

Transcript: 01/04/2021 (checked by Malvika Jolly)

Computing in/from the South Celebration Computação no / do Sul Global

Recorded: 12/03/2020

## **Sareeta Amrute:**

Thank you and welcome, everybody. Hi everybody, welcome to Computing in/from the South, A Global Celebration! My name is Sareeta Amrute, I'm Director of Research at the Data & Society research institute, and I'm here with my co-editor of the special Catalyst Journal section *Computing in/from the South—Computação no / do Sul Global*—at Data & Society. For those of you who don't know us yet, Data & Society is an independent research institute studying the social implications of data and automation. We produce original research and convene multidisciplinary thinkers to challenge the power and purpose of technology in society. You can learn more about us through our website at <https://datasociety.net>.

For those just learning about Catalyst Journal, they support creative, critical research in multiple platforms: text, image-text essays, video works, sound projects, and so on, presenting opportunities for collectively exploring modes of access. Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, and Technoscience serves the expanding interdisciplinary field of feminist science and technology studies (STS) by supporting theoretically inventive and methodologically creative scholarship incorporating approaches from critical public health, disability studies, science art, technology, and digital media studies.

For those of you new to Rede Mocambos, they're a solidarity network of quilombola communities, indigenous, urban, rural, civil society associations, and points of culture, from north to south of Brazil, connected through information and communication technologies. They build partnerships, projects, and actions aimed at human, social, economic, cultural, environmental, and preservation of the historical-memory heritage of these communities.

We're all here to celebrate this journal release, and experiment together in the spirit of the volume on what it would be like to do technology research differently—from a different perspective. To that end, some of the things that may be discussed today include: what it means to undo—or redo—the line between researcher and research subject, the specificity of place, the term “South” itself, what it feels like to see ourselves or our projects written about, what our hopes for the future computing might be, and so on.

A couple of grounding notes before we ask our contributors to take over. If you're joining us from a computer, use these features to participate: Turn on the Closed Captioning function (cc) at the bottom right of this video for subtitles. View and join the chat to ask questions and learn more—there is a chat—it will be posted in the chatstream, a web chat site. Also note that this event is being recorded, and may be shared afterwards.

**New Speaker/Luis Felipe Murillo:**

I would like to call on TC to join us to participate in the conversation. TC will give an introduction of the space—the webspace and the physical space and the cultural and community space—from which we are transmitting this event.

[5:02]

**Antônio Carlos (TC) trans. by Luis Felipe Murillo:**

Hello, and I am very glad to be here with all of you! I'm very happy to be here, I'm very glad to be here, and especially now in this very difficult journey that we are going through—that humanity is going through—so I'm very happy to be here and to connect with friends. We're also very glad for the vote of trust for us to use a platform that is meant to break the hegemonies in computing that are threatening, basically, our communications in the world. [Skips here beginning of sentence, 7:12] Remind of the fact that we are talking about a cultural organization

that [skips from 7:17–7:50]. So, in context, a country in which the Black population and Indigenous populations are being brutally exploited, and it's always important [skips, 8:04]. I have behind me the images of two warriors who were brutalized in this process [skips, 8:17] and who was also a victim of violence—of racial hatred and violence—in the country. What I have is what we all have, and this is something that informs and shapes the way we work, the way we conceive of life and work. It's important to also talk about the figure that is also represented behind me of Zumbi dos Palmares, who was a freedom fighter from communities that were established—folks who ran away from the plantation system—and he had a conception in the community, they always had a conception of *shaping the world our way*. And this is what also inspires us to do the work that we do.

[Skips, 10:22] That subject, it's important to understand how much that constitution is anchored in the notion of territory *and* culture. We say that we are well, and we have the conditions to live well, as long as we have the house of our parents [skips, 11:07–11:33]. A form of use of the internet or appropriation of technologies that does not transform us into passive users, but active [skips, 11:45, I would guess “strategies”] that we appropriate—and we make ours—and for our purposes. As the technologies of the drum, of traditional technologies—the technologies, for example, of the storytellers, of the *griyos*—and how much those instruments, those technologies, [skips word, 12:45, I would guess “corresponds”] with African understandings of logics and mathematics.

