



The Pirate Parties' Globality

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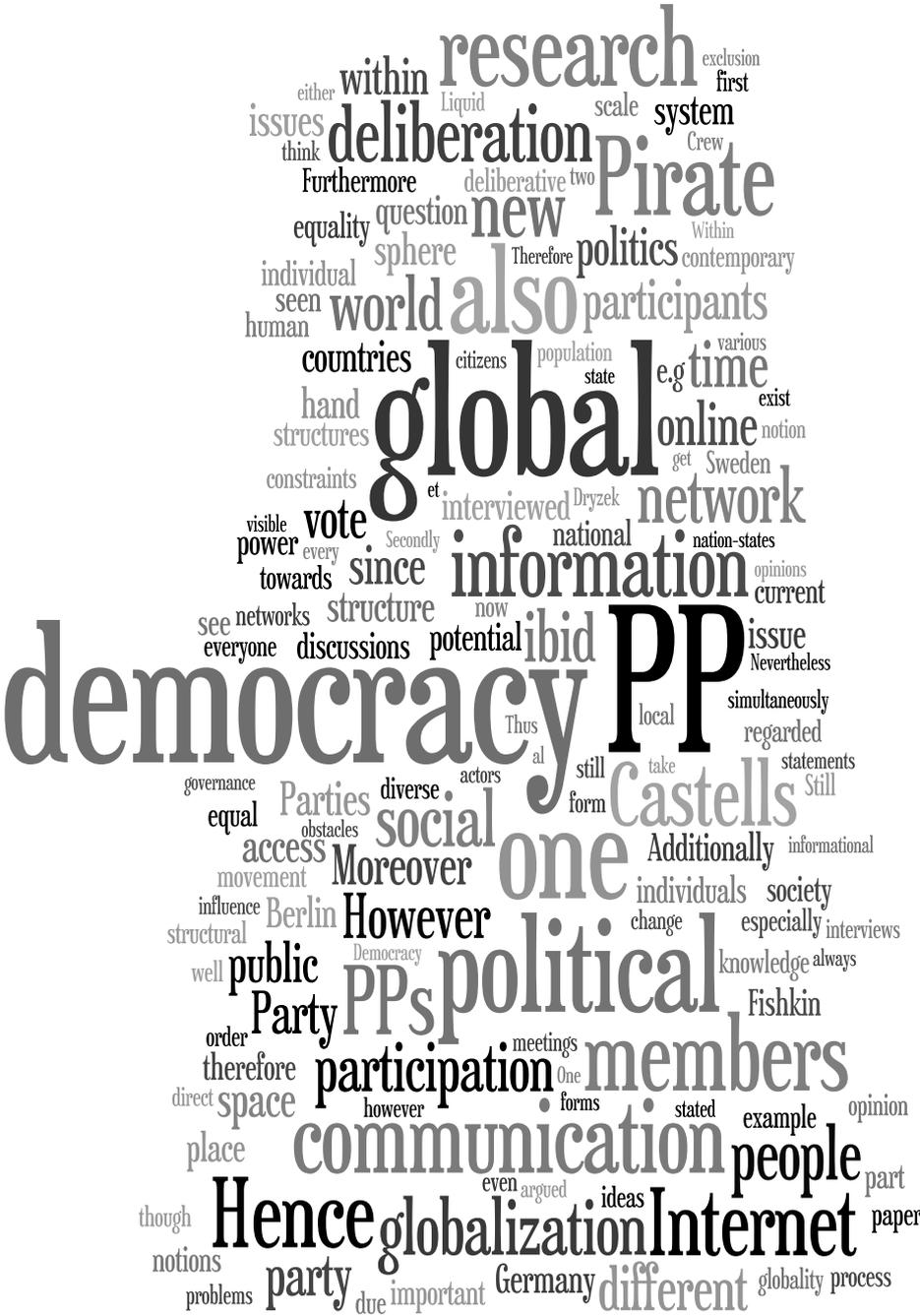
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Wordcloud Summary



The software 'Wordle' - available via www.wordle.net - evaluates most frequently used words in texts (automatically excluding common words such as 'a' or 'the') and thus provides a first impression on the content of this paper.

“There is not eternal evil in human nature. There is nothing that cannot be changed by conscious, purposive social action, provided with information, and supported by legitimacy.” (Castells, 2000)

Abstract

In the following, one transnational - and potentially global - phenomenon will be discussed by asking ‘how do the members of the Pirate Party perceive the Pirate Parties’ globality?’ In the first part of this paper, the structures surrounding the Pirate Party are described. It will be argued that the Pirate Party can be regarded as an allegory for globalization. Furthermore, it is asserted that the Pirate Parties constitute a network. Therefore, the network shape, as defined by Manuel Castells, will be scrutinized in order to investigate the appearance of a potentially new global player. Besides that, the Pirate Parties’ emergence will be embedded into the current geo-political context of the Information Age. In the second part, a stronger focus rests on the action that should be generated in the future. Here, the notions of democracy, as defined by the interviewed Pirate Parties members, serve as the basis for investigation. Liquid Democracy, a blend between representative democracy and direct democracy, will be explored and additionally compared to its template deliberative democracy. Furthermore, the obstacles, but also the possibilities of this notion are going to be debated, and in the end additionally layered on a global scale. Altogether, and as it can be detected in the setup of this paper, the ontological dispute between structuralism and constructivism will be an eminent feature of this research, arguing that not a bipolar opposition between individuals and structures enforces our reality, but the reciprocity between them.

Keywords: *Pirate Party – Globalization – Network Society – Notions of Democracy – Structural Constraints*

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Table of Abbreviations

AG	Arbeitsgruppe (working group)
HDI	Human Development Index
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
LQFB	Liquid Feedback
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PP	Pirate Party
PPs	Pirate Parties
PPI	Pirate Party International
PPI-GA	Pirate Party International General Assembly
PP-EU	Pirate Party Europe (not yet the official name)
TNC	Transnational Cooperation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UN-MDG	United Nations Millennium Development Goals

1. Introduction

The world is evermore transforming. This is not a new phenomenon; without fail change has always been an eminent feature of human history. Advancement and development are inevitably intertwined with human nature; moreover they are depicted as key driving forces of humankind.

However, it seems that the pace of change is ever increasing. Acceleration, in turn, is said to be a distinct feature of globalization, which can also be regarded as an essential attribute of our contemporary time. There are multiple and diverse phenomena on this planet to allegorize globalization. Indeed, globalization entails various explanations and many occurrences. In this paper, however, the attention is drawn to *one* phenomenon: The development of a new and uncommon political party that came into existence in approximately 62 countries around the world within six years: The Pirate Party. But could one genuinely refer to a *global* phenomenon? Or can the Pirate Party be seen as an allegory of globalization? What is the interplay between our globalized world and the agents - the active subjects - in it? On top of that, which new ideas brought and will bring these agents into the 'global' discourse?

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First of all, very little research has been conducted about the Pirate Parties, even less research is available in English. Moreover, there has not been a cohesive study yet, that combines globalization and the network society with the Pirate Party, nor has there been a discussion about their notions of democracy. Hence, this paper is entering an uninvestigated area, which is applicable in various fields. Secondly, and even more importantly, the Pirate Party can be regarded as a new player on the global scale. Still, it can be argued that the Pirate Party itself is not a global player, but the morphology of the Pirate Party denotes a new form of a potential global player. The network shape indicates individuals cooperating alongside topics - not necessarily along ideologies - worldwide. To understand (potentially global) actors and their shape, especially in a globalizing world, is of crucial significance in order to be able to recognize and utilize the prospects of and in a transforming world.

This thesis is broadly separated into two parts. The first part explores the structures in which the Pirate Party operates. For it, the Pirate Party is embedded into the grand theories of globalization, and secondly into the Information Age Trilogy by Manuel Castells. While multiple definitions are suggested, this paper will define globalization with the help of the place and space distinction by Anthony Giddens and David Harvey, designating globalization as the intensification of (social) relations across local boundaries. Here, the significance of globalization becomes visible, because it influences every single individual on this planet – although to a varying degree.

The second part denotes a more constructivist approach, investigating what actions are generated within this global context. Of course, multiple agendas of the Pirate Party could have been depicted, however here notions of democracy were chosen, on the one hand, because democracy is a crucial global concern, and on the other, because the Pirate Party is believed to be a single-issue party, focusing on 'Internet issues'. Although it is accurate that the party congregates around Internet themes, notions of democracy exceed this stance. Moreover, it exemplifies the interconnectedness and increasing complexity of various topics in a globalizing world.

Hence, the two evenly balanced parts indicate a controversy in the understanding of our modernity: Structuralism versus constructivism. While the first focuses on structures that influences agents, the latter puts an emphasis on the agent him- or herself. Structuralism can be seen as exogenous challenges towards unconstrained action. In other words, restrictions are prevalent in our contemporary world and influence our behavior. Constructivism, on the contrary, emphasizes the capability of an individual to form, shape, mold, and restructure reality through action, without being necessarily exposed to external coercion and circumstances. The author of this paper truly believes that not the bipolar opposition between structure and agency enforces our reality, but an interplay between these two approaches. This stance will be scrutinized within this paper, adding a ‘practically-tested’ contribution to this controversy. Summing-up, the reciprocity (or duality) between the individual and the grand forces (id est globalization, including structural constraints and a networking world) is going to be reflected upon.

To attain this objective, the structure of the paper will be as following: First, the design of the research is shown, which is made up of semi-structured interviews with 21 members of different Pirate Parties. Then the Pirate Parties are embedded into contemporary structures: broadly speaking into globalization and the network society, hence, the surroundings of the Pirate Parties. Within this, glocalization, structural constraints and the Internet are significant components. Moreover, it is shed light onto the morphology of the Pirate Party.

The second part encompasses a more constructivist approach, in which ideas for transformation(s) are exhibited. Notions of democracy have been selected, on the one hand to enlarge our understanding of democracy beyond the representative system and on the other, to evaluate if the various members of the different Pirate Parties have a common point of departure. Firstly, the notion of democracy of the Pirate Party as identified by its members is shown – sic Liquid Democracy. Secondly, the foundation of this notion is displayed – sic deliberative democracy. Thirdly, the implementation of that system inside the Pirate Party Berlin is exhibited. In the fourth part of this section, the duality of the structure and agency becomes noticeable. Here, the obstacles of this notion of democracy - divided into ‘practical’ and ‘theoretical’ nature - are disclosed. It is important to note here, that this display of obstacles is only fragmentary. It is only a beginning of a thoughtful examination. Lastly, democracy on a global scale is briefly discussed: the problems that arise, but also the possibilities that emerge. Finally, in the conclusion part, a summary is provided, the research questions are discussed again, and some further thoughts will be laid out.

At this moment, it is time to talk about what this paper is not going to be about, because due to the format of this paper reduction was inevitable. First of all, the programs and the history of the different Pirate Parties are not shown. In addition, there will not be a comparison between different Pirate Parties. Furthermore, the implementation of the notions of democracy is only briefly displayed; additionally restricted to only one locality, sic Berlin. Other Pirate Parties handle matters differently. How far reaching this diversity (or uniformity) is can only be evaluated in further studies. In the end, it might be helpful for some readers to review the webpages of the Pirate Parties if further information is desired (especially the wiki of the Pirate Party International¹). Even though the information provided is by the Pirate Parties themselves (and hence raises the question of objectivity), the webpages are always helpful to gather further information (e.g. about election outcomes, lists of Pirate Parties), which then in turn can be evaluated by the reader.

¹ http://wiki.pp-international.net/Main_Page

2. Research Design and Methodology

2.1 Aims, Intentions, and Relevance

The aim of this research is to investigate the Pirate Parties members' perception of the Pirate Parties' (PPs) globality in a descriptive and exploitative manner. Additionally, the content is critically analyzed by embedding it into grand theories. As stated in the introduction, when looking into political phenomena beyond the national categories, it can become evident that the PPs' global orientation is unique in the contemporary political sphere. However, no previous research has scrutinized this matter in depth. On the one hand, the lack of literature concerning the national chapters of the PPs is visible. To illustrate, in Germany - a country in which the PP has taken seats in federal parliaments - the academic examination of this issue is fragmentary² (Bieber, 2010: 27). On the other hand, the insufficient amount of research is even more apparent on a global scale. Nevertheless, in order to genuinely understand and to critically evaluate this new political rarity, further in-depth academic research is essential. Inevitably, one single paper is not going to provide a holistic image, nevertheless it can be utilized and give helpful insights for further academic investigations.

Hence, this research will become highly relevant inside the academic sphere. Moreover, the multidisciplinary approach - which is also an underpinning feature of Global Studies - indicates a potential utilization across various sectors of the academic sphere, such as (et al.) political science, regional studies, international relations, science and technology studies, communication studies, and global administration. Therefore, this research will be formulated in a manner that no subject-specific knowledge is mandatory, and furthermore will be written in a comprehensible style.

This approach opens this research additionally to a larger audience, the non-academic sphere. Especially, since the author believes in a stronger integration and connection between the academic and non-academic sphere, this paper aims to take a step into that direction, not only by challenging dominant discourses, but also by assisting in the formation of a critical, distinct and individual judgment about this phenomenon.

Furthermore, beyond the academic/non-academic division, further noteworthy addressees are the members of the different PPs themselves, even though (e.g. due to the time frame of this research) no action or participatory research method (Avison et al., 1999) emerged. This research is supposed to help the members realize their potential that lies within this international/global structure, but also simultaneously to point out some of the obstacles and dangers that should be taken into consideration.³

In sum, this paper aims to critically investigate the globality of the PPs, explored through the PPs members' perception, presented in a manner that a variety of individuals are able to obtain insights into concerns of a globalized (and globalizing) world. Ultimately, the aim is to acquire knowledge for interested individuals and groups and to raise awareness to a contemporary, urgent, and global matter from an agent-oriented standpoint along with an interpretivist knowledge claim.

² „Bislang ist die wissenschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit der Piratenpartei noch lückenhaft [...]“ (Bieber, 2012:27).

³ Still, after completion of this research, further discussions and critical reflections from both sides hopefully emerge, resulting in a reflexive analysis in the future.

2.2 Epistemology and Ontology

Knowledge claims, or epistemologies, concern the question of what is regarded as acceptable knowledge (Bryman, 2008: 13). In this precise research, the ‘Verstehen’ - to understand issues from the participants’ point of view (Geertz, 1973: 14) - is of particular importance. Coincidentally, an author also interprets research from her/his standpoint (ibid: 16).⁴ Thus, interpretivism - and therefore subjective significance - is the epistemological foundation of this research.

