

Comparative Cultural Biography and Advocacy Project

Alexis R. Ribakoff

Chapman University

## **Part A**

### **Interviewee**

I grew up in a place where diversity is minimal. I was never friends with people who were of a different race or religion than me. I was only friends with Jewish white kids. Because of where I come from and how little diversity I was exposed to in my life before Chapman, I will be exploring this idea of race, religion, and geographic differences and how that has played a part in my schooling as well as my interviewees schooling. I will be referring to my interviewee as Miss Keisha. Miss Keisha also attends Chapman University as a freshman. She is one of my friends' roommates. I met Miss Keisha in my friends room and we have hung out with her a few times since meeting her. Over those times we have hung out, I have really bonded with her. She is a person who radiates positivity and always has a smile on her face. Miss Keisha is the kind of person who you will have a great time with no matter what you are doing. She comes from an military family in Oceanside California. She is originally from Washington, but moved to Oceanside when she was a teenager. Both her parents are immigrants from the Philippines. I interviewed Miss Keisha on March 13th 2018 at around 8:45 at night in her dorm room. During this 30 minute interview, I got to rehash some of the things I already knew about Miss Keisha while also learning new things about her life, her beliefs, and how she grew up. Before this interview I intended to ask questions about her gender, her race and her schooling but in the end we talked about other important things such as politics and what's important to us. After conducting this interview, I was able to see how different Miss Keisha and I are on many aspects but I was also able to see our commonalities. I was able to come to the realization that you can find commonalities in those who could not be more different from you.

### **Transcript:**

Alexis: Are you still willing to have this interview? Is this okay?

Miss Keisha: Yeah of course.

A: Okay, I am performing this interview as a part of my fieldwork for my education class at Chapman University. The informal interview is not considered formal or generalizable research; it is only a sharing of experiences and views. Participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You/your child/your ward may choose not to answer any question, and/or to discontinue participation completely and end the interview, at any time without penalty. To protect your/your child's/your ward's identity, a pseudonym (a false name) will be assigned in any written material or verbal discussion about this interview. The content of this interview will be shared only in my class at Chapman, and will not be published or distributed in any other way.

A: Do you agree to participate/allow your child/allow your ward to participate in the interview?  
[Yes, proceed; No, end conversation and thank the person for their time.]

MK: Yes.

A: I would like to record the interview to help me when I write my assignment. I will destroy the recording within 48 hours of the end of this interview. Do you agree to my recording the interview?

MK: Yes.

A: OK. So what are some of the key identities that you hold today?

MK: I would say that I am Filipino American with a military background I guess, and I am the daughter of immigrants and I am a heterosexual female that's pretty much my identity.

A: OK. So do you think those identities give you opportunities or do you think they take opportunities away from you. You can pick a few.

MK: OK. I would say in a way yes.

A: That they do take away opportunities?

MK: So yes. So I would say that being an Asian American in the college admissions process took away opportunities for me because I'm being compared to other Asian Americans rather than just who I am as an individual. But then, I would say it also gives me individuality because it makes me unique and makes me who I am. So it gets me a community and culture to be a part of.

A: Do you think do you feel that way about being a woman. Do you think that being a women gave you opportunities or do you think being a woman took it away?

MK: I think like in this time, I don't consider being a female stopping me from doing what I want so far, like anything I wanted to do or or wanted to accomplish I've done so and if I didn't do it, it was just because I wasn't up to par.

A: OK. So follow up question. So do you feel like your schooling was different from other students because of your identity, like your race?

MK: So I grew up in Spanaway Washington which is a farm town in the middle of nowhere where it takes 30 minutes to the nearest Walmart. And I was probably one of five students of color including my sister. But, I would say I wasn't treated differently just because of my identity but I kind of questioned it like myself because I really didn't know like realize that I was even a person of color just because I'm surrounded by a general white population. And so I wasn't really exposed to like the Filipino or like Asian culture as much growing up until now. I'm kind of learning about it now that I'm older. But I would definitely say that it kind of hurt me

like growing up but, then once I moved to Oceanside where it's more diverse and like a lot more people are accepting of people of color it changed my perspective.

A: So follow question on that, So you grew up most of your life Washington and then moved to Oceanside. So how was the culture of Oceanside different from the culture of Washington?

