

Jointly written by Jovita dos Santos Pinto and Emanuel Haab

GLOSSARY

This glossary serves as a guide to visitors of the exhibition 'Resistances: On Dealing with Racism in Bern'. It contains a collection of terms that are used in the exhibition or that informed discussions as the concept was being developed.

The glossary focuses on words that enable to discuss racism, colonialism and discrimination without reproducing offensive language. We have therefore decided to exclude racist terms such as the N-, I- and C-word which feature on the mural. These terms are referenced in the entries on \rightarrow anti-Asian racism. \rightarrow anti-Black racism and \rightarrow anti-Indigenous racism. However, racist ascriptions are sometimes named in order to make them recognisable as such and to problematise them. Trigger warning: Unfortunately, this also goes hand in hand with the reproduction of violent statements.

As language evolves, new words are coined. This can be irritating and challenging at times. But what if new words sparked our curiosity and inspired us to pause and reflect? What if we seized their presence as an opportunity to shift the way we speak to each other? What if we could find a language that made everyone feel included and respected?

This glossary is not a set of rules. Its aim is not to curtail discussions, but to inspire a shared, inclusive language that allows us to engage in conversation with each other about the themes addressed in the exhibition.

The terms chosen reflect the debate in German-speaking countries and the context in which the exhibition took shape. Not all of them can be readily translated into English. By the same token, the glossary may exclude some terms that are integral to debates in anglophone countries. This printed glossary uses abridged versions of most entries. A full-length version (only available in German) can be found online at: histnoire.ch/glossar oder glossar.aboutpower.net.

Jovita dos Santos Pinto is a historian and a scholar of gender studies. She specializes in post_colonialism, critical race studies and Black feminism. Her dissertation focuses on the im/possibility of a local Black historiography. She is the initiator of historire.ch.

Emanuel Haab conducts artistic research into forms of knowledge and power formations at aboutpower.net. He is a TCM therapist and theatre pedagogue and is currently completing a masters in transdisciplinarity at the Zurich University of the Arts. His writing is informed by feminist theory, among other sources, and ranges from cultural analysis to 'cut-ups' to disruptive board games.

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A as in addressing the wider **public.** Who are texts or exhibitions aimed at? An exhibition on racism that focuses on 'being accessible' and 'addressing a wider public' may effectively end up excluding the very groups who experience racism. This occurs when persons framed as white are implicitly privileged because they are considered to be 'the norm' or in the 'majority'. For a country as diverse as Switzerland, this approach is less acceptable than ever. Those who are addressed but do not \rightarrow **come along** will rarely shift points of view.



A as in amnesia, i.e. loss of memory. The European practice of omitting or selectively remembering their colonial history is called colonial amnesia. Collective amnesia is never neutral, but always selective. Violence against particularly vulnerable groups is often at odds with the image that European nations have of themselves, and is therefore often silenced.



A as in anti-Asian racism

is directed against Asian persons or persons perceived as Asian. A broad range of racist ideas about Asian persons have a long history in Europe. The image of the 'indefatigable worker' has been used to justify exploitation. And the long-standing prejudice that Asian people are responsible for the spread of disease gained new traction during the Covid-19 pandemic, exposing members of the group to insults, physical attacks and marginalisation across the globe.

The mural's depiction of a certain figure's skin tone, eyes and clothing offers a \rightarrow racialised and \rightarrow exoticised image of 'Chinese people'. Its \rightarrow stereotypical representation makes the mural racist. The term 'Chinese' is also a \rightarrow self-designation.



A as in anti-Black racism

refers to attitudes and actions against Black persons on the African continent and in the diaspora. The destruction of Black lives and livelihoods through enslavement, overexploitation, forced migration, murder and criminalisation continues to this day. The N-word dehumanises Black persons and marks them out as members of an inferior 'race' and as people at the bottom or even outside of society. It reproduces and normalises the symbolically, materially and socially violent history of Black people.

Maafa (Swahili for 'great suffering') describes the history of enslavement and colonisation as well as other forms of historical and ongoing systematic violence against Black people, such as overexploitation, forced migration, criminalisation and murder.



A as in anti-Indigenous

racism, the term is used to describe discrimination against Indigenous persons (→ Indigeneity). Their → othering as 'noble savages' or as 'being threatened with extinction', but also the projection of a lost connection to nature or their part in adventure stories lead to Indigenous people being perceived as belonging to a different time and reality. Perpetuated over generations, such images trivialise Indigenous people's experience of violence and cement their marginalisation. Forced displacement

and resettlement, genocide, forced adoptions, assimilation, overexploitation and marginalisation have been destroying the lives and livelihoods of Indigenous peoples since the advent of colonialism.

