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Brazilian Activism in Mastodon

Sovereignty Discourses between Cyberlibertarianism and State-Centrism

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9.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the most resilient elements of the digital culture has been the free and open source software (FOSS) movement, which began with the purpose of developing software whose code is open, modifiable, and shareable. This activism has given birth to well-known initiatives such as Linux operating systems, the web browser Mozilla Firefox, the website creator WordPress, and the web server software Apache and Nginx, which together serve more than 60% of the most popular websites (W3techs.com, 2022). For the movement, technological infrastructure is too important to allow proprietary lock-in, an argument that resembles the rhetoric of control and autonomy over devices, software and data of digital sovereignty discourses (Couture & Toupin, 2019; Pohle & Thiel, 2020). More specifically, it belongs to the "commons digital sovereignty," explained in the introduction of this book, which seeks to create digital public goods from the bottom-up, beyond state and corporate control.

The rise of corporate digital platforms led the FOSS movement to articulate specific sovereignty discourses and practices with regard to social media as well, advancing the model of *federation*. In this model, social networks should adopt open and interoperable protocols, allowing users to reach contacts across different federated networks (Gehl, 2015; Mansoux & Abbing, 2020). Since Elon Musk's takeover of Twitter (now X), this alternative model of social networking has attracted more attention, as its spearhead Mastodon became the favorite destination of millions of Twitter users disappointed with the prospects of Musk's leadership (Chambers, 2022). Mastodon is a Twitter-like software released in 2016 by the German developer Eugen Rochko that allows people to connect to the "Fediverse," the ecosystem of federated social media, accounting for nearly 90% of its current active users according to

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the stats website "The Federation."[1] Even corporate social media are slowly moving in this direction, as Meta anticipates EU regulation and plans to implement federation with the Fediverse and Mastodon in its newly launched Threads (MacManus, 2023).

There is already scholarly literature on federated social media and, more specifically, Mastodon exploring some social and political aspects: interoperability in the Fediverse as a model for competition in digital markets (Brown, 2020); the restructuration of online social interaction promoted by Mastodon's design choices (Zulli et al., 2020); and internal pressures on Mastodon toward centralization (Raman et al., 2019). A dense discussion about federated social media appears in an essay by Mansoux and Abbing (2020), where they assert that the Fediverse represents a turning point in the politicization of FOSS activism toward a less neutral understanding of technological openness. Such a bold claim opens up the possibility that the Fediverse activism also advances a different understanding of digital sovereignty in comparison with FOSS historical claims. However, to the author's knowledge, no literature on the Fediverse has addressed so far this issue. Furthermore, in countries from the Global South, FOSS activism has articulated digital sovereignty discourses that differ from the widespread narratives in rich countries, with the state as an active player supporting and implementing open technologies to achieve geopolitical sovereignty (Schoonmaker, 2018). Nonetheless, research on federated social media still misses the discussion about the participation of peripheral countries and their own appropriation of sovereignty discourses. This chapter aims to contribute to closing this gap in literature by investigating how Brazilian activists on Mastodon articulate concepts and practices related to digital sovereignty discourses and how this narrative relates to traditional claims within the FOSS movement.

In the first part, I discuss the relations of FOSS activism with digital sovereignty discourses. There is a growing body of literature dealing with the assumptions, implications, complexities, and contradictions of discourses on digital sovereignty, and this chapter will concentrate on the approaches by Stéphane Couture and Sophie Toupin (2019) and Julia Pohle and Thorsten Thiel (2020). In the second part, I analyze the digital sovereignty claims in Brazilian activism around Mastodon. For this, I briefly explain the context of the emergence of federated social media, as well as their political assumptions and implications that are relevant for digital sovereignty discourses. Finally, relying on data about country participation on Mastodon, participant observation and interviews with administrators and moderators of communities oriented to Brazilian people, I sketch an understanding of digital sovereignty by Brazilian Fediverse activists – narratives, actors, and the role

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[1] https://the-federation.info. This website hosts statistical data on Fediverse software, operating instances, server location, registered and active users, and is the primary source of all statistical information of Fediverse and Mastodon in this text.

of this technology in fulfilling their normative expectations – and discuss their presence and influence in the global movement, considering specifically the geopolitical dimension of their activism.

9.2 FOSS ACTIVISM IN DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY DISCOURSES

The roots of the FOSS movement lie in the 1980s, when hacker Richard Stallman (2002) started to develop software under the so-called "copyleft" licenses, that is, whose legal status sought to protect the right of users to further examine the code, modify it, and distribute new versions. Because of the influence of its founder, the ethical thinking emerged from this movement is called by Rappaport (2018) "Stallmanism." Indeed, the hacker culture assigns great importance to some key figures, playfully called "Benevolent Dictators for Life" (BDFL), and Stallman is considered to be the first of them. Since then, the movement consolidated and expanded, playing a decisive role in the emergence of the digital commons and the culture of peer production (Benkler, 2006; Lessig, 2006). Gabriela Coleman (2004) argues that the FOSS movement is ultimately a struggle for freedom of speech by rethinking the naturalness of intellectual property, which in the 1980s had been extended into coding by public regulation in the interest of the corporate software industry. FOSS activists consider that this alliance between state and corporate power restrains freedom to work with computing and coding and, by extension, hackers' freedom to express themselves (Coleman, 2004). Free software participants, thus, struggle to conserve, reinforce, and spread the software through which they communicate, collaborate, and coordinate themselves.

The community that follows the free software principles and ethical thinking is defined by Christopher Kelty (2008) as a "recursive public," "a public that is vitally concerned with the material and practical maintenance and modification of the technical, legal, practical and conceptual means of its own existence as a public" (p. 3). Furthermore, by protecting the right of expression in code, FOSS activism intends to safeguard an important dimension of political freedom. They believe in the necessity to "include within the spectrum of political activity the creation, modification, and maintenance of software, networks, and [related] legal documents," as these forms of expression "can both express and 'implement' ideas about the social and moral order of society" (Kelty, 2008, p. 8). In other words, not only the content expressed by technologies, but also their technical materiality matters, as it creates infrastructures that actually allow for expression and circulation of ideas, sometimes in very unexpected ways. Expanding freedom to use, examine, modify, and share source code is a way of assuring political debate regarding one of the most important realms of contemporary societies, namely the information and communication infrastructure.

