

Braving Citational Justice in Human-Computer Interaction

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ABSTRACT

Citations are central to the production and sharing of knowledge, and how, why, and where citations are used has been an intense subject of study across disciplines. We discuss citational practices and the politics of knowledge production within the field of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), drawing on parallels from related fields, and reflecting on our own experiences of being cited and not cited, citing and not citing. We also present recommendations for making concrete changes across the individual and the structural in HCI, related to how citations are viewed, and how the field might advance in solidarity towards greater citational justice.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Human-centered computing** → **Human computer interaction (HCI)**.

KEYWORDS

Citational justice; knowledge production

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1 WHY CITATIONAL JUSTICE

On October 29, 2020, we were invited to talk about citational justice by Katta Spiel, at a public lecture series around critical perspectives on technology¹. The talk was not recorded, but we share a version of it here for those in our community inclined to read and reflect on the role that citations play in their lives, and the roles that their lives play in citations. We aim to engage our readers in a dialogue on the topic of citational justice in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI)—to arrive at a definition, and to create space for a Freirean critical consciousness to emerge around this topic [43]. We hope this takes us, individually and collectively, to a place of greater awareness, purpose, and responsiveness around the issues raised below. We write this piece as scholars of Indian origin conducting research in the Global South, even as we are employed at elite academic institutions within the United States. Our work has been

¹<https://exceptional-norms.at/critical-perspectives/>

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cited generously by many—a privilege we duly recognize. We also relate to and draw upon experiences where cites that would seem important have been absent.

We began to reflect deeply on our own citational practices in November 2019, when an article by Rankin and Thomas in the *Interactions* magazine cited us, calling us out for being on the other side of citational justice, the wrong side. We were missing an important citation [70]². Many justifications came to mind, but in the end we were unarguably responsible for overlooking the work of the authors. Worse, our unwitting oversight reinforced histories of harm enacted against Black women scholars. As we made sense of their article and our responsibility, we came to ask deeper questions: Why do we (as a research community) cite how we cite? Where do we look for knowledge, and what guides that process? Who do we omit to cite and why? Is it fundamentally a question of what we can “get away with”? How is responsibility distributed across individuals and institutions? What power structures play a part, and how? We also questioned how, as researchers, we recognize and value good work, because that is intimately tied with whose work we choose to cite. Also, how do we make our work good, and in doing so, how do we make sense of difference, of work that is seemingly not like ours?

2 BECAUSE PAPERS HAVE POLITICS

We ask these questions because papers have politics, much like technological artifacts [79], and are embedded in a larger politics of knowledge production [25, 33]. Presenting on the impact of *subfield bias* in HCI, Dillahunt describes how certain research topics or ways of knowing tend to be more valued in the field [33]. Causevic et al. have drawn attention to more generally recognized biases around whose work is valued or made possible, highlighting how Black and Indigenous populations, people of color (BIPOC), queer, and Dalit scholars are routinely overlooked in scholarship, online spaces, historical narratives, and cultural institutions [25]. Prior work demonstrates that these biases in who and what we value show up in how works are cited. For example, Chivukula and Gray’s analysis of how Shaowen Bardzell’s work on Feminist HCI [23] has been cited finds that most cites are cursory, and that few works engage with or develop feminist theories [28, 29]. Kou et al.’s study finds that CHI papers on studies in the Global South tend to offer context such as location in titles and text, while studies done in the Global North frequently do not describe context at all [50]—this poses the question of what other disparities are linked, as Jacques

²When writing our piece titled *Intersectional Computing* for *Interactions* [53], we missed a paper by Thomas et al. [76] that had previously used this term. This did not show up in our search for related work, possibly because our piece was submitted just a few weeks after theirs came online, although it was presented at a workshop several months before—based on our analysis of internet records. We have since engaged with the authors on multiple occasions and hope to continue these engagements in the future, especially given our shared commitment to an intersectionally aware HCI.