The I-word for Indigenous people from the Americas is an Eurocentric \rightarrow external designation.



A as in anti-Muslim racism

refers to discrimination against people who are perceived as Muslim due to their actual or ascribed affiliation to Islam. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, there has been a considerable increase in anti-Muslim racism worldwide. Islam is constructed as the antithesis of 'Western society' (→ Orientalism). Frequently, stereotypes associated with this form of racism centre on terrorism, violence, anti-Semitism, sexism or homophobia. Women's or LGBTQI+ rights are often instrumentalised to fuel anti-Muslim racism.



A as in anti-racism refers to all efforts to combat structural inequalities caused by racism. Its aim is to achieve self-determination, a dignified life, equality, and freedom for all across all areas of life. Political anti-racism, regards racism as a structure that shapes power relations, not as individual misconduct. This is further underlined by two related terms used in the German speaking context: racial sensitivity and racial critique.



A as in anti-Semitism

describes all forms of hatred, hostile statements and actions, as well as prejudice, directed against (religious and non-religious) Jews or any person perceived as being Jewish. Anti-Semitism may take on direct or indirect, overt or coded forms. These include perpetuating the falsehood that Jewish people are members of a 'secret elite'. Over centuries. Jews in Europe have suffered various forms of violence, persecution and displacement. The Shoah, the genocide of two thirds of Europe's Jews, was predicated on the Nazi regime's state-sponsored anti-Semitism.



B as in BIPoC stands for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (also see → PoC). The term highlights the specific violence, cultural erasure and discrimination experienced by Black and Indigenous peoples. It is used to make visible their particularly → marginalised positions within groups that experience racism. BIPoC is therefore a solidarity-based, historical and context-specific term for people who are → racialised as non-white and experience racism as a result.



B as in Black is a political self-designation that names a position of social → marginalisation due to racism, as well as the resistance against dehumanising practices, violence and exclusion. It is not used to describe a person's skin colour. To underline this meaning, Black is often capitalised.



C as in colonialism. Colonisation refers to the violent subjugation, appropriation and accumulation, enslavement and exploitation of land,

resources and peoples. The European policy of conquering the world (since the 16th century) is called colonialism.



C as in colourism creates a hierarchy of skin tones among racialised people. Darker skin tones are considered unfavourable, while light skin is seen as being more desirable, more highly valued and linked to higher social rewards. Colourism is part of a racist body politics in which an idealised, invented but enforced norm of the white body serves as the standard. Deviations from e.g. 'white facial features' or 'white hair textures' are similarly devalued. Colourism can be observed between and within racialised groups and is also part of the ideology of \rightarrow *white* supremacy.



C as in coming along. The task of a text or an exhibition is to broaden our horizons, to open up new perspectives. In order to take in something in from a new perspective, you have to come along, shift position and formulate your own questions. Hence, C as in coming along. Because → addressing the wider public alone will not take us any further.



C as in controlling images are debasing representations of social groups created in a specific political, economic and social context by the dominant society. They portray inequalities as a natural, normal and inevitable part of everyday life, thus legitimising unequal power relations. Controlling images continue to have an effect, even when the context in which they originated may evolve.



C as in culture(s) of remembrance describes the conscious remembrance of historical events, figures and processes. This can be cultivated by individuals, but also by social groups, institutions or nations. Cultures of remembrance are diverse and contested, and may be rooted in diverging historical experiences and power relations within society. A 'multidirectional politics of remembrance' acknowledges these differences and explores the relationships between different cultures of remembrance.



D as in decolonising describes struggles for freedom from colonial power relations. Decolonisation refers to the formal process of attaining political self-determination vis-à-vis former colonial metropoles and the founding of independent states. As an action, to decolonise is to examine the continuing effects of colonial power relations and how they can be overcome. Decolonisation promotes redistribution and → reparations for those who continue to suffer from these power relations.



D for distancing behaviour.

Analyses of racism expose a variety of defence and distancing mechanisms. Their common denominator is that they enable individuals to bypass critical examinations of racism and uphold an innocent self-image. Common distancing behaviours include spatial or temporal externalisation (e.g. 'Racism is a problem in the United States', 'Things were much worse back when ...'), privatisation (racism is trivialised by pinning the blame on individual behaviour or the harmed person's hypersensitivity)

or culturalisation (when the effects of racism are interpreted as cultural differences).