Therefore, FOSS activism is full of references to actors and practices that restrain or enable freedom, and is directly oriented to create strategies for

politicizing control over the digital infrastructure. These are typical features of digital sovereignty discourses, which "describe various forms of independence, control, and autonomy over digital infrastructures, technologies, and data" (Couture & Toupin, 2019, p. 2305). Nevertheless, digital sovereignty is a highly contested concept, with a large variety of connotations, very different actor arrangements, and competing normative practices (Couture & Toupin, 2019; Pohle & Thiel, 2020). For the structure of my argument, I will follow Couture and Toupin's (2019) categorization with five clusters of discourses, namely "cyberspace sovereignty," "state digital sovereignty," "indigenous digital sovereignty," "social movements and digital sovereignty," and "personal digital sovereignty."

FOSS is an important part of two of these discourses. First, free software appears in the category of *social movements and digital sovereignty*, which is equivalent to the "commons digital sovereignty" explained in the introduction of the book. According to this discourse, social movements should be entitled the capacity and, to a certain extent, even the responsibility to develop technological skills, programs, devices, and content outside the framework of commercial and state-sponsored infrastructures. Most initiatives in this kind of discourse promote FOSS, digital commons, encryption technologies, self-managed servers, among others (Couture & Toupin, 2019). Lately, this discourse centers on the critique of the use and ownership of users' data by the corporate digital platforms, sometimes called GAFAM (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft), whose surveillance business model represents a modern form of dispossession (Gosh & Couldry, 2020; Zuboff, 2019a).

Then, Couture and Toupin (2019) situate FOSS activism in the *personal digital sovereignty* discourse as well, which pleads for autonomy of citizens as individuals. Consumers and users should be empowered to make self-determined decisions facing commercial and state powers, including their own protection against surveillance. Measures in this case include "economic incentives for user-friendly and domestic technology development, but also the introduction of technical features allowing for effective encryption, data protection and more transparent business models" (Pohle & Thiel, 2020, p. 12).

However, the whole debate around technological sovereignty began before FOSS, tracing back to the 1960s and 1970s, when the geopolitical implications of the information and communication technologies were high on the agenda. Couture and Toupin (2019) report discussions in France, Canada, and Australia with the term "sovereignty" linked to technology, formulating an informational version of nationalistic concerns. Countries from the Global South also expressed very specific concerns in the debate. In the late 1970s, Latin American and African countries realized deep inequalities in the information technology sector, especially dependency because of their "lack of development of information productive forces such as computer and software industries" (Schoonmaker, 2018, p. 28). Data about their economies and citizens were stored and processed outside of their jurisdictions,

spurring concerns on the perpetuation of global power inequalities and dominance. The discussion around strategies to tackle this power imbalance was a crucial part of the debates in the late 1970s and early 1980s around a New World Information and Communication Order (Schoonmaker, 2018). This history shows that a state-centered technological sovereignty discourse existed before the FOSS movement, and peripheral countries had a very specific position in this debate, underscoring the need of state-led action against global power inequalities.

The popularization of networked communication in the 1990s pumped up another kind of sovereignty discourse, focused rather on the promise of overcoming the state as boundary. Couture and Toupin (2019) call it the *cyberspace sovereignty discourse*. In this narrative, Westphalian nation-states should have no say on what the rules on the internet are supposed to be. Sovereignty here refers mostly to freedom for internet users *from* the state. This kind of discourse reproduces what Barbrook and Cameron (1996) called the Californian ideology, a mash-up of technological determinism and libertarian individualism that shaped technological development in the Silicon Valley. Cyberlibertarians distrust political institutions to a major extent and argue that the decentralization provided by digital technologies allows for better forms of organizing modern societies (Pohle & Thiel, 2020).

It is obvious nowadays that cyberlibertarianism is naïve regarding the power struggles in global capitalism. In fact, after some predominance of the cyberspace sovereignty, the 2010s witnessed a revival of *state digital sovereignty discourses* (Couture & Toupin, 2019; Pohle & Thiel, 2020). In its recent form, the most popular measure is data localization, whereby storage and processing of data should occur within national or regional jurisdictions. Some of these discourses focus more decisively on the economic dimension, highlighting the "autonomy of the national economy in relation to foreign technology and service providers" (Pohle & Thiel, 2020, p. 10). Measures here refer to incentives to the domestic economy and local competitors, usually part of a larger economic policy strategy. Couture and Toupin (2019) report a growing concern on the side of European governments throughout the 2010s, pursuing developments such as encrypted chatting functionalities, national emails, localized data storage, and restriction of European data flow within the continent (Pohle & Thiel, 2020). Despite recognition of the lack of political conditions, some scholars even plead for publicly owned or funded digital infrastructures, following the model of public service media, which could promote more democratic control over the internet (Fuchs & Unterberger, 2021; Morozov, 2019).

As with the early state-centered discourses, the Global South also positions itself considering global power imbalances. Brazil has performed a leading role among liberal democracies, especially under the presidency of Dilma Rousseff, with actions such as data localization and state investment in undersea cables (Schoonmaker, 2018). Much earlier and within a much bigger

scope, China realized the need to develop its own state approach to the internet to ensure the achievement of its political, economic, and cultural goals (Jia & Winseck, 2018). Somewhat similar approaches have been either discussed or implemented in countries such as Russia and India.

Finally, Couture and Toupin (2019) identify a further category, the so-called *indigenous digital sovereignty discourses*, arguing for the inclusion of voices and rights of indigenous populations in the realm of digital data. They question, for example, the Western-centric prism of sovereignty based on territory jurisdiction.

All of these discourses articulate a particular arrangement of *governments*, *market economy*, and *civil society* as actors with possible agency over digital infrastructure, software, hardware, data, and content. Governments are addressed as either liberal democracies or authoritarian (and semi-authoritarian) regimes. Market economy is also referred to by two sets of actors: transnational companies headquartered in the United States – mostly the GAFAM – or regional/national market players. The civil society realm is divided into social movements or the individual person, usually addressed as user or consumer. According to Couture and Toupin (2019) and Pohle and Thiel (2020), FOSS actively participates in accounts that pose the first two groups – governments and market economy – as entities that control technologies, whereas the last group – civil society – should reclaim its independence and autonomy. In these accounts, the search and the agency for technological sovereignty come from civil society, not from the Westphalian nation-state or private business looking for economic sustainability. However, I argue in the following section that some peculiarities have to be considered, revealing a more complex participation of FOSS in digital sovereignty discourses.