*[Antônio Carlos (TC) begins to play a string instrument]*

As an example, the strings are tuned [skips, 13:05]

[Skips, 13:36–14:00]

[Skips, 15:48] for our wellbeing, for a good life, and this is the conception— the African conception—that we carry in our use of technologies. To conclude, because my time is up, I

would like to say that the work that we do is based on the network. That we have a lot of people who have contributed to this network, and this network extends to Indigenous and quilombola territories, and that it's from these networks that we conduct our work. And this network is a network of effects, it's a network of political communion [skips, 17:04] and about us, what we are constructing in the context of this network.

To the orders that [18:26–20] the goal of the order

[Skips, 18:26–19:00]

And this platform that we are running—this Jitsi instance—is running from the data center that is the cultural center where TC is talking to us from, and he would like to welcome us all to start thinking and working towards this distributive network of community data centers. That after this event, we should get together again to discuss this idea and move it forward.

[20:05]

We are trying to build an alternative to the big networks that are a real threat to the future of humanity. We had a visit in our cultural center of a representative of Google in 2000– 2001, and we realized, we were very intrigued by the name “Google,” and we started to look into the origins of the name, and we realized that the number of O's in the name refer to the [infinity symbol]—to the mathematical symbol of the infinite. And, to us, that was a real representation of the threat of the aspiration of these networks, in terms of the scale and the range that they have attained. In the context of Brazil, several universities—more than 60% of the universities—have actually contracts with Google today. And we understand that this is a real threat for our future.

TC will continue the conversation, move onto the other folks who will present their projects, and then after this we will return to a session that is informal. So, TC, thank you very much. And we

will continue to dream together, and to dream of a future that we build and we dream together. So, to be continued. We will continue and move on.

**Sareeta Amrute:**

Next we will have Natacha Roussel, Ariane Stolfi, Fabiane Borges, and Nadège talking about their article “Taking Back the Future: A Short History of Singular Technologies in Brazil.”

**Natacha Roussel:**

Hello everyone. Hello, Ariane, we haven’t seen [each other] in awhile. So, it’s amazing to follow after TC, the representation of what I think is a unique implementation of community appropriation of his software. So we have a very short moment of ten minutes among us. And, as the article is starting with the notion of [24:19, two French names in feminist thought] and pursuing from Babackshah and further women in feminist appropriation of this community implementations that are completely unique. We have invited—Ariane and I—Fabi Borges from *Technofeminism* and Nadège who started Rede Kéfir who—she is not directly in Brazil—but started a long feminist meeting in Brazil on technology that were called Encantrada. Maybe we can start hearing about this, although it’s time-wise reversed because of the constraints.

**Nadège:**

Hello everyone. Nadège here.

**Natacha Roussel:**

Hello. Is the pathway from this unique thing that happened in Brazil to the feminist appropriation of it that came later on with the Encantrada meeting, and the development of more specific feminist projects that happened in that same? Is it?

**Nadège:**

Sorry, this is a question for me?

**Natacha Roussel:**

Yes, please.

**Nadège:**

Okay.

**Natacha Roussel:**

Maybe it's better to start backwards in time-wise because...And we also have Fabi on here who will start it.

**Nadège:**

So, who do you want to start? Fabi or me?

**Fabiane Borges:**

I think she asked for Encantrada. You can go.

**Nadège:**

I'll talk about Encantrada specifically.

**Natacha Roussel:**

Well, it's the point where I situate a transformation and an aggregation that happened in...But we can also go on. I see Fabi showing the *Technofeminism* t-shirt. And this is also a point where we can start up through and maybe come back to the later development, if it feels better in feeling.

**Fabiane Borges:**

For me? Okay, so. [Skips and glitches, 26:49–27:11] Today we are launching the long—how to say in English? I never remember—auction. Yes, we are launching the auction of those people in the South of Bahia make. And this was We were trying to make it in 2019, but we could not make the money, so during the pandemic we got the money, so we could not help them, we gave the money, and they are making it. I cannot—I would like to show some photos here but I am not sure if I can. So, that's it. This is one thing. We are working on this Indigenous healths center, and this is the most important thing we are doing now. Historically, I think we are making this a festival meetings, more than 80, we were trying to make a big church for to make compete with angelic church, but we did not do it because we did not have enough people to construct it together. So we tried to make it an NGO and it doesn't work there as well, so we tried to make a school but it didn't work good as well [laughs]. So I think Technofeminism, there's no profile at all, concept that we work. [skips, 29:05] You want to say how it started, Ariane? Maybe you can say how it started because I was not there, really, in the beginning. So I think it was a Free Software Movement, the *pontos de cultura*, the hotspots of culture, the Highline do Brasil, the cultural ministry of Gilberto Gil—so everybody started to implement these programs into Brasil. So when these hackers and Free Software found the Indigenous and the quilombolas and the jiberios really far away from the big cities it started to change them a lot. It was a revolution of inside, a subjectivity revolution. So they word “Technoshamanism” appeared in a really strong way, was a connection between different temporalities, different behaviors, different ontologies, different perspectives of life: so one really technological, another one really deep in other technology that is shamanism—or a nature-friend not nature-enemy.