MK: So in Oceanside, it's one of the biggest Samoan populations in the country. Like other than Samoa itself, there is a lot of immigrants from whether it be from Mexico or from other countries as well. So it's all around diverse and like it's just a booming community with people who aren't from like America. Its filled with people that have different backgrounds so there's wealthy families and there are also poorer families so it's like all around just diverse.

A: And that's different from Washington how?

MK: Its different from Washington because Washington is mostly a military community or a farming community. So like there you wouldn't see like an Humberto's taco shop or you wouldn't see like people waiting to get picked up by a construction worker to get jobs for the day. I would compare it to middle America for the most part because it's like people wearing like the construction workers sweatshirts has a style. Like all they really have is like the Friday night football games and like the talk of the town so everyone knew what everyone was up to and I guess it's the same as Oceanside in a way, it seems like there's a strong community. But I think with Washington it was more so just ignorant under exposure to anyone else in the world. So yeah.

A: You moved to Oceanside when you were in 9th grade right?

MK: Yeah my summer going into 9th grade.

A: So when you went to Oceanside did you feel you needed to conform to the culture to fit in?

MK: Actually no, I knew I wanted to get involved right off the bat but, I felt more accepted there and then I felt like I was more true to who I was because in Washington I tried to be someone I was not in a way. I just feel like more at home in Oceanside. Even if I didn't know everyone there, I just felt like I could be myself.

A: Do you think it was the people that lived there or do you think it was just the environment as a whole?

MK: I think it was the people who lived there because in Washington, I was like the only Asian girl but, here I was like I'm just another Asian girl you know, that sort of thing.

A: OK so going off of your Asian ethnicity do you feel that because you're Asian you have to live up to this stereotype that all Asians are smart?

MK: Yes. So much. Because like especially in high school you take AP test and like everyone wanted to graduate with honors everyone was like "you're Asian you don't need a study". And I was like first of all, I'm actually not struggling in this class and it's not because I'm Asian. It's like just because I like actually study, like I work for what I do.

A: So do you still feel that here at Chapman?

MK: Well, I would say no. I've never had anyone actually say like, "oh you're Asian, you like should be smart" at Chapman. So I would say no not really.

A: OK. So, do you feel that the way you were raised at home differed from the way that other people in your community were raised?

MK: Oh heck yeah.

A: Why?

MK: My parents didn't push me, they let me do what I wanted to do. For example, I was always very involved and always like proactive in school and like in sports in the clubs but, it was just the fact that they supported anything I would do rather than like people in Washington, their parents aren't really involved with their children. Like, their kids can do whatever they want. And like college wasn't a thing on most of the kids minds. It's not like my parents were like you have to go to college, but it's just like kind of like I always wanted to go to college. But like when I look back at where are the people in Washington are, they're either like drug dealers or like just pregnant or married already or even divorced so it's kind of just like I'm thankful for her parents for showing me that there's more than Washington.

A: So going off of that, do you feel that since you are like a military family that you were raised differently than other people in your community?

MK: Yeah. There was more military in Washington. But, everyone was basically the same there in Oceanside. In oceanside it's like there's Marines mostly there are families with like younger kids. So no one really understood, oh my dad's like in the army, that sort of thing. And in oceanside most of their parents are like realtors or like work at a restaurant.

A: Do you think that like your parents parenting style was different because your dad was a military man?

MK: I think I just had to grow up more, like my sister my brother would always be like scared if my dad was deployed or something like that and I had to like put up a front like I wasn't scared. So like they wouldn't be like crying and worried. So I just think I have more responsibility than a typical kid would. And it wasn't like my parents were making me raise my siblings, but I had to help my mom out. She was basically taking on the single mother rule for a majority of my childhood. So yeah.

A: So what was it like growing up in a Filipino family?

MK: BIG. My dad has eight siblings and my mom has three siblings.

A: Wow. We must have a lot of cousins?

MK: Yeah, like every party is like the best thing ever. I love like the holidays or when it's someone's birthday. It's always loud like I'm scared to bring like my friends over. You have to be prepared and used to how loud it is, especially when you don't understand what they're saying because they're speaking in a different dialect. So yeah, I would just say like it's a lot of crazy hectic-ness but, I love it.

A: Awesome, you said earlier that you weren't always connected to your Filipino side. Do you feel more connected now right?