9.2.1 FOSS in Cyberlibertarian and State Sovereignty Discourses

The first important element for a more complex understanding of FOSS claims on digital sovereignty is its relation with the cyberspace sovereignty discourse. As Coleman (2004) documented almost 20 years ago, hackers and developers often reject any deliberate politicization of their work, but FOSS clearly instantiates many liberal values. While the movement mostly relies on technical and economic rationalities as its justification, this conception is informed by a "taken for granted form of cultural liberalism," expressed in Anglo-European ideas of individual autonomy, self-development, and a value-free marketplace for the expression of ideas (Coleman, 2004, p. 509). Since the consolidation of the surveillance business model of digital platforms, FOSS activism also stresses the liberal value of privacy, which hackers seek to embed in most of their discourses and practices (Mansoux & Abbing, 2020).

In fact, enthusiasts of FOSS and networked communication often emphasize the emancipatory potential of openness and decentralization, a typical reasoning in the liberal toolbox (Benkler, 2006; Lessig, 2006). In his philosophical

inquiry on Stallman's argument that proprietary software restricts users' freedom and is unjust, Rappaport (2018) concludes that his ethical thinking poses an intrinsic moral value of freedom and autonomy that aligns with libertarian ethics. Ossewaarde and Reijers (2017) argue that the digital commons presuppose the atomized individual of neoliberal discourses and, at the end of the day, reinforces the cyberlibertarian ideology, a relation that is also constructed by Lund and Zuckerfeld (2020).

Coleman (2004) and Kelty (2008) warn against overstating the role of liberal ideas shaping the movement, as FOSS activism fundamentally begins not with ideologies, but practices of programming. That said, it is justifiable to argue that FOSS activism historically echoes libertarian discourses of cyberspace sovereignty in many aspects.

On the other hand, there are appropriations of FOSS activism, which ascribe a crucial role to the state in implementing technological autonomy and independence, problematizing immediate associations between FOSS activism and neoliberal thought. Recently, European activists have argued on the necessity of purposeful state investment on digital commons and FOSS as a digital sovereignty strategy (Bria, 2020, Reda, 2020). State intervention is required to protect the regional and national freedom to code software (and further forms of expressions alongside the spectrum of the digital commons) from dispossession strategies by foreign actors, fostering local digital industry and enhancing security. Following variations of this reasoning, several European municipalities have increased the presence of FOSS in their infrastructure, with Barcelona showcasing the success of this initiative (Calzada, 2017).

But even before this awakening in Europe, state power has been an active part of tech activism around FOSS activism in countries from the Global South. As early as in the 1980s, such governments articulated resistance to proprietary software and incentives to local and open-source industry. Brazil objected to the US copyright law on software until 1987, conceding after trade barriers to soya exports (Leister & Frazier, 2014). At the level of municipalities, the public sector began to embrace FOSS in the mid-1990s, whereas the federal government adopted it in 2003, under Lula da Silva's administration. His government prioritized FOSS in public schools, and introduced support for hacker events and projects with copyleft licenses (Leister & Frazier, 2014). Much of this effort has been backpedaled since Rousseff's term, but she still pushed forward an agenda of internet neutrality, which converges with FOSS activism in the efforts to expand the digital commons (Schoonmaker, 2018). Besides Brazil, other Latin American countries, such as Uruguay, Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela, and Cuba, have passed laws between 2004 and 2013 to migrate governmental data to systems operating with free software (Avila Pinto, 2018). Reportedly, India and Russia also have laws mandating open source software in several layers of state administration (Avila Pinto, 2018).

Thus, FOSS activism cannot be exclusively associated to social movements. FOSS embodies many aspects of cyberlibertarian discourses that should not be

ignored, a perspective that could even undermine the organization of collectives such as social movements. At the same time, FOSS also appears on the other side of the sovereignty spectrum in variations of state-led discourses, with an early development in the Global South. State participation in the recursive publics of FOSS might sound contradictory for libertarians, but the referred actors from the Global South have rearticulated freedom discourse "beyond its original focus on individual rights and societal value" toward a geopolitical conception of "freedom within a context of relationships between states in the global economy" (Schoonmaker, 2018, p. 38).

This makes the position of FOSS activism in digital sovereignty discourses more complex, sometimes ambiguous and contradictory, beyond a straightforward identification with the social movements of the "commons digital sovereignty" narrative. Political, economic, and social developments have shaped FOSS, creating different opportunities and threats in this form of tech activism. Furthermore, the role of the Global South and its appropriation of FOSS for technological sovereignty have to be differentiated from general statements, as it not simply reproduces the efforts of US and European activists but also ascribes way more importance to state participation in a geopolitical context.

9.3 FOSS ALTERNATIVE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

More recently, FOSS activism has also been concerned with the rise of corporate social media platforms. The business model of these platforms contradicts core values of the movement (Gehl, 2015; Maxigas & Latzko-Toth, 2020). These companies use people's interactions to collect personal data, profile users' behavior, and sell this targeting capacity to advertisers (Gosh & Couldry, 2020; Hildebrandt, 2018; Poell et al., 2019). Because of their need of data, they promote engagement at the expense of other considerations, strive for never-ending expansion of their user base, and adopt proprietary standards in order to gain more control over data collection and processing of information. Platforms are able to use these data to leverage power across several sectors and markets, benefiting from network effects and becoming infrastructure for much of modern life, including services historically associated in Western democracies with public values (Plantin et al., 2018; Taylor, 2021; van Dijck, 2020).

This societal phenomenon can be seen as a loss of control over personal data and a fundamental infringement of the right to privacy. In the liberal tradition, privacy is a human right, not by chance enshrined in the Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights. Understood as a protection against invasive inquiry, privacy is crucial to self-determination, and data-driven platforms seek to undermine it (Hildebrandt, 2018). Research has shown that people desire to control the information digital entities have about them, even if they feel unable to do so (Draper & Turow, 2019).

Digital platforms can also represent a loss of control over data at a societal level. Laura DeNardis (2012) argues that these digital information intermediaries "have diminished the capacity of sovereign nation states and media content producers to directly control information flows," representing "a loss of control over content" (p. 721). Corporate digital platforms shifted to a central position in the public information ecosystem, as they became an important source of information and news consumption for an increasing amount of people over the world, especially in the Global South (Newman et al., 2023). While established media organizations still produce the bulk of the internet content actually consumed, social media platforms organize access to and consumption of this content, involved therefore in real-time decisions about which content is allowed, promoted, or removed (Gillespie, 2018; Jakubowicz, 2015; Napoli & Caplan, 2017). By voluntarily or obligatorily assuming the task to govern content and expression, private social media platforms accrue significant opinion and political power (Belli, 2017; Helberger, 2020). Examples are the constitution of the Facebook Oversight Board and platforms' ban of former US president Donald Trump's accounts in early 2021, as well as the siege by app stores and hosting services of the far-right social network Parler. Given the circumstances, many of these initiatives are welcome and can be justified according to Western standards. But they also point to a deeper question on whether few (US) private corporations should have the power to both amplify and curb speech, even beyond national jurisdictions. Scholarly literature has summarized this aspect as a concern regarding the privatization of the governance (Belli, 2017; DeNardis & Hackl, 2015).