The ontology - the question of “the nature of reality” (Creswell, 2009: 27) - of this research points towards structuralism which “[...] perceives actor as a part of social collectives that share particular belief systems, symbolic sets and cultural categories that provide meaning and a sense of direction” (Geels, 2010: 499). Structures surrounding an individual influence her/his behavior, however, simultaneously humans construct those structures. This reciprocity - Giddens calls this duality of structure (Lippuner & Werlen, 2009: 40-41) - informs the understanding of our reality. Still, the author inclines towards the agent-oriented approach, meaning this research builds additionally upon constructivist ontology. Constructivism “insists that human agents do not exist independently from their social environment and its collectively shared system of meanings” (Risse, 2007: 128). Differently phrased, it “[...] asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors [...]” (Bryman, 2008: 19) and are therefore “in a constant state of revision” (ibid.). Still, the structuralist and constructivist interplay will be an eminent feature of this research, since it is highlighting competing discourses in an era of global transformation.

2.3 Research Design

From these epistemological and ontological stances and due to the lack of literature, a particular research design emerges: a qualitative design. Within this research, the statements of the PPs’ members are going to be embedded into grand theories, in order to analyze and explain the content beyond the mere utterance. Therefore, the inquiry is inductive (Bryman, 2008: 541). Additionally, definitions unfold in a tentative way, because they “[...] emerge through the data analysis” (Creswell, 2009: 40) and accordingly put an emphasis on the participant’s point of view.

To additionally underline the participants’ point of views, semi-structured interviews were conducted in a natural setting, in Berlin in February 2012 and at the Pirate Party International (PPI) General Assembly (GA) in Prague from the 14th until the 15th of April 2012. In total, 21 people from twelve different countries and 15 PPs (multiple memberships are possible) were interviewed during 15 interviews (see below).⁵ The majority of interviews were conducted in English; however, two interviews were conducted in German due to the participants’ wishes.⁶

⁴ The author’s reflexivity will be dealt with in the section on ethical considerations.

⁵ In the following the statements of the participants are marked by their name and their country of origin (Name, Country of Origin). The dates are not specified, because the interviews were lead during one weekend. When referring to the Serenity-Interview in February, it will be labeled: (Name, Serenity, Germany).

⁶ When an interview was conducted in German, it was left in the original language in the main text. The translation can be found in the footnotes.

The participants were selected according to snowball sampling (Bryman, 2008: 699) in which voluntary sampling had an impact as well. The initial contact started with the Crew Serenity in Berlin and the non-probability sampling method continued in Prague. Nevertheless, an effort was put on the obtainment of diversity concerning firstly, the ‘position’ of the members inside the PPs and secondly, a diversification regarding the range of PPs. Referring to the former, although a manifold scope of members with different positions was achieved, all accounts count equal, meaning e.g. that the input of the founder of the PP is equivalent to a grass-roots pirate. This is due to the description of the PP as a non-hierarchical, flat organization in which everyone has an equal vote (Zolleis et al., 2010: 23; Bartels, 2009: 264-267).⁷ Additionally, four interviews were lead with German Pirates, which also reflects the researchers geographical proximity, while simultaneously the German PP is one of the most evolved PPs worldwide. Besides that, it is noteworthy that no emphasis was put on the personal backgrounds of those interviewed, but strictly on their interrelation with the party.

In short, in order to analyze the perception of the globality of the PP by its members, and to achieve the above-mentioned aims, a qualitative research through semi-structured interviews is indispensable. However, to achieve a greater validity, a minor triangulation was employed. Semi-structured interviews were coupled with a participant observation in Berlin in January and February 2012 and with a literature review.

After explaining the nature of this qualitative study, the progression of the research is thus shortly shown: The research started with a participant observation of the PP Berlin through regularly attending various types of meetings, talking and discussing with members, detecting what was crucial to them. After a first literature review, a preliminary interview guide and a leaflet were created. The latter was handed out to potential participants containing some basic information about the research and the researcher. On the 23rd of February 2012, a pilot, semi-structured, focus group interview was conducted with the Berlin Crew ‘Serenity’ which is especially interested in European politics (Piraten Partei Deutschland, 2012)⁸ in a casual atmosphere - during their Crew meeting - lasting for one hour. Afterwards, the interview guide was revised with the help of firstly, further literature and secondly, the experiences collected during the pilot interview. This interview guide was then employed during the PPI-GA, interrogating further 15 members of the PP for approximately 10-20 minutes. However, all interviewed participants are European bound (except for one Tunisian), resulting in a fairly Eurocentric outlook. Hence, an e-mail interview questionnaire was created and sent out to all PPs worldwide (and divisions within national PPs)⁹ that were not yet interviewed, striving to make all voices heard. However, only seven responses were received from 37 sent E-mails: An insufficient amount to truly attain a conclusion from these. After gathering all the material, the evaluation of the interviews through open coding and the embedding into a larger framework through a literature review commenced.

2.4 Research Questions ¹⁰

The research started out with the broad research question of ‘what are the PPs’ global perspectives?’ This inquiry was vast on purpose, so it was possible to conduct an inductive

⁷ This approach can be additionally confirmed by statements such as:

“*We don’t have a leader in our party*“ (Yiannis, Greece) or furthermore, “*we don’t have positions in our Pirate Party*“ (Slim, Tunisia) and finally, “*I cannot speak for the party, but I can say for myself [...]*“ (Toon, Belgium).

⁸ <http://wiki.piratenpartei.de/BE:Crews/Serenity>

⁹ The rest of them were contacted via Facebook.

¹⁰ The research questions are ordered according to their relevance within the study.

study. Despite the fact that this research question helped during the construction of the interview guide, the author realized that this question points too strongly towards the future. However, “[w]e can analyze the present, but we cannot predict the future” (Hoffmann, 2002: 5). Therefore, the main research question evolved into:

- *How do the members of the Pirate Party perceive the Pirate Parties’ globality?*

Within this question the meaning of globality is significant. Even though globality and globalization are terms that are used synonymously and also presuppose each other, they entail one specific difference. Whereas the term globalization can be seen as a process (see Wallerstein, 2000; Gunder Frank & Gills, 2000), globality refers to the (present) condition, which is consistent with the conception of this research question, since the contemporary situation is analyzed. Nonetheless, globalization can also be seen as a process and its current manifestation (Robertson, 2002) and will also be employed in this thesis.

In order to investigate if the PPs have a common ground worldwide - which goes beyond the name and the badge - notions of democracy were utilized as variable. While it is often argued that the PP is a single-issue party concerning the Internet, notions of democracy exceed this stance. Moreover, democracy and democratization are weighty global concerns. Hence, the first sub-question - exemplifying the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the beliefs and objectives of the PPs’ members - is:

- *What are the Pirate Parties members’ notions of democracy?*

Additionally, in order to critically analyze the statements of the PPs’ members, the third research question will be as followed:

- *What are the complications and possibilities of these notions of democracy?*

Finally, for the purpose of embedding the research into a larger, political, and contemporary framework, the members’ conceptions on global governance were explored. Furthermore, this sub-question offers the possibility to further examine the antagonism between structuralism and constructivism:

- *What are the Pirate Parties members’ attitudes towards global governance?*

The results type will be descriptive and explorative, coupled with a critical analysis of the statements. Simultaneously, the research questions are aiming to assist in embedding the statements of the participants into the current geo-political context and hence to implant them into grand theories of globalization and the Information Age.¹¹

2.5 Delimitations

Especially since these research questions are formulated in a broad fashion, limitations on the research exist. Content-related limitations can be looked through in the introduction, whereas now, delimitations relating to the research design are presented.

¹¹ For the interview guide see Appendix.

First of all, the format of this paper requires reduction. The topic is so broad that a PhD-thesis could have emerged from it, in which further techniques of qualitative and yet also quantitative studies could have been employed, such as comparative case studies or structure interviews with self-completion questionnaires (Bryman, 2008: 191-252). However, this paper confines itself to a qualitative study, since it puts an emphasis on the participants' point of view. Moreover, in contrast to a quantitative study, dialogues with the interviewed emerged, giving them an opportunity to elaborate on concepts important to them.

Within the realm of this qualitative research, the amount of interviews was – in the environment of a global phenomenon – of a relatively small scale. Moreover, the author chose not to interview externals, due to the limited time frame and to additionally put an emphasis on the agents' point of view. Furthermore, it was not possible to retest the result, which was then presented in a written form, though the researcher aspires to continue the dialogue after completion of this research.

Furthermore, with respect to the scope of the interviews: They were made in Europe – in Berlin and Prague during the PPI-GA – pointing towards a geographical constraint. Only one of the interviewees and only three of the received e-mail surveys were non-European (sic Tunisia, Uruguay, Venezuela and New Zealand). Hence, this research has a Eurocentric substructure, which sadly was not avoidable.

Additionally, the language barrier was not that intruding, however, conceivably some of the participants were not able to express themselves in the way that they wished, because English was not their mother tongue. Moreover, some potential participants did not share their opinions, because they lacked – or they felt they lacked – the level of English to truly express themselves.

Last but not least, all these constraints – the small scale of the interviews, the time restriction, the geographical distance, and the language barriers – constitute another delimitation: Generalizability. The issue of external validity – “[...] the question of whether the result of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context in which it was conducted” (ibid: 694) – is, however, predominant in every qualitative research, which can be weakened through embedding the findings into theories. “[T]he findings of qualitative research are to generalize to theory rather than to populations” (ibid.: 391-392). Still, here a moderatum generalization - a tentative generalization within a limited domain (ibid.) - is targeted.

2.6 Ethical considerations

Likewise, some of the delimitations influence the ethical considerations of this research. Initially, the immediate geographical vicinity of the researcher inside Europe affects the global scope of the research negatively. This constitutes a danger towards a Eurocentric perspective. As Edward Said has pointed out – even though in the different context of ‘Orientalism’ (2003) – distinctions between the ‘West’ and the ‘Orient’ (here the ‘Rest’) pervade power structures and therefore also impact the outcome of the research. Although a global outlook was intended, a critical eye should rest on the European ascendancy.

The status of the researcher – as European, German, white, middle-class female with a university degree – inflict further difficulties. “The role of an observer [...] is always selective and usually creative” (Lippmann, 1922: 54). This reflexivity, the notion that the ‘knowledge’ that the researcher generates “[...] is always a reflection of a researcher’s location in time and

social space” (Bryman, 2008: 682), has to be dealt with in an analytical manner. To illustrate, the participant observation was based in Berlin, and the writing took place in Germany, where the PP has taken seats in four federal parliaments.¹² Not a day goes by in which an article about the PP cannot be found in a German newspaper. Furthermore, the PP Berlin is comparatively well developed (in respect to et al. their scale and program), whereas other PPs (e.g. PP Greece) are still in the process of formation. Moreover, other PPs are not officially recognized parties by their respective governments yet (e.g. PP Serbia & PP Romania). Thus, the success, attention and development of the German PP pose a risk of overestimating the entire PP movement.

In addition, it is noteworthy that besides the limitations on diversity of a national PP, within one national PP diverse members exist. When one person from one national PP was interviewed, that person was not reflecting a homogenized party. Within one party, different opinions and streams exist. This is of particular importance, since PPs’ members put a high emphasis on individuality. In other words, every person interviewed stands for her/himself. He or she is not representative of a national fraction. Hence, this constitutes a problem to the generalizability, as mentioned before. Nevertheless, interviewing everyone would simply not have been possible.

Last but not least, anonymity was ensured to the participants. However, interestingly, all participants involved (except two) mentioned their real names. This is particularly noteworthy, because on the one hand, it is assumed that Internet-affine persons prefer to obscure their identity and emphasize privacy. On the other, the participants stand for their opinions with their true name, which increases the credibility of their statements.

¹² Alone between March and May 2012, the PP Germany entered three federal parliaments in Germany (Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein and North Rhine-Westphalia).

3. Pirate Party and Globalization

3.1 Place and Space

In this first part of the paper, the PPs are employed to allegorize globalization. However, in order to typify globalization, it has to be assessed what globalization is. Of course, multiple globalizations exist (Sassen, 2007: 82). Indeed, “‘globalization’ [has] many meanings” (Keohane & Nye, 2000: 104). This can be exemplified by various manifestation of globality, such as the movement of people, the homogenization of production processes, military activities or ecological concerns (Scholte, 2005: 67-75). Moreover, globalization can be seen as the domination of one distinct discourse (Bourdieu, 1998) or as a “ [...] single logic of rule” (Hardt & Negri, 2003: 116) without territorial or temporal boundaries.

Notwithstanding the fact that humans experience and understand globalization in various and legitimate ways, one set of explicantia for globalization is of peculiar eminence here: the concept of ‘place’ and ‘space’ by Anthony Giddens (1990). “‘Place’ is best conceptualized by means of the idea of the locale, which refers to the physical settings of social activity as situated geographically” (ibid: 18). In the emergence of modernity, social interaction is torn away from the place into the ‘space’, meaning “ [...] the spatial orbit of social life [is withdrawn] from the confines of locality” (Inda & Rosaldo, 2002: 8). Hence, the process of disembedding - “ [...] the ‘lifting out’ of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space” (Giddens, 1990: 21) – can be regarded as an explanation for globalization.

Additionally, David Harvey’s time-space compression provides a further sapid input (2000). Harvey’s time-space compression draws on the “ [...] changing experiences of time and space” (Inda & Rosaldo, 2002: 5) which is marked by “ [...] the ‘shrinking’ of space and the shortening of time” (ibid: 6). Hence, not only the interaction across distance, but also the speed-up of these interactions allow “[...] that distance and time no longer appear to be major constraints on the organization of human activity” (ibid.) and thus, influences humans’ horizon of experience on multiple levels regarding et al. political, economical, social, and cultural aspects.

Even though the two models of Harvey and Giddens embrace differences, they can be seen as “ [...] complementary viewpoints” (Inda & Rosaldo, 2002: 9). Combining the two major ideas, “[g]lobalization can thus be defined as the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shared by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens, 2000: 92). In sum, globalization can be seen as a process, which includes the increasing acceleration of flows (of e.g. people, ideas, money), the intensification of worldwide links surpassing the place-dimension, and finally the expanded entanglement between the space and the place (Inda & Rosaldo, 2002: 9).

So, how does the PP fit into this description of globalization? When asking the PPs’ members whether the PP is a global party or not, a wide range of the perceived globality became apparent. On the one extreme, one participant described the PP as one big PP all over the world (Slim), while others put a stronger emphasis on structural constraints existent within

nation-state¹³ boundaries (e.g. Amelia). Still, a clear trend among those interviewed became evident. All of them acknowledge that the PP has a global outlook. More concretely, eleven out of the 14 participants interviewed in Prague did not identify the PP as a global party, but as a global movement.

But what does that mean? It has two distinct, but separate meanings. Firstly, it indicates that there exists a perceived global mindset within the PP, which was depicted by Jelena (Serbia) as a “hive-mind” and a “group-thinking”, by John (UK) and Gabriel (Spain) as a “global idea”, or as a “globaler Gedanke”¹⁴ by Thomas (Germany). Hence,

“we [the PP members] feel connected, because we have this shared culture. We have the same sort of [...] solving the problems, same sort of thinking about problems. We have our rules and we know what we want.” (Slim, Tunisia)¹⁵

Furthermore,

“it is global. I would not say it is a global party. It is an idea, it is a think-tank, it is like minded people coming together to work as activists.” (John, UK)

In other words, this indicates, that even though PP members live in different (geographical) places, they simultaneously inhabit the same space. In this sense, their visions and connections are disembedded from the locality and are, therefore, a compelling illustration of Giddens space-place distinction.