MK: Yeah, because when I was living in Washington, all my family was in California so we didn't see them often but now being in California has made me closer to them.

A: So have you ever been in a setting where you felt like a minority?

MK: Yeah but I think I'm used to it. I don't really think about it.

A: What do you mean you're used to it?

MK: Like in Washington, I've like grown up always being a minority so like coming to Chapman people would be like, I don't know how to do it you're the minority. And I'm like used like it doesn't faze me.

A: Can you a specific time that you distinctly remember like really feeling of being on the outs because of who you are?

MK: I don't know. I would say like maybe in high school because like the crowd I hung out with was mostly white like the surfer like blond kids and so like I kind of felt outed by that, like I



didn't fit in but like then I realized like it didn't really matter because they're my friends. When I first moved, I was like "Oh I do not belong in this surfer kid town, like this is not where I belong" but then I got to know them for who they are. It was like the generalization of them, like I was like "oh these kids surf every day like go get acai bowls everyday" but then I realized like you just have to get to know somebody.

A: Was there ever time in your life where you were worried that like you didn't know where your next meal was coming from or anything like that?

MK: Honestly no. Like that's why I'm like really grateful. We never really struggled economically but, that was because my parents worked so hard. Like my parents came from the Philippines like dirt poor and they struggled but, they made a better life for themselves and for their own families.

A: Do you think that that motivates you to do the same?

MK: I think I have to give back to them. And that's kind of like how our culture is, like once you are well-off you're kind expected to give back to your family. That's what my parents do day in and day out for their family so I think so. That's why I'm going to school. And since my dad's service in the military is getting me through college. I really do want to give back.

A: OK. What is your learning style?

MK: I think in college it's changed. Like now when I'm in class what I do is I just take all the information that the professor says, just like word vomited out on my computer, and I type it all out and then from there I'll get a study guide and then I'll put together like all the answers or the notes from my study guide and answer them and then I'll print out and then memorize from there.

A: So what changed?

MK: I used to be more of a visual learner. Like I had to see it on a PowerPoint, I had to see pictures or like a video about it. And now I don't really need that, I just need to really listen pay attention to all my lectures.

A: Did you feel that being a woman has prohibited you from receiving equal treatment in a school setting?

MK: No.

A: Do you think that's because of where you grew up or do you think that's just because society's evolving?

MK: I don't think it's because society's evolving, I think it's because in a school system we are still equal to boys. Like maybe like in P.E were treated a little different but like in schools we're basically treated the same. When we come into the real world, it's like jobs and stuff like that, I think I can start seeing like the barriers we have as women. But I would say in the school system not so much.

A: So do you have a specific religion that you practice?

MK: No.

A: Is there a reason that you don't practice it?

MK: I was baptized and my grandma is very Catholic but my mom's side is Christian so when my dad was away, like deployed and stuff, my mom would go to church because that's what she does that would give her peace of mind. So I was very active in the Christian church growing up in Washington and then we just dropped the ball would really only go on like Christmas.

A: Why do you think that happened?

MK: I think because my parents grew up in the church, like my dad was really involved like he was like wearing the robes and everything. And I think they did it because they had to. But when they had their own kids they were like you can do what you want.

A: So would your parents support you if you chose to like practice a different religion?

MK: I don't know. To be honest no, if I decided to convert to Islam my dad would probably go crazy just because he's like that but, no I don't think they would support that.

A: From where you grew up, do a lot of people have a certain religion that they practice?

MK: Um, there's a lot of Christians and like Catholics.

A: Do you ever feel like outed or anything because you don't practice as much as them?

MK: No, in one of my poli sci classes were talking about comparative politics and they're saying like in today's society there's like less political participation and all around civil society participation like people just don't go to church as much as they used to. Like they don't participate in clubs or musicals as much as they used to. And yeah I think that's kind of like the norm now, either do it or you don't.

A: So do you have a specific political affiliation?

MK: Um, no if we're being completely honest here. So my dad's super conservative, super republican, like guns the whole nine, like bring more money into the military and that's the kind of like the household I grew up in. My moms more politically quiet. Like she doesn't really express her political opinions. And so in polysci you learn that political socialization is like the main part of who we become, like where we grow up and like our background, like that's who we end up being. And I think like I don't know how I didn't end up being like a gung ho conservative Republican. I think it just because like I was exposed to more than my dad was and

so I kind of like am still exploring where I stand. But I think that's kind of like what our generation represents. We don't need a political party to affiliate ourselves with we just need to have our own ideals and like it doesn't matter if it overlaps because nothing should ever be one way or the other.