Therefore, loss of control is perceived at both individual and collective levels. Reaction from FOSS activism comes with the argument that social networking does not need to operate this way (Gehl, 2015; Maxigas & Latzko-Toth, 2020). Accordingly, activists have come up with alternatives based on the concept of federation. This concept refers to a communication system where social networks use open and interoperable protocols and software, having the capacity to run independently but still allowing their communities to reach people with accounts in other networks (Brown, 2020). In contrast, in the model of corporate social media platforms, the company enforces its own messaging protocols, operated exclusively in software run on its servers, and this way restricts access to its user base, increasing the company's power over users and their activities. The architecture of federated social media expects to make difficult, if not impossible, such a control and oversight of digital communication by a single entity.

In the last decade, the ActivityPub standard, developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), has evolved into an established protocol for the social media willing to federate, and this group of federated social media became known as the "Fediverse." On top of this protocol layer, a number of software applications have provided the practical features for users' communication. Created in 2016, Mastodon became the most important Fediverse software, employed by over 90% of active Fediverse users, according to the

statistics of the website "The Federation." In December 2022, two months after the conclusion of the Musk deal over Twitter, the Mastodon community had grown from around 500,000 to 2.5 million monthly active users, most of them disillusioned Twitter migrants (Chambers, 2022).

Mastodon reproduces the microblogging functionality of Twitter with the principles of the Fediverse, meaning that any person can host it on their own servers – each server installation is technically called *instance* – and connect to other instances. Each of them, in turn, keep independent administration and moderation, although administrators often coordinate actions. People who do not want to host an instance – the vast majority of current internet users – can register accounts in the hundreds of open ones, being subject to their rules. If the user wants to have another administration or moderation, they can move to other open instances, import their older list of contacts, and remain in touch with them. Differently from corporate social media, Mastodon software does not provide algorithmic curation of content, so that timelines strictly follow chronological order, and content curation depends exclusively on human decision-making, by both moderators and users. Design choices create several possibilities of account and post visibility, allowing users to decide to what extent they want their communication to be public.

The Fediverse explicitly seeks to offer an alternative to corporate control over social media communication, resonating with discussions on digital sovereignty. At a first glance, its decentralized governance might recall libertarian accounts of unfettered individual control over digital data and content. Indeed, a foundational manifesto of federated social media, the text *A people's history of the Fediverse* (Freedombone.net, n.d.) argues that, from the point of view of privacy and security, the ideal approach for everything in the internet would be an individual governance of data, following the peer-to-peer model, with no servers as intermediaries. This way, each peer would be able to make their own decisions about who to connect to and what data to share. However, the text acknowledges that this approach has important drawbacks. It is ultimately inefficient, as it would cause "a lot of duplicated curation effort." Furthermore, it overwhelms individual users who do not possess the interest and the technological knowledge to make these decisions. Federation is then considered a middle ground approach. Data can be collectively governed if there is closer connection between provider and user. This allows for better trust. Offloading preferences to affinity groups improves user experience and reduces cognitive workload.

Federation can be regarded as a further development of the original idea of decentralization in the imaginary of the internet, which would challenge the hierarchical capitalist mode of production and spur emancipatory effects in societies (Benkler, 2006). As already referred in the discourse of cyberlibertarians, decentralized organization should offer "a better tailored response to the complex demands of governing modern societies than is offered by traditional forms of political organization" (Pohle & Thiel, 2020, p. 4). In other words, this imaginary assumes that technical decentralization induces political emancipation. But this

understanding has always faced several tensions. In some cases, the decentralized architecture of the internet is simply regarded as a myth, since its approach to information seems to reflect rather design for control, and not decentralization (Galloway, 2004). In addition, some argue that addressing power and conflict requires coordination, so that technical decentralization often leads to centralizing effects (Bodó et al., 2021). Moreover, the internet itself did not evolve as expected into a wholesome decentralized system, displaying some features of decentralization at the infrastructural level (Winseck, 2017), but strong concentration at other levels, such as content distribution (Helberger, 2020; DeNardis & Hackl, 2015). From a critical perspective, it is possible to argue that internet decentralization did not change any structural aspect of information capitalism. Nonetheless, the tension remains, and decentralized network architectures are still seen as a possible response to the dynamics of concentration, centralization, and capture in platform capitalism (Rosnay & Musiani, 2020).

In any case, the Fediverse also diverges from the historical approach of FOSS communities in some aspects. While FOSS communities have historically focused on addressing privacy through security technologies (end-to-end encryption, peer-to-peer topologies, etc.), in the Fediverse, development has focused rather on "building moderation tools, granular visibility settings for posts, and the possibility to block other instances" (Mansoux & Abbing, 2020, p. 133). Fediverse activists usually pose their refusal to automate moderation by means of algorithmic curation as an advantage. For this reason, Mansoux and Abbing (2020) assert that the Fediverse promotes a shift from technical to social understanding of privacy.

Furthermore, Mansoux and Abbing (2020) argue that the Fediverse represents a decisive politicization of FOSS. It departs from naïve notions of neutrality and openness in original FOSS activism, embracing a kind of agonistic pluralism, in Mouffe's (2013) sense, that acknowledges the limits of connection and openness. This is materialized by allowing not only federation, but defederation and instance blocking. This design feature has been systematically used to isolate white supremacists and other far-right extremists that resort to the Fediverse to escape moderation policies from platforms (e.g., when the far-right social network Gab adopted Mastodon software in 2019, most relevant Fediverse instances took a coordinated action to defederate it and avoid user exposure to Gab's content). This way, "non-Western views on democracy, secularism, communities, and the individual" can still express and coordinate themselves, but no group or ideology can claim full acceptance and reach in the public discourse, as there is no centralized public sphere anymore (Mansoux & Abbing, 2020, p. 131). Many of these design choices reflected demands from the LGBTQIA+ community, which saw the universalizing and amplifying features in corporate social media platforms as prone to abuse and harassment (Valens, 2019).

