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RESISTING EPISTEMIC COLONIALISMS: INTERNET(S) RESEARCH OTHERWISE

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Abstract

To study the internet, whether infrastructure or discourse, teaches us that the engineers, architects, and programmers who developed these technologies did so with a settler colonial logic. Charles Babbage's analytical engines, which form the foundation for modern computational systems, were designed to discipline labor (Whittaker, 2023). The earliest algorithms designed to manage water distribution were based on land dispossession policy (Dryer, 2023). The "Turing complete" standard for general purpose computing is too embedded with Western conceptions of morality and truth (Fischbach, Vandemeulebroucke, & Wynsberghe, 2023). Modern day relational databases and machine learning algorithms also follow logics of extraction, domination, and control (Stevens, Hoffman, & Florini, 2021; Katz, 2020; Posada, 2022, Ricaurte, 2024). Platforms situated in the Global North exert power and wield influence globally, reinforcing colonialist and imperialist legacies (Silveira et al., 2021; Birhane, 2020).

As academics, when we approach the internet, as subject or object, we too can be imbricated in these logics if we don't recognize this history and adjust our approach to knowledge production accordingly. Yet, when working within academic institutions, Western values narrow the options for "valid" knowledge production - in a process

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recognized as “epistemic colonialism” (Fanon, 1963). In response to these histories and pressures, Black feminists, Indigenous scholars and activist-researchers have created a breadth of perspectives, theories, techniques, and methods to resist the hierarchical mandates within academia that fail to acknowledge other ways of knowing that doesn't fit the mold of hegemonic “scientific” perspectives. Approaches include Indigenous epistemologies and methodologies (Wilson, 2020; Smith, 2021; Balutski, 2015), participatory-action research (Thiollent, 2011), militant research (Serpa, 2023) or insurgent research (Gaudry, 2011).

In this panel, we follow calls to engage in active praxes of resistance to colonial structures and logics within our unique position as academics (Liboiron, 2021). Each panelist has not only theoretical familiarity with the literatures we cite above, but also practical experience within communities whose philosophical and practical commitments reflect these radical praxes. Among our panelists, we represent expertise in Indigenous studies, militant/insurgent research, transgender data epistemologies, Latin American Black Feminist perspectives, and Citizen/Grassroots Science and Data. Each panelist will discuss their onto-epistemological orientations to the “work” of the academic and discuss the application of this approach within an academic context. In this way, we hope to contribute to the following questions: “How can we resist epistemic colonialisms from within our role in institutions?”; ““How can we dismantle data colonialism and build emancipatory alternatives, alongside those most affected by it?”; “Which methods, practices and/or ways of living can we cultivate to resist and subvert current epistemicide frameworks?”.

To address these questions, the topics of the panelists’ presentations are as follows:

1. Negotiation relational commitments and epistemologies in western academic institutions
2. Beyond Scholarly Boundaries: Intersectional and Militant Research Methods
3. Building Trans worlds: Applying Transgender Data Epistemologies to Data Models
4. The Quizumba is On: Political Action and the Appropriation of Digital Technologies
5. Citizen generated data as a (gender) inclusion methodology

Collectively, we argue that liberatory research must be informed by local contexts and grassroots perspectives, critically engaging with the power structures shaping knowledge production. We emphasize an approach that remains critically attentive to the power structures shaping our own knowledge-making practices. Our panel explores how research can serve as a practice of resistance, subversion, solidarity, and transformation - both within and beyond institutional settings. This strengthens and unites our collectives to ultimately: resist and dismantle the coloniality of internet infrastructure.