A: That's a really good way to look at it. So what are the political standings in Oceanside?

MK: Very conservative and republican but, I think the tides are turning in Oceanside because it is it's so diverse there's a lot of like wealthier people, a lot of military people, but then there's also like the immigrants so I would say it's a little bit of everything and I think that's representative of myself as well. So yeah the tides are turning, we'll see.

A: What about in Washington?

MK: Oh yeah. It's guns, cars, so very Republican and very conservative.

A: So you never felt the pressure of conforming to what was around you?

MK: I think that honestly if I stayed in Washington, I'd be that way. But because I moved right during that transition from 8th or 9th grade where I'm transitioning myself I was able to see both sides without being like this is how I believe this is what I believe. So I was still open to learning and accepting new ideas.

A: That's great, you went to a public school for all your life, so how was the transition from public to private going Chapman?

MK: Honestly, there was no hard transition.

A: Really?

MK: Yeah I just really appealed to the private school. It was something I wanted. I wanted that close knit, smaller classroom sizes, more like individualized education. And everyone was like, "its an all white school" and I was like I'm used to it, it's not going to affect me. And so it wasn't

really a big deal. In Oceanside I think my education was like phenomenal, I adored all my teachers. They are the reason I wanted to pursue polisci, like I always knew I wanted to do politics, but I didn't know to what extent. So my teachers really made me love the topics and love what was happening.

A: What made you want to pursue polisci as a major and politics besides your former teachers?

MK: I've always known, in fifth grade I was like I'm going to be president of the United States and so my parents sent me to D.C. to all these leadership conferences to explore that just to see if I would actually like it.

A: Last question, what would you say your main values are?

MK: I would say family for sure because without them I wouldn't be where I am today. I think for me, I need a support system whether it be family or friends like I just need that someone to go to when something happens. With anything that happens to me I have to instantly share it. There's no way I can keep it to myself, like I do journaling and stuff like that but I literally have to just get it out and say it so I think a good support system is something I value a lot. And I also value education. People always say, "oh, you don't need to go to college to be successful in life" and I agree, but you also need exposure to like other things. Like you see people are ignorant and like they have these opinions based on absolutely nothing, this is like what they've always seen but, yet they aren't willing to listen to the other side or get educated and just be more knowledgeable and go out there and see the world. Something else I value is acceptance, just being willing to open your mind and be able to just listen to others. Listening to people is just a thing that I think people forget. It's so easy for people to post their opinions on Twitter and Instagram and yet are unwilling to listen to the other side and aren't willing to see if they're wrong or being able to accept that they're wrong. So yeah.

A: That's great. Well thank you for allowing me to interview you.

MK: Of course!

### **Response**

Before choosing Miss Keisha as my interviewee I knew we were different in many ways. I knew that racially, religiously, and culturally we were different. Miss Keisha is of Filipino descent and grew up in a completely different environment than I did. Likewise, I am Jewish and while Miss Kesh's family is Catholic, they do not practice any more. With that said, we also have many things in common. We both are females, we both grew up in households that are financially stable and our political and ethical standings are quite similar. Likewise, we both believe that family is everything. We both cherish the bonds we have with our family and know we would not be where we are today without their love and support. I was also to relate to what Miss Keisha said about having to grow up quick because her dad was a military man and would be shipped out for months at a time with no contact. While my dad is not a military man, my father passed away when I was nine. Because of this, I too had to grow up faster for the sake of the people in my family. Another thing that I found that Miss Keisha and I had in common was that we are grateful for the education that we have received thus far. We both had great high school experiences and attribute a lot of who are today to those people we met in high school.

I first asked Miss Keisha about some of the identities she held. She said the main identities that she held were Filipino American, military background (her family), daughter of immigrants and a heterosexual female. I then asked her if she thought those identities gave or took away opportunities for her. She then went on to talk about how being an Asian American with a high GPA applying for college took away opportunities from her because she felt like she blended in with all the other Asian Americans with high GPAs. On the flip side, she also said

that being an Asian American in general, gave her individuality because it makes her unique and makes her who she is.