Secondly, the interviewed members mentioned another aspect of the separation between the space and the place on a global scale relating to policy issues. “The [...] penetration of local worlds by distant forces [...]”(Tomlinson, 2007: 153) postulates another reason for the characterization of a global movement by some participants. Some participants identified the PP as a global movement, because

“our issues are global issues [...]. There is no transparency in most countries, there is no participation in most countries, there is no access to culture in any country, so that is a global issue.”(Kenneth, Catalonia)

Or similar,

“it [the PP] has many goals that are global goals, [they] cannot be achieved [o]n a national level.”(Yiannis, Greece)

In sum, the PP can exemplify the place-space-distinction; on the one hand through a common ‘mind-set’ or ‘identity’ beyond local place, and on the other, by dealing with policy-issues that have been exerted on national entities from a (perceived) distant space.

¹³ Here the term nation-state will be employed to describe the state (as the institutions that enable a common living) and the people that live in it (nation), even though the term is misleading, as it supposes that a homogenous nation (people) exists within one state (see e.g. Renan 1883, Meineke 1922, Hobsbawm 2005). Still, in order not to create confusion, the dominant application of this term will be utilized here.

¹⁴ „global thought“ (Thomas, Germany)

¹⁵ The quotes taken from the transcripts are as close to the original as possible. They are as articulated during the interview. Hence, language mistakes appear. Exceptions were employed when the quotes were not understandable.

3.2 Glocalization

However, “[...] the global [...] simultaneously transcends the exclusive framing of national states yet partly inhabits national territories” (Sassen, 2007: 79). Thus, globalization does not only entail the disembedding of social experiences from the locality, it equally contains the process of re-embedding (Eriksen, 2007: 141). Even though the global influences the local, these global impacts are constantly modified within the local (Berger, 2002). This “localization of the global” (Sassen, 2007: 79) - also called glocalization – can be recognized in statements of the interviewees:

“[...] It [the PP] emerges as the practically same time independently in all countries, so it is global, in it's essence, but it is local because it is always about [the] individual who can actually make things moving.” (Jelena, Serbia)

Furthermore,

“[...] we are spreading like wild-fire to pretty much every corner of the globe, and while everybody has their own starting point in terms of the local political context, pretty much everybody agrees in quite big detail of the direction we are heading in. [...] ” (Rick, Sweden)

Hence, “[...] there is no deterritorialization without some form of reterritorialization” (Inda & Rosaldo, 2002: 12).¹⁶ While the above-mentioned first quote is a more agent-oriented and constructivist perspective, the second quote denotes yet another important issue of the globality:

3.3 Structural Constraints

As mentioned before, the PP can typify globalization, but it remains questionable if the PP is a global party. According to the PPI, the PP exists in 62 countries.¹⁷ In the following table on the next page, the PPs are ordered along their Human Development Index (HDI):

¹⁶ Another compelling illustration of this re-embedding is the annual PPI-GA, where members – that socialized in the ‘space’ - meet in the ‘place’.

¹⁷ The author was not able to contact all 62 PPs, even though it was attempted. Members of 15 PPs were interviewed, 37 E-mail Interviews were sent out (without receiving a delivery failure status, three of them belonging to national fractions of the PP-USA) and three PPs were contacted via Facebook. Hence, in total, from the standpoint of the author 52 PPs are existent. Still, it is worked here with the 62 countries provided by the PPI, since it cannot truly be stated, that indeed only these 52 PPs exist or not.

Human Development Index	Very High	High	Medium	Low	
Countries in which PPs exist (according to PPI)	Argentina	Belarus	China	Nepal	
	Australia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	El Salvador		
	Austria	Brazil	Guatemala		
	Belgium	Bulgaria	India		
	Canada	Colombia	Morocco		
	Chile	Costa Rica	South Africa		
	Croatia	Ecuador			
	Cyprus	Kazakhstan			
	Czech Republic	Mexico			
	Denmark	Montenegro			
	Estonia	Peru			
	Finland	Romania			
	France	Russia			
	Germany	Serbia			
	Greece	Tunisia			
	Ireland	Turkey			
	Israel	Ukraine			
	Italy	Uruguay			
	Republic of Korea	Venezuela			
	Latvia				
	Lithuania				
	Luxembourg				
	Netherlands				
	New Zealand				
	Norway				
	Poland				
	Portugal				
	Slovakia				
	Slovenia				
	Spain				
	Sweden				
	Switzerland				
	United Kingdom				
	United States				
	Taiwan ¹⁸				
	Total PPs¹⁹	35 out of 61	19 out of 61	6 out of 61	1 out of 61
	Total worldwide	47 out of 168	47 out of 168	47 out of 168	46 out of 168

Table 1. Source of the HDI: UNDP, 2011: 126-130.

¹⁸ Taiwan is not included in the HDI Report 2011.

¹⁹ Total of 61 instead of 62, because the PP Catalonia is not included here.

As it can be recognized in Table 1, the PP exists in 35 countries with a very high HDI, 19 in countries with a high HDI, whereas just six can be found in countries with a medium HDI and solely in one with a low HDI. Hence, it can be safely stated that the PP is unevenly distributed around the world.

However, simultaneously the contemporary world can be characterized by inequality. There are big differences across “age groups, classes, cultures, [countries,] genders and races” (Scholte, 2005: 19), in terms of e.g. food distribution (Schmidhuber & Tubiello, 2007) and material use (Krausmann et al., 2009). Multiple inequalities can be added such as the fact that trade and finance are concentrated in the global North (Hirst & Thompson, 2000: 2-3). Moreover, some authors argue that “world polity is in the making based on Western cultural standards” (Risse, 2007: 133). Still and all, poverty can be seen as the most obvious feature of global inequality. “Globally, poor people disproportionately live in Africa. The largest number live in Asia” (Reeves & D’Costa, 2008: 138).

From this global inequality, structural constraints arise. For example, while the sub-Saharan Africa is the poorest region in the world, the costs for the Internet connection are the highest (Le monde diplomatique, 2009: 34-35).²⁰

Some participants also identified this uneven distribution and the resulting structural constraints:

“[...] The Pirate Parties that exist are potentially a global movement that appeals to everybody who uses the Internet. [...] At the same time, I think it clearly has a first world character [...]. It is very much limited in the sense to [the] first world.” (Justus, Germany)

Moreover, not only poverty and the lack of access to technology are potential structural constraints, but also geo-political limitations arise:

“[...] The Pirate Party is a political party [...] and is as such bound by the restrictions that entails to run for elections in a geographical constituency.” (Amelia, Sweden)

And as a result, structural differences can lead to external exclusion:

“[...] There is a part of population that is normally not included.” (Toon, Belgium)

In sum, “[...] the geographical concentration of [et al.] capital flow suggests [...], that the process of globalization itself contributes to increased inequalities [and] increased inequality gaps” (Abrahamson, 2003: 115)²¹, which can result in an asymmetry of participation. Here the exact keynote of this chapter can be emphasized: The PP is not a global party, because it lacks the equal distribution along countries with diverse development statuses. However, the PP can still be seen as an allegory for globalization.

Simultaneously, “[g]lobal income inequality is no longer mainly the result of a rich global North and a disadvantaged global South, but increasingly due to widening gaps in income gaps within countries. [...] Global inequalities is increasingly a matter of inequalities within rather than between countries” (Loewe & Rippin, 2012). Hence, the “*part of the population*

²⁰ In other words, “Africa surft am teuersten” (ibid.) id est “Africa is the region where surfing is most expensive.” For a further examination of structural constraints see 5.3.

²¹ Also called contradictory circumstance (ibid.)

that is not normally included” (Toon, Belgium) is not necessarily bound between nation-states, but also within them. Thus,

“The context in each country is different [...], but you can see that all pirates, all around the world, have been defending people’s freedoms [...].” (Kenneth and Gabriel, Catalonia and Spain)

Additionally,

“I really think that [a non-oppressive state] is an international issue which can be applied in nearly every country.” (Gregory, Germany/Kazakhstan)

As a consequence, even though global inequalities and structural constraints are prevalent features of contemporary world order, an obstacle that arises can affect citizens of different nation-states almost identically, whereas this obstacle does not necessarily affect citizens within one nation-state equally. Therefore:

“The Pirate Party is a voice of a generation that is used to communication, that is able to speak to people that is being affected by issues that usually, or previously, would have been viewed as something in a different country which did not affect them. With the inclusive communication that is not longer the case.” (John, UK)

In sum, the PP can be regarded as an allegory for globalization, but is not a global party. The focus here was put on the place-space distinction, glocalization, and structural constraints. The PP deals with local struggles, but simultaneously transcends national dimensions. Forthwith, this can be linked to the concept of denationalization, which encompasses “[...] the reorienting of national agendas toward global ones [...]” (Sassen, 2007: 81). Thus, further questions arise, such as where does this (apparently) self-activating global outlook come from? This is due to, on the one hand the above-mentioned ‘inclusive communication’, or on the other, by the morphology of the PP? This will be dealt with in the following chapter.

4. Pirate Party and Network

4.1 Morphology of the Pirate Party

Before investigating the ways of communication, the PP has to be classified within the contemporary world order. Disregarding the discussions that globalization has a severe impact on nation-states; the focus here is on new actors that have entered the global sphere. This is of particular significance, because “[s]ocial actors are in a complex but potentially crucial position with regard to their capacity to reinforce and generate transnational change” (Cerny, 2010: 298).

Still, “no author has come up with a definite typology of transnational actors” (Jönsson & Tallberg, 2010: 31). Snarr has identified four key players, firstly, states - also in collaboration with international governmental organizations (IGOs) such as the UN or the World Bank -, secondly non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Greenpeace or Amnesty International, and thirdly transnational corporations (TNCs) such as Nike and Apple. Lastly, individuals can influence global matters as well (Snarr, 2008: 9-10).

The first broad distinction that can be drawn between these actors is, whether they are for-profit (TNCs) or non-profit (NGOs). One interviewed member (Kenneth) addressed the non-profit character of the PP, while another interviewed (Claudia) mentioned the obstacles that arise, when not being able to access official funds. Hence, one set of global players can be precluded from the typology: the for-profit transnational corporations (TNCs).

As can be read above, most of the Pirates identify the PP as part of a global movement. “Social movements deal with forms of collective action that aim at transforming existing social and political structures and practices” (Jönsson & Tallberg, 2010: 31). The distinction between a social movement and a NGO can be seen in attributes such as professionalization and institutionalization. NGOs can be depicted as “tamed social movements” (Kaldor *quoted in* *ibid.*: 32). In Serbia, for example, the PP is “*registered as a non-governmental organization*” (Jelena). Hence, the PP encompasses characteristics of a NGO, such as “possess[ing] a global moral compass, [and] master[ing] a modular technique, easily replicable in diverse settings [...]” (Jönsson & Tallberg, 2010: 34).

However, in Germany for example, the PP was elected into several federal parliaments. Therefore, they cannot entirely be certified as a NGO. Still, the PP is not constrained by the state-led, hegemonic discourse. “Discourses construct meaning, distinguish agents, [and] establish relations between actors and others [...]” (Dryzek, 2006: 3). To illustrate, the environmental movement in the 1960s contested the hegemonic discourse of industrialism, leading to a contemporary diverse discourse (*ibid.* 18). Nowadays, green parties are an established part of the government. In the words of a participant:

“[...] Roughly every 40 years, a new generation re-conquers democracy. You have had liberal thoughts coming into political power about 1890 [...]. You have had labor movement coming into political power about 1920, 1930. [...] You had the green movement coming into political power 1970, 1980. [...] And now, there we are again, 40 years later. [...] Every such movement is unique for its time, brings new ideas for its time [...].” (Rick, Sweden)

Hence, “reacting against the established political order, social movements can serve as the sources of alternative democratic practices” (Kavada, 2008: 226).

Summing-up, the Pirate Parties embody several characteristics of the different types of global players. Firstly, they can be seen as a social movement in terms that they challenge the hegemonic discourse; secondly they can be depicted as an NGO due to their level of professionalization and their non-profit orientation, thirdly, since PPs gained seats in local and federal parliaments (predominantly in Germany, but also in Tirol and Catalonia) and “[...] work [...] inside the political structures [they] have [...]” (Gregory, Germany/Kazakhstan), it can be characterized as a governmental organization. Finally, the PPs are composed of individuals.

But why is this important? “The key driving force in this transformation and reconstruction [of the state, id est the process of globalization] will be transnationally linked group political actors, exploiting growing institutional loopholes of global politics, constructing new power games, creating new networks, and changing people’s perception of how world politics works by changing the parameters and dynamics of who gets – and should get what, when and how” (Cerny, 2010: 23). Consequently, this quote denotes the significance of the agent within the contemporary and is pointing towards a constructivist perspective.

Turning back to the question of the typology of the PP, no satisfactory answer has been provided yet. The multiple characteristics only leave one response: The PP cannot be strictly distinguished along the global players typology, but embrace features of each (except of the for-profit TNCs). Hence, it can be stated that the PPs constitute a network.

This proposition can be strengthened by statements of members regarding the intermediating role of the PP, such as:

“ [...] Pirate Party is someone in-between who can actually articulate the changes and perhaps be a [...] intermediary in the dialogue.” (Jelena, Serbia)

To further illustrate:

“Imagine, for instance, if you had two countries doing a military deal [...] and you had Pirate Parties in both countries demanding transparency. And these Pirate Parties would see themselves as the same party being present in both countries [...]. You see a significant weakening of the adversary of thinking [...].” (Rick, Sweden)

The second quote could be regarded as an example of a potential, future transgovernmental network that transcends nation-states, or differently, as a cross-nation interest group with “[...] systematic linkages between state, actors and agencies” (Cerny, 2010: 5, 15 & 37). This quote furthermore emphasizes that “[t]he network form implies that the variety of local experiences and viewpoints has to be taken into account” (Dryzek, 2000: 134).²²

But what exactly is a network? What does it indicate? What is the Network Society?²³ These issues will be dealt with in the following section within which the second meta-level of this study is attained.

4.2 The Network Society

“A network is a set of interconnected nodes. [...] Networks are open structures, able to expand without limits, integrating new nodes as long as they are able to communicate within the network” (Castells I, 2001: 528).²⁴ Nodes have multiple compositions - depending on what kind of network – including stock markets, televisions or individuals. Networks are not power-neutral, but power is reorganized along the network. “[...] The degree of hierarchy or non-hierarchy may vary across networks, but basically they rest on links between interdependent actors” (Jönsson & Tallberg, 2010: 39).

