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Criticism Inside, Alternatives Alongside: Organizing Otherwise to Intervene in Anthropology's Future.

Public, Open/Libre, Commons: Cultures of Liberation and the Liberation of Culture in Anthropology with Alberto Corsín Jiménez, Reader, Department of Social Anthropology, Spanish National Research Council, Madrid

>> BILL MAURER: We'll get started in a couple of minutes, as we wait for people to come in from the waiting room.

>> BILL MAURER: Again, thanks for your patience as we wait for people to file in from the waiting room. This is

"Criticism Inside, Alternatives

Alongside: Organizing Otherwise to Intervene in Anthropology's Future.".

This is the seventh our virtual conversations here sponsored by the School of Social Sciences and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological research. This event will be recorded, and it will be posted on the UC Irvine School of Social Sciences website where you can also see the other conversations we hosted in the series. We have three more after today and the full schedule is posted on the Wenner-Gren website and the UC Irvine School of Social Sciences website. I think we'll just go ahead and get started. Thank you all so much for joining us from wherever you are. We are ourselves are spread out over five time zones, so given the theme of today's conversation, that's appropriate.

I am Bill Maurer, the Dean of the School of Social Sciences at the University of California, Irvine.

This event and the UC Irvine campus are within the

Ancestral and unceded shared territories of the Acjachemen and Tongva. The region extends from the Santa Ana River to Aliso Creek and Beyond. As members of a land grant institution, we acknowledge the Acjachemen and Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers whose efforts To steward and protect the land continue today.And I will hand it off now to take to Taylor Nelms.

>> TAYLOR NELMS: And I'm Taylor Nelms, the Senior Director of Research at the Filene Research Institute. Today, we are thrilled to be joined by Dr. Alberto Corsín Jiménez! Alberto is Reader in the Department of Social Anthropology at the

Spanish National Research Council in Madrid. So not only are we spread out across time zones, I think we have three continents represented on the panel today. Alberto has written

wide on a truly diverse range of topics, I was trying to think about how best to talk about Alberto's research biography and I think maybe just the long list of things at that Alberto has written about might be useful. So Alberto is really in my mind, you know, your work is often reflected on and expanded on anthropological contexts in a really reflexive way, everything from space to infrastructure to prototypes to trust, to well-being, to organization, to the very notions of the relation or the concept themselves. Alberto is the author of, among many other publications, the bookAn Anthropological Trompe L'oeil For a Common World. Later on in the conversation we'll be joined by three Ph.D students: Kim Fernandes from the University of Pennsylvania, Nina Medvedeva from the University of Minnesota, and Nima Yolmo from the University of California, Irvine. We want to thank the Wenner-Gren Foundation and the UCI School of Social Sciencesand to remind everybody on the line here that we'll have time for your questions, so please do use the Q & A feature to submit those questions, and we'll circle back to them towards the middle and end of the conversation. So Alberto, thank you so much for being here and talking with us today.

>> DR. ALBERTO CORSIN JIMENEZ: My pleasure. Thank you so much for inviting me, Taylor and Bill, thanks so much, Nina and Nima and Kim for joining us and the conversation and to Jenny Fan who has been sort of behind the backstage for all the background preparations. My pleasure.

>> TAYLOR NELMS: Great. Thanks. Just one more quick reminder, this event is being live captioned by Lori Yeager Stavropoulos, so Lori, thank you so much. Just click the live transcription button at the bottom of the screen if you would like to access those captions. And we will also be working to translate the transcript of this particular conversation into Spanish after the completion of the webinar. So Alberto, let's kick things off, maybe you can tell us a little bit about what you do and how you ended up doing the work you're doing. Give us a little bit of that intellectual and professional biography, if you don't mind.