Later in the interview, I asked her if because she is Asian, does she feel this need to live up to this stereotype that all Asians are smart. Without any hesitation she said “Yes. So much”. She continued to talk about how people would make comments to her like, “you’re Asian, you don’t need to study” all the time in high school. I thought it was really interesting that she stopped receiving those types of comments when she came to Chapman. This surprised me because the student body here at Chapman is predominantly white, whereas Miss Keisha's high school in Oceanside was very diverse. It was somewhat shocking to me that she received comments about her race at a more racially diverse school than Chapman.

Miss Keisha went on to tell me that her family did not really push her to go to college. They always let her do what she wanted to do. Her parents of course wanted her to go to college, but she still had a choice. This idea shocked me. Where I am from, you go to college and you do not have a say in it. No one I know back home graduates high school and then doesn’t attend a four year university. I would likely be disowned if I did not attend a four year university. In my culture, college is an important step and is something that must not be a maybe. Miss Keisha's family allows her to have a choice because of their inherent culture as well as the culture around where they live.

Going off of this, Miss Keisha told me that because her family came to the United States dirt poor she feels this sense of obligation to give back to them and that is one of the reasons she is attending college. She went on to tell me that this is how her culture is. She says, “Once you are well-off you’re kind of expected to give back to your family”. Even though Miss Keisha and I have very different cultures, this idea of giving back to your loved ones is something that is also

apart of my culture, especially my religion. In my religion we are expected to give money and donate food and clothes to people less fortunate enough. Likewise, we are supposed to give back to our families because they give us everything. While Miss Keisha and I come from two very different place and live two very different lives, we found that this idea of giving back is something that we both share and both value.

Additionally, as we continued to talk about Miss Keisha's education, it was brought to our attention that she has experienced both public and private school education. She talked about how she did not feel that there was a hard transition between public and private school. She has gone to public school all her life up until she came to Chapman. She then went on to say how the private school setting really appealed to her. It was something she wanted when she was looking into colleges. She wanted that close knit more individualized education. While she loved her education back in Oceanside she knew she wanted to try private for college.

### **Part B**

I am a half American half South African Jewish female from Los Angeles California. I am what you would call your typical "valley girl". I grew up in the San Fernando Valley my whole life. Likewise, my sexual orientation is straight or heterosexual. I am an only child. My mom and dad got divorced when I was six years old. I have six grandparents. My dad was a Jewish lawyer who also grew up in the San Fernando Valley. At 38, he died of stomach cancer when I was 9. My mom is a Jewish facialist who was born in Johannesburg South Africa and moved to the United States when she was 9. She essentially grew up in the San Fernando Valley her whole life therefore, her South African accent is no longer prevalent. I would consider my immediate family to be part of the upper middle class. I went to the same school for my entire life. I went to school with some of the same people since I was in Mommy and Me class.



Moreover, I went to an all Jewish private school in Los Angeles. My school had a student body that is roughly 500 students.

Because I grew up in Los Angeles I got to see how different and diverse the class system is. In LA you could be driving through an area with million dollar houses one minute and then the next minute you in an area where 3 families have to share one apartment. Because I went to private school, I was constantly surrounded by people who came from money. I was fortunate enough to never have to worry about where my next meal was coming from or if my mom could pay rent. I had the luxury of being secure which was something I know a lot of people in my area were not fortunate enough to have. Every summer I work with kids who are from parts of LA that are poverty ridden. Because of this, I feel like I have stepped outside my sheltered bubble more than most of the people that went to my high school. Everyone who went to my high school was privileged and did not have to work a day in their life if they chose not to. I unlike them do not have that kind of luxury. I have made an effort to step out of my bubble as much as I could, I did not want people to group me in with the people who surround me and have them think that I was ignorant or spoiled.

My parents have raised me to be a hard working person. Even though I do have some financial support to lean on, I still need to go out into the world and work hard for the things that I want. My parents were never hard on me when it came to school or rules. My mom raised me for most of my life and she was happy if I was happy. She did not hold any expectations over my head. She always encouraged me to do what I wanted to do. She never made me get straight A's in school. Because of this, I was able to come to her if I was struggling in a class without the fear that she was going to lash out at me for not doing well enough. My mom is also not an overbearing parent who gave me a curfew. My moms mantra is, "I'll trust you until you give me

a reason not to". This allowed me to always be open with my mom about everything. I never lied to my mom about anything and if I did I would be overcome with this feeling of guilt and then I would have to tell her. Even at the times where I did something that may have disappointed her, she was still there for me. Because my mom was so encouraging and non-judgmental, this allowed me to enjoy my schooling and not have to worry about taking those grades home to disappointed parents.