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BEYOND SCHOLARLY BOUNDARIES: INTERSECTIONAL AND MILITANT RESEARCH METHODS

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There is a growing body of research, particularly from scholars drawing on Intersectional and Black feminist perspectives, as well as Decolonial, and Anti/Contra-colonial approaches, calling for deeper political commitments from social science scholars studying the internet(s) (Neves Barros & Silva, 2023; Natansohn, 2016). Being reflective of the methods and implications of our research is especially urgent in light of digital media's tremendous influence in shaping and perpetuating the historical oppressions of minoritized groups, and how these oppressions are sustained through the sociotechnical assemblages of digital media. In doing so, they present alternative epistemologies and approaches that prioritize the lived experiences of the oppressed (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021). These scholars have demonstrated a meta-reflexive understanding of their own ethical considerations and power-related complexities, and how the rewards and legitimation systems of academia shape their commitments to social change and emancipatory action (Bardzell, 2017; Irani & Silberman, 2014).

In a provocative essay, Corrêa (2020), drawing from Intersectional perspectives, ask researchers to shift their gaze to themselves, instead of separating them from their subjects, grounded in the logic of "we, the analysts, they, the people" (Corrêa, 2020, p.829). Recognizing how the epistemological practices of critical fields are also part of a formalized structure of domination that marginalize non-academic knowledge, Corrêa sees that the future of Cultural Studies is to be found in those at the margins and experimenting with new methods and theories. Building on Corrêa's provocation, and recognizing its usefulness to scholars across different fields, this paper reflects on lessons from Intersectional feminist research and Latin American Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods, which I refer to as *militant research methods* following Serpa's (2023) perspective. These methodological approaches offer fruitful lenses for scholars studying digital media and advocating for a commitment to resisting oppressions.

First, it is important to highlight that Intersectionality, in its roots, is more than a descriptive method. Collins (2017) argues that intersectionality was "lost in translation," as contemporary academics within powerful institutions have adopted the concept, often disconnecting it from its Black feminist political roots. She views intersectionality not only as a method but ultimately as a praxis - one that highlights hierarchical differences between those in institutions historically recognized as legitimate producers of knowledge (such as academia) and those whose epistemologies are constantly questioned. Once intersectionality was incorporated into academia, it became less associated with radical politics or social movements, evolving into a more descriptive methodological approach. This created a "new normal" in which "emancipatory

knowledge was separated from emancipatory politics" (Collins, 2017). Instead, Intersectional approaches are deeply reflexive, challenging the power structures underpinning modern science and the paradigms that validate academic research. They invite practitioners to critically examine the purposes and consequences of their work.

This praxis-oriented understanding of Intersectionality aligns with the ethos of PAR, also referred to as collaborative, cooperative, engaged, non-extractive, or activist. Here, I emphasize the term *militant research*, which is rooted in critical social movements in Latin America (Serpa, 2023; Peruzzo, 2016). In militant research, the roles of the researcher and the researched are actively collapsed, as the research design and outcomes are collaboratively discussed in synchrony with Paulo Freire's perspectives for *comunicação popular* (popular communication) (Cogo,2021; Peruzzo et al., 2022). Militant research views the research process as a relational endeavor embedded in power asymmetries that must be challenged and questioned. A feature of militant research is its explicit commitment to questioning and resisting dominant knowledge-sharing practices, while advocating for non-Western communication paradigms that prioritize horizontal relationships between social scientists and their research subjects.

Rejecting colonial ontologies that frame the world through hierarchical relationships, militant research avoids placing the "other in a condition of subaltern" (Moretti & Adams, 2011, p. 454). Rather than a fixed set of methods, this type of research is better understood as an epistemological "orientation within the broader scope of qualitative methodologies" (Stanton, 2014, p.5), situated within ongoing decolonial/anti-colonial efforts to challenge oppressive structures. The term "militant" can seem scary when related to research - as if the political dispositions of a researcher will somehow infect their scholarly production. However, as discussed by feminist scholars, “knowledge is situated” (Haraway, 1988) and offers a particular perspective of the world. The positionality of a researcher, or, in other words, their experiences and outlook in the world, thoroughly shape how knowledge is produced, received, and shared. Militant research is presupposed to reject that the political stance of a researcher is detrimental to their work or somehow should make their research less legitimate. Rejecting positivist scientific tenets that value the supposed "neutrality" of scientists, this type of research is rooted in the explicitly political and ethical engagement of the researcher, without any loss to rigorous methodological procedures in the research design, data collection, or analysis (Moretti & Adams, 2011, Hale, 2001;).