Thank you for this sketch that you made for advertising our talk, Katta Spiel!

and Sebire, looking at medical literature, find that referencing a specific country in titles correlates with low citation rates [47]. Earhart et al. show that scholarship in the digital humanities over 10 years presents with gender gaps in citation rates, hypothesizing reasons such as a reliance on informal relationships as opposed to databases for citing work, as well as low representation of women in the field [37]. Less systematic searches might also stem from inertia that leads to a focus on recent or well-recognized papers [9].

How work is written about also matters because it can distort or even erase contributions over time. Marshall and colleagues have conducted multiple studies on how HCI papers discuss cited work [61–63]. Looking at exertion games literature specifically, they find that an influential study from child health research is often misrepresented in HCI, with some possible reasons being that HCI researchers rely on second-hand citations from within the field or cherry-pick literature to support preexisting views [61]. Misunderstanding and uncritically engaging with work outside HCI and then relying on these misrepresentations for further citation within HCI can propagate unsubstantiated claims [63], and their analysis of CHI 2016 papers confirms that a very small percentage of papers critically engage with prior work [62]. Such distortion also occurs outside of HCI to begin with. Greenberg has found that biomedical papers that refute a widely believed claim are less cited, and papers can amplify a belief and turn hypotheses into fact through citation [45]. Beck et al. find that HCI researchers do use citations more purposefully as well, for example to affirm personal relationships or build intellectual narratives [24]. When citations are used in these ways, a lack of citation that disproportionately impacts women and people of color [22, 26, 56] is even more troubling and can serve to erase work. In one case, Bailey and Trudy discuss how their involvement in the creation of the term *misogynoir* is constantly erased, or even when they are cited for the term itself, their theory work around it is often erased [22]. Mott and Cockayne aptly describe citations as tools that can reify or resist these patterns of knowledge production we have described [66].

Such biases do have material consequences. Citations are heavily correlated with recognition of work, and feed into awards and tenure, as well as more informal rewards. Latour and Woolgar’s study of currency in knowledge production describes how “the object of ‘purchase’ is the scientist’s ability to produce some sort of information in the future” [57]. Beyond one-off awards, recognition meant that scientists were overall more accepted within their community and received more opportunities. If we view citations as wealth, then the question arises: how is the wealth distributed and to whom?

3 THINKING ABOUT (CITATIONAL) JUSTICE

Distribution of wealth and assets has been a central topic of study in theories of justice that we frequently engage with in HCI and our field of Information and Communication Technologies and Development (ICTD). Rawls, Sen, Nussbaum and others have theorized about just distribution; Rawls’ focus is on material resources [71], while Sen and Nussbaum focus on capabilities and their role in achieving wellbeing [67, 72]. Lötter centers his dimensions of justice around the complexities of what it means “to give everyone their due” [59]. These scholars ask what a just distribution of various types of wealth looks like [67, 71], whose duty it is to ensure justice [59, 67], and how we might know when justice has been achieved [71, 73].

A body of work focuses on epistemic injustice specifically, or the silencing, undervaluing, or misrepresentation of knowers and their knowledge. Spivak describes how colonialism has silenced local knowledges of marginalized communities in the Global South [74], and Collins describes how Black women in the U.S. are denied legitimacy as knowers, for example through controlling stereotypes [30]. Since this scholarship, Fricker has theorized two forms of epistemic injustice [44]. Testimonial injustice entails eroding someone’s capacity as a knower, while hermeneutical injustice entails being unable to make sense of social experiences due to the silencing of marginalized communities’ contributions to collective understandings of social life. Dotson hones in on the relationship between the knower and the audience, describing, for example, testimonial smothering, when the speaker feels they must limit their narrative to what the audience can and is willing to understand [36]. Extending the concept of testimonial injustice, Podmore discusses perspectives from Medina and Luzzi, whose critiques taken together demonstrate that injustice can occur even when due credibility is given [60, 64, 69]. In HCI, Anon Ymous et al. and Erete et al. respectively describe the epistemic injustice done to researchers with disabilities [81] and to Black women [38], through many interactions including writing, reviewing, and conducting research. Epistemic injustice can occur in a range of communication acts, and we focus on citational practices in HCI and how they shape and are shaped by politics of knowledge production.