The increasingly dominating logic of the network²⁵ (Palazzo, 2000: 213) has implications for several spheres of society. In his trilogy “The Information Age”, Manuel Castells substantiates that this network structure has consequences on the way reality is constituted,

²² Additionally, the orientation of the PP towards globalization can be identified. Scholte distinguished between “[...] four broad lines of policy response to contemporary globalization” (2005: 36), the neoliberalist, rejectionist, reformist and transformist (ibid: 36-47), whereas the PP can be regarded as a transformist approach, which will be illustrated in the succeeding chapter on notions of democracy. Interesting here is that “[...] the [transformist] advocates aim to transcend prevailing social structures [...]. [T]ransformists have often worked [...] through loose and decentralized networks” (ibid: 45).

²³ The Network Trilogy by Manuel Castells was unfortunately only available to the author in German, which is the translation of the 2nd English edition. Nevertheless, when directly quoted, the quotes were taken from the English conclusions (2nd ed.) and referred to in the footnote.

²⁴ English version: (Castells I, 2000: 501)

²⁵ „Die zunehmend dominierende Logik des Netzwerkes [...]” (Palazzo, 2000: 213).

broadly separated along the political, social, and economical sphere. In short, Volume I deals with the question of what the ‘net’ is, Volume II analyzes the influence of this new organizational structure on the human being and lastly, Volume III explores the historical changes that led up to contemporary dynamics (Castells, 2001-2003).

The technological revolution, the interdependent national economies, the collapse of the Russian etatism and the restructuring of capitalism changed the social landscape of human existence (Castells I, 2001: 1). Especially the informational-technological revolution is of prime importance, since it has an impact on all human activities. One of these spheres is economy, which evolved to an informational capitalism since the 1980s (ibid: 13-19). Within this economic system, structures of companies, labor, employment, and the asymmetries between countries (et al.) transformed (ibid: 75-375).

The alteration of the world also becomes visible when investigating the social sphere. It influences identities, social movements, the construct ‘family’ and the patriarchy, nation-states, and the execution of politics (Castells II, 2002: 4-386). All these occurrences resulted in a restructuring of the geopolitical constitution. On the one hand, a ‘fourth world’, the ‘black holes of the informational capitalism’ developed, which in turn led to a selective globalization (Castells III, 2003: 73-174)²⁶. On the other hand, the ‘network-state’ arose, which can be exemplified by the unification process of the European states (ibid: 335-391).

Hence, from this – to all intents and purposes – holistic analysis of the existing structures, it can be concluded, that the new structure of the Information Age penetrates all societies to a varying degree (ibid: 401-402). “A new society emerges when and if a structural transformation can be observed in the relationships of production, in the relationships of power, and in the relationships of experience. These transformations lead to an equally substantial modification of social forms of space and time, and to the emergence of a new culture” (Castells III, 2003: 392).²⁷

What does that have to do with the PP? Firstly, the typology of the PP as a network can be further approved, while secondly, the parties’ emergence can be linked to the processes depicted by Castells.

The technological and informational revolution resulted in increased and more complex patterns of interaction, which is an essential trait of the network society (Castells I, 2001: 76). These patterns of interaction - through a network – comprise specific attributes, which will now be compared to the PPs’ structure:

Firstly, “[a] network-based social structure is a highly dynamic, open system, susceptible to innovating without threatening its balance” (ibid: 528).²⁸ Secondly, networks are informal, share information, and harmonize standards (Newman, 2010: 132-135). Thirdly, they are open and include a variety of links (Castells I, 2001: 81). This leads to an engagement of genuinely diverse participants. In other words “[a] network begins from the bottom up, and is especially interesting from the point of view of the contestation of discourses when it brings together actors with quite different backgrounds” (Dryzek, 2010: 38). Hence, diversity and multi-faceted approaches within discourses are achieved through a network (Castells I, 2001: 227), leading to a diffusion of the left-right spectrum. Thus, additionally, the new social morphology is in an opposition to hierarchical thinking (Palazzo, 2000: 227) and can be

²⁶ Compare there with 3.1.3. Structural Constraints.

²⁷ English version: (Castells III, 2000: 371)

²⁸ English version: (Castells I, 2000: 501-502)

regarded as decentralized. Lastly, “[networks] have emerged organically in response to the increasing complexity and transnational nature of contemporary problems [...]” (Slaughter & Hale, 2010: 48).

In sum, “[i]n a broader historical perspective, the network society represents a qualitative change in the human experience” (Castells I, 2001: 536).²⁹ Networks are open, horizontal, diverse, decentralized, dynamic, informal, emerge organically and transcend national boundaries. These assertions were also identifiable in the statements of the interviewed members of the PPs.³⁰

First of all, regarding the openness of the PP:

“[...] Pirates are special, because they are approachable, highly approachable.” (Jelena, Serbia)

“We [the PP-Greece] can get in touch with other Pirate Parties very easily [...].” (Yiannis, Greece)

“The party program is a wiki, so everybody can contribute by changing it.” (Gregory, Germany/Kazakhstan)

Secondly, the horizontal organization structure is described in the existing literature (see e.g. Zolleis, 2010), but can also be seen in the statements of the participants:

“It [the PP] is unique in the sense that hierarchies are very flat. [...] I am not voted into any office, [but] I can still really move a lot and influence or [...] contribute to the success a lot.” (Justus, Germany)

“We had kings, we have emperors, we have presidents, we had whatever, banana republic, but it’s always a hierarchical system. We are changing that; we are the first horizontal political wave ever. [...] Once a journalist asked us, is there going to be a pirate president at some time, and in my opinion there is never going to be a pirate president [...].” (Kenneth, Catalonia)

Thirdly, this openness and the anti-hierarchical attributes attested by the participants incorporate another aspect. The networks are characterized as being inclusive in relation to their diverse point of views. This can be attributed to the PP as well, firstly through the participant observation, listening to the discussions and furthermore by asking about the members’ political background. Some stated they came from an anti-fascist background, while others considered themselves more bound to the green movement, while still others were previously electing liberals. Moreover, the matter of diversity can also be found in the literature concerning the German PP (Raab, 2011: 85-86). This ‘post-ideological approach’ – especially emphasized by members of the Crew Serenity - denotes:

“dass man themenspezifisch Mehrheiten finden kann [...], die man nicht unbedingt ideologisch begründen muss, [...] die nicht aus einer eindeutigen Parteienideologie heraus diskutiert [werden], [sondern man] in einer sehr konstruktiven Diskussion auf einen gemeinsamen Nenner [kommt].”³¹
(Erich, Serenity, Germany)

²⁹ English version: (Castells I, 2000: 508)

³⁰ Of course here, not the whole spectrum of the responses can be shown, but only a few examples of the expressions can be presented.

³¹ “that majorities can be found according to specific issues which do not necessarily need to be justified along a party-ideology. Instead, a common denominator can be reached through a constructive discussion.” (Erich, Serenity, German)

Fourthly, the decentralized structure of the PP has implications on the exchange of information and ideas:

“We don’t have define official channels of communication, [...] we use everything [such as] Facebook, Twitter, our mailing lists, groups, whatever. And it works organic [...].” (Jelena, Serbia)

“I think the Pirate Party’s strength is not necessarily in a centralization, but a decentralization. [...] What is unique is how fast we learn, we observe, we copy, we remix, we reuse, we relearn from each other.” (Rick, Sweden)

Another pattern that was observed is, that the different PPs support each other, whether physical support or mental support. Examples for this exchange are “*providing service space*” (Jaan), “*to share research and information*” (John), to “*exchange opinions and expertise*” (Gregory) or to support bloggers during the uprising in Tunisia in which “*everybody [...] took part as it would be his own personal problem*” (Gregory).

Additionally, the relationships between the different PPs are informal:

“I think it [the relationship between the different parties] depends on which Pirate Parties, though [...] a lot of contacts between different Pirate Parties at an international level now are very informal. We have some formal structures like the PPI [...], but the vast majority of contacts, I would say, are probably informal.” (Amelia, Sweden)

Finally, the PPs emerged and expanded organically:

“The Pirate Party is a party [...] that came out of necessity and it is not a regular political movement, as it represents the needs, the current needs of the people [...].” (Claudia, Romania)

Thus, the network structure, as defined by Castells (and others), can be exemplified by the PP, since it inhabits several distinct characteristics of a network. The notion that the PPs transcend national boundaries was already demonstrated in the pervious section.

Combining now globalization theories with the network-theory of Castells, it can be claimed that the new experiences in time and space addressed by Castells³² are closely connected with Giddens and Harvey’s concepts of globalization, since networks are non-territorial in relation to the physical place. If a human is inside or outside a network is not determined by the place, but if this person is connected to it (in a space) (Jönsson & Tallberg, 2010: 39).

Not only the network structure can be exemplified by the PP, but additionally the emergence of the party can be embedded into Castells description of the state of the world. “Castells has characterized the contemporary reconfiguration of social and political space on the macro level as the ‘rise of the network society’” (Jönsson & Tallberg, 2010: 39), which will now be dealt with, and can also be linked to the last mentioned quote above.

Several spheres of human existence were transformed through the events that occurred in the close past. These influences are manifold, whereas here only a few are shown, in order to briefly embed the PPs emergence into the contemporary context.

The informational-technological revolution is seen as important as the industrial revolution by Castells, since it impacts the material basis of economy, society, and culture (Castells I, 2001:

³² e.g. “timeless time” and the transformation of the “space of places” into the “space of flows” (Castells I, 2001: 431-526)

31). “[...] Information is the key ingredient [...]” (ibid: 536)³³, inasmuch as it does not only influence the economic sphere, but also culture and politics. Informational capitalism, on the one hand, links distant territories by e.g. global capital or the assimilation of production process (ibid: 108&124). On the other hand, informationalism implies two dynamics: firstly, inequality concerning distribution of wealth and therefore polarization, and secondly, the individualization of work and social exclusion (Castells III, 2003: 73-79). Here again, structural constraints affect individuals negatively in regard to the degree of participation in a globalized world (in multiple ways). The global network is characterized by inclusion (important sectors of economy and society) and simultaneously by exclusion (big sectors of the human population and territory) (Castells, II, 2002: 315).³⁴

Within these economic processes, “[i]f innovation is the main source of productivity, knowledge and information are essential materials of the new production process, and education is the key quality of labor, the new producers of informational capitalism are those knowledge generators and information processors [...]” (Castells, III, 2003: 397).³⁵ Hence, the claim of the PP

“[...] to try to make access to information easier on a global level and therefore possibly raise it and mak[e] sure that the access of information is free [...]” (Justus, Germany)

is a very urgent demand in the Information Age as depicted by Castells, because it creates potential for communication, productive skills and creativity (Castells II, 2002: 75-76). Hence, information is a resource, or, differently phrased, a material basis of the ‘network society’.

Congruently, the informational - and global - economy has a severe impact on the nation-states and the way politics is conducted. To illustrate, the welfare state, which is a fundamental component of the legitimation and the stability of the nation-state, is undermined by the globalized economy (Castells II, 2002: 269). In other words, “[s]ince commands from the state cannot be fully enforced, and since some of its fundamental promises, embodied in the welfare state, cannot be kept, both its authority and its legitimation are called into question” (Castells III, 2003: 397).³⁶ Further examples are applicable, however here, it is sufficient to state that there is an analytical and empirical connection between globalization, informationalism, capitalist restructuring and the crisis of political legitimation (Castells II, 2002: 317).

In these circumstances, a new form of politics arises: the informational politics. The informational politics are characterized by (et al.) the simplification of the messages, single issue politics, professional advertising and opinion research as political tools, personalization, negativism as the predominant strategy, and politics of scandals, resulting in a crisis of democracy (Castells II, 2002: 344-365). This leads to a support of ‘third parties’ or regional parties, which can be regarded as either protest vote, or as an effort to establish an alternative. Still, the inconsistency of the voters is an indicator for the dissatisfaction with the traditional party system (ibid: 368-369). Some of these attributes of the informational politics were reflected in the statements of the participants:

³³ English version (Castells I, 2000: 508)

³⁴ This can additionally be typified by the unequal appearance of the PPs around the world (see 3.3).

³⁵ English version (Castells III, 2000: 376)

³⁶ English version (Castells III, 2000: 377)

“[...] The thing that political parties need to keep in mind at all time is that they work in the name of the people. [...] But [...] politics gets too caught up in political reflexes and misses the basics. [...] I think [...] politics misses the point, they need to go back to the basic values and the basic purpose for which they exist in the first place [...].” (Claudia, Romania)

“We have a power relationship that is wrong. Now, people have to legitimize themselves towards the government, more than the government [...] has to legitimize itself towards people.” (Toon, Belgium)

Another pattern was detectable among the participants was the idea that the young are excluded from the political arena. Asking the founder of the PP (Sweden) about why he founded the PP:

“Out of frustration with how the politicians demonize the entire growing up generation, politicians [...] who see an entire young generation as a problem, but just maybe it is the politicians who are the problem [...].” (Rick, Sweden)

Hence, the current political agenda does not take youth into consideration. “Politicians seem unable to take up many issues that engage the young, while the issues they offer do not resonate deeply with such audiences. But it is also a problem of communication, of modes of representation and expression” (Dahlgren, 2008: 193). To encounter this polarization, it is argued for a double transparency, meaning that on the one hand, politicians need to be more visible for the youth, while on the other, politicians need to detect the youths’ problems and hence understand their realities. This would lead to an increased decentralization of political communication (ibid.).

Similar, according to Castells, the political transformation is predominantly due to communicational failures, especially embodied in the new media, mainly in television. The TV is the biggest source of information and has an immense impact on the formation of opinions of the population and therefore affects election outcomes, political organizations and decision-makings of governments (Castells II, 2002: 330-333).³⁷ The key problem arising here is that the mass media is a one-way-communication-system. However, real communication occurs reciprocal (Castells I, 2001: 383). Currently, a transformation of communication materializes - which is comparable to invention of the alphabet that enabled the people to lead a rational discourse – that integrates sound, text and images in one system with a potential interactive component, resulting in a culture of real virtuality (ibid: 375-378). “Under the informational paradigm, a new culture has emerged from the superseding of places and the annihilation of time by the space of flows and by timeless time: *the culture of real virtuality* [...] a system in which reality itself [...] is fully immersed in a virtual image setting [...], in which symbols are not just metaphors, but comprise the actual experience ” (Castells III, 2003: 401).³⁸ This leads to the next section, which perhaps can be seen as the substantial embodiment of the network, the net itself:

4.3 Internet

Not only the network society can be symbolized by the Internet, also the definition of globalization (as defined above) can be exemplified through the Internet. On the one hand, the place seems to be diffused into the new communication networks. “Virtual communities

³⁷ This “*Meinungsmonopol*” (monopoly of opinion) of the media was also discussed in length in the pilot interview with the Crew Serenity.

³⁸ English version (Castells III, 2000: 381)

overlay geographical and political borders [...] and therefore enable political action independent from a locality”³⁹ (Stegbauer, 2008:4). On the other hand, the locality – the place - still matters. One example is that the understanding and meaning of a text, TV show, or blog (etc.) is always relative to the social surroundings (Tomlinson, 2004). Further examples of the re-embedding are potential language barriers, or structural constraints, such as the disability to connect to the Internet. Moreover, the smaller the geographical proximity of a social relation, the stronger is the connectedness online (Stegbauer, 2008: 8). Hence, the Internet can be seen as an embodiment of globalization, a process of lifting social relations out of a locality, but simultaneously re-embedding them into the local context.