Instead of creating scholarship "about" a subject, in a militant approach, it is created "with" the subjects (Silva et al., 2023, p.1). Researching in this manner requires the social scientist to be aware that the research question or problem will arise from the collective instead of being framed beforehand in an iterative process revisited by the people involved continuously (Serpa, 2023; Thiollent, 2003). There's a commitment to be made by the researcher in making efforts to develop a relationship of reciprocity, respecting the autonomy of the communities or people researched.

However, both Intersectional and militant research approaches are not without its own epistemological paradoxes and challenges. One of the main challenges is to balance the need for a clear research question and agenda whereas these approaches

encourage opening up the whole research design to discussion, reflection and adaptation. As posited by Medrado and Verdegem (2024) as they reflected in the limitations of their workshops with students, tech workers and activists, "although impact generation is aimed at delivering a positive impact on non-academic stakeholders, the rhetoric of co-creation and development is often hollow, as it is challenging to engage marginalized communities in the research process (as they need to prioritize their time and energy)" (Medrado & Verdegem,2024, p.13). From a militant research standpoint, merely crafting a research design culminating in an article, paper, or dissertation is insufficient. Following this perspective, research should transcend being a mere vehicle for academic credit and prestige; instead, researchers must actively engage in the emancipatory movements they study and involve broader audiences in their work. In other words, *in order to be militant, researchers should militate* - using the empirical knowledge gained through the research process to inform political action and coalition-building. Those involved in this approach apply the learnings generated collaboratively to support their political struggles.

In this panel presentation, I will share my experiences as a researcher from the Global South in a Global North institution attempting to employ intersectional and militant research approaches. I will highlight how media-making methods have been pivotal in my efforts to incorporate such lenses. Striving to combine the "investigative process with an educational action" (Silva et al., 2023), I examine the struggles, ethical considerations, and methodological challenges involved in moving away from extractivist epistemologies and methods, particularly in the context of academia, where scholars' livelihoods are often dependent on reward systems that incentivize such extractive approaches.

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NEGOTIATING RELATIONAL EPISTEMOLOGY IN THE WESTERN* ACADEMY

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Indigenous perspectives have grown in visibility and use within the western academic system. This foundational work by Native scholars, activists, and community members has fundamentally changed the negotiation of non-western ways of knowing in the academy. What once was subject to epistemicide (Santos, 2016), now is growing. Perhaps the most famous example of this proliferation is *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Kimmerer (2013). This one text, which addresses questions of scientific methodology and Indigenous epistemology, has been cited thousands of times since publication. To use my own context as an example, there are texts that explain *Kānaka Maoli* (Native Hawaiian) cosmology (Hall, 2019), epistemology (Meyer, 1998), and methodology (Balutski, et al., 2015; Vaioleti, 2006), all authored by Native Hawaiian scholars. While this doesn't suddenly make the knowledge "real" now that it has been validated by the western academic system, it *does* make the knowledge productive in different contexts. How does this change the space for Indigenous academics who seek to continue building on this foundation? Especially under the monumental threats our work has recently come under in the United States (Novak, 2025; Mervis, 2025; Stone, Huang, & Stein, 2025). The focus of this article is to bring to the surface one strategy in negotiating non-western, specifically relational, epistemology within the western university. This particular strategy employs western philosophical terms, such as ontology, epistemology, methodology, and teleology, to aid in translation and ultimately find the complementary space of multiple ways of knowing. This is not to engage in approaches that seek to combine multiple epistemologies, such as braiding or weaving metaphors, but instead to find the complementary facets of different approaches to knowledge production. To accomplish this, I provide background on relationality, a brief context on the western university system, and, finally, I point to perspectives useful in making comparative arguments concerning empirical science.

