Best Paper
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Angela D. R. Smith

Flourishing in the Everyday: Moving Beyond Damage-Centered Design in HCI for BIPOC Communities

Alexandra To*
Northeastern University
Boston, MA, USA
a.to@northeastern.edu

Angela D. R. Smith*
University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX, USA
angela.smith@ischool.utexas.edu

Dilruba Showkat
Northeastern University
Boston, MA, USA
showkat.d@northeastern.edu

Adinawa Adjagbodjou
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, PA, USA
aadjagbo@andrew.cmu.edu

Christina Harrington
Carnegie Mellon University
Pittsburgh, PA, USA
charring@andrew.cmu.edu

ABSTRACT

Research and design in human-computer interaction centers problem-solving, causing a downstream effect of framing work with and for marginalized communities predominantly from the lens of deficit and damage. Frameworks such as assets-based design and designing for resilience have emerged to highlight the strengths of these communities. However, we observe an additional need to center positive aspects of humanity, such as joy, pleasure, rest, and cultural heritage, particularly for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. In this paper, we present three case studies of existing technologies that center BIPOC flourishing to provide an alternative path for HCI. We propose six actionable tenets for designing for flourishing in the everyday: (1) seek opportunities to design for self-actualization, (2) identify and center the desire to flourish, (3) collaborate and distribute power, (4) refrain from damage-centered reductionism, (5) bring the humanity of a community into the design process, (6) and evaluate for self-sustainability.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Human-centered computing** → **HCI design and evaluation methods**; HCI theory, concepts and models; • **Social and professional topics** → *Race and ethnicity*.

KEYWORDS

Values, Values in Design, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), Design Methods, Joy, Flourishing, Case Studies

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*Both authors contributed equally to this research.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Human-computer interaction (HCI) as a computing field has become more engaged with exploring the intersection of race and technology as a way to define technology's role in humanity [31, 52, 83]. In this process, researchers have primarily aligned to HCI's default problem-solving methodology - as a field, we identify and center pain points and challenges (often as outsiders) and design to overcome these pain points. As one of the primary focuses of this research approach, racial and ethnic minority groups are seen more as the subject of damage-centered [116] and deficit-driven research and design. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) are and have always been in and impacted by technology, yet they are often seen as those who need help or are defined by their problems in HCI research practices [19, 81, 81]. We use "BIPOC" as an inclusive umbrella term for people of color and to highlight Indigenous invisibility and anti-Blackness that are perpetuated under white supremacy. BIPOC is an imperfect term that can have a homogenizing effect, and often most makes sense from a U.S.-centered lens. Our aim in using BIPOC is to open broader conversations about race that are inclusive to and center people of color - while acknowledging that 1) people of color have vastly different experiences and priorities and 2) our concept of race operates from a U.S.-centered lens.

In many instances, *BIPOC communities*[1] are observed and studied as the focus of research efforts instead of engaged for the humanity of their lived experiences [21], leading to tensions between academic institutions of research and BIPOC communities that surround many of these institutions [30, 31, 50, 51]. In practice, researchers and designers who center BIPOC communities are often asked either to recenter whiteness (e.g., *"but how does this generalize?"*), justify the impact on BIPOC through a deficit lens, or to solve structural inequality with their research (e.g., *"how will that solve racism or close the achievement gap?"*). To a certain extent, this misunderstanding of the experiences of BIPOC communities also dooms social computing researchers who center BIPOC to failure as

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[1]In this work, we use "BIPOC communities" or "communities of color" as umbrella terms referring to formal or informal groups and/or organizations primarily or exclusively comprised of people of color. These are not always "true" communities of people who know one another or have shared experiences or goals.