



Glossary

Androgynous

The adjective describes someone who presents as both female and male or whose >**gender expression** can be defined in terms of both female and male characteristics – or blurs the boundaries between them.

BIPoC

The acronym stands for >**Black**, Indigenous (and) Person/People of Colour. It is a self-designation used by individuals and groups who experience racism, e.g. people from the African, Asian or Latin American diaspora or Indigenous people. Even if racism takes different forms and is not experienced in the same way by everyone, the intention behind the term is to indicate that people are subject to structural >**racialisation** on the basis of external ascriptions and this has a major impact on their social and political reality.

Black

The term Black is a self-designation used by people of African and Afro-diasporic origin, Black people and People of Colour (>**BIPoC**). They all have in common the shared experience of racist >**discrimination**. The term asserts the existence of a >**white**-dominated social order that denies Black people access to privileges and thus upholds a discriminatory status quo. The capitalisation of the word Black points up the fact that it does not denote skin colour but rather a social and political construct. For this reason, the term is never used on its own but is always combined with a noun (Black people etc.).

Cis

The adjective cis denotes people (e.g. cis woman or cis man) who identify with the >**gender** assigned to them at birth (in distinction to >**trans** people). Thus someone who was registered at birth as being male, is perceived as a man and also sees themself as such is cis.

Colonial Legacy

The colonial period denotes the era between the 16th century and the end of World War II when European nations expanded their power and territory by occupying other countries. This expansion of political power went hand in hand with subjugation of the resident population and exploitation of their labour and natural resources. The systematic deportation, enslavement and murder that ensued was legitimised on the back of racist ideologies that categorised people according to a >**racialised** hierarchy based on physiological characteristics such as skin colour and bone structure: This was used to construct a system of >**white** superiority. As a supposedly objective representational medium, photography was employed to scientifically measure the different human 'types' and to affirm the power relations that had been constructed. This gave rise to exoticising, racist ascriptions that then circulated in the form of photo albums and postcards. The colonial power construct continues to exert an influence today: it is upheld by structural mechanisms of >**discrimination** and everyday expressions of racism. >**Norms** also operate at the level of representation, emanating from a dominant *white* gaze that reproduces racist >**stereotypes, clichés and prejudices** and continues processes of >**othering**.



Cross-Dressing

Cross-dressing constitutes the wearing of clothing that is usually associated with a different gender. Although instances of cross-dressing are found in Greek, Norse and Hindu mythology, it is a practice that was long forbidden in many Western cultures and, in some cases, still is today. Cross-dressers make evident the close relationship between the production and reproduction of social classification systems and confront us with the >**norms** of gender-specific images: if there were no restrictions governing what a person can wear, there would be no cross-dressing. Drag is an artistic expression of cross-dressing.

Discrimination

Discriminating against a person means acting and speaking in ways that exclude, demean, disadvantage, oppress or otherwise harm them – motivated either by one's own personal attitude (>**Norms**, >**Stereotypes, Clichés and Prejudices**) or by established structural and institutional discriminatory mechanisms. Structural discrimination is the unequal treatment of social groups systematically practised by a more privileged segment of society. People may also experience discrimination on several levels at the same time (>**Intersectionality**) because of particular characteristics they have (e.g. their body, origins or religion) that are regarded as deviations from the norm and viewed in a negative light. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights saw a number of countries, including Switzerland, recognise the right of all people to equal treatment. However, people around the world continue to experience discrimination: its causes include sexism, hostility to the >**LGBTQIA+** community, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, ableism (discrimination against people with disabilities) and different forms of racism.

Empowerment

Empowerment refers to a process whereby people and groups who have been marginalised or discriminated against take action in pursuit of their own aims (e.g. in the form of activism or civil disobedience). This gives them the power to oppose, in various ways, the >**discrimination** they have experienced. The kind of action involved here may include a change of self-image, the assertion of personal interests, a shift in power relations, self-determination or emancipation. Historically, the term can be traced back to anti-colonial and anti-racist movements and today also extends to groups campaigning for the implementation of human rights from a feminist, >**queer** and inclusive perspective.

Femme / Butch

Femme and butch describe an identity or a presentation of non-heteronormative, >**queer** femininity and masculinity respectively. Although the terms have frequently been associated, particularly in the past, with queer and lesbian women, this does not mean that people who refer to themselves as femme or butch identify as women. In today's queer community the terms are applied in different contexts. They are used, for example, to describe a markedly binary >**gender expression**, independently of >**gender identity**.

Gender

There is a distinction to be made between biological and social gender. The former is predicated on a biological understanding of people as either 'female' or 'male' based on physical and physiological characteristics – it is generally assigned at birth. The latter refers



to people's socially constructed roles, behaviours, forms of expression and identities. It affects the way a person sees themselves and others, influencing how they act and interact. >**Queer** (>**non-binary**) theory poses a particular challenge to the binary understanding of biological and social gender. Knowing and feeling a personal sense of gender affiliation is called **gender identity**, something that is not always visible from the outside. **Gender expression** refers to the way a person represents their gender to the world, or presents themselves in terms of their clothing, hairstyle, gestures and social behaviour. A person's gender identity is often falsely extrapolated from this: their expression and identity may be congruent, although this is not necessarily the case – moreover, gender is not static, but rather mutable. **Gender norms** also change over time: these are the social and cultural attitudes and expectations about what behaviours, preferences, products, professions and knowledge are appropriate for women, men and differently gendered people.