E as in empathy. Being receptive to the thoughts, motives and emotions of another person can be a crucial first step to addressing racism. However, empathy can neither be the basis for nor the aim of anti-racist struggles. Overcoming racism requires structural, legal and institutional changes that go beyond the awareness raised through individual encounters.



E as in Eurocentrism defines European or 'Western' living conditions, culture and history as a global yardstick. European imperialism and colonialism have made a Eurocentric view the norm. Europeanness is seen as a neutral or universal characteristic, while everything else is considered a 'culturally specific' deviation. This distinction casts Europe in a progressive role and makes what is not 'Western' or 'European' seem as backward or inferior.



E as in exoticisation describes ascriptions that construct the 'foreign' as attractive, positive, exciting, pleasurable or desirable. Exoticisation and racism are two complementary aspects of → othering. While racism debases the 'other', exoticisation projects one's own desires onto the 'other' and thus contains an element of violence.

Often, exoticisation is linked to eroticisation, for instance of non-white bodies, 'exotic' fruits or tourist destinations. The term used to describe this conflation is s/exoticisation.



F as in fundus (figuratively, from the German "Theater Fundus") is the repertoire of knowledge, images and objects that a society can access to produce classifications and explanations. Individual elements of such a fundus are recognised throughout society. The Fundus shapes perceptions of the new and the range of statements that can be made about them. Additions and removals from the fundus have a world-building power and are subject to political

negotiation. Thus, not all experiences leave traces in the fundus (see \rightarrow gap). \rightarrow Museums have a privileged influence on the cultivation of the fundus.



G as in Gadjé racism (or, more controversially, anti-Ziganism) refers to racism against Romani, Sinti and Yenish people as well as persons who are perceived as being members of these groups. For centuries, they have suffered persecution, expulsion, assimilation, disenfranchisement and violence in Europe. The Porajmos ('great devouring') committed by the Nazi regime was only recognised as a genocide in 2015. The Swiss Fremdenpolizei was set up, among other things, to pursue itinerant people. Until 1972, the public-private foundation Pro Juventute handled 600 cases in which children were forcibly removed from their itinerant families.



G as in gap / S as in silence / B as in blank. History is never objective or neutral. It is usually the victors of social conflicts who determine which story is told. Archives GLOSSARY GLOSSARY

and collections are also a reflection of such dynamics. The result is a multitude of significant silences, gaps and blanks: Herstories that are not recited, not remembered or, even more radically, lives that are so precarious that they hardly leave an imprint.

One way of dealing critically with such silences, gaps and blanks is to make them visible. Instead of offering up a closed counter-narrative, gaps and fissures are woven into their fabric, ideally creating a space that makes imaginable the lives and positions of the undocumented and oppressed.



I as in Indigeneity (Latin

indigenus, from this place). A generic term used to identify vastly different groups worldwide which use different → self-designations and who inhabited their respective territories prior to European → colonisation. Indigeneity refers to ways of living and knowing whose connection with the land as a source of culture, society and history differs from mainstream views. Indigenous struggles are often about reclaiming sovereignty over

their own space (territories) and over specific ways of living and knowing (such as languages).



I as in intersectionality

describes how social forms of inequality (e.g. based on gender, \rightarrow racialisation, class, disability, age, sexual orientation) intersect with each other, giving rise to individual, specific forms of discrimination that cannot be understood if each one is looked at in isolation. Intersectionality also takes into account the diverse power relations between dominant and oppressed social positions.



L as in listening. → Marginalised people speak. The problem is: they

people speak. The problem is: they are not being heard. While Western democracies widely promote the act of speaking, the act of listening has traditionally received less attention. The question of who or what is heard and in which ways is contingent on a person's position in the web of societal power relations. A racist \rightarrow fundus can make us unrespon-

sive to messages that may undermine established truths. The act of listening is not only a matter of hearing, but also of interpretation and understanding. It involves the ability to register and interpret not only words and sentences, but also nuances, silences, things left unsaid.



M as in marginalisation means to push to the margins (of society).



M as migratory foreground/ migratory background/ migratory underground.