To begin, there is no singular definition of relationality. For this article, I define relationality as the baseline understanding that humans, non-human kin, and the environment are in constant connection, or "relation" (Hill, 2008). In that, any change in one group or community necessarily affects all others. This is an acknowledgement of an interdependence between and across all that exists. In Shawn Wilson's (2020) words, we *are* relations. For this reason, relational understandings of the world necessarily vary due to their groundedness in local context, hence the variation. There is strong evidence that relational worldviews are shared within and across many nations of Turtle Island (North America) and *Moananuiākea* (the Pacific) (Waters, 2004; Vaioleti, 2006). From this recognition of interrelatedness, governance and knowledge systems are created (Bear, 2000). As it is difficult to express such a foundational system, I look to Dr. Leroy Little Bear for a comparison between relational and western systems. Dr. Little Bear (2015), Blood Tribe of the Blackfoot, describes within the field of physics an apt example. Where is knowledge found? In the western system, it is found in isolation.

Western science focuses on observing the atom in isolation and extrapolating its behavior from this observation. Indigenous thought focuses on systems, in which the human is always a part of. It is within the interactions of each part of the system that knowledge is found. This extends to how matter is perceived in the world. For Indigenous peoples', everything is animate. Whereas, in the western system, a rock, for example, is expressly inanimate. This focus on animacy extends to spiritual understandings of the world. As Dr. Little Bear describes these waves *are* spirit. At this level of comparison, it can be seen that the underlying belief systems create different methodologies resulting in different knowledges. Perhaps the most important differences lie in the underlying belief system and what it allows science to be used for. As Dr. Little Bear points out, if we are all interrelated, then humanity's decision to engage in science should be a measured decision as it isn't solely ours to make. In the west, there are no such guardrails or considerations. In fact, science is often isolated from political governance. This unique circumstance has allowed great atrocities to be committed against not only other humans, but to the lands we live on (Whyte, 2020).

Put plainly, there is no escaping the fact that the ideology of Modern western science is built upon a philosophy of separation and domination, of nature and humanity (TallBear, 2023). Not only this, but western systems demand only one valid or legitimate way of thinking (Bear, 2000). The science that emerges from the European enlightenment informs a racist ideology which is used to justify the mass genocide of Native Americans and the destruction and dispossession of their lands (Hoquet, 2014). A key example is the "father of modern taxonomy" Carl Linnaeus infamously added human beings to his taxonomy, embedding racist stereotypes aiding in the dehumanization of non-white peoples. It is from this history that informs the education and scientific pedagogy of the first universities in what is now North America. This continues with the rapid innovation and proliferation of technology. The original analytical engines (Whittaker, 2023), the criteria for Turing complete computers (Fischbach, Vandemeulebroucke, & Wynsberghe, 2023), foundational optimization algorithms (Dryer, 2023), and relational databases (Stevens, Hoffman, & Florini, 2021), all have roots in settler colonial logics. All of which are a part of the infrastructure undergirding the internet.It should come as no surprise then that the ontological and epistemic norms of a settler colonial orientation too became embedded in the university (Stein, 2022). While all American universities are built on stolen land, it is lesser known that the land grant system, which appropriated funding and land for the formation of state universities, is complicit in the dispossessions of *millions* of acres of lands stolen from *hundreds* Native tribes across North America (Lee & Ahtone, 2020). Cornell University, my current institution, is listed the largest benefactor from academic land dispossession in the United States. This history further reflects the necessity to address the ideology and methodologies of western science. It informs the level of care and intention necessary to find the utility of knowledge, especially if we are to bring technologies and methodologies into our communities.

Considering the history of the university and the intentional campaign to eliminate non-western thought, it is a testament to the will of Indigenous scholars that Indigenous studies departments exist and Indigenous thought is proliferating. Many of our traditional practices have been written down, systematized, and peer-reviewed. They are citable. Regardless of valence, this allows a level of legibility and legitimacy within

the western academic system for Indigenous knowledge. What once was a battle to have journals, conferences, and reviewers read and publish our works, now becomes critical engagement with the work itself. For the panel presentation and discussion, I will describe relationality (as I understand it), the Indigenous methodologies I have used in my own work and how I am able to effectively explain and compare these approaches to traditional western methodologies within western academic systems.