Therefore, the federation expressed by the Fediverse and Mastodon understands itself as a means of transferring power control over online communication from big corporations to communities and social movements, a historical

claim of FOSS activism regarding digital sovereignty. At the same time, federated social media evolved in a way that challenges neutral openness in classical FOSS discourses. Because of these characteristics, Mansoux and Abbing (2020) conclude that the Fediverse represents a turning point in the history of the FOSS movement. However, although research identifies a more sophisticated political understanding in Fediverse activism, there is little attention to the dimension of geopolitical power. This is even more striking if one considers the tension North–South in the history of digital sovereignty discourses, including the appropriation of elements of FOSS activism in peripheral countries.

In the following, I analyze Brazilian activism in Mastodon in order to shed some light on this issue. Brazil belongs to the group of Global South and BRICS countries with a relevant history in digital sovereignty debates and, as shown in the following section, has activists engaged with Mastodon as well. Nonetheless, it is not clear the dimension of their activism with regard to the broader Fediverse movement, nor the specific imaginaries of digital sovereignty that fuel these activists in the margins of global capitalism. Learning the role of geopolitical imbalances in the discourses articulated by Brazilian Mastodon activists will help to understand which digital sovereignty can be expected from this FOSS iteration in countries from the Global South.

9.3.1 Brazil in Mastodon

Following a mixed-methods approach, I collected both quantitative and qualitative data between January and June 2021. Quantitative data refer to country location of servers, users, and content production provided by the website "The Federation." These data were cross-checked with the website "Mastodon Instances"[2] and my own observation, having visited all 300 communities with more than 100 users. These data have some shortcomings, but can provide a better understanding of the magnitude of the geopolitical forces shaping Mastodon.[3]

Then, qualitative data help to understand the ideas and practices behind the numbers of Brazilian activism. For the purpose of this research, activists are defined as administrators and moderators of instances. I conducted

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[2] https://instances.social.
[3] There are two important limitations regarding this approach of data collection. The website "The Federation" works in an opt-in basis, meaning that instance administrators have to flag their intent to participate in the statistics. This way, it can never reflect the whole network. At the same time, most activists rely on these data when talking about the size and growth of the Fediverse, especially because most instance operators are engaged with activism and want their activity to be counted into the statistics, turning instance opt-in very likely. A second limitation of this approach is related to the global nature of the FOSS movement, whereby activists articulate themselves relatively independent from national jurisdictions. Most communities have highly mixed membership with no attachment at all to countries, although English remains overwhelmingly important. Not rarely, instance operators even hide their actual location, as it is the case of almost all Chinese instances.

five semi-structured interviews with activists from four (out of six then active) instances oriented to Brazilian people or Brazilian-Portuguese speakers, including the two largest ones. Administrators were asked about the reasons for creating a Mastodon instance, their views on the actors actually controlling digital social networking, the necessary practices to achieve the desired condition, and in which sense Mastodon contributes to this. As requested by most interviewees, I have done my best effort to safeguard their anonymity by not referring to any name, gender, role, and instance affiliation (see Appendix 1 for the interview protocol).

9.3.2 Brazilian Instances

Despite the global nature of the FOSS movement and Mastodon, many activists engage in nation-related practices. At the time of data collection, the active Mastodon communities oriented to Brazilian people or Brazilian-Portuguese speakers were "Masto.donte.com.br," "Mastodon.com.br," "Ursal.zona," "Colorid.es," "Bantu.social," and "Brasileiros.social" (see Table 9.1 and Figures 9.1 to 9.5).

The community "Brasileiros.social" was oriented to far-right supporters of former Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro, had very low (apparently coordinated and unauthentic) activity, and was either silenced or blocked by the other networks. In late 2021, it was discontinued following up a scandal with the publication of classified documents in the instance (Poder360, 2021). All other communities were organically active and federated with one another. As evident in the descriptions, three of them ("Ursal.zona," "Colorid.es," and "Bantu.social") were oriented toward specific social movements and highly moderated. The other two instances ("Masto.donte.com.br" and "Mastodon.com.br") were more generic, but had moderation explicitly oriented to curb hate speech, harassment, and abuse, especially toward minorities and marginalized groups. For this reason, despite their different goals, these five communities were federated with one another.

TABLE 9.1 *Brazilian Mastodon instances: users and posts*

Instance	Total Users	%	Monthly Active Users	%	Posts	%
masto.donte.com.br	454	14.6%	402	33.1%	380957	60.9%
mastodon.com.br	1482	47.7%	307	25.2%	64245	10.3%
ursal.zona	477	15.3%	294	24.2%	107033	17.1%
colorid.es	618	19.9%	161	13.2%	53577	8.6%
bantu.social	30	1.0%	30	2.5%	19297	3.1%
brasileiros.social	41	1.3%	22	1.8%	335	0.1%
TOTAL	3,102		1,216		625,444	

Source: Compilation by the author, based on data available at https://the-federation.info. Latest update in June 2021.

FIGURE 9.1 About page of masto.donte.com.br Translation: "Masto.donte.com.br is an instance focused on Brazilian users, but users from other places (and languages) are welcome. Hate speech is prohibited. Users who do not respect the rules will be silenced or suspended, depending on the severity of the violation."

FIGURE 9.2 About page of mastodon.com.br Translation: "Mastodon.com.br is an instance oriented to Brazilian-Portuguese speakers. Aiming to be an inviting and less toxic space, we intend to be an instance that welcomes people from all nationalities, ethnic groups, body formats, genders, diverse sexual identities and orientations, feminists, neurodivergents, independently from religion, race and political orientation."
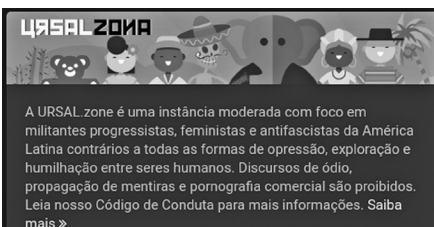

FIGURE 9.3 About page of ursal.zona Translation: "URSAL.zone is a moderate instance focusing on progressive, feminist and anti-fascist activists in Latin America opposed to all forms of oppression, exploitation and humiliation among human beings. Hate speech, propagation of lies and commercial pornography are prohibited. Read our Code of Conduct for more information."
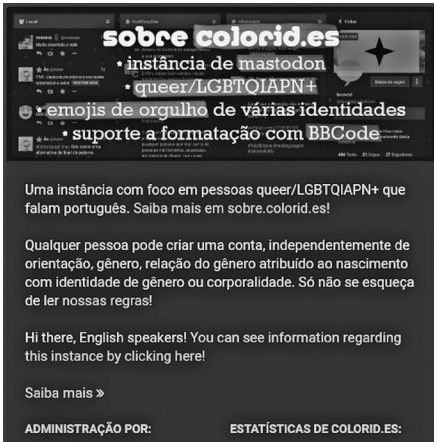
FIGURE 9.4 About page of colorid.es Text retrieved from their official English version: "Colorid.es (from colorides, 'colorful people') is an instance focused on the queer/LGBTQIAPN+ community. Anyone can make an account, but don't be surprised if you encounter few het, cis and perisex people here. We take our rules seriously, so please read that section before making an account. Also, this is an instance primarily for Portuguese speakers. People who don't speak Portuguese or who will also speak in other languages are welcome, though, as long as our moderation team can handle it!"

