers found the jacket and returned it to her after years.
Dell	41	Male / African American	New England	Ston Mid-1990's	Private Jesuit research university	Master's in Business Administration	Procurement, Operations, Sourcing | Higher Education	None shared
Enya	43	Female / African American	New England	Line Mid-1990's	Private research university	Master's in Organizational Leadership and Management	Planning and Development| Community Activist | Government	None shared
Ranti	45	Female / African American	New England	Aron Early-1990's	Private research university	Master's in Education	Ministry, Director, Educator | Non Profit	None shared

GROUP PORTRAIT OF SEVEN PARTICIPANTS

• 3 Middle and High School
• 4 Elementary thru High School
• 5 enrolled by Mother
• 2 enrolled by Grandmother

• All 7 participants all shared memories of their bus ride from their home to their suburban school districts.
• Many mentioned it being pitch black outside and feeling like night time when getting ready for school.

Program Entry

Bus Ride

Careers & Family

Career Decision Making

• 4 Educational Institutions
• 3 Healthcare, Government, Non-Profit Sector
• All have dual careers entrepreneurial ventures, sit on multiple advisory boards focused on education, and all but 1 have children, and a few have children enrolled in the program.

• All 7 participants provided their definition for career decision making: offer to the world, contribution to society, called to do, opportunities afforded, outside of oneself, and making self happy.

Theme #1: Environmental Conditions and Events
social, cultural, political, economic forces, and natural resources

Literature + Theoretical Framework = Evidence of Findings which answered the RQ

Literature:

➢ Picard and Zenou (2018) demonstrated how students of color who were bussing outside of their resident cities to attend majority White schools were influenced to develop a social network and how the social network was used in their career decision-making process.

Theoretical Framework:

✓ All described their environmental conditions based on the academic culture of higher education.

✓ Krumboltz (1991) proposes that individuals develop relationships in their environment which can help or hinder an individual from taking productive steps in their vocational development.

Evidence of Findings:

✓ Ricks explained, "You know the culture at Sley (Pseudonym) was like you gotta apply to school, because everybody's applying for school and everybody is getting accepted and you don't want to be the person that's like, I'm not doing anything."

✓ Esir said, "I thought that I needed to go to college, and perhaps a prestigious college. My motivation was only driven by the fact that I watched the White kids attend prestigious colleges."

✓ Enya described, "It was weird because all your friends are doing it and so you kind of start getting on the ball."

✓ Ranti said, "The culture of the school was what the kids used to talk about, and kids from this school applied for college."

Portraiture: #3 identifies, extracts, and documents relationships between external influences, and #6 culture , and ideology of the environment
(Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997)

Literature + Theoretical Framework = Evidence of Findings which answered the RQ

Literature:

➢ Lin (2001) defines social capital as social networks and relationships that most of the participants were able to form through their experiences, and in turn, grew into a source of information necessary to successfully navigate their education and ultimately career decision making.

Theoretical Framework:

✓ All participants in this study described experiences based on commonalities such as a person, for example, a counselor, teacher, principal, or alumni who provided support, encouragement, or guidance, and influenced them to make career decisions.

✓ Krumboltz (1991) described these as individuals who take action after hearing, learning, doing, or observing.

Evidence of this findings:

✓ Ranti shared after a fight broke with a Black and a White girl, she was asked by the <u>principal</u> to how administration should handle the case. Surprised by the principal, she became very active in social justice movements in the school and now outside.

✓ Enya gave an example of when a <u>classmate</u> ran for city council. She exclaimed, "So when he decided to run for office, I remember saying, super dope. I was glad to see someone in my peer group getting into politics." This impacted Enya's interests in advocacy.

✓ Ricks shared, "Being in the special education department during middle and high school provided me with good <u>teachers </u>that helped." Ricks jobs have related to advocacy, and counseling with students.

✓ Resa talked of classes she would take based on recommendation from her <u>counselor</u> and extra curriculas. The influence of the counselor to make choices steered her career direction. Resa I now in the health profession.