Notes:
* west/western are intentionally not capitalized. This is a symbolic move to decenter the, often assumed, inherent power of the west. It also acknowledges the long history of fighting to include words that represent marginalized people - including capitalization. To not acknowledge whiteness in this way is to reflect the orientation of power represented in the article itself.

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BUILDING TRANS WORLDS: APPLYING TRANSGENDER DATA EPISTEMOLOGIES TO DATA MODELS

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In 2022, the United States introduced the X gender marker on US passports to provide transgender people an additional way to be recognized by the state, beyond a Male or Female designation. The X marker never had unanimous approval from the broader trans community, with some arguing that it was a surveillance mechanism furthering the datafication of trans lives (Adair, 2019), while others insisted that it was an important step in the recognition of trans people. However, the X gender marker was unequivocally a technical compromise – modifying a database and data structure designed to hold one character (M or F) to fit a "third" gender. What would have happened if, rather than making an X available to trans people, the government had instead reconsidered its wholesale orientation to tracking, storing, and communicating gender? What if the change to accommodate trans people had been made at the ontological and epistemological level of the data model, rather than at the level of the gender field? This paper considers the precarity of trans people, our/their data, and offers a sociotechnical path forward based on trans ways of knowing and being.

This work is particularly urgent because transgender people are under immense attack in the United States today. As a culmination of years (generations?) of increasing hostility towards trans (and more broadly, queer and other non-heteronormative and non-cisnormative communities), recent months have exposed the deep reserve of violence imbricated in the history of the country. Since January, transgender communities have lost civil protections (Sostaric, 2025), access to life-saving preventative healthcare (HCR Foundation, 2024), and access to employment (Neuman, 2025; Wiggins, 2025). At this writing, the US is denying its trans citizens accurate passports (Diaz, 2025) and preventing trans people from moving across its borders (Reed, 2025). Recent changes to US policy both allow transgender (and queer) people to be more readily surveilled (Adamczeski, 2025) and denies us/them access to useful and life-saving data.

In addition to this multi-pronged erasure of trans people from civic life, the U.S government is also engaging in an erasure of both historical and contemporary quantitative trans data, a further extension of the long erasure of trans lives (Namaste, 2000). As a modification of the historical record, The government removed trans people from the Stonewall Monument, a monument to mark the site of a trans-led civil rights uprising. Signaling the end of a significant amount of quantitative trans data, the Center for Disease Control, a national public health agency responsible for "nurturing public

health," has announced that it will stop collecting transgender data across its programs (Gaffney, 2025). The public have responded to these changes with immense protest, that in part equates the erasure of trans *data* with the elimination of trans *people*. They are not unrelated, of course. However, the outcry about this erasure is based on normative ideas that more data is a good thing. However, in many cases, it is just such *data* that has facilitated the vulnerability of trans people under all governments hostile to our/their thriving.

Those of us with a praxis and community-care focus must engage with these realities in our work. As academic researchers, how do we know when collecting data on/with/for trans communities simply makes us/them more vulnerable, and how do we create models and methods less likely to cause harm? How do we engage with trans communities in ways that resist the colonialism of modern data structures, the extractivism of the academy, and the centrality of violence (Namaste, 2000) in trans lives? In the loving service of these questions, this paper makes a specific and actionable offering: the application of transgender data epistemologies to the technical object of the data model.

Data models are the ideological and technical containers that determine the structure of a database and subsequent dataset. The data model constrains the type of entry a field can receive (a number, a binary choice, a string of text etc.) and the way those fields are connected in the database. It is the data model that gives formal shape to the ontology, teleology, and epistemology of the larger data collection process and all resultant artifacts. Data models prefigure the database and act as a structuring force on any algorithms (Stevens, 2022). Importantly, it is the data model, not the algorithm or the dataset, that acts as the translational layer between the racialized, gendered, colonial logics of the state and data. By considering models as locations into which we (as researchers, as trans people, as technology producers) can manifest our own teleological worldviews, we are able to make foundational interventions into regimes of data circulation.