Migratory foreground is a newly coined German term for a self-confident → post-migrant Switzerland in which multiple identities and diversity in everyday life have become the norm. In a similar vein, migratory underground describes this self-confidence as a kind of avant-garde counter-culture to dominant society. Both terms ironically reference the term migratory background (Migrationshintergrund), which has become increasingly stigmatising through its

use in media discourse and state-imposed integration measures. All three terms point to ongoing discrimination and the transnational lifeworlds of so-called *Second@s* (a swiss german self-designation for second generation migrants).



M as in moral panic describes a social and media phenomenon in which the stigmatisation of a certain type of behaviour serves as an outlet or scapegoat for real social crises. Certain types of behaviour are emotionalised, scandalised. exaggerated, and framed as a corrosive threat to society, as something radically new and harmful that needs to be eliminated with the aid of state measures. Those rejecting such responses or measures are assumed to be on the side of the enemy. Frequently, this results in increased surveillance of an often already \rightarrow marginalised group.

Examples include debates about hijabs and minarets, or 'genderism', 'wokeism' and, at times, 'cultural appropriation' and 'cancel culture'.



M as in museum. Museums are historically linked to the emergence of nation states and thus directly implicated in colonial practices. Through collecting 'national treasures', museums aimed to 'educate' citizens. Non-European collections in particular often owe their existence to colonial looting and theft. The origin of such collections, the methods used to index and describe their objects, and the modes used to exhibit and display them have therefore become the subject of → decolonial critique and practices.



O as in Orientalism is a specific form of colonial → othering. It describes the construction of the 'Orient' as a counter-image of the 'West', a reflection of everything the West does not want to be. Specific images of the Orient have evolved in tandem with the image the 'West' has cultivated of itself. Orientalism as knowledge about the Orient was a powerful lever of domination: it justified colonial subjugation and exploitation as well as military interventions in a vast, culturally diverse geographical area. To this day,

Switzerland's immigration policy and discourses on terrorism and security remain shaped by Orientalism (→ anti-Muslim racism).



O as in othering occurs when a group establishes a distinction between itself and a group of 'others' and subsequently distances itself from those 'othered' as strange(rs). This distinction always entails a hierarchy. The term 'colonial othering' is used in post-colonial research to describe the → Eurocentric practice of representing a colonial 'other' as inferior and backward. To this day, the way many European societies see themselves has been influenced by colonial othering.



P as in PoC (Person/People of Colour). In various enslavement societies, the term Person of Colour (or *Personne de Couleur*) referred to freed or non-enslaved Black people. Its meaning was redefined by the American civil rights movement. Since then, PoC has been adopted as an expression of solidarity as well as a historically contextualised and

context-specific \rightarrow **self-designation** by persons who are \rightarrow **racialised** as non-*white*. Not all people affected by racism identify as PoC (see \rightarrow **BIPoC**).



P as in post-colonialism. As an approach, post-colonialism describes the global social, economic, cultural and political upheavals in the wake of European imperialism. Post-colonialism examines the colonial repercussions and continuities that shape culture, science, business, politics and everyday life. The prefix 'post' does not point to a time after colonialism. but to a present that globally remains marred by ongoing colonial ties even in places where colonialism has officially ended or supposedly never existed. Post-colonialism implies the emancipatory aim to overcome these continuities.



P as in post-migrant refers to a society in which migration has long taken place, continues to take place and irrevocably shapes society's structural make-up. Post-migrant approaches push for broad acknowledgement of this situation, combat \rightarrow xenoracism, political exclusion and the social and economic \rightarrow marginalisation of people who identify as members of the \rightarrow migratory underground.



R as in racialisation refers to the construction of groups of people that share supposed or actual cultural or physical characteristics. Relationships between groups are determined hierarchically based on their 'race'. The term racialisation makes visible the social constructedness of these groups. As a participle, 'racialised' also refers to people who are disadvantaged by racism (\rightarrow BIPoC), as opposed to \rightarrow whiteness as an unmarked norm.



R as in racism describes a form of domination that places groups of people in a hierarchical relationship to one another on the basis of actual or perceived physical or cultural characteristics. Racism discriminates and → marginalises people. They are subjected to racist violence and terror, including being killed. Racism

exists in various forms that may intersect. Gender, sexuality, class and other forms of social inequality impact experiences of racism (see \rightarrow intersectionality).