>> DR. ALBERTO CORSIN: Sure. I think first I'm the first non-U.S. based scholar in this series, so I think it would be good to introduce, kind of to start by saying that the liberal public sphere that shapes anthropology academia in the U.S. and UK which provided my background, sort of when I started thinking about this conversation, I thought that if I could give a sense of what the structure of that liberal public sphere is, at the end of the summer, people would walk away with a sense of how it's positioned institutionally as professional practitioners

but also as an intellectual field, how it is positioned within that space, vis-a-vis people's ideas of how that space might be n the U.S. or Anglo-Saxon academy largely, and I would be happy with that. So very quickly, I mean I would say that I was trained as an anthropologist in the UK. I left Spain when I was very young, when I was about 20, for University in the UK. I trained first as an economist, and I worked as a futures and options broker in London, but very quickly sort of in terms of anthropology and trained as an anthropologist in UK and got my first appointments in the UK and altogether spent about 20 years there and I finally moved back to Spain in 2009 so my upbringing as an academic and as an anthropologist in particular was within the context of the UK academia, and upon arriving in Spain really, I had a dual identity, almost a double citizenship. I was an 18-year-old, so I mean, my notion of myself as a Spaniard, the C the person had left at the age of 18 and I had spoken Spanish like an 18-year-old so I didn't have the baggage or the equipment, the academic equipment that was expected from a Spanish academic, but I did have that equipment as sort of an Anglo-Saxon trained anthropologist. So upon arriving in Spain, I was lucky enough to be funded in 2009 when I landed had, I was lucky to be majorly funded to carry out an ethnography which I imagined at the time as a kind of relatively straightforward ethnography kind of organizational or SDS inflected ethnography of digital arts and digital cultural center, which is a public media lab, public because it's publicly funded, it's owned and managed by Madrid's municipality.

So I very early on in that research project, I was joined by another anthropologist here in Spain called Adolpho -- and all work since been collaborative and work together I'll be talking about today, I've thought about it, and in the companionship with Adolpho. So I was joined by Adolpho, we got started, and to our surprise we very quickly realized that media lab, that public funded digital arts center was populated by kind of very interesting, a number of very interesting communities. On the one hand, you had your digital artists and data scientists and hackers, and also there were a number of people who labeled themselves as free culture activists. And for those of you who are not acquaint understand at free culture movement, the free culture movement began had the late 1990s, was a digitally born movement that aimed for the free circulation on the digital age on the internet so basically against the encroachment of intellectual property law and copyright, et cetera, on the circulation of digital content. So these are people like Richard Storman who was a very famous hacker, or Lawrence

Lesseck the Harvard intellectual property law professor who amongst others invented the or developed the creative commerce licenses or even indeed the whole Wikipedia movement, those are sort of emblematic exemplars of the free culture movement, or Wikipedia created comments, et cetera.

But finally in the Spanish context the free culture activists we met in 2009 there were some hackers and intellectual property lawyers who are the figures of the movement but most of them oactually what we sort in the southern European context or in the European context approximate are known as autonomous activists, these are kind of people who have been struggling for the right to the city, for the urban commons, against youth in the Spanish context against can youth precarity, we have a huge youth unemployment in Spain with almost 40 percent of under 30s unemployed.

So you have urban commoners, actually squatters, so squatter social centers. So he have a right to the CT nailed, right to CT activists, neighborhood association as squatters who were in the late 1990s the recipients or vehicles through which the free culture movement landed in Spain. So not your usual suspects. I mean, you had hackers, but hackers who developed think work as free culture activists within the context of, you know, those urban autonomous groups.

