

# Characteristics of Systems of Privilege

- Dominance** Where there is power, the default is for it to be held by a member of the dominant group—whites in relation to race, men in relation to gender, etc. Because of this, most power is held by members of privileged groups.
- Obsession with Control** Control over members of both dominant and subordinate groups is necessary to maintain systems of privilege. In addition, dominant groups are perceived as having a greater capacity for control of all kinds than are subordinate groups, which is used to justify their superior position and the privilege that goes with it.
- Identification** The dominant group is seen as the standard for human beings in general, with subordinate groups culturally defined as “other.” Because of this—
- The dominant group is assumed to be superior.
  - When something—such as a job—is done by members of the dominant group, it tends to be seen as having greater value than when done by subordinate groups.
  - What is positively valued in the culture tends to be associated with the dominant group, including control and power.
  - Dynamic relationship between control and fear.
- Centeredness** Path of least resistance is to place members of the dominant group at the center of attention—media coverage, conversation, meetings, etc.