Thinking of citations as a technology as Mott and Cockayne suggest [66], we join the growing body of work on how HCI research and design can engage with theories of justice. Asad and colleagues [20, 21] ask how the research process can incorporate concepts of justice, while Costanza-Chock [31] and Fox and colleagues [41, 42] consider how we can use justice to approach design and evaluation of technologies and systems. Dombrowski et al. ask how design

can grapple with principles posed by Lötter, such as recognition, reciprocity, enablement, or distribution [35]. It is also important to consider the role of consequences in justice when such harm is done [19]. Retribution assumes that crime should be met with proportional punishment, while restoration asks: who has been harmed, how can their needs be met, and how can those involved put things right? Thinking about justice as distribution leaves room to consider how distribution happens and the social relations that underlie it, our main focus here. Iris Marion Young, a political theorist and socialist feminist, offers a relational perspective on justice that we now turn to [82]³. There are multiple relational theories such as those of Sen, Nussbaum, or Lötter. Young’s perspective in particular was rooted in multiple axes of oppression, and was both broad and defined enough to account for the many but still different processes and relationships that feed into unjust citational practices, such as writing, reviewing, and participation in the community.

4 IRIS MARION YOUNG: OPPRESSION AS A STRUCTURAL CONCEPT

We borrow the words of Rainer Forst describing Young’s take on justice: “Justice is not primarily about evaluating end-states or distributions of goods regardless of how they came about; justice is a relational virtue of the actions, structures, and institutions in which persons stand to each other as social and political subjects, be they structures of the production and distribution of material goods or of the exercise of political power” [40].

The focus for Young is on structures rather than the individual. According to her, social justice does not require the disappearance of differences, but instead, institutions that promote the reproduction of and respect for group differences without *oppression*. She speaks of the shifts in the meaning, the concept of oppression brought about by the new left social movements in the ’60s and ’70s. “In its new use,” Young notes, “oppression designates the disadvantage and injustice some people suffer not because a tyrannical power coerces them, but because of the everyday practices of a well-intentioned liberal society.” She adds that its “causes are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules.” She also stresses that the “conscious actions of many individuals daily contribute to maintaining and reproducing oppression, but those people are usually simply doing their jobs or living their lives, and do not understand themselves as agents of oppression” [82].

This lens of justice seems apt for our scrutiny of citational practices—and indeed there may be others—because there is not necessarily a tyrannical power that coerces us to adopt particular everyday citational practices. Rather, there are unquestioned norms we get accustomed to, which prevent us from viewing ourselves as responsible for oppression. Unpacking “oppression” further, Young says that whether a group is oppressed depends on whether it has been subjected to one or more of five faces of oppression: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence.

We frame citational justice as a response to these faces of oppression and how they manifest in acts of citing and not citing. This allows us to do two things. First, it draws our attention away from assigning blame to individuals, and towards recognizing the structures and practices that we are so deeply and unquestioningly embedded in. At the same time, it does not prevent us from taking responsibility for our actions at a personal level—how we cite and do not cite, and more deeply, whose contributions we draw on or (unconsciously) overlook. We now elaborate on these faces that Young theorizes, and how citational justice emerges as a function of these within the universe of knowledge production.

4.1 Face 1: Exploitation

Young says, “Social rules about what work is, who does what for whom, how work is compensated, and the social process by which the results of work are appropriated operate to enact relations of power and inequality. These relations are produced and reproduced through a systematic process in which the energies of the have-nots are continuously expended to maintain and augment the power, status, and wealth of the haves.” She adds, “The injustices of exploitation cannot be eliminated by redistribution of goods, for as long as institutionalized practices and structural relations remain unaltered, the process of transfer will re-create an unequal distribution of benefits.”