And then you had also architects, community guerrilla community architects, and you had community artists. So essentially, in 2009, you know, what we thought was going to be, you know, the way we had imagined an ethnography of a media lab, populated by digital artists, maybe some hackers, maybe some data scientists, it turns out to be not an ethnography a digital culture or new form of digital practice, but it turns out to be an ethnography of -- an urban ethnography really. And in that context, we realized that there were kind of three public spheres or three spheres of interlocution. So we had the public sphere, because this was a public institution, so a publicly funded, you know, welfare state institution, your classic idea of welfarism, the media lab as an icon or as a beacon of the delivery of public goods or public service, then you had the commons activists, so interlocution with the public institution was interesting, they were trying to rearticulate or redirected in favor of the commons, so, you know, they kind of refashioned idea off the public in the language and in the theoretical vocabulary of the commons, and then upped the free culture activists who again had a completely different idea of what the public -- you know, what was at stake in the transformation of the public sphere because for them, it was working on and

entailed particular infrastructural transformations, of technological sovereignty, hackers wanted the internet to be free but not free as in, you know, gratis but free as in freedom, and they wanted the infrastructures of the internet, they wanted the archives and the repositories, and, you know, the underlying technologies, they wanted them to be free. So their conception of the public sphere was really, you know, in their imaginary is a free sphere, or a libres free. So this is what we came across, a very interesting scenario where the public, the commons, and the libres were traversed by kind of similar population of activists, but whose allegiance and genealogies were different. So the commoners activists, they claimed allegiance to autonomous tradition, anarchist traditions, especially Spanish, you know, our what we in Spain call Republican, which is the exact antithesis of American Republican, so basically anarchist traditions, free culture activists who laid claim to allegiance or traced their genealogies to partly Californiin ideas, ideas of utopianism, also anarc -- liberal socialism and then you have your classic public institution which laid allegiance to the welfare state and the second half sort of, you know, late 20th century ideas of liberal social democracy, et cetera.

So that's the context where I parachuted in 2009 in a UK-trained social anthropologist. So that's kind of my background.

>> TAYLOR NELMS: I wonder if we might ask you to reflect a little bit on since then, how do you think your anthropology or your social science has been shaped by or changed in response to your engagement with this really diverse set of social movements? And, you know, intellectual and political traditions.

>> DR. ALBERTO CORSIN JIMENEZ: So I would say completely. So I look back, and the person I was in are, say, and this is a bit of a caricature, the academic I was in pre2009 is completely different persona than the academic am today. So for instance, when I landed in Spain, in this climate, you know, in this scenario, so many people, some of my interlocutors were incredibly articulate, you had intellectual property lawyers, you had hackers, community architects and community artists who had been experimenting with their own form of communication and sometimes publishing, so Fanzine, pamphlets, manifestos, museum exhibition catalogs, sometimes academic booths, and taking those genres and forms and venues to the limit. In the case of hackers, for instance, often experimenting with forms of trying to cancel the idea of author and experimenting with

multiauthorship and anonymous identities and blinding those conceptions of the author in the material form itself of the communication outlet. So for instance the early blogs and early sort of podcasts or free radio programs which, you know, which often took place in particular kinds of neighborhoods, marginal neighborhoods, and there were ways to empower local communities and therefore to experiment with who was the person, the agent that was claiming enunciation in those spaces, was it the nailed, was it the squatters social center, was it the guerrilla architect or the collective, was it a group of anonymous hackers that were violating copyright and therefore it was paramount that they completely left no traces of their own sort of personal identity?

So I came across these people who had been experimenting in forms of publishing, in forms of communication handling their own archives and repositories and infrastructures for doing these things, so famously in the case of hackers, you know, everyone has heard of intermedia in 1988, 1989 with the Seattle global protests and the sudden appearance of the global independent media centers, in the Spanish case, Spain was one of the earliest subscribers to the inetermedian format, hacker activists, hackers enabling new form of communication. So I was completely, for me, the discovery of a new public sphere or the discovery that the public sphere was shaped and materialized and staged in completely different ways, that it requires infrastructures and material supports and effective communities which were completely different from those of the academy, many as I had known it.

>> BILL MAURER: Then I wonder if you could just say a word about, you know, you said sort of this before and after moment, you weren't the same person before as you came. Could you talk about that also not just in relation to the diversity of publics that you then encountered and engaged with and were in conversation with, but also about your work itself and how you imagined your work but also like what this anthropology thing is?

