

## **Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite**

**Shamus Khan**

*What is the focus or thesis of the reading?*

The focus of the reading studies the lives of privileged adults. Khan conducted research at a private school in New York City to understand how privilege is perpetuated among the elite and what aspects contribute to their higher status.

*From your reading, what are the key points made by the author(s)?*

Khan emphasized many key points, one of them being cultural capital. Cultural capital is passed on through generations which in return leads to the reproduction of privilege. The continuous attainment of privilege creates inequalities within a society.

Attending an elite school plays a role in shaping the life of some of the most affluent. These schools provide certain resources and networks that are not as easily accessible to individuals of less privileged backgrounds.

Kahan argues for the idea of a meritocracy. More specifically, the idea that social class and status play a role in certain outcomes, even though it is believed that success is based on individual excellence. Students can attend private school due to their affluent background, which then provides them with many opportunities that not everyone has access to.

*Which of those key points do you find most important and why?*

I found the most important key point to simply be the role of private schools. While it sounds simple, I think it is the most influential. Attending a private school with other individuals of higher status not only shapes who you are but it affects how you interact with others within society. The maintenance of privilege continues discriminatory attitudes and inequalities.

*What ideas in this chapter are new to you and especially interesting?*

Coming from a small town where I attended a smaller public school system, I found the whole reading to be interesting for many reasons. Growing up in a rural area shielded me from many of these ideas. While there were people of different statuses in my school, I feel like people didn't put much thought into who has the most money mainly because my school was not in an affluent area. My school system and town were a tight and close knit community. While I do agree that school shapes you into who you are, whether that be good or bad, I am thankful for where I went to school because I do appreciate the person I have become and what it taught me.

*What ONE question would you like us to address in class?*

How are the inequalities, created by the more affluent, addressed by them? Do they understand they are pertinent throughout society, or do they simply not care?