When it comes to my schooling, I have been fortunate enough to be able to afford to go to private school all my life. In Los Angeles, it is hard to find a good public school. All the public schools in my area are not safe and are too big for students to get any individualized attention. In Los Angeles, if you can afford it, private school is the way to go. The population of my school consisted of people who were like me. Everyone in my school was Jewish, everyone had the same values, and everyone knew each other. In addition, since my high school was so small the classes were very individualized and hands on. For example, the biggest class I ever had at that school was 25 students to 1 teacher and the smallest class I had was 8 students to 1 teacher.

In school, I always struggled with math and science but, I was never amazing at English or history either. In school I always had to try my hardest in everything or I would not do well. I was never one of those kids who could study the night before a test and get a decent grade. I am the type of student where I have to study a week in advance to get a decent grade. Sadly, I only realized this halfway through high school and my grades suffered because of that. When it came to school work, a lot of the time I would get frustrated because I would try so much harder than my friends yet, I would perform worse than them on everything. It was always a struggle for me to feel like I'm trying my hardest and to not get the results I wanted. I think a lot of that had to do

with the fact that my school was extremely academic. Every class was a college prep course and then there was the option to take either honors or AP's. Because I had to constantly work hard until the day that I graduated, the transition to college was fairly easy and very much like high school. Likewise, I did not feel like I had to change a lot of working habits when coming to college and living on my own.

Reflecting on my Jewish background, I have come to realize that while I did go to a Jewish school all my life where I learned Hebrew and took Jewish history classes, I believe in the Jewish ethics but, not necessarily the Jewish faith. What I mean by this is, I believe in the values that Judaism teaches people. I believe in the idea that we have to always be giving back to people, I believe in the idea that we need to treat our neighbors in the same way that we want to be treated, and I believe in the idea that family is everything. Conversely, I do not believe in God which happens to be a big part of the Jewish faith. With everything that has happened to me in my life, I do not believe that a God would let bad things happen to good people. I have struggled balancing and explaining my beliefs in this culture, but even though I don't believe in the main staple that the Jewish religion believes in, I do not feel judged for my beliefs by others in my religion. This is because the Jewish people as a whole are an accepting and loving group of people and because of our past, we are not one to judge or make people feel bad because of their differences.

Because I went to a Jewish high school my whole life I did not think I was going to want to keep up this constant "Jewishness" when I came to college. Actually, I told myself that I was not and I did not have to anymore. Although, what I have realized is that once you aren't forced to practice something everyday for your whole life, you actually realize that it is a part of you and you need it. Without even intending I became more involved in my religion once I left high

school and came to college. Now I look forward to Chabad every Friday night and I look forward to that time where I am surrounded by Jewish people and people who understand/practice those values that I so deeply admire.

Furthermore, I chose Miss Keisha for this interview because of the differences between us as well as those similarities. Before this interview with Miss Keisha, I thought we had more differences than we actually did. I was able to find new things that were similar between us from conducting this interview. Miss Keisha is an individual who has a completely different race and religion from myself. As stated before, we also come from completely different geographic regions and have completely different cultures. Miss Keisha is of Filipino descent and is very family oriented. She loves spending time with her large Filipino family. In addition, her family is a military family. Because of this, she at one point moved her whole life to Oceanside, CA because of her father's work. Because her family is a military family and her dad sometimes goes away for months at a time, she had to grow up fast and be strong for her siblings. I think that it's very beautiful how much Miss Keisha values her family and all that they do for her on a daily basis. A lot of people take their families for granted and I think that Miss Keisha learned at a young age that your family are your biggest advocates so we have to give to them the same way they give to us.