FIGURE 9.5 About page of bantu.social Translation: "Mastodon instance focused on non-white Brazilian people."

9.3.3 Restoring Social Movements' Autonomy Over Online Communication

In the Brazilian Mastodon activism, there is a clear arrangement of actors and a corresponding narrative on who has and should have control and autonomy over digital infrastructure, content, and data. Interviewees strongly endorse the critique that corporate digital platforms, the GAFAM, have excessive control over current online communication, reproducing the surveillance capitalism thesis (Zuboff, 2019b). They affirm that big companies are "monopolizing" (interviewee I2) the internet and harming the autonomy of citizens, who have

to surrender their personal data to few stakeholders mostly located in foreign countries (interviewees I1, I2, I3, I4, and I5). But they also reveal concerns regarding the way state power can make use of the centralized data provided by few market companies, not only in authoritarian regimes, but also in liberal democracies, especially by the United States (interviewee I4).

While discussing this dominance, they advance a classical argument of FOSS communities: the nostalgia regarding the early days of the decentralized internet, which frames their normative expectations. All interviewees, at some point of conversation, refer to the need of returning to a stage of networked communication when the forces of commercialization did not colonize most online activities. Illustrating this argument, one interviewee said: "We have lost this spirit of the beginning of the internet, when you used IRC [messaging application], those obscure fora… And the data you put there were not monetized. These were discussions for the sake of discussions" (interviewee I4).

Accordingly, activists believe that the ideal situation would be the individual having full control of their social media data. An interviewee said: "Ideally control would be in the hands of users as individuals, at least controlling their own data" (interviewee I1). But collectives of the civil society are mentioned more often as appropriate agents of autonomy struggle in the digital realm. When asked about "sovereignty for whom," interviewees focused on the collective organization and digital emancipation of the LGBTQIA+ community, people of color, people with disabilities, and indigenous people (interviewees I1, I2, I4, and I5). Some activists argue that these social movements should incorporate struggles for control over the digital infrastructure as part of their own struggles. One interviewee even asked: "Isn't it absurd how progressive groups organise themselves on Facebook? It's like Jews saying 'let's go to Auschwitz, we organise ourselves there and fight against the Nazis'" (interviewee I2).

This weighed approach regarding the roles and responsibilities of individuals and collectives shows that current Mastodon activism in Brazil is aware of the limitations of an unfettered individualist approach. In this sense, it distances itself from cyberlibertarian accounts that, as seen before, have historically marked much of FOSS activism. Activists fear excessively burdening citizens and users. Despite their appreciation of individual autonomy, they believe that responsibility – and the most promising results – lies on collective structures of governance (interviewees I1, I2, I4, and I5).

Furthermore, although activists concentrate on the agency of collectives from the civil society, they do not discard participation of the state in online affairs. Nothing close, however, to strong claims of state sovereignty discourses. For example, Brazilian administrators and moderators see no point in the main measure of the state digital sovereignty discourse, namely data localization (interviewees I2, I4, and I5). Server location of the Brazilian instances already indicates their flexible approach in this regard, as only one of the six communities is hosted in Brazilian territory. All others are in either the United States or Canada.

Interviewed activists are also skeptical of other ideas from the toolbox of state sovereignty discourses, such as publicly owned and managed social networking. None of them showed support to this measure, some were actually surprised about the possibility of such a debate. This does not mean that Brazilian administrators and moderators see no role for the state. "I don't think that having a publicly-funded instance would be an advantage. Instead, it would be a good advantage if we had grants to support developers working on free software in order to bring this knowledge [to the country]. [Other possibility would be] funding for a research centre on the Fediverse at a Brazilian university" (interviewee I1). In addition, activists claim for public regulation to enforce transparency, an approach that later became central in the parliamentary proposal to regulate digital platforms (Tomaz, 2023). "Governments should not control what kinds of data are consumed, where they are transferred to or where they should be stored, but demand more transparency from these companies [digital platforms]," complemented another interviewee (interviewee I2). Thus, activism shows concern regarding the privatization of the governance of the public sphere, but from a perspective that is more akin to liberal discourses, whereby the role of the state is to offer good conditions for allowing the civil society to create its own solutions. In the case of social networking, this means regulating big business, investing in local technical knowledge, and providing population with appropriate media and data literacy (interviewees I1, I2, and I5).

Most interviewees appreciate what Mastodon offers to fulfill their normative expectations, namely to restore civil society control over social networking. Following the reasoning of the text *A people's history of the Fediverse* (Freedombone.net, n.d.), interviewees adopt the argument that the Fediverse provides the conditions for a middle ground approach. It rejects platform centralization, but does not burden too much the individual. "Mastodon is a halfway, so to say, a transitional stage where power moves from the private hand to the collective, so you would be able to make collectives that can pull that power back to the user and eventually return it fully to the user," said an interviewee (interviewee I1).

Furthermore, they value Mastodon's rejection of algorithmic curation, which promotes more transparency regarding data. "Mastodon, despite all its problems and they are many, makes it easier to have some order because it is real people moderating, not algorithms, not big companies, not people who want your engagement for the good or the evil as long as it generates profit," says an interviewee (interviewee I2). This confirms Mansoux and Abbing's (2020) point on the shift to a social understanding of privacy and control.

However, the emphasis on technical affordances can still be felt in much of the conception of Brazilian administrators and moderators. This is the case when they relegate state-related investment to the technical development of free software, undermining the conditions for a political debate about publicly owned and managed instances. Another evidence comes

from the fact that only one of the interviewees has no background as software developer (interviewee I3). By highlighting the technical aspect of federated social media, Mastodon activism risks reproducing some aspects of the belief in technological determinism that fueled the cyberspace sovereignty discourse.

9.3.4 Pitfalls of Resistance from the Margins

Finally, I address here the extent to which peripheral countries participate in Fediverse activism, shaping and adapting it to their specific demands. A simple comparison between the Brazilian internet population (around 160 million users in an overall population of over 210 million people) and the number of participants in Brazilian instances of Mastodon (merely 1,200 active users) exemplifies how fringe federated social media still are. The movement struggles to achieve any critical mass that would be able to meaningfully influence digital sovereignty in FOSS terms. Network effects favoring established commercial players and digital resignation, among other factors, play against such a community-led initiative. The long-term effects of the Twitter takeover by Elon Musk are yet to be seen, as this fact can be a game changer.