Heteronormativity/Heteronormative

Heteronormativity denotes a world view and a social value system that restricts normality to just two genders (male and female) and to heterosexual relationships (between a man and a woman). This is tied up with social expectations about how people should behave as men and women and how they should live with one another. Anyone who does not fit into this binary order because of their >**gender identity** and/or sexuality is perceived and labelled as 'different' and 'abnormal' (>**Othering**). When people fail to comply with the social expectations of the heteronormative (majority) society, it responds with a variety of social and legal sanctions (>**Discrimination**).

Intersectionality/Intersectional

The manifestations of social power relations and inequalities can be grouped for the purposes of analysis in four major categories: >**race**, class, >**gender** and disability. All these categories are historically, socially and culturally constructed. This understanding has given rise to the concept of 'intersectionality', a term indicating that people may be discriminated against on the basis of a number of different characteristics. These intersections generate specific forms of >**discrimination**, the effects of which need to be examined in terms of their interaction, i.e. intersectionally.

LGBTQIA+

This acronym stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, >**Trans**, >**Queer**, Intersex and Asexual. The plus sign (+) denotes other forms of >**gender identity** and sexual orientation that are not listed above but are included in the idea informing it.

Non-binary

Non-binary people locate their >**gender identity** outside of a two-gender norm. This norm stems from a binary understanding of gender that only knows of and recognises two categories – male and female – which are supposed opposites.

Norms

Norms are (unwritten) social rules or imperatives that influence people's day-to-day behaviour and expectations. They are a reflection of the dominant values of one part of society and are often tied in with identity traits and role definitions. Because norms are socially constructed, they change over time. The social sanctions (e.g. shame, punishment)



associated with not following norms cause them to become internalised, both consciously and unconsciously. What is 'normal' or otherwise – and who is involved in determining this – is not simply a 'natural' given but is always connected with the dynamics of power. Norms range from the way people greet each other to personal questions about one's way of life and what is regarded as criminal under the law. Gender norms prescribe, for example, how people should typically behave on the basis of their **>gender identity** or sexual orientation.

Othering

Othering involves a privileged group excluding a specific set of people on the basis of their perceived 'otherness'. This otherness is viewed as negative because it deviates from the privileged group's self-defined **>norms**. Historically speaking, people of the Global South in particular have been consciously categorised as 'other' by *white* people of the Global North in order to point up (supposed) differences or indeed create them in the first place. The process of othering takes place in the context of a power gradient, whereby a person's own culture or behaviour is presented as superior to another culture or way of behaving, which is characterised as alien and inferior. Debasing the 'other' helps create a positive self-image, while biased ascriptions lead to discriminatory **>stereotypes, clichés and prejudices**. Besides dealing in racist ascriptions, these mechanisms also have a bearing on people's sexual orientation and **>gender identity**, affecting the way those with fluid sexuality or a **>non-binary** gender presentation are treated or shaping attitudes towards disability and religion.

Passing

The term is primarily used within the **>trans** community in relation to **>gender identity** and **>gender expression**. Passing means not being seen as trans in everyday life, but rather 'passing' as **>cis**. However, this does not necessarily have anything to do with personal preference. It may also be a necessity for someone who feels insecure about being 'read' as trans, or where being seen as such would be dangerous for them. Because passing is not always an expression of autonomy, the word pairing 'presenting'/'assumed' is often preferred, with the former describing an autonomous expression of gender and the latter referring to assumptions made about a person's gender orientation on the basis of their outward appearance. Passing can also occur in connection with other identity categories – in the context, for example, of class, **>race** or sexual orientation.

Queer

Used as an umbrella term, queer refers to people who do not (choose to) conform to binary, **>heteronormative** realities and concepts and are often excluded as a result. Queer people reject the idea that there are only two **>genders** (female and male) and sexuality and love can only take place between them. Many are opposed to these rigid notions and structures because of the **>discrimination** they experience – which, in many cases, does not just afflict them but has a negative impact on the whole society. Queer people associate themselves with other forms of **>gender identity** (e.g. intersex, **>trans** or **>non-binary**) and/or sexualities (e.g. asexual, homosexual or bisexual). In the past, the term queer was imposed from the outside as a derogatory designation. The queer community has now empowered itself by appropriating the word and turning it into a positive self-description.



Race/Racialisation/Racialised

As is the case with >**gender**, categorisations according to 'race' are based on the idea that there are biological differences between people. However, race is actually a social construct that has been artificially created. The German word for race, *Rasse*, is bound up with the history of anti-Semitism in Germany, while *Rassifizierung* (racialisation) is typically used to describe the construction of 'races'. Both terms relate to the process of separating individuals into groups on the basis of particular external characteristics (skin colour, in particular) and their cultural or ethnic affinities. As viewed by those in a position of power, such a group is then treated as homogeneous and has certain characteristics attributed to it (>**Othring**). These >**stereotypes, clichés and prejudices** provide the basis for racist >**discrimination**. Racism is the product of the personal or social belief that one 'group of people' is superior to another. Racism is not only a matter of individual agency but also operates through institutional structures and social and cultural norms (>**White**). As a medium of representation, photography is also strongly implicated in processes of racialisation (>**Colonial Legacy**).