The work we bring to scrutiny here is academic scholarship, and how this work is “compensated” depends also on how it is cited. When citational practices “produce and reproduce” the power dynamics such that the relations between haves and have-nots remains unchanged over long periods of time, a mere redistribution of cites is not enough. We translate these concerns to the following questions: *What differentiates the haves from the have-nots in the processes and practices of knowledge production? How might we train ourselves to better recognize this power, status, and wealth? And how might we begin to reimagine these institutional practices and structural relations?*

4.1.1 The Rich Get Richer. We begin by naming some of the ways in which citational practices have shown up routinely for us, in our capacities as authors and reviewers, because naming is a good place to start. We refrain from giving citable examples because our intent is not to assign blame. Undoubtedly, we are not without our guilt—we have learned how to cite (and not cite) while embedded in existing practices. We take to some hyperbolizing below, to emphasize that it is important to recognize and learn to characterize our biases.

Common enough is the **Cite-Me Cite** that says “Add this cite to my paper and I’ll mark your paper as an accept.” There is the **Name-Agnostic Cite**, where names that are hard to recognize or generally unfamiliar are Othered [48] like so: “Other HCI authors have studied... [x],” while Western names are explicitly listed. Linxen et al. have recently documented the dominance of studies at CHI conducted in Western and/or educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) contexts [58]—the **In-the-Global-South Cite** furthers this alienation, as it simultaneously expands and limits the contribution of a work to the Global South: “This broad concept has also been studied in the Global South [x].” Similar harm is effected by the **Unrelated-to-the-North Cite** that goes a step

³We acknowledge here that our intimate, and unarguably liberating, introduction to Young’s philosophy is owed to Nassim Parvin, and takes root in prior co-authored research [52].

further to say: “Maybe this has been studied extensively in the South but we will skip that literature because its relevance to us is hard to immediately articulate.” Not purely restricted to the Global South, the **Throwaway Cite** shows up quite commonly, as in “HCI has looked at rainbows [2, 5, x, 10, 23, 33, 39, 45, 54, 67, 79, 85, 90]”. This type of practice has been studied by Marshall et al. [62]; it is difficult to tell what the knowledge contribution of the throwaway cite is, even when it is included. And then, there is **No Cite**, a simple omission of related work; whether it is intentional or unintentional, we will never know, though it cannot hurt to remind ourselves here of the fundamental attribution error, regardless [46]. This is by no means an exhaustive breakdown of potentially problematic cites, but some examples to look out for and steer away from in our own citation practice, where there may be more.

The haves here might include, though certainly not always, people with relative privilege. Perhaps these are people relatively senior, co-authoring with recognized researchers, or supported by more elite institutions and thus can afford to be gatekeepers. These are people who are more likely to have their work published even when they do not list some names while listing others. And when we can get our papers accepted for publication without being conscious of the omission of certain works, we are less likely to make an intentional effort to engage with this literature, surely impacting the value of our own scholarship. Such failure to engage might suggest that the costs of our practices on the production of knowledge are not entirely visible to us.

4.2 Face 2: Marginalization

Young presents marginalization, a second face of oppression, as occurring when “[a] whole category of people is expelled from useful participation in social life and thus potentially subjected to severe material deprivation and even extermination”—as scholars on the margins of HCI have been, within the context of HCI knowledge production. She also stresses, “Dependency should not be a reason to be deprived of choice and respect, and much of the oppression many marginals experience would be lessened if a less individualistic model of rights prevailed.” She additionally asserts that marginalization does not entail issues of distributive justice alone, but “also involves the deprivation of cultural, practical, and institutionalized conditions for exercising capacities in a context of recognition and interaction.”

The margins of HCI are many, and much more populated than we think! Every year there are scholars, from underrepresented contexts across the Global South and North, who are unable to afford participation in our most celebrated publication venues. This impacts their ability to learn from and network with others in interactions that could potentially enrich the scholarship of both. Young brings us to ask then: *How might we move a step away from individualistic models of knowledge production? And how might we foster greater solidarity towards the collective good?*

4.2.1 Cycles of Marginalization. We have undoubtedly all noted cycles of marginalization perpetuated in the many worlds we inhabit, where we routinely find the “rich getting richer” and the “poor getting poorer”. Within HCI, these cycles manifest in particular ways, as Wisniewski et al. have brought attention to previously

[80]. We list some examples below; for those that we have evidence, what stops us from taking action to disrupt them? And if we lack sufficient evidence, perhaps that is a place to intervene.

