

Glossary of Gender Terminology

Compiled by United for a Fair Economy. These are not exhaustive, complete, or universally agreed upon definitions. Language is constantly changing. Visit www.faireconomy.org/gender_terminology to see the most up to date version of this glossary.

Sexism:

- **Feminism:** The belief in and advocacy for equality between women and men across social, political and economic opportunity. While more inclusive branches of feminism such as intersectional feminism exist now, the feminist movement has historically enforced the gender binary and has been exclusive of those who were not upper class, white, cis-women.
- **Gender Equity:** The belief in and advocacy for equality for all genders across social, political and economic opportunity. This differs from feminism in that it does not ascribe to the gender binary.
- **Gender Roles:** The set of roles, activities, expectations, rules, and behaviors assigned to people based on the gender binary system.
- **Misogyny:** The dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.
- **Patriarchy:** An economic, political, cultural and social system of domination of women and people who do not fit into the gender binary that privileges cisgender men.
- **Sexism:** A system of oppression that operates in a gender binary and benefits men over other genders. It assumes that being a cisgender man is superior and more desirable than any other gender.
- **Toxic Masculinity:** Narrow and repressive description of manhood, designating manhood as defined by violence, sex, status and aggression, while supposedly “feminine” traits – which can range from emotional vulnerability to simply not being hypersexual – are the means by which your status as “man” can be taken away. (from The Good Men Project)

Queer/Trans:

- **Assigned Sex at Birth:** How sex (male or female) is assigned in a gender binary system based on physical characteristics, typically genitalia. Other characteristics such as chromosomes, hormones, internal sex organs, and secondary sex characteristics are typically left out of the assignment. This is also sometimes known as biological sex.
- **Cisgender:** Someone whose gender identity aligns with the sex they were assigned at birth as defined by the gender binary system. (ex: If you were assigned female and are a woman).
- **Cis-sexism:** A system of oppression that benefits cisgender people over transgender or gender non-conforming individuals. It also assumes that all people are cisgender and that being cisgender is superior and more desirable.
- **Gender:** The socially constructed external or internal perceptions of one’s gender or lack thereof and how someone chooses to label themselves, or not, based on how much they align, or don’t align with what they understand their options for gender to be. Gender typically is a reflection of either/both stereotypically masculine and feminine traits.
- **Gender Binary System:** The false notion there are only two genders, man or woman, and that they are opposite of each other. Our entire society is structured around the assumption that there are only two genders – men and women – and therefore acts as a system of oppression to those who fall outside of the binary.
- **Gender Identity:** Someone’s experience and personal identification on the spectrum of gender as it relates to being a man, woman, trans, anywhere in the middle, or off the spectrum.
- **Heterosexual:** Someone who is sexually attracted to people of the opposite gender.
- **Heteropatriarchy:** A system of oppression benefiting heterosexual males over anyone who is perceived to be queer and/or not male.
- **Pronouns:** A consciously chosen set of pronouns that allow a person to accurately represent their gender identity and expression that is comfortable for them. Examples may include or are not limited to he, she, they, ze, etc.
- **Queer:** An umbrella term used to refer to people who are not straight and/or not cisgender. Note that all of these identities fall along a spectrum and can change throughout someone’s life.
- **Sexual Orientation:** Someone’s physical and sexual attraction, or any lack thereof, as it relates to other people (regardless of romantic orientation).
- **Transgender:** An umbrella term used to refer to someone whose gender identity does not exclusively align with the sex they were assigned at birth as defined by the gender binary system (ex: if you were assigned female at birth and are a man).
- **Transition:** When someone takes steps to socially or physically feel more aligned with their gender.
- **Transphobia:** The fear or dislike of people who are trans or the fear of being labeled negatively based on an association with people who are trans.
- **Transmisogyny:** The dislike of or hostility towards transgender women; an intersection of transphobia and misogyny.