Interjecting trans epistemologies into data models is facilitated by the existence of a robust ecosystem of trans epistemologies (Cull, 2024) and in particular transgender data epistemologies (Stevens and Doğan, 2025). Trans data epistemology rejects any notion of data as valuable for its own sake, moving away from notions of data as "the new oil" and instead considering data as merely one of many tools in a community-care toolbox. Within this framework, the use value of data is measured by its ability to facilitate greater health, safety, and well-being for trans communities. When we take trans ways of relating to data seriously enough to formalize them in the structures of the data model, we are moving away from the abstract theorizations so common in the academy; we are materially contributing to the building of livable trans worlds.

For non-trans researchers, encounters with transness are frequently digitally mediated – trans people appearing as health data points, as content creators in large corpora, as subjects for identification, categorization, and sorting. All of these encounters strip context, strip cultural nuance, and, perhaps most importantly, reify the extractivism of the academy. This paper offers a path towards engaging with trans communities and trans data in ways that move beyond a literal or metaphorical X marker. Data models

are a meaningful place of intervention into the reproduction of colonial interpretations of transness within data structures; trans data epistemologies resist violent datafication. Combining these two is a pragmatic and technical offering generated out of deep care and community solidarity.

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THE QUIZUMBA IS ON: POLITICAL ACTION AND THE APPROPRIATION OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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"Then some very nice white people invited us to their party, saying it was for us too. Some book about us … We were very well-received and treated with all due consideration. They even insisted that we sit at the table where they were sitting, giving beautiful speeches, saying that we were oppressed, discriminated against, exploited. They were all fine, educated people, who traveled around this world of God. They knew things. And we went to sit there at the table. But it was full of people with whom we couldn't sit. However, we handled the situation pretty well, looking for chairs and sitting right behind them. They were so busy, teaching a bunch of things to the creoles in the audience, that they didn't even notice that, if one came a little closer to another, they could make a little space and everyone would sit at the table. But they were the ones organizing the party, and we were not supposed to fuck it up with excuse me, excuse me, dragging chairs here and there. We had to behave. There was speech after speech, everything followed by a lot of clapping. Until the moment the neguinha[1] sitting with us got all sassy. She was called to answer a question. She got up, walked toward the table to speak into the microphone, then she started complaining about certain things going on at the party. ***The quizumba[2] was put together.*** *All them negroes seemed to be waiting for it so they could fuck everything up. Suddenly there was such loud talking, screaming, booing, that no one could even hear any speech. Obviously, the white folks turned white with anger and with good reason. They had invited us to this party to celebrate a book about us, and we behaved like that, dismantling their speech. Where in the world? Even though they knew more about us than ourselves? Since they were there, willingly teaching us a lot of things about us? There was a moment when they could not bear that whole frenzy of those ignorant and rude negroes anymore. It was too much. At that point, a troubled white man started a fight with a creole who was holding the microphone and speaking against white folks. And the party ended up in a big fight…*

[1] Translated as lil'nigga

[2] Brazilian word of Central African origin meaning "trouble/confusion" (Venancio, 2024)

Now, only between us here, who was to blame? That sassy neguinha, of course. If she had not spilled the beans … Now white folks don't fuck with her no more. They badmouth her to this day. Also, who allowed her such bad behavior? No wonder they keep saying that "when Blacks don't fuck up when they come, they do as they go" (Gonzalez et al., 2021, Emphasis mine)

The passage above is the prologue of the article "Racism and Sexism in Brazilian Culture" by Lélia Gonzalez (1984). I have taken this scene as a representation of a "feast of the myth of racial democracy," and the emphasis in the text is meant to highlight and reposition *Quizumba* as a Black movement against the colonial apparatus, through its insubordination and disobedience, as an act of resistance against tutelage and compulsory silencing in power relations. It is the estrangement in the face of repetition that leads to indignation.