>> DR. ALBERTO CORSIN JIMENEZ: Yeah. So for instance, in the Spanish context, one of the things we picked up, Adolpho and I picked up, was that this is a very eclectic community of people, so you have hackers and artists and community architects and autonomous activists for the right of the city or the fighting against precarity of youth unemployment or illegal immigration, in favor of illegal immigrants, so really eclectic community.

But they all seemed to converge on a notion of their work

as -- and this is the word they would often use -- as a prototype. So for them, the idea of the prototypes, allowed them to speak because of the connotations of the work, allowed them to speak because social technical designs or technical infrastructures, so prototypes is things as particular, say, as website or an archive or an infrastructure, but it also gesture understand the idea of the prototype gestured to a sociotechnical design that is not closed, is opened, is in a prototype state and is enabled to remain opened by particular kinds of tools, like free intellectual property licenses or free patents, which means that anyone can pick up the prototype and work on it and modify it and edit it and take it home, so long as whatever they do to it, they respect the conditions upon which they received it. So you can take a prototype and improve it or modify it or do whatever you want to do with it, but you cannot copyright it because that would violate the terms under which you got it. So prototype or designs with particular kind of legal licenses attached to them, particular kind of infrastructures of collaboration. So a prototype in the imagination of the people I worked with could work as a prototype because it was open for other people focus in and edit it and modify it, so it was designed in in such a way that it carried an infrastructure of collaboration. So for instance, saying we're talking about the design in a community architect that are working with a marginal neighborhood community and trying to build a playground for the children in that marginal neighborhood. And the designs for that playground, they put up the designs on the internet so that anyone can look at them and download them and improve them and et cetera. Now, the standard software that architects use for architectural drawing and designing, it's proprietary. So you need to buy, you need to buy a license to work with the software, and therefore, you download the designs for the internet. It's no good because you don't have the license that will enable you to run the software to tinker with the designs. So community architects have, in realizing that, eventually what they did is to develop their own software. So they have to become software hackers in order to do their architectural work, right? So that's what building infrastructures of collaboration means. We need to build the software that allows others to work with us in order to do our work together, in order to do our work as architects. So the prototype entails or embodies all these little things, a particular attitude or sensibility or orientation to the law, to legal licenses, a particular attitude or sensibility to the infrastructures of collaboration, to putting up documentation on

the web for others to learn, et cetera. So go back to your question, Bill.

In working with these communities, with these people, it became quite -- eventually it became obvious to us that it would be almost impossible for us to study free culture prototyping without can becoming ourselves, without turning our own ethnography into a prototype for free culture. So what would ethnography, ethnography as a free culture object look like, right? What kind of legal transformations would we have to inject to the discipline? What kind of infrastructures of collaboration would we have to design? What kind of pedagogical vectors we would have to -- so kind of thinking through the transformation of ethnography as a prototype inspired by our free culture interlocutors challenge us to rethink ethnography through those kind of three vectors, legal challenge, legal licenses, the design of infrastructures of the collaboration and the design of new form of pedagogical sort of companionship or accompaniment.

And we did it through a number of ways so maybe the one project we're most proud of is a project called (Speaking Spanish) the city as school which is a digital archive, digital infrastructure we built with community activists, with architects, basically all the groups of people that I mentioned before and it's kind of a repository of urban apprenticeships, you know, how different communities in different cities, in this case in Spain, although the project has been replicated in some Latin American countries, how different urban communities make explicit different trajectories of apprenticeship, things they're learning that have been proved useful, could be anything from running a community assembly using What'sApp or slack or, you know, Indigenous this or that digital tool or building community based cartographic tools. So this repository that we built is an archive of all those grassroots bottom up systems of apprenticeship, of learning pedagogical tools, et cetera.