Portraiture: #1 explains educational effectiveness influencing students of color, and # 4 makes specific uses of context and conditions (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997)

Theme #3: Task Approach Skills

performance, *habits*, *goals*, *attitudes*, *problems solving*, *information seeking*

Literature + Theoretical Framework = Evidence of Findings which answered the RQ

Literature:

➢ Scheitle et al. (2020) suggested that even after accounting for skill and talent, a wide range of other social and cultural factors are relevant in shaping students' career plans.

Theoretical Framework:

✓ Six out of seven participants spoke of their communication development in cultural settings.

✓ Krumboltz expounds upon task approach skills as exemplary of intellectual and performance skills and emotional tendencies for surviving in an environment where an individual is operating (Krumboltz, 1991).

Evidence of this findings:

✓ Esir said, "I learned how to survive. I'm able to shift and navigate into both worlds. I've been able to articulate myself in a way, whereas I don't pose a threat to White people around me, but I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing."

✓ Elle shared, "Code-switching is what I was used to, so I knew how to play the game, so to speak."

✓ Dell said, "I also learned how to effectively get my point across . I was really able to see how biases affected the way people, communicated with me, but also how they received how I was communicating with them."

✓ Ranti said, "Code-switching which I'm not gonna say is negative or positive. It's just something that you know you can do."

Portraiture: human development and social change , and #6 ideology of the setting and environment (collective adoption of a role / behavior) (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997)

Conclusion

➢ Each participant was encouraged to **share their experiences** and as a result we have better insight into how this program impacted and influenced alumni career decision making.

➢ Prior to this study, Krumboltz Social Learning Theory had been **limited in research concerning learners of color** and their career decision-making (Bounds, 2013).

➢ Portraiture makes room for the **researchers' perspective and point of view** in interpretation (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). As a result, I have expanded literature that will continue the conversation on the importance of understanding the career decision making process of students.

➢ **Implications for practice** can foster understanding to form more equitable policies and career development programs that can be implemented by those who work in similar fields.

➢ **Implications for research** can inform others in their data collection that could encourage them to continue collecting adding to the body of knowledge.

➢ Lastly, these findings can be used by counselors, society, students, administrators, and practitioners, which is also my personal work in the area of **career development.**

➢ **Next, these findings yielded recommendations for practice and future research.**

Recommendations for Practice

#1 Career Readiness Measurement Tool	#2 Career Development Course	#3 Career Resource Guide for Guardians	#4 Training in Multicultural Career Counseling
✓ According to the State Profile Comparison Chart, the **state of Massachusetts has not implemented a universal method for career exploration or career plans** at the K-12 level (American Institutes for Research, 2021).	✓ If students are not taught the **basics of career exploration and how they can connect their education with a career**, this can lead to what Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) call misfits which means someone is employed in a position and not efficient, productive and lack goal attainment.	✓ According to the Career Exploration for Teens – A Parent Guide to Starting the Career Conversation, a collaboration piece between **Chegg (Inside Jobs) and Youth Career Coach Inc. (2020) showed that 78% of teenagers list their parents as the biggest influence on their career choices.**	✓ Multicultural Career Counseling is designed to meet the needs and offer the understanding it takes to counsel underserved students. **This method adds self-awareness from privileged and marginalized individualities regarding possible prejudices into the framework of counseling (Jackson, Regis, & Bennett, 2019).**

Recommendations for Future Research

#1 Career Decision Making Longitudinal Study	#2 Exploring How Faith Influences Career Decisions	#3 Using an Assessment Tool for Career Decision Making
✓ Conducting a study with a **bigger sample size over a longer period of time could make the results generalizable**, applicable, and provide a higher level of validity, as the findings may capture stronger evidence on cause and effect over the long term.	✓ One of the most surprising findings was the relationship participants had between themselves and their faith in a higher power which they referred to as, 'God'. When participants were asked to define success **participants mentioned their faith and belief as a way to decide if they were successful.**	✓ Implementing the use of a scale, assessment tool, or some type of measurement to compare responses would be beneficial. **The benefit of using such a scale could help shed insight in understanding answers to questions such as why was the person comfortable with this particular career choice.**

Ask Me

Thank you

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