The concentration of people of color in urban neighborhoods is deeply rooted in the historical discriminatory pattern of disinvestment and lending practices that acted as an impediment to home ownership among African Americans. The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and The Servicemen’s Readjustment Act facilitated segregation and the socio-economic inequality between black Americans and white Americans. Massachusetts, a state with a byzantine history of liberalism, and racism initiated the Metropolitan Council for the Educational Opportunity to desegregate Boston schools. While programs like METCO are essential until the problem of poor inner city public education is rectified, steps should be taken to reaffirm a positive black identity for these youth. The METCO program should not be the standard of desegregation because it is just a band-aid to the glaring problem that urban public schools are underfunded compared to suburban public schools. METCO’s integration practices do not improve urban public schools. Rather, the program overlooks thousands of black and brown students who do not have any option but to attend their neighborhood schools. Research indicates that METCO students graduate and perform at a higher rate and level than their peers in Boston public schools, but at what cost? Through a ten-week participant observation and focus group study, I explored the experiences of black high school males who participate in the METCO program. Findings confirm the literature that students outperform their peers in their home communities, but experience
social isolation and segregation from their non-METCO peers. Participants’ stories indicate that while academic standards are higher than their home community schools, they are influenced by racial biases that impact how METCO students are treated and evaluated. Furthermore, the experience of racism perpetuates the notion of educated space as white space and black space as inferior. While programs like METCO are essential until the problem of poor inner city public education is rectified, steps should be taken to reaffirm a positive black identity for these youth.