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# Following the Trail of Citational Justice: Critically Examining Knowledge Production in HCI

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## ABSTRACT

Citations are nodes in the networks of knowledge we create. Portals to conversations with the past and bonding material with the scholarship of the present. Choosing who we cite is a practice signaling who we recognize and respect as a knowledge source. Therefore, we recognize citations as a relational practice. As this relational characteristic of citing is mediated by wealth we distribute across those who we cite, it is imperative to interrogate how just these practices are. We ought to engage with Citational Justice. Building on recent work discussing citational practices within HCI [9], we use the opportunity of this workshop to expand this conversation into deeper reflection on how we cite and the practices and infrastructures surrounding citations. Our goal with this workshop is

two-fold. First, to create common language to collectively reflect, interrogate our own citational practices and reverberations, while fleshing out concrete steps to make these practices just in our work and communities we are part of. Second, to invite participants to re-imagine citational practices and the systems and infrastructures necessary to make such practices feasible. We invite a diverse group of participants from the CSCW community interested in examining their citational practices and the systems surrounding them.

## CCS CONCEPTS

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

## KEYWORDS

citational justice, knowledge production

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\*All authors contributed in diverse, yet vital ways, rendering author order meaningless. We center the collective representing our ideas before listing individuals in alphabetical order by first name. Section 4 details authors' roles.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

"Papers have politics" [9]. Our (the authors) collective exploration leading to this workshop has shown us that citations serve as a proxy to enact such politics. Citations weave the stories of how we choose to construct and reconstruct knowledge as well as who we choose to signal as characters of such knowledge production [2, 4]. They serve as a stage to project certain narratives while leaving others, perpetuating the marginalization of already marginalized communities [3]. For example, Kou et al. note that studies conducted in the Global South offer context details in citations, while studies conducted in the North do not, reinforcing the belief that work in the Global North produces "putatively universal applicable knowledge," but research conducted in contexts of the Global South generate "exotic, highly contextualized knowledge" [8]. Citations have the potential and power to distort beliefs into facts [7], and thereby misleading knowledge communities [10, 11]. We recognize citing as a relational practice and a type of distributive wealth embedded in a larger politics of knowledge production. Therefore, we argue that *citations have politics*.

As researchers, we are not necessarily trained to grapple with the political aspect of citations. We are usually taught that we must build on the contributions that came before ours, to deepen, widen, and strengthen the web of knowledge. However, while the problem of 'Citation Apartheid' has been raised in HCI by researchers in the Global Souths (e.g. [1], we have fewer opportunities to learn about the political impact of our citational practices. In their recent paper, Kumar and Karusala discuss the implications of such limited understanding by reflecting on their experience of missing a critical citation in their work [9]. They argue that unjust citation practices, even when unintended, could lead to epistemic injustice, further perpetuated through writing, reviewing, and conducting research (see also [5, 12]). The authors propose to engage with the notion of Citational Justice (CJ). CJ involves what and who we recognize and respect as a knowledge source. Instead of seeing citations as what we put on the page when we write, it can be seen as the tiny public face of a system that demeans types of knowledge and ways of knowing, endlessly recycling and emphasizing dominant/privileged voices. Kumar and Karusala's work prompted us, as a group, to think about how we can examine and confront the visceral feelings related to respect, recognition, and fairness that are tied up in citation. Specifically, it led us to ask *what does it mean to brave citational justice in HCI and CSCW?*

To explore what a just distribution of citational wealth looks like and how to achieve it, we propose this workshop on *Braving Citational Justice Together*. This workshop aims to bring together researchers across diverse HCI and CSCW domains, such as education, design, health, community, and global development, and from various sociocultural and geographical contexts to collectively reflect on our citational practices while attempting to address critical questions such as: Why do we cite how we cite? Where do we look for knowledge? Can citing more broadly and fairly be a concept for holding someone accountable for their unjust practices? Can it be a prism to look at the impacts of the demeaning dominant academic

culture and a way to understand it better? Can it be enough as a practice for those who cannot or do not wish to engage further, as some small act of justice-making?

The questions we pose in this workshop are ones we have been grappling with, individually and together, for years. The workshop attempts to engage the participants to create and participate in discussions around CJ in order to arrive at a common understanding of the term while making space for a Freirean critical consciousness [6] to emerge and evolve around the topic. This workshop, we believe, could provide an opportunity to raise awareness and responsiveness among the participants and the broader HCI and CSCW community, moving towards citational justice in HCI and CSCW.