Overall, Miss Keisha is a very smart and open minded person. While her family is conservative when it comes to political ideals she's managed to block out their opinions and formulate her own based on what she feels is right. Her maturity is showcased through her views on the world and the ways she was brought up. I believe that Miss Keisha is a perfect example of how your experiences shape you. When she moved from Washington to Oceanside, she was able to grow and evolve into the person she was meant to be by holding on to some of the past as well

as taking in the present. It is also clear that Miss Keisha knows what she wants. She knew she wanted to go to a private school because of that hands on work that the teachers can offer and she knew she wanted to go into politics from a young age. In the end, I am glad I got the chance to interview Miss Keisha. Because of this I have learned that while someone may look very different from you on the outside, you cannot assume they can't be like you on the inside. From this interview I was able to see the beauty in difference and the beauty in finding those commonalities from someone who seems so unlike you.

### **Part C**

When it comes to schools, many teachers and administrators do not realize this, but they tend to have preconceived ideas of others based on who they think they are and where they come from. "Additionally, a growing number of teachers have begun to dump all manner of behavior into a catchall they call 'culture.' Whenever students seem not to be able to explain or identify with students, they point to students' culture as the culprit".(Ladson-Billing 105) This quote sums up this idea that teachers use one's identity as an explanation for their actions. They may say they understand the student, but in reality they just grouping them where they think they belong. After talking to Miss Keisha, I realized how true this idea is. While she did not receive this kind of treatment from her teachers, she experienced this generalized culture grouping. Miss Keisha is Asian and because of this, she has felt this pressure from society and everyone in her school environment that because she is Asian she needs to get straight A's and be smart. "Belief in the myth of Asian Americans as the model minority". (Holtzman 219) Likewise, Miss Keisha talked about getting grouped together with all the other Asians students when applying to college and throughout high school. Because these teachers are using certain minorities as models, they are widening the achievement gap. I believe that this stems from those generalizations that the

teachers make of their students and the different standards they hold their students to based on their culture.

In order for this to change for future students, teachers need to refrain from developing bias based on who they think their students should be as opposed to who they really are. If the teachers, the role models, are also playing into these cultural stereotypes how can we expect the other students and teens not to as well? It is imperative for future educators to be taught when they are learning how to become teachers, how to also not let themselves create these assumptions. This also means that if a teacher is teaching in an low income area they cannot assume that all these kids are going to be misbehaved because of where they come from. Like Miss Keisha's classmates, in order to see a change in the youth we first have to see a change in the people who are teaching the youth.

After talking to Miss Keisha and hearing about her transition from public school to private school compared to my constant private schooling, I came to the realization that the quality of your education really depends on where you are geographically. "Education is power for those who hold it and weakness for those who do not".(Cardinal) The idea that those who have the most education hold the most power is something that is unfair and has a lot to do with privilege. For example, like I have said before, the LA county public schools are not the places where you are going to receive the best hands on education. Because of this, those who can afford it decide to go the private school route. While Miss Keisha did receive a great education through the public schools in Oceanside that does not mean I would have experienced that same great public school education that she did in my area. It is so strange to me how some public schools in one area are so good and yet, so bad in others. If all these schools have the same requirements for teachers and instill the same values, then why are some better than others?

Some may say that the students are what differentiates one school from another which is partly true, but that's not the only factor. Miss Keisha went to a public school in an equally wealthy area as the one I live in yet, her public schools are ten times better than the ones in my area.

If we are able to make it so all public schools are equal and some aren't better than others then I think we have a chance of closing this gap between lack of power and power when it comes to education. If there is a way to even the playing field between great public school education and private school education verses bad or run down public school education, people won't have to worry about their education, or lack there of, inhibiting them from doing what they want.

Schools need to be able to promote diversity as a whole. Diversity includes anything that makes a person who they are, whether that be their race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, and disabilities. To do this, schools need to first start out by teaching their students about different cultures. While I went to a school was anything but diverse but, I do feel like I learned a lot about other cultures. That is not something you would expect out of a private Jewish high school. I feel that I was properly educated on a variety of topics. If all schools made an effort to do this, we would not have to worry about students like Miss Keisha feeling this pressure to be on top because of her race. Like what I said before, if we are able to explore and respect other people's cultures we will stop this cycle of thinking that all people of the same ethnicity are the same. Not every Asian gets straight A's and not every white person is spoiled. In the end, the key to fixing this problem of inequality and generalization is by promoting difference and an developing safe spaces to explore others differences in a school setting.

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