Within transnational networks, the “[c]ommunication networks are obviously of prime importance [...]” (Eriksen, 2007: 72). The spatial adjustments commenced with the satellite communications rendering the costs and time of communication irrespective to the distance (Harvey, 2000: 84). The decreasing costs of international communication (Doyle, 2007: 195) and the reduction of the expenditure of time made transnational communication accessible to a broader audience (Eriksen, 2007: 73). But not only the price factor is a distinct characteristic of the Internet, also the spread and the implementation of the Internet was the fastest of all communication mediums (Castells I, 2001: 398).

But what implications does this have on the conduct of everyday life? First of all, the Internet has a high significance especially for young people. For example, it influences the way leisure time is spent (bpd, 2011: 341). Here however, it is going to be focused on informational and communicational issues: The information power that has been given to various actors on the international field through the intensified role of the media “[...] can translate into agenda-setting power” (Kay, 2008: 83). Moreover, some argue that the Internet can be regarded as the birthplace of the communication society, which can be - in future times – considered as important as the invention of trains, cars, and planes (Zeh, 2011: 102). The interviewed members of the PP have also identified this trend:

“I think the Internet is like a mindblower for our generation in the sense that it is boundary less [...]. It connects people from everywhere [...]. Now ideas can flow more freely and people can connect with all kinds of ideas and that gives a big explosion of creativity and opportunities to evolve. I compare it a little bit with Gutenberg [...] what that kind of influence has on society. [...] I think the Internet is even bigger, because it gives ordinary citizens so much knowledge and so much access to information than we ever had before. For example, somebody with a cellphone now has more access to information than an American President 20 years ago [...]” (Toon, Belgium)

Thus, the access to information can empower individuals or groups. “The Party considers the modern technologies as a tool for emancipation” (Schirmacher, 2011: 139).⁴⁰ The importance of information was also stressed in another interview:

“People should have easier access to information, because information is free to copy, is very free to access. It is not longer any problem about copying by hand [...] or printing them out, which is costly [...]. With the internet age, there is a small administrative cost, but negligible.” (Josef, Sweden)

Additionally, the communication and the distribution of information in the Internet cover all spheres of human existence. Individuals can therefore arrange around certain subjects and can

³⁹ „Virtuelle Gemeinschaften überlagerten geographische und politische Grenzziehungen [...]. Auf diese Weise seien politische Aktionen unabhängig vom Ort möglich” (Stegbauer, 2008: 4).

⁴⁰ „Die Partei betrachtet die modernen Technologien als ein Instrument der Emanzipation“ (Schirmacher, 2011:139).

collaborate expediently resulting in a worldwide web of individual and interactive communication (Castells I, 2001: 403).

In contrast, traditional mass media, such as TV, is a one-way street communication form. However, true communication is based around sending and receiving (ibid: 383). “One of the most basic formulations of the idea of communication is in terms of a message and the response to the message” (Dean, 2004: 273). The members of the Crew Serenity identified the importance of the reciprocity of communication:

“[...]Irgendwann war man nur noch Zuschauer und man konnte einfach nicht mehr teilnehmen. [...] Das war wie ein Theater, eine Show, [...] in eine Richtung, also vom Fernseher auf ein her [...] und man hatte keine Möglichkeit der Kommunikation, weil Kommunikation funktioniert immer auch, wenn man wieder zurück kommunizieren kann. Dann ist sie erst vollständig, sonst ist es eine einseitige Beschallung [...].”⁴¹ (Nene, Serenity, Germany)

Hence, the viable participation and the inclusive communication within the Internet are of prime importance. “Like the computer, information technology is reflexive” (Dean, 2004: 267). Here, the keynote of the network society can be detected: “What characterizes the current technological revolution is not the centrality of knowledge and information, but the application of such knowledge and information to knowledge generation and information processing/communication devices, in a cumulative feedback loop between innovation and the uses of innovation” (Castells I, 2001: 34).⁴²

This application of information - or the usage of the Internet - signifies that the existing technologies are not merely utilized, but they are additionally transformed and enlarged. For example, taking Wikipedia, a platform where individuals can not only use the presented information, but moreover contribute to the content and discuss articles. Similar, the PPs’ Wikis function like this.⁴³ Hence, the Internet suggests participation. “Everybody can take part in the communication process – independent of hierarchies and institutional links”⁴⁴ (Meckel, 2008: 19). According to some others, this leads to a (grass roots like) democratization of mass media (ibid.), characterized by decentralization and horizontality. Additionally, as empirical studies show, through electronic communication, social relationships evolve flat and lateral (Gumbrecht, 2011: 119). All these characteristics can also be detected in the PPs’ organizational structure.

Another important factor that locates the PP in various countries is immediacy. The immediacy, achieved through the new technologies “[...] create the impression of a general effortlessness and ubiquity of contact [...]” (Tomlinson, 2007: 158). Hence, it also has implications on the geographical separation between nation-states. Moreover, some authors argued that the new communication forms did not emerge on the basis of the nation-state (Hepp, 2008: 10).⁴⁵ One participant was asked about how to counteract selfishness when it

⁴¹ “At some point one was only an observer, one could not take part any more. This was like a theater, a show, in only one direction, from the TV screen towards oneself. And there was no possibility of communication, because communication only works, if one can communicate back. Only then is it complete, otherwise it is a one-sided sound.” (Nene, Serenity, Germany)

⁴² English version (Castells I, 2000: 32)

⁴³ See <http://wiki.piratenpartei.de/Hauptseite>

⁴⁴ „Jeder kann sich an allen Kommunikationsprozessen beteiligen – unabhängig von Hierarchien oder institutionellen Anbindungen“ (Meckel, 2008:19).

⁴⁵ Hence, it is claimed that transnational communication is an inadequate term; ‘transcultural communication’ is more apt.

comes to the distribution of resources amongst different nation-states. He anticipated that through this immediacy (in social networks) this obstacle would be solved:

“By social networks. People are selfish, because they don’t know other people. And by social networks Tunisians know Germans. [...] People [...] that are practically born with the Internet, born with the social networks [...] don’t make a difference between the Tunisian guy behind him at the school and the Japanese guy he knows from Twitter. You see, they are both his friends [...].” (Slim, Tunisia)

Hence, through the Internet, cosmopolitanism can be intensified (Castells I, 2001: 415).

Similar:

“The net is the greatest equalizer humankind has ever invented. It gives a nine year old school girl in Paraguay who just got her first laptop on the one-laptop-a-child-program, the exact same strength of voice as me, a white, middle-aged male in the privileged parts of Europe.” (Rick, Sweden)

Hence, it can be concluded that the Internet changes communicative behavior. Therefore, when the participants of the research talk about inclusive communication and a different understanding of communication, it denotes that they were socialized around the Internet. Therefore, the Internet (and its ways of communication and expression) is what connects them and which enables them to come into being (globally). Inclusive communication (utilized by the PPs’ members) indicates the reciprocity and the equalizing qualities within the Internet-based communication process, simultaneously coupled with a decentralized and horizontal organizational structure.

However, despite the fact that the Internet can increase cosmopolitanism - and can therefore be regarded as potentially inclusive and as an equalizer - structural constraints arise. The digital divide is a clear example that not everyone is connected in the same degree. Still today, infrastructural and social inequalities prevail. For example, the urban and rural access to the Internet (and in Germany especially between East and West) is unequal, and in the rural parts of Germany live-streams (e.g. to follow discussion of the Bundestag online) are not possible. Furthermore, the social structure of individuals that are online is unequal: more men than women are online, more young than elderly, more rich than poor, and finally the more educated tend to be better connected than the less educated (Roleff, 2011: 15-16). In Germany in 2012, 75.6% of the population was online (Initiative D21, 2012: 4). When regarding the global distribution of the Internet the separation becomes even more striking. In 2011, only 32.7% of the population of the world was connected to the Internet (Internet World Stats, 2012).

Hence, the global network is on the one hand characterized by inclusion, but simultaneously by exclusion (Castells II, 2002: 315). The process - even though the tendency towards an increasing connectivity is visible - is highly selective and therefore cannot be regarded as equal. In order not to generate a false impression and to reduce the internet euphoria, it is important to keep in mind, that - notwithstanding the Internet has a great potential of (re)constructing reality - the prevalent structures prohibit an equal and inclusive distribution of communication for the majority of the world's population.

To conclude the first part of this paper, the PP can be seen as an allegory of globalization and the network society. It embodies several characteristics of both. Furthermore, it can be argued that the PP would not have come into being, if these specific features of modernity did not exist. Especially the Internet and its potentials of (inclusive) communication allow the global outlook of the party, particularly since it grew organically. In the words of one participant:

“I believe the Pirate Party is the symptom of the every more informed network world [... and] a symptom of an increasingly globalized generation.” (John, UK)

Still, structural constraints are frequent and seem to persist. Hence, it is important to be conscious of the fact that the external exclusion poses a severe limitation on the globality of the PP.

Whereas the journey through the first part of this paper - in which the structures surrounding the PP were scrutinized - ends here, the second part now explores one specific constructivist - action-generating - objective of the PP: their notion of democracy.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Inevitably, these two parts cannot be strictly separated, because (e.g.) as mentioned above the Internet and the from-it generated new (grass-roots like) understanding of communication influences the PPs members' notion of democracy.

5. Pirate Party and Democracy

5.1 The Pirate Parties' Notion of Democracy

New ways of democracy can be enabled through the Internet and its 'inclusive' communication. "Without information and communication, without discourse and objection, without approval and critique democracy dies. Politics IS communication, and ever since the digitalization, communication has changed fundamentally. Due to this tight relationship, politics had to change as well"⁴⁷ (Süssmuth, 2011: 5).

Democracy appears to be in a crisis. It is not democracy itself that is in question, but the way it is executed. Illustrations of the discontent with the current politics are the apparent domination of economics over politics, the distance between the people and politicians, and the dominating logic of the media, labeling the current state as "post-democratic" (Golz, 2011: 2). Castells reveals further and profound examples giving a sapid input into the current "crisis of democracy" (Castells, 2002: 329-375). All together, these current difficulties in the execution of politics result in a crisis of credibility of the political system that is increasingly dependent on the media. In general, the discontent of the citizens towards parties, politicians, and politics intensifies and turns moreover into a fundamental problem (Castells, 2001: 365-366). One of the consequences is disenchantment with politics, resulting in low voters turnouts in elections. In Germany, this trend is evidently visible. For example, in 2010 in Saxony-Anhalt, only 51,2% of the eligible voters voted. In Europe, the image is more diffused. In 2009, only 43% (European average) cast their votes. In comparison to 2004, 2,5% less people voted. On the one extreme, only 21% of the eligible voters voted in Lithuania (-27,4%). The other extreme is Luxembourg, where 90,8% voted. However there, the voters' participation dropped 0,6% (bpb, 2009a). In general, the voters' participation in European elections decreased from 63% in 1979 to 43% in 2009 (bdp, 2009b). In the global perspective, voters' participation peaked between 1980-1989, but dropped again until 2001 (end of the study) (Pintor et al., 2002: 76).

Hence, the current crisis of democracy can be noticed in the decreasing participation in elections, a clear symptom of disenchantment with politics. However, the entrainment of the citizens is of prime importance, especially in the time of fundamental transformation (Helms, 2011: 13).⁴⁸ Particularly income-weak and less educated parts of the population increasingly desert political participation, even though they are typically most affected by the current (socio-economic) changes. Additionally, the habitus (and hence the socio-cultural capital) is an ever more important trait to gain access to the political (decision-making) sphere (Bender & Wiesendahl, 2011: 19-20). Consequently, the seemingly powerlessness of the political sphere (and hence also individuals that try to gain access and influence) in relation to global phenomena delimits action and points towards structuralism.

This brief digest of the current political situation can be extended largely and should be further analyzed thoughtfully. However here, the focus now is on the notions of democracy of the interviewed PP members. Statements in 4.2 already exemplified the discontent of the PP members. Still it is important to keep in mind, that this discontent generates action and forms

⁴⁷ „Ohne Information und Kommunikation, ohne Rede und Gegenrede, ohne Zustimmung und Kritik stirbt die Demokratie. Politik IST Kommunikation, und seit der Digitalisierung hat sich Kommunikation grundlegend gewandelt. Aufgrund dieser engen Beziehung musste sich auch die Politik verändern“ (Süssmuth, 2011:5).

⁴⁸ due to e.g. exogenous challenges such as the economic globalization or the unification process of the EU.

their understanding of and demand for a new form of democracy: A democracy that has a higher participatory approach.

In the following, it will first be examined what the PP members expressed about their notions of democracy (Liquid Democracy), then this will be related to the existing theory on alternative democracy forms (focusing especially on deliberative democracy and Liquid Democracy), and then finally the implementation in Berlin (Liquid Feedback) will be looked at.

Again, only a few statements are shown. However, for the first time in this research, answers from the e-mail survey are included as well. This is due to the research question, if the notions of democracy can be regarded as homogenous. Therefore, it is helpful to transgress European boundaries (even though only on a limited scale).

First of all, some of the members started their political activities in the PP due to the possibility of increasing the participation of citizens in political processes. Asking why they became a member and about the uniqueness of the party, following answers were received:

“I like the ideals: freedom, decentralization, direct participation [...]. For me it is special, because they offer an opportunity to work on new models of democracy [...] like forms of direct democracy and I think the current democracies are quite outdated.” (Toon, Belgium)

“The Venezuelan Pirate Party represents an effort of like-minded individuals who see the Pirate Movement as an alternative to traditional politics. We became “activists”, because we believe in the Pirate Party agenda which we see as a means towards a more democratic, honest and open society.” (Javier, Carlos, & Balam, Venezuela, E-mail survey)

The PP is special, because “it is a new way to see politics basically. It doesn’t take the old concept where you have a few well-trained politicians who always [...] run for the Parliament [...]. But what you get instead is a lot of young people who have no experience at all in politics and [...] it is kind of making the really complicated language of politics a really simple one.” (Jaan, Estonia)

I became a member of the PP “because I believe that through democracy and through the current means of policy we can really change our future.” (Sebastián, Uruguay, E-mail survey)

Hence here, it can be concluded that some members joined the party, because it offers an alternative to the problems of current politics mentioned above. Nevertheless, reasons for becoming a member are diverse, for example finding a political movement that suits them (e.g. Justus and Gabriel), or becoming aware of the party through friends advice (e.g. Jelena and Claudia). Still the majority of those interviewed became members due to Internet issues and notion of access to free information (e.g. Josef and Amelia). Yet, the incentives to join the party are manifold and cannot be clearly separated into one distinct objective.