>> TAYLOR NELMS: So the idea here if I'm hearing you correctly is that in some ways many of the central principles and techniques associated with this really diverse group of free culture activists and organizers and architects, et cetera, et cetera, teachers, so on, those became models, maybe even prototypes themselves for what your vision of can anthropology or ethnography could do. So I guess my question is, then, can how did these folks imagine the anthropologists in their midst, right? So what, in their imagination, could anthropology or ethnography do for them? If anything.

>> DR. ALBERTO CORSIN JIMENEZ: That is a very good question.

We're still trying to figure it out. So I think it took them a long time, a very long time, to appreciate the distinctiveness of ethnography as a sensibility, but I think, now, maybe I'm talking like six or seven years but of late, over the last three or four years, I think our skill as ethnographers, so the specificity of our participating in this ongoing experiments for almost ten years now, the specificity of ethnography as a mode of description, as a mode of attentiveness, as a mode of making connections between places, things, people, sometimes comparative connections, sometimes analytical connections, I would say that that takes, at least if our case, it took a long time for our interlocutors to appreciate it, but now it's something they value and they value what we bring as writers, so one of our most treasures skills is writing, so they value our writing skills and they often ask us to help writing proposals or writing manifestos or writing documents for, you know, which are going to be sent to the -- or in political authorities, so writing is a value skill.

But also the intensity of the gaze, of outlook, I think it's also valued.

>> BILL MAURER: I think this might lead right into one of our next questions, but it looks like Taylor is going to ask it.

>> TAYLOR NELMS: No, go ahead, Bill,ment question I had and I'll leapt you follow up because I'm interested to hear what you have to say too is, one of the ways or one of the channels maybe in which anthropology or ethnography might be repurposed in this kind of prototyped way is in publishing, right? That's one of the key sites of contestation for free culture activists and for anthropology in its encounter with free culture activist and is social movement. So I wonder if we could ask you to reflect a little bit on your work on academic publishing, you know, on a particular project maybe that you're involved in to kind of remake publishing in its encounter, you know, in the kind of intersection between academia and free culture. Was that what you were going to ask, Bill?

>> DR. ALBERTO CORSIN JIMENEZ: So yes, I've always been very interested in the digital as a medium of expression and as a tool that is transforming the 21st century and public sphere, so when I was back in the UK, I was involved, I think I was amongst the very first bloggers in a kind of failed experiment that the association of social anthropologists had called the global lock, horrible name, no wonder that it failed, it was like 2005 or 2006, so, you know, the medium of the digital was always, as a user and as maybe an advanced user or as a young user, I was very much into T but my experience of its importance to the

structural transformation of anthropology was foreign to me until I started work with fro culture activists, and because that's the hallmark of what they do is that the structural transformation of the public sphere will only happen if we take seriously, we take command and control of its legal -- the tools in which it's legalized, the tools in which its infrastructure lies and the tools and the storytelling tools through which it's documented and pedagogyized, so that came as a shock to me. And when I every day from work with free culture activists and suddenly in taking refuge in my, you know, sense of self as an anthropologist, I was ashamed, you know, I was like our discipline is -- what we've done to our discipline over the last twenty -- you know, this was ten years ago, to 2009, 2010, the state of the discipline then, it was horrific, you know. Our main scholarly journals we had over the past 30 years, we had transferred sometimes ownership, sometime just means of publishing to the big commercial publishing houses to the Wylies and Sage and Elseveres, and not only that, but also our archives. So, you know, we were letting go of the process of digitalization of our archives and letting some of the these giant publishers to take control of that.

And in so doing, really defining what our future scholarly public sphere is going to look like. So whenever we Google for an article, you know, we have lost entirely control of how the list of results, you know, which articles appear at the top, which articles appear at the bottom. So our own interests and intellectual agendas are being completely shaped by other people. And eventually, it's just an issue of not holding up to the challenges that my interlocutors were putting to us, so basic questions we all face as anthropologists, where are you going to publish this stuff, how are we going to read it, and saying, well, up won't be able to read it unless you pay $40, so basic it was at that time that I decided to become more active or try to become more active in pushing or trying to push our discipline into organize this activism, mostly by way of our learned societies. So at the end of the day, not all, but some of the most important journals in the discipline are owned by lone societies, so AAA owns 22 journals, the -- anthropological institute owns three or four journals, so it's crucial to try to lobby and start to create lobbying groups can or an intellectual climate and I joined the company of other people who had been doing it for a long time and just trying to reach out and lend a hand.