Even within the Fediverse itself, Brazil seems to be far away from the prominent role it has played in the broader FOSS movement in the past. Indeed, the whole Global South falls short of the contribution to the recursive public of the Fediverse. Despite constant growth since 2016, Mastodon remains largely concentrated in Europe and North America. In 2021, the United States, France, and Germany hosted 65% of all servers. Adding up Japan, this comes nearly to 80% of Mastodon instances concentrated in four rich countries. The Global South, on the other hand, is underrepresented. At that time, Brazil run 0.4% of the instances, and only China, another BRICS country, performed better (see Table 9.2). There is no evidence that this power imbalance has changed since the beginning of the Musk-motivated Twitter migration. The fivefold growth of active users since then remains astoundingly concentrated on the US and Europe. This clearly contradicts the history of geopolitical engagement of peripheral countries with FOSS, even more striking as the internet infrastructure itself has been tipping in the last two decades toward the BRICS and the Global South (Winseck, 2017).

My research does not allow to draw definitive conclusions on the reasons for this, but certainly economic constraints play a role. Costs of operating small instances, between 30 and 200 active users, vary between 50 and 400 dollars a year, and poor economies will certainly lack financial resources to sustain such a voluntary, non commercial effort. However, the governance structure of Mastodon also contributes to this situation. Despite the ideological stance for decentralization, governance is still centralized in key figures, undermining possibilities and interest of activism from the margins. Some

TABLE 9.2 *Participation of countries in Mastodon in 2021: instances, users, and posts*

Country	Instances	%	Active Users	%	Posts	%
Top countries in terms of instances						
US	581	24.37%	68,725	15.72%	52,177,794	14.53%
France	577	24.20%	51,340	11.74%	22,521,403	6.27%
Germany	394	16.53%	108,065	24.71%	52,035,253	14.49%
Japan	345	14.47%	118,101	27.01%	207,467,657	57.78%
China	101	4.24%	26,986	6.17%	7,601,084	2.12%
Canada	68	2.85%	3,691	0.32%	1,941	0.44%
UK	48	2.01%	7,036	0.62%	3,951	0.90%
Comparison with Brazil						
Brazil	8	0.34%	1,224	0.28%	628,424	0.18%
TOTAL	2,380		437,822		358,749,149	

Source: Compilation by the author, based on data available at https://the-federation.info. Latest update in June 2021. In this table, I consider only instances with more than one monthly active user.

activists criticize Rochko's management and development of Mastodon as a reproduction of the "Benevolent Dictator For Life" model (Valens, 2019), an opinion shared by a moderator of a Brazilian instance who has engaged over years with Mastodon governance: "He [Eugen Rochko] is a very privileged person, who has a corresponding worldview that sometimes make it difficult for him to accept other perspectives" (interviewee I4). Reflecting on the development structure of Mastodon around a "benevolent dictator" and the overwhelming majority of Anglo-American white people, this interviewee reports that marginalized groups coming from the global periphery resist to join it: "This [the difficulties to participate in Mastodon] is especially true if we look at black people, indigenous peoples and many other marginalized groups who have several problems to express themselves and be heard by those who develop the software and moderate the communities" (interviewee I4). This interviewee complements: "The very few Black people who are on Mastodon now are there for the sake of resistance" (interviewee I4). According to this interviewee, it is common that persons from these countries and social groups come from Twitter and join a Mastodon instance for a while but, after perceiving its whiteness, return to Twitter, where there are already established communities such as the Black Twitter.

Thus, even if the Fediverse might be celebrated by its possibilities of decentralization, the lack of participation of the Global South in Mastodon brings again to the fore the shortcomings of merely technical approaches. More than openness and federation, politicization of social media infrastructure

requires collaboration, negotiation, and explicit choices at all possible layers. "The code might be open, but there is no real collaboration if Eugen [and the small group of developers around him] is not open to discussion," complemented the same interviewee (interviewee I4).

Despite the hurdles to actively participate in and shape the ecosystem of federated social media, Brazilian administrators and moderators see positive repercussions in their country, especially for the marginalized groups of populations. One interviewee reinforces this idea: "White, European, North American people still dominate the internet. Federated social media allow us to reach these marginalized people which Facebook and Elon Musk don't know. Marginalized people fighting together with marginalized people" (interviewee I2). This must be read, of course, as optimism regarding the potential of alternative social media, and not as a factual observation, as Fediverse figures still do not allow to affirm any significant reach. At best, they suggest more autonomy and independence for some individuals within these collectives.

If, on the one hand, Brazilian collectives of civil society are meant to be empowered, the nation-state in its territorial sense, on the other hand, is not thought of as an actor that could enjoy more sovereignty with the Fediverse, weakening once more state digital sovereignty claims. The dismay in face of Bolsonaro's ultraconservative government at the time of the interviews and the perception that the independence of Brazilian institutions was under threat, as some interviewees explicitly expressed (interviewees I1, I2, and I4), might have increased skepticism regarding strong sovereignty measures by the state, such as data localization and publicly funded internet services. Only one instance, "Ursal.zona," considers the necessity of a more active role of the nation-state in the development of an independent Brazilian and Latin American digital communication.

This emphasis on collectives of the civil society when thinking about the Global South, instead of the territorial framing of nation-states, represents a reformulation of collective struggles that often favors cross-country allegiances around shared experiences and subjectivities over national solidarity. This is in line with late resignifications of the Global South beyond its geographical categories (Mahler, 2018). Nonetheless, there is also a risk in this approach, namely to excessively minimize the geopolitical dimensions of technological power. The business model of tech companies benefits from and reproduces, at least to a certain extent, the old patterns of colonialism and exploitation from the Northern nation-states, as scholars have increasingly argued (Avila Pinto, 2018; Couldry & Mejias, 2019). In fact, geopolitical power imbalance has been a matter of concern in digital sovereignty discourses from the Global South, including those which have focused on FOSS as part of the strategy (Schoonmaker, 2018), but it is almost non-existent in the discourse and practices of Mastodon activism in Brazil. Federated social media activists would provide an even richer contribution to the politicization of social media infrastructure if they could integrate into their framework a geopolitical dimension that acknowledges nation-state as a site of struggle, which also bears the capacity to tackle power imbalances and protect its citizens from exploitation.