Global inequities prevent participation in conferences that are expensive and far. However, many conferences continue to be held expensively and far. The CHI conference, for example, is yet to be held in a Global South location in its nearly-40 years of existence. Townhalls and panels in recent years—at CHI [55] and CSCW [49], for example—have surfaced concerns around conference attendance and locations, speaking to massive, highly consequential economic inequities that result when students and/or professors from less privileged institutions are repeatedly unable to attend conferences and partake of the networking and other career-essential activities that take place at these venues. Linxen et al. discuss the importance of participation of scholars from across the world and equitable cross-country collaborations, if we are to address the WEIRD-ness of research at CHI [58].

Elite universities contribute publications in large numbers. This is evidenced by how many of the same institutions have had the most publications at CHI since 2015, for example [77]. Understandably, when there are more resources, monetary or otherwise, there are more papers, not least because there is more time to produce these papers and more people employed to produce them. However, this may also feed the bias that papers from elite universities are likely to be more worthy of acceptance (and subsequently citation). This is a phenomenon worth investigating so that such biases may be openly confronted and addressed.

A growing body of research shows that women and BIPOC scholars are in smaller numbers and less cited to begin with in multiple fields, including in STEM. Like Earhart et al.’s work in the digital humanities [37], Larivière et al. analyzed more than 5 million science articles and found that women were cited less than men, including when comparing lead-author papers [56]. Dion et al. show how even with increasing authorship by women in political science journals, the proportion of authors referenced who are women does not increase, complicating the notion that participation addresses citation gaps [34]. Looking at race as a dimension, Chakravartty et al. find that scholars of color are underrepresented in citation rates in communications journals [26]. It is essential to foreground intersectional issues, as reinforced by the struggles around racial injustice being made more visible across the world and especially in the U.S. Erete et al.’s research discusses how the erasure and resulting invisibility of Black women in computing contributes to seeing few of them cited in HCI papers [38]. We note that institutional and other privileges (such as those we both benefit from) also affect the extent of citation gaps.

The lack of diversity in awards committees may perpetuate unconscious biases and inequities in future selection of awardees, given that awards committees are often comprised of prior awardees—this is important to consider as awards amplify a researcher’s visibility. We see limited combined racial and gender diversity in SIGCHI award recipients for the last seven cycles [10–15, 17]. This is plausibly because such awards are typically designed to recognize more senior researchers, at levels where there has not been much diversity to begin with. More focused efforts may be needed to ensure that this changes as our field matures.

Inequities in recognition are exacerbated also when individuals or particular papers are rewarded instead of collective bodies of work. Is it possible then to lessen competition and begin to find solidarity with each other's scholarship, recognizing how much we stand to gain from collaborative processes of knowledge production? How tenure guidelines may be adapted for such a system to be introduced more widely and publicly is worth brainstorming about. Within the system of individual awards, it is also important to think about what is being valued. The CSCW conference, for example, offers recognitions for diversity and inclusion, separate from an official best paper award [32]. While this process recognizes work done on the margins, it also serves as a boundary between the "best" scholarship and scholarship that focuses on diversity and inclusion. The unclear standards behind each of these awards has been noted previously [38]. We also ask why these categories are seen as separate, and what might be the effects of people "getting richer" in different ways.

4.3 Face 3: Powerlessness

Young notes: "Nonprofessionals suffer a form of oppression in addition to exploitation, which I call powerlessness." She adds that "most people in these societies do not regularly participate in making decisions that affect the conditions of their lives and actions, and in this sense, most people lack significant power." Also: "To that extent many people have some power in relation to others, even though they lack the power to decide policies or results... the powerless are situated so that they must take orders and rarely have the right to give them."

Who are the non/less professionals in HCI? What are the assumptions made about these individuals? How do these assumptions come in the way of citational justice? Much of this boils down to representation and inclusivity of cultures. We mentioned subfield bias above [33]. Notions of quality are shaped significantly by the assumptions we make that we could check ourselves on. Some examples are listed below.