So, yeah. This is why “Technoshamanism” became a word— so important in the Free Software Movement—and then we started to organize festivals about it. So I cannot speak much.

[31:22]

**Natacha Roussel:**

I will, as we have quite a short timing in front of us. What feels interesting is the development and the pathways of the Free Software Movement in Brazil led to different cultural appropriations. And this is how I wanted to lead back to another feminist movement of application of technology that led to large reflection on feminist servers, and I’ll bring back the [mic] to Nadège, if she is agreeing with that, to present us [with] what she did and how she understands the Encantrada meeting and how it led to the activity of Rede Kéfir in not only Brazil but larger North America. Are you fine with this, Nadège?

**Nadège:**

Hello, yes. I have to leave very soon but, anyways, I think it’s very brief intervention, so I’ll be logging off of here in 5–6 minutes, but I’m happy to share a bit [skips, 32:40-48] And what I’d like to highlight is how the gap between transfeminist—how, for example, Vedetas was a space aimed at building capacity and reflection around feminist infrastructure, and they led very interesting workshops in São Paulo around server administration, for example, and many other types of events and participating with a lot of digital security holistic security, networks. A very active project in terms of activism. And what Kéfir was doing, which was much more projects, in seeing how, at the end of the day, it’s extremely difficult to have time to do everything—you kind of have to make decisions. And providing internet services—I think one of the biggest questions that came up to me in the moment of deciding to close down Kéfir—was feeling unable, not as a negative thing but as this question to move on, but unable to keep up with the expectations of what internet activism were needing in a productive sense. Feminist networks and feminist

lawyers and reproductive justice. In the big jump of actually migrating to this infrastructure always demanded more on our side: more commitment, more reliability, and in many spaces where we talked about infrastructure with activists, it was very interesting how, I remember very clearly a dynamic in the space [which was] called Internet Freedom Festival in Valencia in Spain: how the people in the room, they would break down in groups, and there were a series of sliders of making a priority list of what you look for in an internet provider. Diversity and a feminist approach, all of this was very much appreciated, but when you had to choose in a list, the first thing that would come up would be, still, reliability, having a series of software—capitalist expectation—which is super understandable when you have to perform and there's a standard. So, having to keep up with that—or feeling that you have to keep up with that—and, at the same time, wanting to completely shift the way of understanding infrastructure and all this reproductive part, of care and holding space and questioning why, even if you changed names, it still seemed separated? It's still, at some point, there still seems to be this embedded distinction between what is technical and what is not technical—even in the transfeminist world. Even in the infrastructure world. It takes a lot of energy to redo that in a different way, and it takes a lot of time. And when you're on a day-to-day basis, what that boils down to, labor-wise, is that many of the transfeminist system administrations that I know end up working in corporations or in companies. And this transfeminist infrastructure is this side project which is very valuable but there's still this gap between commercial labor and activism. And what I really hope for the future of a transfeminist infrastructure and hoping for a more local modes in how we can provide collectively and look up to this infrastructure in Latin America, is: What do we need to take on that task, instead of [skips, 37:15-37:43].

**Héctor Beltrán:**

Thank you so much for sharing that work. I think we can take up this theme of change from Ariane. Again, thank you also to TC for setting the frame for discussion. I think he really put us in the right frame of mind to discuss these interventions. I think Saiph and I are going to come

at it from a different angle: How do you intervene from the belly of the beast? So how can we think about interventions and change by working within these—I think somebody’s mic is on.