This analysis is based on the contributions of Ivânia Neves (2015, 2020) and Flávia Lisbôa (2022), whose work is grounded in Michel Foucault's concept of *dispositif* (apparatus). The researchers argue that if the dispositif is the mechanism of social control applied through institutions, laws, and social relations and, directly tied to power dynamics, then the colonial dispositif can be understood as the disciplinary strategies designed to maintain this order, ensuring control by those who have always held power; to ensure the creation and maintenance of single truths about the world, determining which languages, which religions, humanities, and hierarchies of lives, bodies, and territories are legitimized. This colonial system left behind, as legacy, coloniality as a method for social functioning, continuously reinforcing the same values and predatory structures, erasing ethnic identities, and controlling access (Neves, 2015; Lisbôa, 2022). The control over who knows and who speaks, or who gets to sit at the center of the table, the power to decide who has access to and can appropriate technologies, are all dispositifs of colonial power. Even the very understanding of what constitutes technology is shaped by a hierarchical conceptual determination imposed by those who control communication.

In workshops on care and digital security, Black women over the age of 50 often considered themselves digital illiterates. However, they were not the only ones: many younger women also defined themselves this way. Our objective was to understand their relationships with digital technologies - their entanglements, uses, and the specificities of their appropriation processes. We examined what these networks demand from them, how they navigate these demands, and the consequences (or legacy) of their actions within these digital spaces. To achieve this, we adopted a transfeminist methodology based on the practice of our Transfeminist Network for Digital Care: Infrastructures of Affection. Through this approach, we conducted discussion circles, debates, workshops, and semi-structured interviews.

And the more marginalized one is, the more violent the relationships of superiority and inferiority become. The colonial dispositif of silencing and infantilization, which treats Black individuals as others who cannot speak for themselves, is very well structured (Neves, 2022).

Just like the *neguinha da quizumba*, thousands of other Black women also believe that something is deeply wrong at these banquets, which create avatars of racial democracy only to assume new personas, just as they fabricate a false democratization of communication, because, for true participation, the chairs must be rearranged so that we are at the center of the table.

Stirring up quizumba is also a way of disrupting Brazil's cultural neurosis - racism - which is structurally reproduced in access, usages, appropriations, and public debate on digital culture and communication: non-white people are invited to consume and are subjected to surveillance standards but are not called to participate in discussions on digital infrastructures and democracy - even when it comes to "verified account" badges on digital platforms. What gets reproduced is the tendency to talk about these groups without considering them as active subjects. This directly impacts their experiences with technological systems, especially concerning digital rights. For this reason, discussing digital technologies with Black Amazonian women is a step that must be followed by collective learning and active provocation so these women come to share their experiences from their own positions and movements.

We already understand that the process of appropriating digital technologies operates through dispositifs, stages, and conditions, but it is essential to include the experiences emerging from different territories. There is no use in claiming to know us better than we know ourselves (Gonzalez, 1984), in defining us as oppressed, and then publishing books about us, we will push back and demand our say. If they know so much, why don't they grant us access to the data archives on user profiles of Information and Communication Technologies and Internet access and usage?

As a result, we identified five key categories through which their appropriations take place: (1) Territory, (2) Collectivity, (3) Language, (4) Surveillance/Violence, and (5) Autonomy. Within these movements, they take on the responsibility of occupying and asserting their presence in traditionally exclusionary spaces, unafraid to stir up quizumbas (Gonzalez, 1984).

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CITIZEN GENERATED DATA AS A (GENDER) INCLUSION METHODOLOGY

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Internet access indicators have shown that even when we use broad indicators such as the classic question “Have you accessed the Internet in the last three months?”, this access is not homogeneous across different social groups. Historically marginalized groups have greater socio-economic barriers, which makes it difficult for them to access the Internet and develop their citizenship, especially in a more digitalized world.