## 2 WORKSHOP THEMES, ACTIVITIES, AND GOALS

The workshop will be structured into two sessions. In the **first half**, we will help participants build shared language around CJ and define a common ground to share their perspectives and experiences regarding the dynamics involved in citing. To help orient the participants, we will start with exploring the following questions:

- (1) What is CJ?
- (2) Why is CJ needed?
- (3) What does CJ look or feel like?
- (4) What does CJ lead to?
- (5) Who does CJ affect, when, and to what extent?
- (6) Have you experienced or witnessed any citational injustice? What happened? What might have been a better outcome?

To address these questions, we will conduct the following activities:

- **Introductions:** We will run multiple rounds of speed dating in which groups of participants introduce themselves and share their initial views on CJ and their expectations for the workshop.
- **Sharing Experiences:** Using a virtual board as a collaborative space, we will encourage participants to share their experiences with citational (in)justice, and to—individually first, and then in groups—reflect on the factors and actions that led to their experiences, (un)desirable outcomes, and people impacted. In addition, we will encourage participants to utilize possible techniques for representing experiences, such as storyboards.
- **Collectively Characterizing CJ:** We will ask participants to go through the different experiences shared on the board and form groups to discuss their definition of CJ, guided by questions 1-3. With the support of the shared virtual board, we will ask each group to document their ideas and later share them with the whole group.
- **Exposing the Issues:** To support participants in identifying pressing issues for the CJ community, we will ask them to model their understanding of citational issues, systematically. For that purpose, we will provide participants with examples of ways to model systems and the tensions shaping them. We will encourage reflection on unresolved questions or loose ends to set up future conversations within tracks chosen by attendees for the second half of the workshop.

### Workshop Sessions - Schedule

Time	Activity
9:00 - 9:30	Opening and Introductions
9:30 - 10:30	Sharing Experiences
10:30 - 10:45	Virtual coffee break
10:45 - 11:45	Collectively Defining CJ
11:45 - 12:00	Exposing the Issues
12:00 - 12:45	Tracks: Tackling the Issues
12:45 - 13:00	Group Discussion - Closing Remarks

In the **second half** of the workshop, participants will join one of multiple tracks to go in-depth on a particular aspect of CJ, considering its many facets and potential paths forward. We will suggest an initial set of tracks; however, we will also give attendees an opportunity to propose new tracks and modify existing tracks based on discussions in the first half of the workshop. Each track will be facilitated by organizers and will involve different activities and outcomes. The tracks offered to participants will be:

- **Citing the 99%:** This track will focus on how we to cite knowledge sources that are not archived within elitist media. We will discuss what entities have knowledge (from the human to the non-human) and how we read them. We will also ask how we can raise our awareness about potential harms in the process of knowledge production. This track will envision new citation systems and tools for finding work from scholars beyond the mainstream.
- **A CJ Research Agenda:** This track will focus on research topics around CJ, including: how we might systematically understand the distribution of citations in a field, how researchers cite, and the impacts of CJ. It will also provide an opportunity to map out and share institutional, fiscal, and academic resources to advance research on CJ.
- **The Human and Institutional Infrastructure of CJ:** This track will create a space for knowledge producers in HCI/CSCW to re-imagine knowledge production systems for these fields. In this track, community members coming from diverse forms of knowing and being can discuss how to support each other in navigating institutional power networks and rethinking knowledge production processes, such as reviewing and tenure evaluations.

Afterwards, all groups from different tracks will reconvene for a larger group discussion on critical commitments moving forward. We provide a detailed description of the proposed session's schedule in Table 1.

## 3 WORKSHOP LOGISTICS

### 3.1 Duration of the Workshop, Participants, and Recruitment

We will hold a one-day workshop for a maximum of 25 participants in order to secure meaningful participation. Participants will comprise a diverse group of researchers, designers, and practitioners from a wide variety of disciplines, who are interested in approaching issues of epistemic justice, knowledge production, and decoloniality.

In order to recruit participants, organizers will launch a Call for Participation, disseminated through social media, mailing lists, as well as personal and professional connections. We will accompany the call with our website (<https://sites.google.com/view/workshop-csw-2021>) detailing submission requirements, agenda, technology requirements, and other resources.

Participants will be required to submit a contribution in the form of a short personal statement or paper (1-2 pages), a pictorial, or a video. Contributions can offer a speculative take on new citational formats and systems, examples of successful citational practices, and reflections about the harms of injustice in knowledge production. These submissions will be peer-reviewed by organizers who will ensure the relevance of a submission in relation to the themes of the workshop and a diverse participant pool. We will ask participants to submit contributions by 11.59 pm on September 14, Anywhere on Earth. We will mandate an author per contribution to register for the conference and to attend the workshop.