So I’m going to bring you back to a far-off time—2015, before Andrés Manuel López Obrador took presidency in México—there is this hype where Mexico is supposed to emerge as this supposed Aztec tiger. A lot of hype about capitalist expansion and techno-computing as a way to effect change—these supposed reforms, right? I became involved with a project at UNAM [National Autonomous University of Mexico] where I was tasked with teaching students coding skills, but also a particular hacking ethos, right? So I was there as a technical instructor but also with my ethnographic sensibilities, trying to hover above this making GoGanger. So as I started traversing these spaces—some of them more radical spaces, some of them more mainstream spaces, sometimes with contradictory politics—and both in Mexico and in the U.S. circulating between Silicon Valley and these initiatives in Mexico, I started seeing Saiph all over the place! So Saiph was also moving in-between these spaces and developing her own initiatives and, naturally, we wound up at this all-women's Hackathon that Saiph helped organize in 2015. So, to set the stage: Can you tell us, Saiph, a little bit about how this Hackathon came about? What was the impetus behind the all-women’s Hackathon and how it developed in 2015, Mexico?

[40:10]

### **Saiph Savage:**

Yeah, thank you. Thank you, Héctor. And it’s really a great honor to be here—I’m very excited. So, in 2015, as Hector was saying, Mexico was going through [skips, 40:21–25] way of doing things. And so I had gotten some money from Google, actually and [skips] because I felt that there I might be able to have even more impact given that maybe not everyone was looking at this space, currently—about just organizing women around technology. Whereas, maybe in the US, you have more initiatives. Some of the things that happened when we started that Hackathon—and, at the time, I think I didn’t value it as much about why it was important just to

have an all-women's Hackathon. Right now looking back on it, I think that it was very helpful because that planted a seed where, now, how I see it is these women from different universities, and also even different professions, have been able to get together, build a strong network together, where they have their own space to discuss about what it means to be a Latina doing technology. And, given that nobody else had given them that space, they hadn't even realized—we hadn't even realized, because I'm part of them—that we needed [those types] of spaces, so it was [skips, 41:39]

### **Héctor Beltrán:**

—National University in Mexico, it was a group of 30 students, all male identified, only a few women, and when I saw them in this Hackathon they were able to—and I bring this out in the article—sort of voice some concerns or interventions or beironic with me about some of the different gender dimensions they saw in these spaces. So I want to ask you about visibility and recognition because— as a researcher and as an ethnographer—we're asked to go to the field, do our research, and step back and theorize what's going on. And part of this includes giving a pseudonym to your research subjects, or now “research participants.” So, when I discussed with you, “What would you like your pseudonym to be?” You said: “Well, actually, I prefer to use my real name. And, you know, it's a struggle to even get recognition.” [Skips, 42:33] Even believing that you're doing this work, right? So could you say a little more about some of those experiences and, in general, about the concepts of visibility and recognition in the tech domain?

### **Saiph Savage:**

Yes, actually, I'm going to share my screen. To have this conversation, I would like to start it by looking at a picture. Do you guys see my screen? Okay, great, thank you. This is one of the main pictures of the Hackathon, and I would like you to look at this picture and tell me if you see anything interesting: What is an interesting thing you might see from this picture? So this was the main picture of that Hackathon. Right now, the photo is taken at UNAM, and it's the main

photo of the Hackathon, I don't know if anyone would like to just share about some of their initial thoughts. The main thing that I would like you to focus on is this is the main photo of the Hackathon, and it's interesting that I'm not in the photo, Héctor is also not in the photo—none of the main Latinos and Latinas who were organizing the event are in that photo. The only person is [skips, 44:16] self visibility. So when I look back, I really like that photo because that photo reminds me about, in Latin culture, I think that we really need to understand that we value humility a lot, so, for me at the time, it made a lot of sense to *not be in the photo*. I mean, *how was I going to be in the photo? That would be just so...pretentious of me to be the main center of the photo!* Now, looking back on it, I'm thinking: I organized this event for almost a year—how am I not in the photo? And I also didn't give myself any main talk in the Hackathon that I organized—I had a set of speakers—looking back on it, even Héctor was one of our main mentors. He is also not in the photo! He was also not one of our [skips, 45:23] Humility a lot, and that can mean we remove this ability from ourselves. Looking back on it, I always try to remember this event because I think that, especially if you have people who are navigating between Latin America and the U.S. it is important that they start to understand that, if you want to play in the U.S., you actually do need to give yourself visibility. For instance, right now I actually don't have any real photos that I can showcase to say, “Hey, I actually was the main organizer of this event.” And so, for me, it has been helpful to have to navigate between the two cultures to understand about—one culture values, for instance, humility—another culture will actually criticize you [for that same thing] and, as Héctor mentioned, im' sometimes confronted about people don't believe all of the things that I'm doing. So I realized that I need to stop being modest and really push forward with the work that I am doing because people will not believe me and will not give me the space that I am [skips, 46:32, my guess is “owed”]. And So I am helping them to have more visibility. And I actually had this issue, actually, with co-authorship: so we were doing, recently, a research paper about Indigenous communities. We had an Indigenous researcher and we had a white researcher, a person from the U.S. who was a U.S. native. The Native American person did all of the quantitative research and the person from the U.S. did a lot of qualitative research. Anyway—long story short—it was decided that the Indigenous person was not going to be a co-author of the paper, and for me, there, it clicked.