9.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I proposed to understand the digital sovereignty claims in Brazilian activism on Mastodon. Clearly this activism has a well-organized narrative and advances a politicized notion of digital social networking that differs from the alleged neutrality of the FOSS movement. It distances itself from individual claims of sovereignty by reinforcing the role of collectives of civil society in the management of the digital resources. The state is not rejected *tout court*. Activists expect it to regulate big business, making it more transparent, and support free software initiatives, which could expand the spectrum of alternative social media. But they clearly do not see an active role by the state such as operating publicly funded networks. Considering Couture and Toupin's (2019) categorization, Brazilian activism positions the Fediverse in *social movements and digital sovereignty discourses*, roughly equivalent to the "commons digital sovereignty" explained in the introduction of the book.

However, Brazil and other peripheral countries still lag behind in their capacity of shaping the development of federated social media in the benefit of their populations. Shortcomings in the project, such as economic constraints in hosting networks and the predominance of male, white, Anglo-European people in both governance and usage, undermine participation from marginalized groups. In addition, Brazilian activism still attaches little value to the geopolitical dimension of struggles regarding social media, missing a historical contribution of technological sovereignty claims from the Global South and possibly a broader understanding of the conditions that sustain current power imbalances. Even if state sovereignty does not belong to the core concerns of Fediverse activists, it is unlikely that the sovereignty they aim at, namely of social movements, will succeed without resisting the nearly universal reach of corporate social media. This will require at least some alliance with local political and economic powers, without which federated online communication will continue to be a paper tiger fighting the enormous economic and intellectual resources available in the core of capitalism. At the time of writing, even after Musk has taken several controversial decisions, Twitter still has a hundred times more active users than Mastodon. Facebook, thousandfold.

Brazilian activism on Mastodon represents, therefore, a further step in the politicization of the FOSS movement and the commons digital sovereignty, away from any value-neutral thinking. On the other hand, it is departing from the historical politicization of global inequalities in technological power promoted by earlier FOSS appropriations in the Global South, which stressed the inexorable reality of state power in the reproduction of digital inequalities and upheld *counterpower at the same level*.

Appendix I

Interview Protocol

This is the interview protocol for the chapter "Brazilian Activism in Mastodon: Sovereignty Discourses between Cyberlibertarianism and State-Centrism." It is mostly based on the interview protocol refinement framework (IPR) for semi-structured interviews (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). All interviews were conducted in Brazilian Portuguese between native speakers. Therefore, the scripts and the questions below are a translation of the original ones, whose correctness and accuracy are entirely under the author's responsibility.

The interviews aimed at providing data to answer the following research question (RQ):

RQ 1: How do Brazilian activists on Mastodon articulate concepts and practices related to digital sovereignty discourses?

This RQ was broken down into the following units:

RQ 1.1: What are and should be the digital stakeholders with sovereignty?
RQ 1.2: What are and should be the relevant digital practices for achieving sovereignty?
RQ 1.3: What is the contribution of Mastodon activism to empower the desired digital stakeholders and promote sovereign digital practices?

The interview questions (IQ) are related both to these sub-research questions and to background information (BI).

PART I – Script prior to the interview					
Thank you for your time to participate in this interview. We have already talked about the basics of this interview in our [Mastodon] message exchanges, but I'd like to make an official introduction. My name is Tales Tomaz, I am a researcher at the University of Salzburg and I'm working now on an article about digital sovereignty and federated social media, within the scope of a project of a research group at FGV. It will be presented in a conference in July. Depending on the results, this article might become a book chapter published in English. I will let you know in case this happens. For the sake of accuracy, I would like to record our talk, if you have nothing against it. Data will be deleted immediately after the conclusion of this project.					
If you don't understand any question, no problems, I can repeat or ask it in other words.					
PART II – Interview questions on personal involvement/practices					
		BI	RQ 1.1	RQ 1.2	RQ 1.3
IQ 1	What is your area of professional activity?	x			

IQ 2	*For administrators*: For how long does the instance XXX exist?	x			
IQ 3	*For administrators*: How did you become an instance administrator? *For moderators*: How did you become a Mastodon moderator?	x			
IQ 4	What are your main activities in the management of the instance? How many weekly hours do you dedicate? Do you have help?	x			
IQ 5	Did you have previous experience with FOSS?	x			

PART III – Short introduction to theoretical concepts

When talking about digital sovereignty, we are talking about independence and autonomy over digital infrastructure and content. We usually talk about the following stakeholders:

- States
  - Public authorities in liberal democracies (e.g., the United States, European Union, and Brazil)
  - Governments of authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes (e.g., China and Russia)
- Private companies
  - Transnational big techs (e.g., Facebook and Alphabet/Google)
  - Private national companies
- Civil society
  - Collectives (e.g., NGOs, unions, churches, and social movements)
  - Individual users

There are different narratives about who (among these stakeholders) currently holds control and autonomy, who should have this control and autonomy, and how this should be achieved. I want to know how Mastodon situates itself in these narratives.

PART IV – Interview questions on concepts and understanding of digital sovereignty

		BI	RQ 1.1	RQ 1.2	RQ 1.3
IQ 6	In your opinion, who holds currently more control and autonomy over communication in social media?		x		
IQ 7	In your opinion, who should have more control and autonomy over communication in social media?		x		

IQ	Question				
IQ 8	Does Mastodon help to give more control and autonomy to these stakeholders? How?				x
IQ 9	In your opinion, is the location of communication data, in other words, where our data is located, important? *If yes*: Then, with whom (among these stakeholders)? Does Mastodon help in this? *If no*: next question		x	x	x
IQ 10	In your opinion, is the offer of this kind of service [microblogging and social media] by domestic stakeholders important? *If yes*: Then, by whom (among these stakeholders)? Does Mastodon help in this? *If no*: next question		x	x	x
IQ 11	In your opinion, is the adoption by the user of practices that promote more data protection important? *If yes*: Does Mastodon help in this? *If no*: next question		x	x	x
IQ 12	Do you see Mastodon's potential of contribution to Brazil in the current scenario of digital platforms? For whom (among these stakeholders)?				x
IQ 13	Is there a role for the public power (especially in Brazil) in expanding the model of relation to digital infrastructure and content presented by Fediverse and Mastodon? *If yes*: Which? *If no*: closing remarks		x		x

PART V – Closing remarks

Thank you for your time and patience. Now I'm stopping the recording. As said, raw data will be deleted immediately after the conclusion of this project and will not be used in further works. If needed, I will contact you once again for another interview. When my paper is revised and ready for publication, I will send it to you. If it will become a book chapter, I will let you know. Thanks again!