That's when in about 2012 or '13 we decided to launch Libraria, people pronounce it different ways, which was just

basically a group of four or five people who had over the years become committed to opening access to anthropological materials and just becoming a nuisance at AAA meetings or the AAA Executive and Yanza executive and royal anthropological institute, and that's it. We're not to be commended for anything, just the fact we've been a nuisance for a long time, and just the climate of opinion has changed. Not because of us, but because of many other transformations. But yeah.

>> BILL MAURER: I just want to give a quick shout out to the librarians of the world, incidentally, just because at least in my institutional location in UC Irvine and the University of California system, it's been our librarians who have really been at the forefront of pushing for open access and open publishing and have been taking the battle to the Elseveres of the world and it's certainly kind of changed the way that many of our research faculty think about publishing, they might actually stop, especially I think on the STEM side of campus, they might actually stop and think, hmm, maybe not this journal, we need to other journal instead.

Taylor, are we going to hand it over to Nina, Nima and Kim now, I think?

>> TAYLOR NELMS: Yeah. Absolutely. Let's hand it over to our trio of Ph.D. students to, yeah, ask their questions and engage in the conversation.

>> NINA: Sure. I'll go first. This is fascinating. It's nice to hear there's common social culture still alive in Spain after seeing the same sort of cultures particularly in DC and New York out detrified out, a lot of our collective spaces are now Starbucks, it's nice to hear there are spaces alive and well. Actually I want to ask a question about sort of like with any commons project you have to deal with the threat of enclosure and capture, and specifically here I'm thinking about GitHub as a form of open source software, which at this point a lot of had corporations have forked and created their own versions of it, like if you look at Airbnb's initial public offering files they actually say that one of the greatest risks that they have as a corporation is the fact that they're dependent on this like one very specific GitHub open source thing. So I was kind of wondering how projects like yours but also the community that you're a part of negotiate liken closure and capture.

>> DR. ALBERTO CORSIN JIMENEZ: Thank you for your question. I think the specificity of the Spanish case comes to, you know, it matters. I mean, I'll tell you a story which is kind of famous in hacker circles. So back in 2002 when Wikipedia was

scarcely one or two years old, Jimmy Wales designed it and not cashing in any money, so it was about time to start putting some advertisements and trying to cash in on the contributions by the Wikipedia, by the editors. And a group, actually four Spanish Wikipedians, they decided that was completely unsolicited and it was against the spirit of the Wikipedia project.

So they designed it to, back then, I think Spanish and German, after English, were the two most important languages in Wikipedia. So they downloaded, because Wikipedia back then had a specific kind of free software license that enabled download of all the content, and took it to a server at the University of Seville. Put it up, and launched what they called a new online encyclopedia, called (Speaking language other than English), Libra, universal encyclopedia. That was a huge challenge to Wikipedia and if you're very interested in the details, the Wired magazine ran a story about the revolt of the Spanish Wikipedians like ten years ago, something like at that. It was a huge challenge and eventually Wales conceded to the claims of the Spanish Wikipedians which were okay, Wikipedia will be free from ads from now on and we will set up a foundation that will host and run. For me the interesting bid about all this story is that when they downloaded, when they took all the content, they took it to a public University, University of Seville, which gave away the infrastructure for free, right? So in Spain the articulation in the public, commons and Libre, that triangulation I described at the very beginning is very specific and I think commons projects have learned very quickly that they cannot scale up without the help or the -- accompaniment of the public, of the state. So I think that if there's a -- I mean, this is in a huge generalization, but I think an interesting difference between the way in which free culture and commons projects have played or tend on play out or pan out in the U.S. and the way they've panned out in Spain but also in Italy and a little bit in Portugal and Greece, is not by kind of benchmarking themselves against the private sector and the objectives of the private sector, but by seeking the help or seeking, you know, support from the public sector. So that's kind of a quick answer to your question.