R as in reparations/restitution/redress. Reparations are compensations made by perpetrators to harmed parties of serious human rights violations or crimes against humanity. Restitution is the act of returning cultural objects and human remains that have been looted and forcibly removed. In post-colonial approaches, restitution is a tool for acknowledging historical and ongoing forms of violence and structural inequality, pushing for redistribution and a reshaping of global relations. Redress for harmed parties builds on a critique of the concept of reparation, as the victims of enslavement and colonialism never received effective reparations. Redress, by contrast, refers to remedies that are being enacted under current conditions and are often self-organised. Although these processes cannot dismantle present structures, they point to possible alternative futures in which the violence has been overcome.



R as in resetting the debate.

The debate on racism has stalled. At any point, it is possible for someone (usually a person who has not been harmed by racism) to proclaim in public, 'In my experience, Switzerland isn't racist at all', as if it were a matter of opinion and as if everyone's experience of racism were the same. In other debates, that person might be made aware that they are not up-to-date. But when it comes to racism, such disruptive statements are seized as an opportunity to move the debate back to square one by raising questions such as, 'Is racism really an issue in Switzerland?' This is what we call resetting the debate. Cp. \rightarrow amnesia \rightarrow distancing behaviour.



R as in resistance against

→ racism/→ colonialism may be
directed against specific situations,
against people in power or against
entire forms of domination. Expressions of resistance can be found
in everyday actions, e.g. sabotage,
in individual actions like people's
decision to flee their home, or in
assassination attempts targeting
those in power. At the collective level,
resistance can take on a variety of

forms too, including strikes, uprisings and liberation wars. Historically, systems perpetuating inequality always have provoked resistance.



S as in self-designation refers

to designations chosen by \rightarrow marginalised groups to identify themselves. Autonyms create a positive sense of belonging in marginalised groups and open up a space to practise resistance against this marginalisation. External designation, by contrast, are imposed on a social group and may convey certain attributes that reproduce \rightarrow controlling images or are derogatory, dehumanising or \rightarrow exoticising.



S as in stereotyping, see \rightarrow controlling images.



T as in tokenism is a practice used by groups, companies or institutions to portray themselves as emancipated or diverse by hiring one or a limited number of people from underrepresented groups. Their

presence increases the institution's symbolic capital but they remain interchangeable and often cannot expect to be treated in a manner sensitive to racism or discrimination. Tokenism is a type of visibility that conceals power differences. It stalls structural inclusion and efforts to address actual inequality.



T as in translating politically sensitive terminology. Some words may seem to have a literal translation but take on a diverging meaning in another social context. Translation is not about conveying words but units of meaning from one language to another. For instance, the writer James Baldwin uses the word N-word (ending in o) in his texts. This reflects its use in the United States both as an external- and a \rightarrow self-designation well into the 1970's. German words with the same historical roots do not share this ambiguity. Today, the generally accepted German translation is Schwarz (Black).



W as in white fragility

describes the emotional responses (such as anger, guilt, crying) of white

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people to being confronted with racism. White fragility shifts the focus to the white person and makes it more difficult for people affected by racism to talk about their own experiences. Such behaviour helps to maintain \rightarrow whiteness.



W as in whiteness/ white supremacy. Being white means not being harmed. marginalised or discriminated against due to racism. Whiteness is not about skin tone. It is about making visible privileged access to power. According to this approach, white supremacy is a political system in which whiteness marks the social. cultural and political norm. 'Methodological whiteness' describes a way of thinking that denies that \rightarrow racialisation structures the world and shapes the construction and legitimisation of knowledge. In German texts, white is often set in italics in order to underline that it does not designate a person's skin tone, but a social phenomenon.



W as in world view. Every individual constructs their own world view, but in the process they draw on a cultural → fundus of existing interpretations, explanations and images of the world. When children use an illustrated alphabet to learn their ABCs, they memorise not only the alphabet but also the associated (racist or colonial) words, images and contextualisations through which the world is presented to them.



X as in xenoracism refers to a form of racism against people who are perceived as 'foreigners' or as non-Swiss. The political catchphrase frequently encountered in this context is Überfremdung (overforeignisation). The term emerged in Switzerland in the early 20th century and suggests that a country is being 'swamped' by foreigners who are gradually displacing local culture. From the 1970s onwards. this discourse gave rise to numerous initiatives to combat 'overforeignisation'. Xenoracism continues to dominate the discourse on people who have migrated to Switzerland

(→ migratory foreground) as well as on Swiss naturalisation, integration, immigration and asylum policy.

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