

### 03. On the Fluid Democracy of the Pirate Party

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The Pirate Party was born in Sweden in 2006. It is a political group that tries to change the existing political system through the internet, and immediately made waves in Europe. It calls for “Liquid Democracy,” a system which integrates direct and indirect democracy. Its keystones are “transparency” and “the promotion of political participation.”

In France, the 2002 Law of the Democracy in the Neighborhood (*Loi relative à la démocratie de proximité*) established resident organizations called Area Councils (*Conseil de quartier / CQ*). They are required to be created in communities with more than 80,000 people. Municipal councils decide on their composition and functions. Mayors can ask area councils for information about their areas. However, the effects of CQs have not been sufficiently clarified.

While the Pirate Party and these area councils appear to be manifestations of two different trends, I adopted the hypothesis that they are in fact similar.

In my research, I indeed found various similarities. In the case of “liquid democracy,” “transparency” was not clearly promoted in the City of Suresne; the city did not open up councils and activities. However, by approximating differences in hierarchy, the participation of the majority of residents in the CQs and the creation of higher-level organizations (such as houses and sectors) can be understood as part of a process of “liquidization,” rather than the decentralization of rights. This can be seen by the consensus-making process in the City of Albi. There, the CQ “promotes political participation.” However, councilors only lead discussions. Policies are decided through several councils and “liquidization feedback.”

The liquid democracy of the Pirate Party and of neighborhood French democracy have quite different origins. The former was born out of a reaction against indirect democracy and the latter was a fruit of a decentralization policy. However, there were many similarities between them. (However, a major difference is their use of the internet). We should rethink democracy from a “pirates” point of view.