>> NIMA YOLMO: Thank you, Alberto, I'm going second. My question ties up to what you just said and it relates to this earlier question you had set up about what do ethnography as a free culture would look like. And you touched upon this question of infrastructures of collaborations that need to be built wherein instances of people learning skills that then allow for collaborations. The question I had or if you could

elaborate a little more was the sense of others that's implicated in this, right? Also tied to a question of public, but this sense of other is like much different than what we would otherwise associate with. Thank you.

>> DR. ALBERTO CORSIN JIMENEZ: Thank you for your question, Nima. I mean, this is a very fascinating question, and I don't think I could -- I would love to broach it expansively but I know we don't have time. But very quickly I'll just say that in the Spanish context, free culture, free culture activism is both both positive and negative liberties the types of positive liberties or positive freedoms are freedom for, freedom to, for the free circulation of digital content on the internet or free from the encroachment of intellectual property rights, freedom for controlling the infrastructures, so technological sovereignty, so not having the Facebooks and the Twitters and et cetera. And those are the positive liberties. But there are also negative liberties. So it's not just freedom for, but also freedom from. And the free culture movement in Spain, it started coming together in the late 1990s and it was coming together as a way of seeking liberation from a very oppressive culture which was the culture of post-dictatorship. So Spain had been coming out, Spain had a 40 year dictatorship which ended in 1975 for about 30 years, the culture of transition, the transition from dictatorship to democracy produced a culture which historians now refer to as the culture of transition, which was a hegemonic block of liberal consensus, pro European, you know, modernizing utopias, right? And so membership in the European Union, flexiblization, you know, all those things that came along.

And in the late 1990s, youth, young activists had had enough and they were trying to find ways to break from that oppressive post-dictatorial culture and free culture afforded that, so it was freedom from, it was many other thing, but also freedom from that. And actually when the occupy movement happened around the world but also in Spain, it was kind of the awakening that that was what was happening. So historians now are looking back to our occupy movement in 2011 not as -- you know, they are redescribing 2011's occupy movement in Spain as the moment when we finally break loose from the culture of transition. We were completely oppressed by 40 years of transitional culture. So our others, going back to your question, it's a complex question, but others are inflected or in complex inflexive by the ghosts of fascism, White nationalist Catholic culture, so Catholicism, so anyway, great question, very difficult for me to fill in in three minute, but kind of along those lines.

>> NIMA YOLMO: Thank you.

>> Kim: Alberto I wanted to follow up on this conversation about researching what's made possible by revisiting some of what came up when you were initially talking about today's conversations, which is the role of professional societies and how they shape the landscape of what is being researched, and I think particularly in the U.S., many anthropologists, even those who continue to work outside the University system, maintained relationships and identify as anthropologists through being able to participate in professional organizations. I know that some of the this context and this landscape might be different in Spain and I was wondering if you could say a little more broadly about how professional societies have funded and supported otherwise what is being researched and where research goes.

>> DR. ALBERTO CORSIN JIMENEZ: Yeah, thanks for the question. I mean, I think learned societies are kind of -- I think it's a very good question because you do point to an actor or a type of agency that we rarely sort of -- which is at the core of how we organize ourselves as a discipline. And, you know, we rarely theorize it, so we actually rarely sort of take consciousness of how much of our agency as institutional actors is channeled through explicitly or implicitly as delineated to learned societies. Learned societies N, my feeling is they'll look back at the role of learned societies from the mid 1990s to roughly today. And they don'ts, you know, they cannot be cast in a nice light. They've been, I don't know, they've been responding to, I wouldn't know what kind of interests, but definitely not the interests of the reproduction of the discipline. You know, I don't think they've been enabling the mobilization of new energies, new commitments, new actors. In my case, what I know most as someone who has been from the side of open access activism, learned societies are largely to blame for not taking a leading role in that. And they come up with lots of excuses and some of them are good arguments, but at the end of the day, things are changing, but some learned societies are much worse off in terms of the role they play in shaping the conversation and the intellectual conversation of the discipline, they are in a much worse position, they have much less control than they have 35 years ago.