Therefore, and as stated before, the members of the PP are diverse. However, “their biggest consensus is about the procedures and general framework of democratic processes”⁴⁹ (Staub, 2011: 95-96). This quote relates to the German PP. Despite that, in the interviews conducted a consensus about notions of democracy was detectable as well, and can be itemized as:

“One person, one vote.” (Kenneth & Gabriel, Catalonia & Spain)

⁴⁹ „Ihr größter Konsens ist derjenige über die Verfahren und Rahmenbedingungen demokratischer Prozesse“ (Staub, 2011: 95-96).

Or differently phrased:

“Basically, the [...] Pirate Parties are about liquid democracy, that every vote [...] is equal to other votes, no matter who is speaking. [...] It is based around content and ideas, not about authority. Not about whether you are male or female, or if you are politician or want to be a politician. So that is the most important difference. Everyone has an equal right to [...] articulate.” (Jelena, Serbia)

Every interviewed member emphasized this particular notion. However, it can be argued now, that this is not a novelty. In representative democracy (or competitive democracy), political equality is a prerequisite. It ideally takes everyone’s vote equal. Additionally, through the institutionalization of rights, it protects minorities. Nevertheless, in representative democracy, political participation is low⁵⁰ and is characterized by an absence of a reciprocal deliberation incorporating the public (Fishkin, 2009: 65-70). To distinguish the precise notion of democracy more specific statements made by the members need to be exemplified:

“We want direct democracy. We don’t want to elect for people to supposedly represent us. We want to take part [in] the decision itself [...] not elect someone who would take the decision.” (Slim, Tunisia)

“With direct democracy, we could help bring forth a more relevant discussion of the real issues. [...] What sets the Pirate Parties apart is their transparency and willingness to get everyone involved in the discussions. [...] Direct democracy [is] the space for all people to participate, have an opinion, be heard and express their concerns and personal solutions” (Javier, Carlos, & Balam, Venezuela, E-mail survey)

Thus, firstly, ‘relevant discussions’ denote a deliberative approach. Secondly, the PP members want to directly vote on political issues and increase participation:

“Jedes Thema was dich interessiert, das Problem was dich beschäftigt, du kannst mitarbeiten. Jeder kann einen Antrag einreichen [...]. Es ist nicht von oben herab, sondern wir alle [sind] gleichberechtigt. [...] Wenn wir einen Vorstand wählen, [...] die sagen uns [nicht] in welche Richtung es geht, sondern die machen die Verwaltung, weil die Richtung [...] das sind wir alle [...]”⁵¹ (Jess, Serenity, Germany)

However, to get everyone involved is complicated.⁵² For example, nobody comprises a holistic worldview and therefore does not know enough to vote intelligently on every issue that arises worldwide. The world becomes increasingly complex and renders polymathy impossible. In other words: “Direct democracy - the government of the public by itself - has always been said to be impossible on a large scale because of the technical difficulty of such direct governance and the fact that the complexities [...] involved in running a large state requires a much deeper understanding of the issues, specialization, and a division of labor” (Ito, 2003). The more people participate, the less deliberation is possible. Here, the specificity of the PP’s notion of democracy becomes visible:

“People do not vote for parties or people, they just vote on priorities [...]. That is one kind of system; the second system is proxy voting, where you give people your vote that you think is an expert on one issue or another, like Liquid Feedback and dynamic democracy. [...] I think [...] we should design

⁵⁰ Or solely limited to vote on legislative periods (approx.) every four years

⁵¹ “Every subject that you are interested in, every problem that bothers you, you can contribute to. Everybody can hand in a proposal. It is not top-down; instead we are all equal [have equal rights]. If we are electing an executive board, they are not saying which direction should be taken, but they are merely doing the administration, because the direction, that is all of us” (Jess, Serenity, Germany).

⁵² See Obstacles 5.4

[current democracies] otherwise, that people have the time to have a public debate and that we can have real discussions and real mental elaboration about certain topics.” (Toon, Belgium)

Liquid democracy entails therefore the delegation of votes to someone who is perceived of having enough knowledge to vote intelligently on an issue. “Liquid democracy is proportional in the sense that one member gets one vote per bill. But instead of having to cast that vote directly, you can nominate a proxy, either for a particular bill or for a particular topic” (Kragg, 2003).

To conclude, a clear trend among those interviewed was visible. The PPs’ notion of democracy can be characterized by political equality, increased participation, deliberation, and the delegation of votes coupled with a bottom-up and content-based approach. Liquid Democracy embodies those attributes as well. Moreover, it is interesting to relate this to the structure of the PP. As it has been mentioned before, the composition of the PP⁵³ resembles a network and matches with these notions of democracy. “The logic of the net reveals the possibility to connect politics more decentralistically, hierarchy free and effective within the basis of civic commitment” (Palazzo, 2000: 245).⁵⁴ Moreover, some authors argue that the new organizational logic of the network strengthens individuals as subjects of their surroundings (ibid: 244).⁵⁵ Therefore, the network structure also indicates a different understanding of human nature. “The deliberative view clearly rests on a different conception of ‘human nature’ in politics from the liberal view” (Miller, 2003: 183).

5.2 Foundations

In ancient Athens, citizens met on a market place to discuss about issues. Following the discussion, every male Athenian citizen had the opportunity to vote on the matter (Fishkin, 2009: 9-13).⁵⁶ Here, the ideal of direct democracy (and deliberative democracy) can be found and it can be stated, “what we see today is therefore the revival of an old theme, not the sudden emergence of a new one” (Mouffe, 2000: 1).

Direct democracy is the immediate form of governance by the people without the necessity of political representatives (Geyer, 2011: 4). Conversely, nowadays, three specific problems arise when applying direct democracy. Firstly, issues are becoming more complex, secondly, citizens lack the time to deal with an (complex) issue thoroughly, and thirdly, there is no common marketplace. Additionally, it is believed that citizens lack the competence, knowledge and expertise to decide on general issues.

Therefore, in modern democracies, representatives are elected in order to deal with complex questions, conduct discussions, and then address the population via the mass media. On the other side of the coin, liquid democracy is seen as an alternative to this representative democracy. Citizens can yield a proposal directly. Furthermore, they can either directly vote on an issue or delegate their vote to someone they believe is suitable to vote on this issue. Hence, “the liquid transition between representative democracy and direct democracy is the

⁵³ such as the horizontal appearance, diversity, openness (see 4.1.)

⁵⁴ „Die Logik des Netzes offenbart die Möglichkeit, Politik dezentraler, hierarchiefreier und wirkungsmächtiger an die Basis bürgerlichen Engagements anzubinden“ (Palazzo, 2000: 245).

⁵⁵ This argument can be additionally strengthened by visualizing a panoptic diagram and a network diagram (Kim, 2008: 246).

⁵⁶ It is important to keep in mind that not everyone was included, such as females, physically constrained and unfree people.

concept of liquid democracy” (Jochmann, 2010).⁵⁷ Similar, liquid democracy can also be described as a “[...] hybrid of direct democracy and representative democracy, in which citizens can vote directly if they wish, and name a representative (‘proxy’) of their own choosing otherwise” (Green-Armytage, n.d.: 1). Within this idea, the Internet is employed as the common market place (or differently, as the public sphere), where the discussions are held (ibid.). Practically speaking, the PP Germany illustrates this in the way that every individual has the possibility to declare: “For issues concerning taxes, I want to be represented by the socialist party, matters concerning environmental politics by the green party, and for school policy I want to be represented by the private person Mr. Müller. Decisions concerning the university-admission law, I want to vote for myself” (Piraten Partei Deutschland, 2012).⁵⁸ Thus, here the significance of the notion of democracy of the party members becomes visible: It is characterized by an effort to increase participation and simultaneously having the possibility to delegate votes to either a party or another individual. In order to scrutinize this further, alternative democracy forms are now going to be looked at.

Alternative democracy forms with the attempt to increase participation have various names, such as “participatory democracy”, “strong democracy”, “expansive democracy”, “discursive democracy” (Dryzek, 1990) or “deliberative democracy” (Schmidt, 2006: 251). In this sense, democracy can be understood as the embodiment of all activities that aim to replace authority and leadership through participation of the society from below (ibid: 256). Here, it is focused on deliberative democracy, since deliberative democracy is the template for the technological realization of Liquid Democracy (Bieber, 2012: 31).

Deliberation means “long and careful consideration or discussion” (Oxford Dictionary online). Hence, the question that arises is “how to include everyone under conditions where they are effectively motivated to really think about the issue” (Fishkin, 2009: 1) putting an emphasis on political equality and deliberation. Ideally, three core values work together: *deliberation*, *political equality* and *mass participation* (ibid: 32-47).

Fishkin defines *deliberation* as “the process by which individuals sincerely weigh the merits of competing argument in discussions together” (ibid: 33). In order to achieve a sincere deliberation five conditions need to be set: firstly, access to sufficient information, secondly a substantive balance between the presentation of competing viewpoints, thirdly, a diversity in the range of competing viewpoints, fourthly, conscientiousness so that the decision is based on the better argument and finally equal consideration of the viewpoint, regardless of the people that offer them (ibid: 32-40). Hence, it is necessary to “[...] create a safe public space where the merits of the reasons are considered rather than the prestige or social standing of the articulators of those considerations” (ibid: 40), resulting ideally in a refined public opinion (ibid: 21-30). Dryzek (2000), who refers to this concept as “discursive democracy” (Preface), denotes: “Discursive democracy emphasizes intersubjective communication across discourses within the public sphere, and treats public opinion as the outcome of their contestation” (ibid: 56).

Political equality indicates an “[...] equal consideration of political preferences [...]” (Fishkin, 2009: 44). On the one hand, this means (and is the predominant vision of today's

⁵⁷ „Dieser flüssige Wechsel zwischen repräsentativer und direkter Demokratie ist das Konzept der Liquid Democracy“ (Jochmann, Kontextschmiede Online Video, Minute 3:03-3:10).

⁵⁸ „Für Steuerrecht möchte ich gerne durch die **Partei** SPD, für Umweltpolitik durch die **Partei** die Grünen und für die Schulpolitik durch die **Privatperson** Herrn Müller vertreten werden. Für die Entscheidung über das neue Hochschul-Zulassungsgesetz an den Universitäten möchte ich aber **selbst** abstimmen“ (PP Deutschland, 2012).

political system) that everyone has one vote and this vote is counted equally in relation to other votes. However, on the other, it could also mean that a random sample of the population is chosen. Hence the concept of political equality means, “effectively offering each person in the population [sampled] a theoretically equal chance of being the decisive voter” (ibid: 27).

Mass participation signifies - in contrast - the idea that everyone is included due to the possibility to vote and not through the equal chance of being a part of a random sample. Voting is the most extensively shared form of (mass) participation; however, other forms do exist, such as donating money or time for political processes or parties, demonstrating or writing letters. Participation can also be passive, by e.g. watching news and reading newspapers (ibid: 32 & 45-47).

In current mass democracies therefore, political equality and mass participation is achieved. However, deliberation falls short (mostly due to scale problems), resulting in a raw public opinion. Defects of raw public opinions are firstly, rational ignorance, secondly phantom opinions, thirdly the selectivity of sources and fourthly, vulnerability to manipulations (ibid: 122). Hence, representation is employed so that the raw public opinion becomes refined. The effect of representation can therefore be interpreted as “[...] to refine and enlarge the public views by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens [...]” (Madison *quoted in* Fishkin, 2009: 16).

As a consequence, in (the ideal type) competitive (or representative) democracy, political equality and the protection of minorities (non-tyranny) is attained, whereas the fulfillment of participation and deliberation remains questionable. Deliberative democracy is not perfect either: where it puts an emphasis on political equality and deliberation, participatory distortion and tyranny may be unintended side effects. In elite deliberation, where the deliberation occurs among representatives on behalf of the people, participation and political equality are improbable, but deliberation and non-tyranny can be secured. Lastly, participatory democracy provides political equality and participation, but lacks deliberation and non-tyranny (Fishkin, 2009: 65- 80).⁵⁹

Hence, it can be concluded, when taking the three core components of democratic reform, they cannot be attained equally or simultaneously (ibid: 198) and have never been synchronistically achieved yet (ibid: 32-47). Fishkin labels this as trilemma. He therefore proposes two different strategies to counteract the trilemma.

Firstly, the microcosmic deliberation - in which political equality is attained by random sampling of a modest scale of a population – which was employed in 2007 by inviting 362 ‘ordinary’ citizens to Brussels to deliberate about issues on Europe, called ‘Putting Europe in one Room’. Interestingly, after a weekend of deliberation, the participant actually changed (or reconsidered) their views: “After deliberation, participants came to see themselves more as Europeans, rather than just citizens of their own countries” (ibid: 189). Before the weekend 77% of the participants felt European, afterwards 85%. Thus, it can be inferred that deliberation practices have an effect on the formation of opinions.

The other proposal - which has not been carried out, since it is a “quasi-utopian thought experiment” (Ackerman & Fishkin, 2003: 12) - is a deliberation day, which can be considered as a new national holiday in which the whole population meets to deliberate. Whereas in the

⁵⁹ For Figure I see Appendix.

microcosmic deliberation, (mass) participation is obsolete (Fishkin 2009: 46), the deliberation day is practically impossible.

However, still, it is important to keep in mind that “[b]eing in a room with randomly assigned fellow citizens can stimulate understanding across social cleavages” (Ackerman & Fishkin, 2003: 19) and has an effect on the formation of opinions. “Democracy is about communication as well as voting, about social learning as well as decision-making [...]” (Dryzek, 2006, 25). Within this communication, reciprocity is fundamental and additionally the basis of deliberation (Gutmann & Thompson, 2003: 33-36), which is increasingly attained through Internet (or inclusive) communication.

5.3 Implementation

After now briefly displaying the ideas on democracy and the theory behind it, the implementation of this notion is shown. As it can be concluded from the above, deliberative democracy is difficult, if not impossible, to implement. However, the contemplation of these ideas gives valid insights into enlarged ideas of alternative democracy forms.

First of all, some participants of the interviews also mentioned that the new form(s) of democracy - and the technological means to achieve it - are far from absolute:

“There should be more experimentation with different forms of democracy, liquid democracy would be an example for that” (Justus, Germany)

“[Es] müssen andere Wege gefunden werden [um Bürger wieder mit einzubeziehen]. Die die derzeit da sind reichen nicht aus. [...] Da müssen verschiedene Systeme mal analysiert werden [und] die guten Sachen gesucht werden.“⁶⁰ (Thomas, Germany)

The implementation of liquid democracy occurs in the digital sphere (space), in the Internet, but is also bound to face-to-face interaction and thus to physical meetings (place). However, it is difficult to rely on academic literature, since it is practically non-existent. Therefore, the author relies here on the participant observation in Berlin in January and February 2011 and on the information provided by the PPs themselves in their wikis. Here, a critical eye needs to rest on the issue that the PP Berlin is quite well developed in comparison to other PPs. This, on the one hand might pose the difficulty of not providing a global outlook. On the other, since the liquid feedback system is reasonably well developed, it can give a valid insight. In the words of a participant (also repeating what has been mentioned above):

“When I founded the Swedish Pirate Party, I did something that the other parties would never have done and that was I hold the principle of one member, one vote as a sacred. The others would just select delegates at one level, vote them up and select delegates of the next level and vote up. So the individual member has very little influence at the end of the day. [...] The German Pirate Party has taken that to new levels with the liquid democracy where you can engage [...] even when they do not want to take the time to really understand an issue thoroughly, they can still activate and vote, delegate their vote to somebody they trust. And you can see this very clear pattern going through all Pirate Parties that we take influence very seriously.“ (Rick, Sweden)

To get into (physical) contact with the PP Berlin is very simple. A visit at the Internet side www.berlin.piraten.partei.de and a click on the word ‘Mitmachen’ (‘take part’) tells the visitor where and when to attend regular meetings. It is explicitly stated that “the meetings are

⁶⁰ „New ways have to be found to involve the citizens. The ones existing are insufficient. Different systems need to be analyzed and the good things need to be searched for”(Thomas, Germany).

open [for everybody] and guests are always warmly welcomed”⁶¹ (Piraten Partei Berlin, 2012).

