

Review of Wikipedia entry "gender roles" (15.03.2015)

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The Wikipedia entry "gender roles" provides an introduction to the categories "gender roles" and "gender stereotypes"; to theories around the emergence and reproduction of gender differences; to the diversity in gender ideologies across cultures; to how gender influences communication and becomes constructed through communication; as well as some background on the history of feminism.

The information provided is usually correct; I have discovered no faulty information. Much of the information, though, is not very relevant, presented with redundancies and without a logical structure. Several topics repeat themselves across the different subchapters, so that it becomes overly lengthy. There could be more cross-references to related Wikipedia entries, to reduce redundancies across the gender-related Wikipedia entries and to improve quality. The article has a heavy focus on gender roles in the North, mainly the US and Europe, but this is mostly not made explicit that it is written from a Northern perspective.

The category of "gender role" is narrow and focuses on the micro-scale of interactions, and relates to an outdated sociological theory, namely role theory. The notion of "gender role" is then not generally used anymore in contemporary gender studies. The article overemphasises values, attitudes, practices and stereotypes around gender and it lacks attention to structures like power relations, hierarchy, and economic inequality which shape and are shaped by gender roles. I suggest to change the Wikipedia entry to "gender relations", which is a broader category and can include macro-, meso- and micro-aspects of gender relations. In addition, the article should be expanded with a subchapter on economic inequality, and look systematically at the question of distribution of care work, unpaid work, gender pay gap, gender & development (with extensive cross-referencing to existing entries).

With regards empirical examples the article makes overly extensive use of references from psychology and quantitative studies, although "gender role" is a sociological category. The terminology (e.g. "feminine traits") is at some points reminiscent of essentialism. Anthropological and sociological theories and research results should be included more thoroughly. Some of the psychological studies are documented overly detailed and in a descriptive way, without providing explanations for gendered differences. The text then runs the risk of reproducing gender stereotypes instead of explaining them.

In the introductory section, the notions of "gender" (as the socially constructed) and "sex" (as the supposedly biological) should be defined. The debate on whether gender results from sex (and therefore biology) or whether gender (and even sex) is socially and culturally constructed repeats itself in several subchapters. I suggest to unite chapter (1) and (2) in a new chapter (1) titled "Biology or culture?". The introduction of this new chapter would then introduce the debate historically, including the evolutionist theories of the 19th century (now under "anthropology and evolution"), then the waves of feminism (adding Simone de Beauvoir etc.), adding emerging research on masculinity. In the historical overview on feminism, critiques uttered by Third World feminists should be added. Cross-reference to the Wikipedia entry "feminism" should be made in order to avoid providing rather superficial, partial overviews over the history of feminism.

Then a subchapter could introduce the theories of social construction. Here Irving Goffman and Judith Butler should be added each as a subchapter. The chapter "sozialization" should contain a cross-reference to the already existing Wikipedia entry, the definition should be copied from there. Anthropological studies on socialization and gender could be added, for example Margaret Mead. Also psychoanalytical theories like from Nancy Chodorow could be added.

Focusing on bit of information on the representation of women and normative statements on women in religious texts, the chapter on religion is overly short and not concise. I suggest that the text is deleted and replaced by cross-references (to "gender roles in Islam" etc).

I suggest to create a new chapter with the title "gender relations and the popular media" where the subchapters on "gender stereotypes in Disney films" plus "impact of feminism on gender roles" get united (paragraph on pornography, soap operas).

Suggestions for further literature

Theories on gender

Goffman 1977: The arrangement between the sexes (<http://doctoradosociales.com.ar/wp-content/uploads/Goffman-The-Arrangement-between-the-sexes.pdf>)

Butler, Judith, e.g. Gender Trouble

Moore, H. L. (1994). "Understanding sex and gender ". 783-312 in: Ingold , T. Companion *Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. London etc., Routledge

Anthropological literature on sozialisatation in different cultures

Visweswaran, K. (1997). "Histories of Feminist Ethnography." *Annual Review of Anthropology* **26**: 591-621.

Mead, M. (1928). *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western civilisation*. New York, William Morrow & Company. (nur Einleitung und Schluss)

Masculinity research

Kimmel, M., J. Hearn, et al., Eds. (2005). *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities*. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

Gutmann, M. C. (1997). "Trafficking in Men: The Anthropology of Masculinity." *Annual Review of Anthropology* **26**: 385-409.

Literature on care, economic relations

Mills, M. B. (2003). "Gender and Inequality in the Global Labor Force." *Annual Review of Anthropology* **32**(1): 41-62.

Encarnación, Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2010): *Migration, Domestic Work and Affect: A Decolonial Approach on Value and the Feminization of Labor*. New York, Routledge.

Koczberski, G. (1998). "Women in development: a critical analysis." *Third World Quarterly* **19**(3): 395-409.

Sexual orientation, third gender

Weeks, Jeffrey (1987): "Questions of identity". In: Caplan, P.: *The cultural construction of sexuality*. London Tavistock Publications. 31-51.

Graham, S. L. and Davies, S. G. *Gender diversity in Indonesia: sexuality, Islam and queer selves*. Abingdon Routledge.

Herdt, G., Ed. (1994). *Third sex, third gender: beyond sexual dimorphism in culture and history*. New York, Zone Books.