Why wasn't the Indigenous person added as a coauthor? This has, again, a lot to do with humility, where in Latin America and a lot of our cultures—he's an Indigenous person from Mexico, actually—we value too much humility, and we are accustomed to not giving ourselves the visibility that we deserve. And, for me, now that I am a professor, I am trying to be much more aware that we tend to do that. I realize that I need to be very aware of the different things that we value in these cultures.

**Héctor Beltrán:**

Yeah, great. You know, this removing yourself or making yourself visible when you need to reminds me of centering-women feminisms. queer-of-color critiques within these spaces. The theorists from these movements have taught us about forging coalitional politics across raced, gendered, classed divisions and they bring these metaphors of—especially Latina feminisms—of bridges and borderlands. So I see some of this, how do we appropriate these metaphors and this type of work, into this culture of computing and these spaces, and I think it's really great, you're already doing that. And, before we run out of time, I really want to get to the abuelitas! One thing I particularly loved about this Hackathon was—in the article I have this section called “Abuelitas: Grandmothers as Infrastructure”—I have been to dozens of Hackathons both in the U.S. and in Mexico, and I never saw more communality—a more communal celebration of the event [than in this one]. And I thought it was really interesting because, if we relate it especially to the theme of the Hackathon which was “Hacking the Domestic Space,” that could be interpreted as sort of a confining element: “Well, we're limiting these interventions to the domestic space.” What does that say about gender construction? About a particular type of femininity. But in this case, the argument was, at least [for] some participants that I talked to: “Well, it was nice that my grandma was able to participate,” and it sort of helped forge this intergenerational intervention from within the Hackathon, like nothing I had seen before. Can you say a little more about [skips] and in general, these small interventions, do you see any other ways we can unsettle these dominant techno-entrepreneurial spaces?

[49:55]

**Saiph Savage:**

Yeah, thank you. That's a great question, and I love the part about the abuelitas! So, I think that one of the things that really helped us was we challenged every part of the Hackathon, and that helped us to be able to bring in women—who are not traditionally included in Hackathons. [Skips]. Hackathons, on the one hand, tell you that it should be a “fun activity,” and so it should be something that people do [skips, 50:26] and they're actually a huge barrier that you're creating in your event. And so we challenged this, and what we did is that we went to public universities in Mexico—specifically the ones in UNAM—and we turned it, instead of it being this fun, casual activity that anyone could join, we actually teamed up with the professors, and the professors turned it into an activity that they did within their classroom, more of a mandatory activity. And so what happened was that we got, now, access to women and girls who would normally never attend a Hackathon, because they weren't even aware that it was a “fun activity” to do. And the fact that it turned into a more mandatory activity that they were doing because of the school turned it into an activity that their family wanted to support. And so I think that what really helped us was challenging *everything* about how these events were organized. At the time I got criticized because the other people were like: “Well, no, the Hackathon has to be something that they do [out of] their own voluntary joy for the technology.” No, the problem is that if you're doing that you're creating a very specific profile of who wants to attend. And so I think that just challenging, every piece along the way, of the Hackathon is what helped us.