In Berlin, there are three types of meetings: Firstly, *general meetings* to get to know other Pirates or individuals who are interested in pirate policies. Furthermore, during January and February 2012, (since the federal states members assembly took place at end of February 2012), those meetings served as information exchange about/with the potential candidates for various positions in the PP Berlin, called “Kandidatengrillen” (candidates’ barbeque). Here, PP members set questions to the potential candidates.

Secondly, *Crews* meet regularly (mostly once a week) in a bar or a café. They are self-organized entities without formal structures on a local level. Every Pirate belongs to one Crew; one Crew has approximately five to nine members, so that discussions can be conducted. They provide their information or outcomes of discussions online in a wiki or a pad. Every Crew has a captain (gender-neutral term) who is not leading the Crew, but moderates the discussions and represents the Crew.⁶² One example of a Crew would be the interviewed Crew Serenity who meets once a week in a pub in Friedrichshain/Berlin. They prepare the meetings online beforehand via a mailing list and a pad. The atmosphere during the meetings is quite casual, and they are made up of presentations, exchange of information and discussions lasting between two to three hours. The Crew is open; the members of the Crew also welcome interested people, new pirate members, and crew-hoppers at any time.⁶³

Thirdly, *Squads* are self-organized working groups that are not primarily bound to a place. Arbeitsgruppen (AGs) - working groups – are over regional Squads. There are three types of Squads, firstly project-squads (to plan events), structure-squads (to work out structures and undertake regular tasks), and thirdly subject related Squads (that work on specific political themes). One pirate can be a member of several Squads; one Squad has at least three members. Meetings occur regularly, either in a place or a (virtual) space. When a Squad has worked out a proposal, it is presented in the Liquid Feedback system (LQFB), where other members can vote on it.⁶⁴

Hence, it can be concluded, that a mixture between the virtual sphere and the geographical sphere is employed. Members of the PP Berlin meet regularly face-to-face in either general meetings, Crews or/and Squads. The results of these meetings are presented online in *wikis, pads and in the LQFB* system, which everyone (also non-members) can access. Also mailing lists are important, but will not be further presented here.

The *wiki* of the PP Berlin works on the same principle as the well-known Internet platform Wikipedia. “In its simplest form, a wiki allows any authorized user to add new content and new pages to a wiki, and to edit, change, or delete existing content” (Clyde, 2005). Also the PPI provides a wiki.⁶⁵ Here concepts, structures, candidates, party programs, election outcomes (etc.) are displayed and explained. In general, all information concerning the party can be found here. As of now (June 2012), the wiki of the PP Berlin contains 180,253 pages to which 25,777 registered users contributed.

⁶¹ „Die Treffen der Piraten in Berlin sind offen und Gäste sind immer gern gesehen“ (PP Berlin, 2012).

⁶² <http://wiki.piratenpartei.de/BE:Crewkonzept>

⁶³ <http://wiki.piratenpartei.de/BE:Crews/Serenity>

⁶⁴ <http://wiki.piratenpartei.de/BE:Squads>

⁶⁵ <http://wiki.pp-international.net/>

Pads are used to conduct online discussion and to present the outcomes of an ongoing discussion. In other words, it is a collaborative and live writing platform. Everyone can contribute to the discussions. First, one writes her/his name on the top of the document and picks a color, so that everyone can see the changes and contributions made. Additionally, the formation and the working out of the program of the PP-EU also occur here.⁶⁶

Finally, the *LQFB* system is the technological realization of the concept of Liquid Democracy. Here the worked out proposals are put into ballot. So far, the PPs of Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Serbia, Catalonia, Brazil and Sweden are working (or will be working in the near future) with similar systems. Jabbusch (2011) analyzed the German LQFB system thoroughly. He draws the conclusion that, even though problems exist, “the overall results are pretty much positive” (: 169).⁶⁷

In sum, it can safely be stated that the PP Berlin’s evolvement is embedded in the local and the virtual. It could be asserted that this intermingling of the place and the space contributes to the PP Berlin’s success. One practical example: Before meetings, or general assemblies, participants can inform themselves (about issues at stake). Therefore, it can be argued that the physical meetings become quite effective. However, to actually safely prove this claim, further research is necessary. Additionally, it would be interesting to analyze, how effective the local-virtual communication is in comparison to the virtual one.

Finally, it is noteworthy, that it is very uncomplicated to get involved in the PP Berlin and to attend regular meetings (also when having no Internet access). Moreover, through the provision of information online, the initiation of action rests upon the individual. Hence, the better the Internet literacy of a person, the easier becomes his or her participation. Nevertheless, one can deduce that the PP Berlin has “[...] a shared infrastructure of communication to permit common dialogue” (Fishkin, 2009: 181) which is a necessary prerequisite for deliberative democracy. But what is about individuals that are not connected to the World Wide Web? How is the trans-regional communication then possible? These and further questions will be dealt with in the next section.

5.4 Obstacles

In the following section, the obstacles or problems concerning the notions of democracy and its implementation are shown. However, it is noteworthy that the author is not trying to resolve the idealist and realist dichotomy. This denotes neither that a final answer will be provided nor that all problems will be displayed. The purpose of this section is only to start a thoughtful examination, which can be employed and further enlarged by other researchers (maybe only focusing on one issue) and by the PP members. Firstly, obstacles of a ‘practical’ nature - meaning problems that can possibly be solved by action in the future - are displayed, then the obstructions of a more ‘theoretical’ nature are shown.

First of all, despite the ‘practical’ and ‘theoretical’ divide, and as it has been mentioned above, “[t]hose who lack access [to the virtual space] tend to be poorer and less educated [...]” (Fishkin, 2009: 169). The *digital divide* therefore generates external exclusion, renders

⁶⁶ <http://www.piratenpad.de/>

⁶⁷ This was a very brief summary of the electronical system the PP uses. Further extensive research is necessary and legitimate. However here, the content has to be limited due to the scale of this thesis. For further contemplation, please refer (e.g.) to Jabbusch or visit the various Internet pages (see links) get a deeper impression.

potential online decisions unrepresentative and results in participatory distortion. “At the present time, political discussions online are privilege for those with access to computers and the internet. Those who would benefit the most from the democratizing potential of new technology do not have access to it” (Papacharissi, 2002: 19).

On top of that, persons who have access might lack *Internet literacy* (or digital literacy). To illustrate “[t]he Web is about interactivity, the ability of the user to choose information pathways and explore them with new-found ease” (Glistler, 1997: 146). Hence, to attain information online is quite simple, however, an individual also needs to be able to evaluate this information.

Connected to that, being able to understand the online tools is difficult as well. In 2011, only (approx.) 30,54% of the PP members of Germany were registered in the LQFB system (Jabbusch, 2011: 94). Some argue that this is due to the unclear and confusing working surface (Neuroth, 2012). In fact, it can be stated that the system is not easy and does take time to understand. Individuals might not be able to cope with this time expenditure. Furthermore, dealing with the extensive E-mails lists is additionally time-consuming and complicated. This might discourage people from joining or from continuing political work. The members of the Crew Serenity discussed this problem in length, which can be summed up by:

“[Die] Aufarbeitung [der Informationen muss] Oma Erna kompatibel sein. [...] Die Technologie [muss] einfacher gestaltet [werden] um eben sich zu beteiligen, um sie dann in die breite Bevölkerung zu tragen, die z.B. auch acht bis zehn Stunden arbeiten muss.“⁶⁸ (Daniel, Serenity, Germany)

Nevertheless, even if the systems are comprehensible for a broad audience, still the gathering of information and the setting up of the systems take time. This expenditure of time has to be compensated. “Most people are not effectively motivated to get informed, to form opinions, or to discuss issues with those who have different points of view” (Fishkin, 2009: 7).⁶⁹ The question arising here is how to get people motivated and how to compensate their efforts. Additionally, “[m]ost of the subsequent research and debate on voting has focused primarily on the incentives to vote, rather than the incentive to know enough to vote intelligently” (Hardin, 2003: 168). Thus, *incentives* should be provided. Financial incentives could be one possibility, however, who shall provide these?

Another issue that has to be dealt with is *anonymity*. On the one hand, anonymity is helpful, since it conceals stereotypical traits (income, outer appearance, nationality etc.), which are not necessary for decision-making. It “serves to disguise many of those social markers [...] that in practice serve to either validate or disqualify the opinions of speakers in direct social interaction” (Sparks, *quoted in* Kavada, 2008: 219). Hence, anonymity renders people more equal and possibly has a positive effect on the equal consideration of conflicting viewpoints. “Anonymity online assists one to overcome identity boundaries and communicate more freely, and openly, thus promoting a more enlightened exchange of ideas” (Papacharissi, 2002: 16). On the other hand, it might have a negative impact on the tone of conversations. It is easier to be rude to somebody one does not know. Secondly, it brings doubt on how reliable a decision is without personal responsibility. Moreover, without knowing the personal

⁶⁸ “The regeneration [of information needs] to be John Doe compatible. [...] The technology needs to be created simpler so that is easier to participate and also to provide it to a greater public, to the ones who e.g. work eight to ten hours a day“ (Daniel, Serenity, Germany).

⁶⁹ This can be also related to rational ignorance.

background of a person suggesting a proposal, the motives are not be revealed.⁷⁰ The issue of the ‘Klarnamen’ (real names) was a much-discussed topic within the PP Berlin during January and February of 2012.

Furthermore, the *tone and the atmosphere of online discussions* can be quite rude.⁷¹ Still, one favorable condition for deliberation is an “atmosphere of mutual respect” (Fishkin, 2009: 115). Perhaps it can be helpful to create a code of conduct about online communication. In the end, the same criteria count as in face-to-face communication, such as respect and a friendly tone. Especially here, anonymity plays a role; meaning personal responsibility might change the formulation of expressions online towards a friendlier atmosphere.

The last ‘practical’ issue discussed here, is *security* of the online systems. Firstly, systems can be hacked and therefore changed in accordance with the hacker’s interests. Secondly, a (none technically adept) voter cannot be sure what happened with her or his vote.⁷² This matter can also be regarded as a more ‘theoretical’ issue, since it reflects the dichotomy between the technology-friendly and the technology-critical position. Can a complete fail-safe system ever be created? To put it bluntly, the complete digitalization of political decision-making resonates with the ill at ease feeling of George Orwell’s 1984 and clearly collides with notions on freedom. In contrast, some presume that through technology freedom can finally be achieved. Hence, two competing worldviews - “[t]echno-elite versus neo-luddites” (Castells, 1999: 1) - clash.

Another important ‘theoretical’ inquiry is the concentration of *power* within networks and eDemocracy tools. Within this research, questions of power have been omitted, but actually require a thoughtful scrutinization. Delegation has the potential to diffuse power, since the votes can be delegated to anyone within the system. It has been argued, “through global delegation, ‘power’ decreases noticeably”⁷³ (Jabbusch, 2011: 107). However, as one of the participants stated:

“I think the great flaw of the Liquid Feedback system, [...] is that every vote for every individual who participates in that system becomes so important for that individual to maintain the support, that is very likely that you will get a very conservative system. Frankly, because the most risk free way of voting [...] normally is vote as conservative as possible [...]. So [...] you need to bear in mind also the psychological factors waying down on the people who get delegated to [...].” (Amelia, Sweden)

Thirdly, can the Internet be regarded as a *public sphere*? The answer to this question is not clear-cut either. Some scholars have therefore compared deliberation in online and offline settings. While the online communication can solve some imperfections of the offline discussions (such as the level of participation and diversification), “online debates seem less structured and/or less constraint than face-to-face ones [...]. Importantly, those who have participated in both [online and offline] settings are much more likely to attend face-to-face rather than online deliberations” (Baek et al., 2011: 379). Hence, online and offline settings both have their own advantages and disadvantages, an issue where a lot of research has already been conducted. Here, it is important to keep in mind that “[...] a new public space is

⁷⁰ For example, a pro-gun lobby group founded a working group within the PP Germany (Macho, 2012: 29). Since the Pirate Parties are about transparency and not lobbyism, it could be safely stated that this was not according to the ‘pirate philosophy.’

⁷¹ E.g. when following the PPI mailing lists (participant observation)

⁷² Suspicions already occurred in the US. See for example http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/44706301/ns/technology_and_science-security (It is not stated here that the claims are true, only that suspiciousness is already existing).

⁷³ „Daher sinkt die ‚Macht‘ durch globale Delegationen spürbar“ (Jabbusch, 2011: 107).

not synonymous with a new public sphere. As public space, the internet provides yet another forum for political deliberation. As public sphere, the internet could facilitate discussion that promotes a democratic exchange of ideas and opinions. A virtual space enhances discussion; a virtual sphere enhances democracy” (Papacharissi, 2002: 11). Hence, the interplay between the offline and online settings⁷⁴ could be beneficial. In sum, “[...] because online deliberation does not replace face-to-face deliberation but rather supplements it, these two deliberative forms differentially – but equally – contribute to healthy democracy” (Baek et al., 2011: 380).

Lastly, the three factors of deliberative democracy - *political equality, participation, and deliberation* - are going to be analyzed in relation to the virtual sphere.

Firstly starting with *political equality*. As stated above, political equality does not necessarily mean to include everyone, but to have an equal chance to be included (by e.g. sampling and creating a microcosmic deliberation setting). The four methods of selection include self-selection, non-random sample, random sample, and simply including everyone. This can be coupled with the characterization of the public opinion as either raw or refined, leading to eight methods of public consultation (Fishkin, 2009: 21).⁷⁵ Leaving the issue of raw and refined opinion out for now (see deliberation), it can be argued that the PP method of selection is self-selection, since everyone who wishes to take part participates, but still not everyone is included. This however, poses difficulties to political equality. On the one hand, when the public opinion is raw, it can be claimed that ‘the loudest wins’. Neither true deliberation, nor representation occurs. If deliberation occurs – through e.g. discussion groups – deliberation takes place, but is not a mirror of the public opinion. The quality of deliberation is limited. Hence, a self-selection generates a partial, distorted, and unrepresentative picture of the reality (ibid: 21-24).