### 3.2 Technology

The workshop will be facilitated using videoconferencing tools and online collaboration tools. The choice of specific tools will depend on accessibility, such as availability of captions or compatibility with screen readers. Participants will be invited to join a Discord server prior to the workshop to help foster a sense of community. All participant submissions will be archived using the PubPub platform which allows for DOI assignment.<sup>1</sup>

### 3.3 Workshop Organizers

**Gabriela Molina León** is a Ph.D. student at the University of Bremen. She investigates how to design interactive visualizations for social science researchers through participatory methods. As part of her research, she organizes co-creation workshops to collaboratively design data exploration tools.

**Radhika Garg** is an Assistant Professor at the School of Information Studies at Syracuse University. Her research focuses on understanding how technology non-/use is influenced by one's intersectional identity. Recently she has been involved with multiple projects that investigated how diverse families with children learn about, engage with, and use voice-based technologies in their homes.

**Pedro Reynolds-Cuéllar** is a Ph.D. student at the Media, Arts and Sciences program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His research focuses on connecting ancestral technology cultures with methods in design education, practice and activism in the US and Colombia.

**Vishal Sharma** is a Ph.D. student at the School of Interactive Computing at Georgia Institute of Technology. His research interests lie at the intersection of Sustainable HCI and HCI for development. He investigates how digital technologies could be leveraged to strengthen capacities and build capabilities of people living in resource-constrained settings to address sustainability-related problems they face.

**Marisol Wong-Villacrés** is an Associate Professor at Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral in Ecuador. Her research explores

<sup>1</sup><https://www.pubpub.org/>

how cultural and learning science theories can inform an assets-based participatory design of technologies that support historically marginalized groups, such as immigrant parents from developing regions, in pursuing sustainable, emancipatory transformations.

**Naveena Karusala** is a PhD student at the University of Washington in the United States. Her research looks at why and how emerging technologies are used in care work in the Global South.

**Sushil Oswal** is a Professor of Human-Centered Design in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences and an Affiliate Professor in the Disability Studies Program at the University of Washington. His research encompasses HCI and accessibility issues in web design, digital library databases, self-service kiosks, learning management systems, and his theoretical work focuses on participatory design in HCI.

**Tee Chuanromanee** is a fourth year PhD student at the University of Notre Dame. Their research examines trans perspectives on technologies, and how gender transition tracking technologies are impacted by normative transition narratives.

**Pranjal Protim Borah** is a Ph.D. student working in accessibility and tangible interaction at IIT Guwahati, India. His research interests include designing inclusive interaction techniques for emerging technologies.

**Nicola Bidwell** has collaborated, in-depth, with indigenous and rural knowledge holders in Australia and Africa since 2005. She is an Adjunct Professor in IT at the International University of Management, Namibia .

**Lynn Kirabo** is a Ph.D Student at the Human-Computer Interaction Institute in the School of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University. I am part of the TBD lab at Carnegie Mellon and I'm advised by Aaron Steinfeld, Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University.

**Neha Kumar** is an Associate Professor at Georgia Tech. Her research lies at the intersection of human-centered computing and global development. She was trained in computer science, design, and ethnography at UC Berkeley (BS, Ph.D.) and Stanford University (MS, MA). Neha leads the Technology and Design for Empowerment (TanDEM) lab at Georgia Tech.

## 4 AUTHORSHIP

This workshop submission is the result of a conversation that started during the CHI 2021 conference where Neha and Naveena, followed by their talk on citational justice [9], invited attendees to join a growing coalition interested in working on the topic and later, to a meeting to further discuss collaborating on this workshop. Marisol, Gabriela, Nic, Sushil, Pedro, Vishal, Sarah, Radhika, Lynn, Tee, and Pranjal joined synchronously and asynchronously to contribute ideas for the workshop. Marisol and Pedro helped organize the group and led the editorial work with great support from others.

As we discuss citational justice, we would be remiss to not try to implement new ideas. As an alternative to colorless authorship conventions, we publish as a collective and list authors alphabetized by their first name. This format allows for the first author-centric in-text citation to recognize the collective while ensuring that all authors accrue benefits that come with being listed, such as citation count. Ordering by the first name was a way to give less import to

the patriarchal tradition of passing on men's family names—though we recognize that this tradition may not shape everyone's names and that there are many ways to randomize an author list. The Citational Justice Collective represents the views of those choosing to contribute with it at a given time as well as those who self-represent with its goals. This provides agency to contributors and members of our community not to be automatically linked to the Collective's past and/or future work

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