Countering Systemic Bias

As Wikipedia developed, it became increasingly apparent that Wikipedia had an immense problem with systemic bias. While the Wikiproject for Countering Systemic Bias dates back to 2004, attention to this problem built momentum in Wikipedia's second decade, resulting in increased efforts to analyze and address these problems. Again, it is worth highlighting these difficulties for a moment since they also are entangled in the editing problems we want to discuss. As is documented in an internal essay on systemic bias, the heart of these problems is the fact that the "average Wikipedian" is not at all representative of the larger populations, even within particular language groups. Not everyone has time, interest, or access to make them capable of editing Wikipedia, so a portion of the bias emerges from a simple selection bias. Although no one explanation should or can account for this bias, the fact that a majority (particularly early in its lifespan) of its editors are white, educated, technically inclined men from developed nations led to certain discernible and statistically visible biases, both in terms of the amount of content and the focus of content. Generally, this bias can be considered in three categories, which, as of 2022, each have their own page outlining these issues: gender bias, racial bias, and geographical bias.

For our purposes, we want to be aware of this bias as we find it in Wikipedia, be aware of our own bias, and help intervene in diplomatic ways to correct current bias and set articles into a more balanced and appropriate direction.

Policy Pages

WikiProject Countering systemic bias

WP:Systemic bias

Issues arising from Systemic Bias or attempts to address them

Geographical Bias

1) **Sometimes an article is written from a particular country's perspective.**

If it's of worldwide relevance or a general concept, then it needs to take a worldwide perspective. However, the process of getting it there can sometimes be messy.

Example: Criminal Justice reform as a good example of needing world wide perspective

- Article created in 2015 for "Criminal justice reform" was ultimately about reform in the US.
- In 2016, this edit appropriately renamed it to "[Criminal justice reform in the United States]()," but simply put a redirect in for "Criminal justice reform" (so anyone finding that article would be redirected to the US one).
- Only in June 2020 did someone come in and create an article for [Criminal Justice Reform]() that was about the topic from a worldwide perspective.

2) Conceptual issues with Worldwide perspective

An article like this needs to take into account a worldwide perspective rather than a largely Christian viewpoint. It also will have to deal with what Sin is conceptually across those different religions and if those concepts even align with one another. An article like this is extremely difficult to get a handle on conceptually and will more than likely need deliberation and consensus on which direction to take the article in amongst the community.

Example: Sin -- ([before]() and [after]()) The lead and table of contents here each present different issues that will affect the article's development. The lead is constructed in a way of placing a

foundation for the huge scope of information presented in the table of contents, but instead only succeeds in creating two topics for a single article to attempt to address.

3) **Problem of articles organized geographically in attempt to**

In a religious context, **sin** is an act of transgression against divine law.[1] Each culture has its own interpretation of what it means to commit a sin.

Contents [hide]

address geographical bias

An article like the Iced Coffee page attempts to take on a worldwide perspective but that causes a larger issue within the article -- the messiness of the table of contents (and "ballooning" of the article overall). It also causes editors to consider whether the worldwide

perspective available in this article does more harm than good, or belongs in this article at all.

Example: Ice Coffee -- (Before + after)

(a) Taking a look at the Talk Page from this example article, we see that the student broached the issue of organizing this article by Worldwide View vs. by recipe differences, which would align the article more with examining Iced coffee itself. The new Table of Contents is still long, but much cleaner and more focused on presenting information about the subject matter.

Contents [hide]

Race and Gender Bias

Example: African american representation in hollywood – (before + after)
Example: Gender in horror films – (before + after)

1) **Content missing**
    a) Possibly because it's not considering important or it just hasn't been added
    b) Tension in standards of notability

2) **Perspective is skewed**

Example: Friends with benefits relationships (before + after)

Within this article, there is a lot of focus on the connotation of a FWB relationship for each gender. While some of the information is OR and others seem to have decent sources, this is not necessary info for this Wiki article and changes the reader's perspective upon reading.

- "Men tend to view FWB relationships as casual, while women tend to view them as friendships."
- "Men are also more likely…"
- "...this is in contrast to casual sexual encounters which are more prevalent among men."
- See also the "Third Wave Feminism" section. It is out of place in the article and does not follow the intent of the page.