**Héctor Beltrán:**

Thank you so much, Saiph, for your amazing work. This has been great being in conversation with you. I am going to transition now, in the interest of time, I'll put your info [skips, 51:53, “in the chat”]

Who wrote an article in the special issue called “Chinese Computing and Computing China as Global Knowledge Production” Hemangini Gupta, who has an article “Postcolonial Assembly Protocols for Unnamed Automation Projects” and also Francisco Caminati and Silvio Carlos who will tell us about their project and their [skips, 52:18]

### **Angela Xiao Wu:**

I’m so happy to be here today. So, I want to talk a little bit about the writing of this article. Earlier this year when the opportunity came to write something for this special issue, COVID was surging in New York City. As the pandemic unfolded in the U.S, I was still processing what I saw on the Chinese internet from January and February when the virus rampaged through China, and especially the city of Wuhan. Among all the other things that I tried to process, one stood out because it was specifically related to my research on [skips] Chinese surveillance technology targeting online expression. In early February, Li Wenliang, the Wuhan doctor who was publicly censured for alerting people [to] COVID died from COVID on the job. When the news came out, there was a massive online outcry. One online [skips, 53:09] and the report also revealed the company’s close connections to Anglophone academia. It was at this time that I stopped being an avid observer of Chinese social media and used my lurker account to post about the leak and these connections. My post quickly attracted many shares and much indignation from fellow Chinese, but it was censored by the platform in less than 24 hours. So my piece in *Catalyst* began with this episode. I wanted to complicate two portrayals of China in the Euro-American imagination in this age of big data and computing. The first makes China “the Other” in surveillance tech—a sinful nightmare where the liberal discourse here employs to amplify its own cause. The second foregrounds China’s immense digital economy and uses that to indicate the country’s formidable extractive—or what some would call a new form of colonial—power on the global stage.

I wanted to open up a space in discussing Chinese computing where we get to see Chinese people or, more precisely, where we get to see the ways in which [skips, 54:17]. On top of this, I

show that the Chinese people are also contorted through China's online surveillance tech, and instead of analyzing this lucrative computing industry in isolation, I want to foreground the global academic field that sustains these operations. Through transactions of legitimacy, money, and data, Chinese surveillance tech, itself, is integrated in the academic knowledge-making enterprise. In other words, I want to show that Chinese surveillance tech is not just a subject for scholars—especially those of us operating at [skips, 54:57-55:05].

I was born and raised in China, I am a researcher trained and employed in the US. I am an ethnographer and critical cultural analyst who also mingles and publishes in quantitative social science. My writing came from my own experience traversing geopolitical, linguistic, racial, and methodological lines. It came from years of reviewing quantitative research papers using online surveillance data from China, attending conferences where Euro-American colleagues host experts from Chinese surveillance industries and learning about senior scholars in elite Euro-American institutions serving as consultants for Chinese surveillance companies to better market their products, and witnessing the deaths and desperation of Wuhan online at a different time zones [skips, 55:57]

### **Hemangini Gupta:**

Thank you so much, Angela, that was really powerful. I'm just going to take a couple of minutes. So [skips?] parody—I didn't mean for parody to be a "fake" or a "copy" of something that is real—but I was thinking of parody as a form that gestures to and reminds us of [skips, 56:44]. And I found that entrepreneurs and technologists often talk about automation in two registers. One is that it offers a clear economic benefit and profit, and the other is that automation frees us to do more creative and lovable work. So I wanted to displace and unsettle this logic of [skips, 57:09] innovation, love, etcetera.

[57:22: Skips from Hemangini Gupta and following Panel 3 to Panel 4 here]

## Erin McElroy

I'm here and Veda Popovici is on my phone, who is also going to be sharing this space with me. So we are just going to try and make it work. Just let me know if people can't hear her when she talks, and I'll just try to rearrange the phone and the computer connections.

I'm so excited about this format for releasing this formal special issue because I think it really helps to decolonize Western forms of objectivity and technology so prevalent in [indiscernible]. So I am really just so thrilled to present some of my research with Veda Popovici today—she really has taught me so much of what I know of political material and imaginative complexities, socialist run-media today, which is where I think is where we are situated.

For context. I first met Veda many years ago in Bucharest giving a talk on fighting gentrification in the San Francisco Bay Area. And I was in this anarchist social center, Plotka, that Veda helped organize, and Plotka also housed—at the time—a group called the [Indiscernible, 58:42] The Common Front for Housing Rights, which is a housing and racial justice collective, one I eventually also became involved with and which I continue to learn from today. So it's really, for me, impossible to separate the research that I'm about to present from these collectives and spaces, and the spaces themselves have continued to grow in the years.