Representation

In the context of self-presentation, group images and depictions of society and the search for identity, representation primarily covers the depiction, visualisation or imagining of people, objects or circumstances, conveyed, for example, through language or images. Critiques of representation, meanwhile, question what and who is visible, how visible they are – or not (when they are explicitly made invisible) – who recognises images and role models of themselves in media representations and the ways in which (stereotypical) representations are connected with semantics. Representation actively produces constructs of reality and thereby gazes (e.g. the >**white** gaze), which are always an expression of power dynamics.

Self-Presentation

Self-presentation, in this context, implies the communication of an image or idea of oneself. It covers the behaviour and/or actions people use to convey information about themselves to the outside world, e.g. through self-descriptions or displays of physical features or personal qualities, social relationships, possessions, skills, accomplishments, attitudes or interests. This may be a controlled process or take place inadvertently. Self-presentation has a range of different purposes: it can influence one's relationships with others, shape the search for identity or have an effect on one's emotions and sense of self-worth. Modern-day forms of photography and social media offer their own methods of self-presentation (e.g. selfies, filters, hashtags).

Stereotypes, Clichés and Prejudices

Based on norms and clichés (ideas expressing a simplistic viewpoint), stereotypes assign particular characteristics and behaviours to certain groups of people. They are a feature of everyday life and can be found in (social) media and images as well as in sporting or work contexts. They are used to assign people specific roles in society. Even clichés and stereotypes that are ostensibly positive tend to have a negative effect overall, as they shape people's expectations and determine their view of the world, hindering open dealings and social interactions. The moment someone is supposed to do something, present themselves in a particular way or have specific abilities, this is associated with a



certain kind of social pressure and duress, e.g. girls should play with dolls, all French people eat croissants, men don't cry, etc. Prejudices are judgements of people (or groups of people) without any basis in knowledge or supporting facts. >**Norms**, clichés, stereotypes and prejudices frequently lead to >**discrimination** and violence.

Trans

The adjective trans describes people whose >**gender identity** does not coincide with the >**gender** they were assigned at birth. Trans, or transgender, can be seen as an umbrella term covering a whole spectrum of gender identities (e.g. trans woman, trans man, trans person, >**non-binary** person).

Transition

Transition refers to the process of a person adjusting the >**gender** they were assigned at birth to accord with their own >**gender identity**. The term covers various personal, social, medical and/or legal steps. This includes changes to their appearance and/or name as well as treatments like hormone replacement therapy and gender reassignment surgery.

Victorian Era

Taking its name from the reigning monarch Queen Victoria (1837–1901), this is an era in British history that had a decisive influence on the 19th century. The effects of industrialisation and technological progress in the UK led to an economic boom during this period. The growing demand for natural resources and labour led to widespread colonial forays. This was also known as the 'era of imperialism', when the country rose to become a colonial power that ruled the waves (>**Colonial Legacy**). The growth in population went hand in hand with a hardening of the disparities between the aristocracy and the working classes evident in the conditions they lived in. The upper classes had land, owned property and held titles, while working-class families had to struggle for survival, even as the middle class grew in stature. In social terms, this period is associated with prudishness in relation to sexuality, conditioned by a strict idea of binary >**gender**. Women were not permitted to act in accordance with their desires, while men set the tone for (heterosexual) relationships.

White

The term *white* (written lower case and in italics) refers to people who are not affected by racism and thus enjoy the privileges of a social order in which *white* people are dominant. It thus denotes a social position within this order. The prevailing >**norm** is determined on the basis of how things are seen from this perspective: the *white* gaze creates the norm – one that is generally invisible and unquestioned – underpinning a >**racialised** conception of the world, whereby whatever is not *white* is seen as different and alien (>**Othering**). In claiming to offer an objective image of the world, photography became a bedfellow of colonialism (>**Colonial Legacy**) and still perpetuates processes of objectification, neutralisation, ascription and fixation that sustain a racialising and racist philosophy.



Sources:

Arndt, Susan, and Nadja Ofuatey-Alazard (eds.), *Wie Rassismus aus Wörtern spricht: (K)Erben des Kolonialismus im Wissensarchiv deutsche Sprache; Ein kritisches Nachschlagewerk*, Münster: UNRAST, 2011.

Bla.sh Netzwerk, *Sprachmächtig: Glossar gegen Rassismus*
https://www.gendercampus.ch/public/ttgd/Glossar_RACE.pdf

Diversity Arts Culture
<https://diversity-arts-culture.berlin/woerterbuch/>
<https://diversity-arts-culture.berlin/woerterbuch/othering>

Transgender Network Switzerland, *Trans – Eine Informationsbroschüre*
<https://www.tgns.ch/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/TGNS-Infobrosch%C3%BCre-Trans-Web-2020-de.pdf>