

**D. Definition of Privilege**

## 1. Privilege Defined

- a. A special advantage, immunity, permission, right, or benefit granted to or enjoyed by an individual, class, or caste. (Merriam-Webster Online, 2013)
- b. An advantage, immunity, or right held as a prerogative of status or rank, and exercised to the exclusion or detriment of others.

## 2. Privilege can be Earned or Unearned

- a. “Earned Privilege” is acquired as a result of effort or action.
- b. “Unearned Privilege” is an advantage based on social group membership (in-group) that simultaneously disadvantages members outside that social group (out-group).

Furthermore, members of advantaged social groups typically are unaware of their privileges, whereas members of disadvantaged social groups typically are sensitized to the disadvantages of not having the privilege (McIntosh, 1988; Wildman, et.al. 1996).

**E. Recall the Types of Privilege**

Privilege can also be linked to various forms of identity such as:

- Race/Ethnic privilege
- Socioeconomic privilege
- Sexual orientation privilege
- Sex (Biological) privilege
- Religious privilege (University of Vermont; Media Smarts, 2014)

## 1. Race/Ethnicity

Privileges associated with an individual’s race/ethnicity is considered unearned. Historically, racial privilege was based upon the dominant culture. However, all races and ethnicities have some form of privilege; though, some have more than others (Parillo, 2007)

## 2. Socioeconomic Privilege

Socioeconomic privilege includes individual attitudes, behaviors, and systems of policies and practices that are set up to benefit the upper classes at the expense of the lower classes.

Socioeconomic privilege, also known as classism or elitism, is grounded in a hierarchy belief system that ranks people according to socioeconomic status, family lineage, and other class related divisions.