So for context my article explores socialist and postsocialist techno culture in Romania. [Skips, 59:24-59:56] Yet, as I share, both of these identities—the Silicon Valley and Eastern Europe—and these starkly anticommunist descriptions bely the rich, technological histories that flourished during socialism and in its aftermaths. So not only was computer learning [skips one word] after socialism, amidst its wreckage of disaster capitalism and austerity engineered by the West, computer programming proliferated, along with the practices of media bootlegging, software sharing, and independent neighborhood internet cabling.

These practices, which many describe as embracing a form of “schnekeriya” which is a Romani word inferring “cunningness” or “cleverness,” I suggest that “schnekeriya” perverts and corrupts [skips word] processes. Yet, of course, Silicon Valley has continued its creep with larger corporations buying up local networks, by the end purchasing and dissolving Romanian State computing factories, and slowly Western companies moving in and establishing outsourcing branches upon the new lines of socialist structure. So today, in cities such as Bucharest and Cluj, companies like Oracle, Microsoft, Hewitt Packard and more pepper urban centers while surrounding different venues attempting to mirror Western aesthetics with food trucks, generic class condos, and more. And this incites local contexts of gentrification and racial dispossession in which, disproportionately, Roma residents are banished to the city’s outskirts and wastelands as urban centers localize. And meanwhile, just as perniciously, desires to gain Silicon Valley recognition have infiltrated the desires of many including the engineers of mass movements [skips] street protests known as the “Light Revolution” for their use of light and Western technology [skips]

[Skips, 1:02:00-1:02:20 to end of Erin McElroy presentation]

**New speaker (From East African accent, guessing is one of Angela Okune, Linet Juma, Aurelia Munene from Panel 3)**

Kind of researcher-and-researched binary.

**New speaker 2 (From East African accent, guessing is one of Angela Okune, Linet Juma, Aurelia Munene from Panel 3)**

[Skips beginning of reply, 1:02:46] Not a thing that is produced by very value-neutral processes, but as an evolving process that is part of our life and that we are constantly creating and recreating, therefore, we are not really able to, in that frame we cannot identify who initiatives or who receives—so that really breaches the binary. Especially when you see data as something that

is constantly changing in form and in shape, thereby making the idea of contextualizing what we do possible, and looking at the research data share site [that] we have been part of where we are a group of researchers building on [skips, 1:03:12-1:03:45]

**New speaker 3 (From East African accent, guessing is one of Angela Okune, Linet Juma, Aurelia Munene from Panel 3)**

Dynamic and the potential of open-research data to shift those dynamics. I look at research data, generally, as a product or an ingredient in this cyclic process [skips] from the Global South. I tend to find myself kind of going in-between these two binaries: you are a researcher at one point, at another point you researched, essentially in the same instance, because [skips] to funding, there is also interests there in terms of what [skips] hard to navigate as a researcher in the Global South. And then if you kind of put this together with [skips, 1:04:22] it becomes a complex environment.

So, often research data and, you know, from my experience—using that platform for experimental and collaborative ethnography, the research data share platform—it has really, for me, provided an alternative mechanism that could potentially shift these dynamics and potentially help us shift and reinforce the margins farther, then it becomes a really complex environment. So I think about it in two ways: the first one is being able to acknowledge the work or the input by *the researched*, essentially. So, at the end of the day, [skips] in most cases we are not really able to give them voices from within those documents. So often research data gives me opportunity to really give voices to the people who inform our publications and really—down the line—end up informing policy advocacy or new decisions within government which we aim to influence. It really helps us to acknowledge the sources of this information, the sources of this data, and to acknowledge such contributions to research projects. And 2) For me, it is the fact that [skips] it presents an opportunity for validation of that information, so it's even a corrective mechanism. So sometimes your analysis and somebody is able to annotate it differently and therefore you are able to validate this information, you are able to generate new data and new

information. But also all these new models of collaboration that do not necessarily center the “researcher” or the “researched”—but bring all of these people together to kind of lend their voice to this collective data.

[Skips, 1:06:12]

[Some skipping, overlapping of Portuguese speaking and English speaking by Panel 4]

**Sareeta Amrute:**

Thank you, everybody, our livestream has stopped. I’m in the background trying to get it working again but not having much luck. I know that the session is being recorded and it will be posted later. Before we end, I wonder if Francisco or Silvio wanted to speak a little bit?