4.3.1 Assumptions We Make. These are not assumptions that are articulated quite as we write them below. They are hyperbolized for effect again to convey how several reviews (that we have received and/or read) end up being received, and what they reveal about dominant attitudes towards the knowledge that we produce. These attitudes then shape who and what work we cite.

- "Qualitative work is not generalizable, therefore questionable in quality."
- "Blogs, news reports, etc. are not valid sources of knowledge."
- "This work was not published at CHI or CSCW (or another top venue)."
- "Work done at better known institutions is obviously good."
- "Work that targets social justice/activism is not quality research."
- "Academic writing looks and sounds a certain way."
- "Good papers are written in good English."
- "Work done in the Global South obviously lacks rigor."

Indeed these are biases, and often not biases that we readily recognize in ourselves and others. They determine who gets to make decisions about knowledge production in the HCI community, and

who does not. The validity of qualitative research methods is frequently brought under question even as several scholars such as Sukumar et al. and Fiesler et al. have organized workshops and panels to address related concerns [39, 75]. When research is being conducted in historically under-researched contexts, blogs and news reports can be helpful for corroborating claims, even if they do not count as peer-reviewed research. This could be viewed as more of a reason to accept a work under review, not less. Rankings for venues and institutions are widely available and widely recognized; such valuing practices also understandably find their way into peer review that is not totally mutually anonymous in practice. Erete et al. call for certain reviewing practices to be addressed, such as asking for more background only from research with marginalized populations, or Othering research on topics that are "too political" [38]. Researchers not fluent in English find themselves repeatedly disadvantaged, and the recent community-sourced document titled *An Unofficial Guide to Seven Stages of Reviewing for CHI* has much to say about reviewing papers where authors might not have English as their first language [16]. We turn next to uncover who we Other or alienate.

4.4 Face 4: Cultural Imperialism

According to Young, "To experience cultural imperialism means to experience how the dominant meanings of a society render the particular perspective of one's group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one's group and mark it out as the Other." Further, "often without noticing they do so, the dominant groups project their own experience as representative of humanity as such. [...] Since only the dominant group's cultural expressions receive wide dissemination, their cultural expressions become the normal, or the universal, and therefore the unremarkable." And, "while the subject desires recognition as human, capable of activity, full of hope and possibility, she receives from the dominant culture only the judgment that she is different, marked, or inferior."

Who does HCI end up Othering? What are Othering practices in the field? How might these practices come in the way of citational justice?

4.4.1 Othered, then Uncited. Some of these examples below are only mildly exaggerated for effect, to draw attention to how these reviews are read and experienced. They have been tweaked slightly to preserve anonymity, and represent first-hand knowledge. We list these examples not as complaints against our reviewers, but to highlight the biases that underlie various comments received during peer review.

- Work in the Global South must focus on the most marginalized populations (e.g., "Why did the sample not include the poorest communities?")
- Culture contributes novelty only in the South (e.g., "What about India makes this different?")
- Paternalism is okay when directed towards Southern populations (e.g., "Women in the South are more vulnerable")
- Ethical standards are universally applicable (e.g., "Did this study have IRB approval?")
- Work done in the Global South lacks good English (e.g., "This paper is written in surprisingly good English given that the first author is Chinese")

These are some of the ways in which we Other; these generate suspicion around the work, question its authority, and mark it as separate from “us”. No matter whether the intent is real, the experience certainly is. There are many questions that arise once we begin to question the assumptions that lead to these types of Othering. Are the technological interactions of wealthy Indians less compelling to study than those of wealthy Americans? Also, must there be differences between Indians and Americans surfaced for the research to be compelling? Does the evidence for commonalities not advance knowledge? IRB approvals are predominantly a U.S.-academic phenomenon. It suffices to note that each of these objections might be questioned to help reveal (and hopefully correct) biases. When not confronted, they continue to shape our understanding of the work we read, and our willingness to cite it.

4.5 Face 5: Violence

Young says, “While the frequency of physical attack on members of these and other racially or sexually marked groups is very disturbing, I also include in this category less severe incidents of harassment, intimidation, or ridicule simply for the purpose of degrading, humiliating or stigmatizing group members.” She adds, “What makes violence a face of oppression is less the particular acts themselves, though these are often utterly horrible, than the social context surrounding them, which makes them possible and even acceptable.”