When we look at Brazil, the broadest indicator shows that 88.9% of the population has accessed the Internet at least once (CGI.br/Nic.br, 2023). However, when we look at race indicators, for example, we find that the black population has this same percentage reduced to 87.7%. Added to this scenario, estimates show that women have lower use and quality of access (Guimarães et al., 2019). These data show that people who have multiple layers of vulnerability, stigmas, and prejudices that have been cast over them throughout our history continue to be marginalized and have their fundamental rights violated. That's why more activists are defending and broadening their analysis to include people from the LGBTI+ community, because we understand that these people have even greater vulnerabilities, especially in societies that, despite claiming to be democratic, end up persecuting people from this community. As is the case in Brazil, the country with the highest murder rate for trans people and transvestites (Narcisa & Bonets, 2025). We have seen an escalation of attacks against LGBTI+ people around the world. According to a survey carried out by Safernet, crimes of xenophobia, religious intolerance, and misogyny grew by 39.3% between 2021 and 2022. Specific complaints of LGBTI+phobia received by the platform increased by 51.9% in the same year (Oliveira, 2022).

With this context in mind, data_labe, a data laboratory born in the Favela da Maré, conducted a study in 2022 called Explana (data_labe, 2022), which investigates the information ecosystem of black LGBTI+ people in the online environment in the city of

Rio de Janeiro. This research was carried out using the main methodology used in our lab, called Citizen Generated-Data (CGD) (Mota & Vieira, 2023), which is defined as a set of actions that allow citizens to generate, collect and use data for the benefit of their own communities and collectives.

In this survey, where everyone had access to the Internet, 42% said they used laptops and mobile devices to access the web, but 31% of participants said they exclusively use mobile devices to access information. In addition, Instagram was the app with the highest prevalence of use, ahead of WhatsApp. About the plans and networks used, the answers varied, with 22% saying they used post-paid mobile data plans and 13% only using pre-paid mobile data. This second audience, which is not such a minority, represents a portion of the population that has limited and no meaningful access to the Internet.

Beyond the basic aspects of accessibility, we can reflect on how the presence of these people on the Internet is threatened by the violence they experience. When asked about the possible violence and discrimination they have experienced online, we received 137 different reports, as this question was not compulsory. 84% of the people interviewed had already suffered some discrimination or violence of this kind and 15% said they suffer this kind of violence constantly.

We are talking about serious consequences for physical and mental health and even for our democracies that could be measured by data. As recurrent as gender and racial violence, 81% of respondents reported contact with hate speech. The context of high levels of violence diagnosed in this survey affected the participation of Black LGBTI+ people in the electoral process, as some people said they didn't feel like voting because of the various attacks they had suffered. According to data collected through the quantitative questionnaire, 94% said they voted in the first round, while in the focus groups and in the interviews the fear of voting and expressing themselves politically was evident. In the questionnaire, we had eleven people who reported that they had not gone to vote or had not voted for all the positions up for election. The percentage of contact with hate speech in this subgroup was the same as in the general group (81%), but homosexuals were more prevalent in this sub-group that did not participate fully in the election rounds.

That's why policies on Internet access, combating disinformation and violence need to take into account these social markers that have been shown to cause or mediate the presence of these people in the online world. These indicators are complex and difficult to generate through traditional national surveys, which is why participatory and social science methods such as CGD are a way to restore the participation of marginalized groups, fight inequality, and generate more granular data in a citizen-friendly way (Mondardini & Grey, 2023).

We also recommend a greater presence of LGBTI+ people in information channels and platforms, that algorithms benefit LGBTI+ content for all platform users, better support for programs with LGBTI+ content creators, and more funds to LGBTI+ organizations and collectives. We say that because at Explana research when asked who they trust the most to consume information, 29% said they trust information from NGOs the most, followed by 28% for information from collectives and 23% for information from traditional private media. With this, we hope to reinforce the message that when we talk about

inclusion, we are not just talking about a policy to appear or be in an environment or report, but about lives that are being destroyed on a daily basis and that are constantly suffering from this violence, both in the physical world and online.

Methodologies such as Citizen Generated-Data challenge the traditional way of generating knowledge through data, precisely because they allow the most affected groups to be protagonists in all stages, from the collection to the communication of this data, changing individual and common sense about urgent social issues.

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