

# Glossary

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**Binary:** a category system, central to Western thinking, of ordering things in terms of their opposites, such as, for example, day/night; black/white; male/female; good/bad. In philosophical terms this means that the second term is conceived of as 'that which is not' or 'the Other'. For example, in relation to 'man', 'woman' is 'that which is not man'.

**Constructivism:** an approach within sociology which sees social behaviour as learned and culturally variable, not innate and inbuilt. It is the opposite of 'naturalism'.

**Consumerism:** term used to describe the contemporary phase of capitalism in which the production of goods and services is no longer solely focused on social necessities but is targeted at the wants and desires of individual consumers. It also describes a culture in which high value is put on the acquisition of material goods and which stresses the importance of individual consumer choices.

**Gender:** originally a grammatical term, referring to the categorization of objects as male or female. In this book, defined as 'the varied and complex arrangements between men and women, encompassing the organization of reproduction, the sexual divisions of labour and cultural definitions of femininity and masculinity'.

**Gender mainstreaming:** in academic usage, the incorporation of gender analyses into mainstream academic disciplines. This may substitute for the provision of separate courses on gender or it may supplement them. In political and policy terms, it means taking consideration of gender and equality issues within all policy areas. The related notion of **gender proofing** means considering what impact any new policy will have on gender relations.

**Gendering:** a term used to describe the processes whereby gender differences are created and recreated within particular settings.

**Intersectionality:** a usage initiated by Kimberlé Crenshaw to conceptualize the mutual interaction of different aspects of discrimination and social divisions. It has been particularly used within Black feminism to explore the impact of ethnic difference on gender relations, but can also be extended to cover intersections with age, class, religion, dis/ability and so forth.

**Naturalism:** a doctrine which sees human behaviour as determined by biology. Personality traits are believed 'programmed' or 'hard-wired' into us by genes, hormones and differentiated brain attributes.

**Patriarchy:** literally 'rule of the father'. As used by Max Weber and others, patriarchy referred to a form of social order in which men had authority over all women and older men over younger men. Pre-industrial families were habitually patriarchal. The use of the term was, however, extended by second-wave feminists to refer to the general domination of men over women within the institutions and relations of society.

**Performativity:** term associated with the theoretical framework of Judith Butler indicating the constant iteration of respective acts and behaviours which give the illusion of stability and fixity to social identities, such as 'woman', 'man' or 'heterosexual'.

**Post-colonialism:** literally describes the period after the end of colonialism. It has come to describe a theoretical discourse involving responses to and analysis of the impacts of colonialism and imperialism. Post-colonial theory is particularly associated with literary studies and has links with postmodernism.

**Postmodernism:** A complex and contested term. In a key text, *The Postmodern Condition*, Jean-François Lyotard described postmodernism as ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’. He was referring to an intellectual perspective that emerged as a criticism of the literary and cultural movement that preceded it, modernism, which was perceived as elitist and scornful of popular culture. In contrast, postmodernism took a playful, pluralist stance to art and culture. In social science, postmodernism applies a rejection of all encompassing totalizing theories of society (‘metanarratives’), such as those of Marx and Durkheim. Postmodernists are wary of generalizations and privilege explanation in terms of specific and local phenomena. Society is not seen as structured and orderly but as chaotic and unpredictable.

**Post-structuralism:** this position is closely linked to postmodernism. It arose within linguistics as a critique of the structuralist approach which suggested that a universal structure underlay different linguistic forms. Post-structuralist sociologists are highly influenced by the work of Michel Foucault, the French philosopher and social historian. They reject the idea of a stable core self or subject, arguing that different ‘subject positions’ are produced by discourses and regimes of power. Like postmodernists they reject the idea of patterned regularities (in other words, structures) underlying society, and promote a view of societies as chaotic and fluid, with order imposed on them only by constructed social categories.

**Public patriarchy:** Term coined by Sylvia Walby who argues that in the twentieth century private patriarchy in the family declined but patriarchal domination continued in other social fields, especially at work and within the state.

**Queering:** a strategy of recapturing pejorative terms related to social identities and using them in a positive way. Thus homosexual women and men reclaimed the use of the insult 'queer' and redeployed it as the title for the study of non-heterosexual sexual identities.

**Sexuality:** refers to the capacity to have erotic feelings, experiences and responses in relation to other beings, to express oneself as a sexual being. In the literature on difference and discrimination, it is often used in a more restricted way to describe particular patterns of sexual attraction (to the other sex, same sex, both and so forth). The term **sexual orientation** is a more accurate version of the latter usage.

**Total social organization of labour (TSOL):** approach developed by Miriam Glucksmann based on the proposition that labour relations are shaped by the spheres of reproduction and consumption as well as production and which explores the relations between the three spheres.