>> TAYLOR NELMS: Thanks so much, Alberto, I think we have time for one more question and we have a really great one from Tim in the Q & A so I will just read it aloud, it's really fascinating. So Tim writes, it's really interesting to hear of how your ethnographic engagement expanded beyond your initial field of interlocutors to your thoughts about and work on the

social organization of anthropology as a discipline. And this seems largely enabled, he suggests, by a deep kind of overlapping of ethical and political visions, right? So the hypothetical is, if you had parachuted rather into the digital media lab in Spain, if you had parachuted into a VC funded digital arts fund say in Silicon Valley promoting entrepreneurship or whatever the opposite of that free culture movement might be, how might that have fundamentally shifted your mode of anthropological engagement? Tim's question is really about how your professional shift, your intellectual shift, the engagement that you had with anthropology itself, its ideas and its infrastructures as a discipline, has then made possible by that overlap in ethical political division.

>> DR. ALBERTO CORSIN JIMENEZ: Thanks for that question. I have no doubt it would have been very different. I think there are a number of biographical and honest oracle and broader social contexts that inflect our trajectories as individuals or as our personas as academic, so my upbringing in that sort of culture, oppressive, you know, the culture of transition that I was talking about, the configuration of the Spanish public liberals fear under the ghosts of Frankoism and ghosts of post dictatorial fascism has located me as you nicely put it and as you reflected on political ethical divisions to my work -- visions to my work and my had allegiances, but had I stayed in British academia, for instance, I think I would have found other outlets to give expression to those commitments and passions and energies. And a media lab focused on anthropology I cannot even imagine what other outlets but I suppose there would have been other outlets for me to channeling those energies. '

>> TAYLOR NELMS: Yeah, I mean, it is an interesting question, especially about as it relates to the stories we tell as anthropologists, right, about the ethnographic work that we do, right? To cede space to the interlocutors who we say reshape the work we do and the stories that we tell, I'm reminded of Marilyn Stothurn's old comment about what ethnography is, that it involves by necessity the giving of oneself over to the interests of one's interlocutors, right, to some degree that has to be made possible by a set of preexisting commitments or allegiances maybe even ones we didn't know we had or couldn't quite articulate as such in advance of that encounter.

So we're coming up on time. Alberto, thank you so much for joining us. Do you have any final thoughts or questions prompted by this exchange?

>> DR. ALBERTO CORSIN JIMENEZ: No it's been a pleasure.

Thank you so much for having me.

>> TAYLOR NELMS: Thank you so much for joining us. This has been a fascinating conversation and it's built in some profound ways I think on previous conversations. Let me just thank Alberto again for joining us, thanks to Nima, Kim and Nina again for your always incredibly important insights. And let me note that our next webinar will be actually next week, next Friday, February 12, same time, slightly different channel, look for a new Zoom link, we'll be joined by another special guest, Angela Russell, Vice President of diversity, equity and inclusion at CUNA Mutual Group which is an insurance group and I think that you'll find that conversation to be incredibly exciting and insightful as well. Angela is not an anthropologist by training, she comes out of public health, but, you know, consider her to be an anthropologist in everything but name.

So thank you again, Alberto, for joining us, thank you for this really incredibly exciting conversation, and I hope that everyone will join us next time.Thank you, Alberto.

>> BILL MAURER: Thanks, everybody, thanks, Alberto.

>> Bye.

(10:00 a.m. PST)