Here we pose two questions. *First, how might we encounter violence in the context of citational justice? And second, how might we counter violence towards citational justice?*

4.5.1 (En)Countering Violence. We share some examples here of encountering and countering violence, involving physical harm in one case but also moments of degradation. As Young acknowledges, there are degrees of violence, and we do not claim that citational injustice amounts to the egregiousness of physical violence. Yet, like with the other faces that we discussed, the scope for violence that we consider is the enterprise of knowledge production. Even within this scope, we see quite a range of harms being committed, and it needs to be contended with.

In the first case, we see an example from reviews we have received where a large fraction of our HCI community is casually marginalized: “[Health topic experienced by half our community] is a niche topic. It may be challenging to find participants interested in engaging with this.” Deciding that the needs of this population are too niche to consider, thus taking away a potential venue for advancing related research, is a form of violence in itself, but the fact that this violence is considered possible or acceptable is an even greater problem.

As referenced above, Erete et al. talked about the epistemic violence that Black scholars have historically been at the receiving end of: “Unsurprisingly, a significantly low percentage of CSCW or HCI publications are authored by Black scholars [54, 63]. In essence, the review process, with its ‘objective criteria,’ which is subject to the interpretations of reviewers who tend to support research aims endorsed primarily by White scholars, becomes a site of violence” [38]. Above we discussed some more of the criteria, and underlying biases, that reviewers have been trained to adopt and uphold. Anon Ymous et al. describe how epistemic violence impacts their

lives as disabled researchers, pointing out the dehumanizing ways research and researchers discuss disabled people, or how disabled people’s labor is exploited in the name of testing and research [81]. Epistemic violence is a type of violence and must be recognized as such so that it may be fittingly addressed.

Mott and Cockayne have talked about the longer term consequences of low citation counts, given the systemic biases that persist: “When we acknowledge in the studies highlighted above that women, people of color, queer, and otherwise othered voices are marginalized or disregarded in academic publishing practices [...], it is insulting to assume that another’s work is not profoundly relevant and well-informed simply because their work is not well known, or because they are not highly cited” [66]. This should encourage us to make less of low citation counts; there can be many reasons why these counts are low. These phenomena then impact who is seen as worthy of recognition, and the cycle of marginalization continues.

In an anonymous essay on citational justice issues in a different academic community, we read about the occurrence of physical violence or harassment raising questions about citational practices. We recommend the full article linked below, but here’s an excerpt that talks about how physical violence circled back to citations: “Most of Bond’s audience would have been aware of Harris’ recent retirement in the wake of a harassment lawsuit, and would probably have understood her to be pointing to this as the reason to cite other scholars. [...] she no longer cites influential digital humanist Franco Moretti because of allegations against him” [19]. This example brings up the larger point of how we might take action against those who cause harm to us or to others in an academic community, and how citations might be leveraged towards enacting solidarity with those who have been harmed.

And now coming back to the missing citation that we started out with: “While Kumar and Karasula (sic) did not cite Thomas et al.” [70]. We were advised by some to take an adversarial stance, to “fight back” or at the least offer a counterpoint. But this is also the point where Young’s advocacy for shifting from personal to political responsibility, as we discuss below, comes in. Being women of color, it may have been painful to be held responsible for erasing the scholarship of other women of color. But as women of color, and humans in general, we can also still take responsibility for recognizing our complicity, apologizing, and doing better. And situate ourselves on the same side, and the right side, of citational justice.