**Francisco Caminati:**

Thank you, everyone. I am going to read. I wrote a short text to share some impressions and ideas on the subject based on my own research and thanks to the collaboration of groups and collectives of Indigenous and traditional peoples in Brazil. I am currently coordinating the project [project name in Portuguese, 1:07:47], which means in the [name of Indigenous group in Brazil starting with A, 1:07:05] people language:

[1:08:20-1:13:21, In the following text the Portuguese live translation and someone’s keyboard is running live over English audio, which is quite spotty, making it hard to discern.]

Initially with support from American anthropologists, and that was digitized. Between 2011 and 2015, public programs on a national skill, but their own village was connected to the national electricity grid. And then, internet satellite. This short period was possible for many

transformations, as digital media became part of community life. It was also possible to observe that local, had also undergone drastic transformation. If the community, in widening the.

In a process of what you might call technological innovation, they have

Using the arrival to highlight the colonial aspect. But because of the quality of the economical and social relationships. My research has been in combining anthropology and computer design. Rather than reflecting the theoretical product. Resolution for local problems related to communication and connection. In an aspect that I believe resonates with the analytical proposal. We always start from the acknowledgement in the news of local technology. The internet as a cultural and surveillance rupture which is the refusal of the idea of the internet as a democratizing. Finally, for the execution of this project, I joined. In this process, in addition to collaborating with, we are deeply

Thank you very much.

**Sareeta Amrute:**

Thank you so much, Francisco. I think at this point we should move towards ending the session. Filipe, do you want to say a few words of thanks?

**Filipe:**

I would pass to Silvio who is waiting, he has something to say, and I would just conclude, for us, with his presentation.

**Silvio Carlos:**

Okay, hi. I'll try to be short. Thanks for the invitation and congratulations, everyone. I worked together with [1:14:12 names that sound like "shikoo"] and some projects. We just submitted a project with TC and [indiscernible name, 1:14:17] about [Portuguese word, sounds like "bobocia"]. I also work at Instituto Socioambiental, one NGO that works with Indigenous peoples, quilombolas, and other traditional populations in Brazil. I'd like to talk a bit about programming as I believe I am halfway to learning some basics and I would like to share some thoughts about that. In this process, I have this strange feeling that while it's extremely important to do other kinds of computing, perhaps not that much computing is needed. Taking as an example what TC said about Google in his introduction. Maybe some of these other kinds of computing are less intensive, for example, more concerned with planned obsolescence and also meant for long-term sustainability. So perhaps this computing is more about de-computing! Consistent in choosing what is simplistic in technology that is about use. So, to be more specific, in terms of computer languages I am concerned here with statements like "import, include, extend, and use" which are common in computer languages. And why that matters for me? So when I import some piece of code in my system, in my platform, whatever, I am increasingly importing many choices, many decisions, and many inheritances—especially in the perspective of computing in and from the South. So, in Portuguese, *importar*—to import—means not only to import something but also that's something that matters. *Something of importance*. So I would like just to give an example and I will finish, I want to share my screen and show you a map. There is this map. I developed it for Instituto Socioambiental. It's a free software project that uses lots and lots of libraries. So I have to use these libraries because I'm just a single person coding a large system. Okay, so, it's open-source, it's free software, but implicitly, on this free software projects, there are some choices. So the first choice I'd like to point to you is this projection in this map—Web Mercator—which is a very colonial projection so I did not have a choice. I could write my own projection, my own library, but I was out of time, so I had this first problem. But that's not exactly what I would like to show you. What I'd like to show is this piece of land here which is a huge Indigenous area in Brazil. In this area, there is a basin—lots and lots of rivers—so I am showing you this Indigenous area. And also, around this area, the current

deforestation in the Amazon. The deforestation is in red to show us that's something bad, and the map is oriented in the classical way of the North-South orientation because of this Web Mercator Projection. So, for Indigenous people, this doesn't make much sense, at least to some of the Indigenous people who live in those areas because for them the map is upside-down. Not because other reasons than that the rivers are flowing in the other direction. For them, this map should be rotated because they usually think from where the river flows. And also, this deforestation that is kind of red—for them the color red means something that is good. So we have a lot of trouble when we are computing in and from the South to report some statement. But we end up importing those statements because we need to make a system, so that's the kind of trouble that I am currently involved with right now. So, thank you, and congratulations again.

**Sareeta Amrute:**

I'm just going to say thank you to everybody who came today. Congratulations to all the authors, thank you so much to those who are joining from [inaudible location] and [inaudible location] and everybody else. Have a wonderful day, we'll see you soon, and talk soon I hope.

[1:20:22]