5 DOING BETTER

We are certainly not the first to recognize citational injustice(s) and the harm they result in. There have been numerous and significant efforts to improve awareness of diverse knowledges and best citational practices that we now draw attention to. Organizations in computing have aimed to support and build community among scholars from underrepresented groups as steps towards diversifying knowledge production; examples include blackcomputeHER [2], Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and queer affinity groups in AI [1, 6–8], and many others. Database repositories have been created to support awareness of work by scholars on the margins. The initiative citeHER [4] by blackcomputeHER collates information about the published work of Black women in computing. There are similar

efforts within institutions, such as University of Colorado Boulder’s collection of publications and projects by BIPOC alumni [68], and for domains beyond computing, such as Cite Black Authors [3]. It can also be helpful to create new social and professional networks that connect scholars in emerging (and often othered) domains of study. HCI community members have put together workshops, such as HCI Across Borders [51], as well as affinity groups like the Gender, Health, and Wellbeing Collective that we recently formed, or fempower.tech [5]. In addition to the wider shift towards diversifying syllabi and reading lists, zines and blogs have also been friendly formats for teaching improved citational practices. Examples include “How to Cite like a Badass Feminist Tech Scholar of Color” by Amrute and Guzmán (illustrated by Mateescu) [18], or the Citation Practices Challenge organized by Tuck et al. [78] (with an associated blog curated by Cheuk [27]). These materials and published papers discuss how deeper engagement in cites [29, 62], being aware of who is represented in bibliographies [66], or courageously self-citing [18] can generate greater recognition for scholars from marginalized or underrepresented groups. These initiatives lead us to ask what collective efforts towards citational justice might look like in HCI specifically.

6 MOVING FORWARD WITH A CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

More than just a distribution of wealth, we can view citational justice as a matter of relationships. Young’s framework offers us a path. She argues for political responsibility, where we all take to fighting injustice(s) because we recognize that we all participate in processes that produce injustice(s). In taking responsibility, we also move towards developing a critical consciousness of oppression [43] and begin to take collective action against injustice. This requires us all to recognize how we have been complicit in injustice, whether around citations or other facets of knowledge production.

Citations are symptoms that are reflective of biases, as we mentioned above. Fixing citations cannot fix biases, but we can view them as anti-racist, feminist technologies [66]. They could be opportunities to draw attention to the work of women of color scholars [18], and to engage deeply with the work we build on rather than relegating it to a laundry list of references [62].

We can also use citations to demonstrate creative connections and unearth ties to seemingly different work. Identifying commonalities in a sea of differences can be done by drawing on principles of feminist solidarity in the work we connect with. Here we offer our work as an example [54], where we build on postcolonial feminist scholar Mohanty’s work [65] to argue for understanding and connecting on similarities in a way that honors differences; we ask how you might reconsider what is similar and different. Is a work too different to cite if it happens in a different country, or might this be a form of Othering? Is a work too niche if it focuses on a specific population, or can we abstract out lessons learned? We can also review papers and recommend citations more generously and without blame, to encourage others to make connections across differences.

Make no mistake, this is also a call for collective action. We must break the culture of unnecessary silence around citations, which Freire [43] deems crucial for a critical consciousness to emerge.

How might we normalize talking about and improving citational practices towards more responsible knowledge production overall? How might we keep raising greater and lasting awareness around how reviewing is one of the most influential social relations in research? How might we disincentivize reviewing behaviors that are insensitive to the politics of knowledge production? How might we make it safe to call in people about lack of recognition, to visibilize biases, and focus on doing better?

A collective effort to address these questions above can serve as an initial step in helping us and our institutions move forward on the larger journey to more just evaluation of research, awards, and promotions, rethinking our relationship to citation counts and individual recognition. This is especially important in light of subfield bias [33], the cycles of marginalization in knowledge production in the HCI community that we’ve evidenced, and broader calls for addressing epistemic injustices experienced by HCI scholars on the margins [38, 81]. It must not remain the work of scholars already located on the margins to muster enough courage to ask for recognition for their contributions (particularly when those contributions are published in the same venues) or for more just institutions. They must not be the only ones braving citational justice in HCI.

7 AUTHORSHIP

Both authors worked on the content of this talk together throughout. Neha’s focus was on introducing the topic and engaging with Young’s lens (sections 1 and 4), while Naveena worked on the related work sections (2 and 3) and discussing how we might do better (sections 5 and 6). We have both considered carefully the cites in this article, and take joint responsibility for any cites we are missing, and everything else.

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