Secondly, *participation* is restricted as well. “Considering that the internet is an easily accessible medium with low entry barriers, many observers hoped that internet communication would have participatory effects [...]” (Gerhards & Schäfer, 2010: 155). Nevertheless, participation is limited by structural constraints, such as the digital divide. Ideally, everyone who owns a computer and a capable Internet-connection can participate. However, these requirements are not equally provided everywhere. Still, a computer is a costly acquisition. Furthermore, the ability to use computers is also limited – especially concerning the older generation. Hence, courses in Internet literacy should be offered. This again is also more difficult in rural than urban areas, reinforcing the divide.

Thirdly, *deliberation* is the crucial component in forms of direct democracy, since the “consultation of an uninformed public can be dangerous or irresponsible” (Fishkin, 2009: 178). As it has been discussed before, the reciprocal features of the Internet improve the potential deliberation. “Nevertheless, one can imagine networks that do not exemplify deliberative virtues of openness, respect, reciprocity, communicative competence, and equality in the ability to raise and question points” (Dryzek, 2000: 134). Moreover “[...] when people discuss politics or policy they do so mostly with people like themselves – those from similar backgrounds, social locations and outlooks” (Fishkin, 2009: 3). This is also true for communications online (Sunstein, 2003: 89). The outcome of self-selection, limiting the diversity of participants and viewpoints, is called ‘enclaved deliberation’ (Fishkin, 2009: 53-54). Hence, only fragmented communication manifests itself. Moreover, “[...] own highly individuated communications packages, filtering out troublesome issues and disfavored

⁷⁴ As the PP Berlin, but also the PPI by meeting annually, practices it.

⁷⁵ For Figure II see Appendix.

voices [...]” can lead to a “[...] radical stratification of the public sphere” (Sunstein, 2003: 89). Hence, for true deliberation, nuanced viewpoints and information is required. But who provides these? Can there or should there be a mediator in online discussions?

Finally, the last matter that will be dealt with here is the divide between *raw and refined public opinion*. How can one measure if an opinion is raw or refined? Who determines the factors displaying a refined opinion? Moreover, it seems impossible to achieve a deliberative mass opinion. “While face-to-face deliberation can be replicated online, technology does not, or at least thus so far, alter the problem of each individual needing to engage with only a manageable number of others if there is to be deliberative discussions” (Fishkin, 2009: 90-91). This magnitude problem also persists online.

Moreover, tyranny - the cruel, unreasonable, or arbitrary use of power or control (Oxford Dictionary online) - has always been a feature of human history. *Minority protection* (especially when having a raw public opinion) has to be a serious concern in direct democracy. To sincerely judge the raw and refined dichotomy is a complex and complicated task. Possibly it also depends on the perception of human nature, as either – simply speaking - a cruel or a compassionate being. One could either see the bad effects of direct democracy (such as the banning of the minarets in Switzerland), or one be convinced that “[...] the public is indeed capable of dealing with complex issues, once it believes its voice matters, once it believes that there is reason to spend time and effort in public discussions, listening to alternative points of view” (Fishkin, 2009: 119).

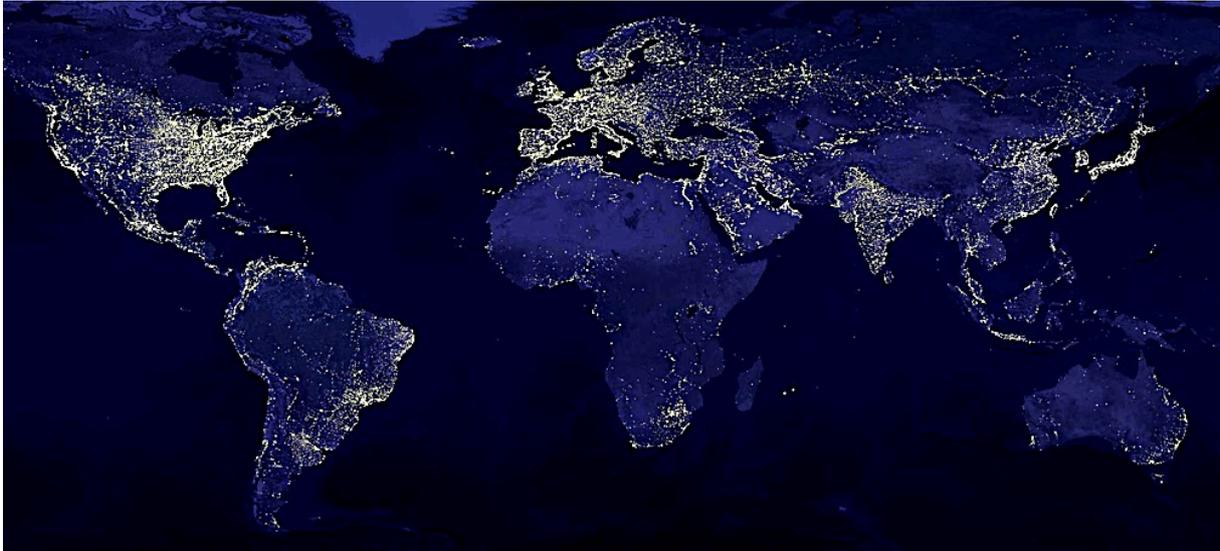
5.5 Democracy on a Global Scale

Lastly, the notions of democracy will briefly be layered onto the global scale. All the obstacles above become visible on a global dimension as well. Moreover, the majority of the obstacles seem to intensify when reflected on a global magnitude. This is especially interesting, because democracy on a global level seems unattainable. The ‘democratic deficit’ (see e.g. Dryzek, 2000: 119 & 2006: 23; Castells, 2002) is discussed in a variety of literature. To illustrate: “The U.N. includes no developing nation in effective decision-making power. Above all, the U.N. does not provide a forum of democratically elected representatives who have a mandate to deal with global issues” (Held, 2007: 311). Moreover, “[i]n the UN General Assembly, those member states whose total number of inhabitants represents just 5% of the planet’s entire population have a majority in the Assembly” (Archibugi, 2004: 448).

First and predominantly, the already discussed structural constraints seem to pose the biggest obstacle. Inequality, exclusion, and polarization are especially visible in “[t]he Black holes of the informational capitalism [...]”⁷⁶ (Castells III, 2003: 87-170). When exemplifying Africa, the issue at stake is not providing every citizen a computer, but first and foremost, a reliable energy supply has to be arranged and maintained. The following picture shows the earth at night, where one can clearly see that not only in the sub-Saharan Africa the physical infrastructure is underdeveloped:⁷⁷

⁷⁶ „Die schwarzen Löcher es informationellen Kapitalismus [...]“ (Castells III, 2003:170).

⁷⁷ Please also relate here to 4.3. Internet: „In 2011, only 32.7% of the population of the world was connected to the Internet” (Internet World Stats, 2012).



Source: NASA (2000). *Earth at Night*

Hence, it can be concluded that the external exclusion of a multiplicity of inhabitants not only inside countries but moreover between countries constitute a dilemma. Thus, political equality and equal participation are not achieved. Furthermore, “[...] processes of selective, segmented globalization characterize other critical instrumental dimensions of our society, including the media, science, culture and information at large” (Castells, 1999: 5) and thus render (equal) deliberation on a global scale nearly impossible.

Secondly, the new paradigms of globalization - (neo)pluralism (Cerny, 2010) and reflexive modernity (Dryzek, 2006) - seem to make deliberation difficult. On the one hand, the “[...] widespread capacity to influence the balance of discourses [...]” (Dryzek, 2006: 127) is increasing; on the other hand, it is often argued that deliberation is only possible on a small scale (Goodin, 2003: 54-55). The more voices, the more complex the (harmonious) decision-making will be.

Thirdly, “[...] the nation-state is so much the medium of political perception that it is seemingly impossible at present to conceive of political organizations any other way” (Laslett, 2003: 218). Moreover, there is no global organization analogous to the state (Dryzek, 2000: 121). Additionally it is argued in a variety of literature, that neither global demos (Bartelson, 2010: 222) nor a global public sphere exist. The idea of a public sphere was always tied to the nation-states (Fraser, 2007: 10). “In [the deliberative model of democracy], democracy requires the generation, through territorially bounded processes of public communication, conducted in the national language and relayed through the national media, of a body of national public opinion” (ibid: 11). To illustrate: Until now, transnational (online) communication occurs in English. This “[...] favors global elites and Anglophone postcolonials at the expense of others [...]” (ibid: 19) which, in turn, renders the legitimatization of these communications questionable.

In sum, when regarding the global sphere, neither equal participation, nor political equality and deliberation is attained. The world is still far away from a “humane, inclusive, and social-democratic global polity” (Dryzek, 2000: 118). For all that, manifold actions and change has to occur: “It is urgently necessary to reverse the downward spiral of exclusion and to use information and communication technologies to empower humankind” (Castells, 1999: IV). Furthermore, “the reintegration of social development and economic growth through

technological innovation, informational management and shared world development will not be accomplished by simply relying on unfettered market forces. Neither will it be born only out of the individual efforts of states, engaging in defensive strategies. It will require a massive technological upgrading of countries, firms, and households around the world – a strategy of highest interest for everyone [...]” (ibid: 12).

Nevertheless, this paper is not going to end with the impersonal power forces of the economics and the obstacles that prevail and shape reality, leaving oneself with a feeling of powerlessness and paralysis. This paper comes to an end with the voice of the members of the PPs and possibilities that can arise on the global scale:

Global governance⁷⁸ was dominantly seen negatively by the participant due to a variety of reasons, such as the democratic deficit, power inequalities, exclusion, uniformity, and the imposition of rules that renders states powerless. Exemplary statements are:

“Global Governance [...] is deluded. [...] They are totally forgetting the democratic process in it [id est in transplanting governance to a global scale].” (Toon, Belgium)

“I think [Global Governance] means different things to different people. For me it is an inherently negative word, because it signifies that you don’t have institutional diversity.” (Rick, Sweden)

A clear trend among the interviewed was visible favoring a decentralized organizational structure for dealing with issues on a global scale:

“I think we have to govern in decentralized networks, [...]. We have to function a bit like the brain. The brain has no center or ruler, but it works together [...].” (Toon, Belgium)

“[...] It is also important not having one solution to a problem, because there are many different ways that are [...] effective. For example, one of the things the Pirate Party works for is often decentralization.” (Josef, Sweden)

Another detectable pattern was that the PP members want to increase the access to information and education. Additionally, they want to improve channels of communication and information flows:

“What the Pirate Party is about is knowledge and [...] access to education. [...] In that sense, it could be a bigger piece of the puzzle [...], because if people have access to knowledge, they may be able to solve the other problems better.” (Justus, Germany)

“The Pirate Party could really play a role [in] information flow. [...] This is a power, where empowerment belongs to the people, regardless of where they live.” (Amelia, Sweden)

Information and education play a central role in the PPs’ agenda. Moreover, they are major concerns in the network society and in the transition of a globalizing world.⁷⁹ “Investments in human capital [...] are foundational” (Reeves & D’Costa, 2008: 152), since increased education “[...] improve productivity, enable better management of resources, [...] permit access to new technologies [...] enhance participation in democracy” (ibid: 153) and also has

⁷⁸ Not being defined during the interview.

⁷⁹ Also the United Nations second Millennium Development Goal to „achieve universal primary education“ stresses this significance (UN, 2010: 16-19).

a profound influence on health awareness. Overall, education can lift individuals and their societies out of poverty and improve a vital, democratic, and deliberative participation. Hence, those claims are of prime importance in a globalized world.

Nevertheless, quite diverse standpoints on a variety of subjects still exist, especially on the global scale.⁸⁰ To illustrate, asking about what the PP could add to solve global problems, one person stated that:

The Role of the Pirate Party in global governance is “a huge transitional role. [...] In an ideal world, there won't be no parties. People would just gather around ideas [...]. It is a completely new mindset.” (Slim, Tunisia)

Hence, this quote denotes a fundamental change in society. Others focused more on issues relating to communication, information and the Internet, denoting a smaller scope (also relate here to Justus quote above):

“And I think that, because it is the voice of the people, regarding this necessity [of communication], that is exactly make a change and address the existing problems by having a different point of view somehow.” (Claudia, Romania)

Still, both quotes indicate a potential change. But is diversity necessarily a negative trait? No, it entails discussions, contestation, experimentation, deliberation, failure and finally also success.⁸¹ In a neo-plural world, diversity cannot be regarded as a hindrance, but as an opportunity, listening to various points of view and fusing different ideas into something new. Especially, “the Internet [...] provides a wide range of opportunities to interact on almost any topic with a growing number of people” (Himmelboim, 2011: 654). The essence of the Internet can be captured in “the fact that people from different cultural backgrounds, states, or countries involve themselves in virtual political discussions in a matter of minutes, often expanding each other's horizon with culturally diverse viewpoints [...]” (Papacharissi, 2002: 23). Additionally, reciprocal attributes of the network⁸² and the diffusion of the left-right spectrum can have a positive impact on the formation of opinions. In other words, “[d]eliberation and communication [...] can cope with fluid boundaries, and the production of outcomes across boundaries” (Dryzek, 2000: 129).

Last but not least, the openness, the horizontality, and the bottom-up approach of the PP renders participation possible. Moreover, the low point of entry and the possibility to participate puts an emphasis on the individual. The individual can generate action and change, intensified by the support of the network (id est other individuals). Individual views are exchanged, coalitions formed, and action is impelled. Hence, it can be concluded, that a new actor – or new actors – have entered the global playing field: The network, which has already been described as “[...] the most promising [...] institutional form currently available [...]” (Dryzek, 2000: 133).

Reminiscing about the environmental movement that went from belittlement to a serious political alternative in a variety of countries. Another example is the historicity of NGOs: Their amounts, but also their functions and significance have increased tremendously since

⁸⁰ This was mostly visible when asking, which sectors of life should be included into politics. Some stated there should be less influence, some said there should be more, and some did not have an opinion (yet) on this matter.

⁸¹ Moreover, it is additionally important to mention, that the members of the PP do not regard themselves as having solutions to all problems occurring globally. The quote: “*We are in [a] process of maturity*” (Rick, Sweden) and similar statements by other participants can exemplify this. See also 5.3.

⁸² Such as openness and horizontality

World War II (Jönsson & Tallberg, 2010: 33). Those NGOs are nowadays part of our understanding of reality and are furthermore regarded as an alternative voice towards globalization (Palazzo, 2002: 231). Hence, the world (as well as democracy) is never static. It is a never-ending process that can be shaped by actors (even if only step by step). Even though the future cannot be foreseen, it is nevertheless important to emphasize that the key driving force of transformation has been – and will always be - individuals (collaborating in groups) that act as agents.

6. Conclusion

“And attitudes will change. I can only see the decisions getting more humanitarian as networking continues. So as such, I rather fight for direct democracy now and know that in 20 years there is a much better chance of a better world to live in.” (John, UK)

In this journey through the world of the PPs, it was stated that the PP could be seen as *one* illustration of globalization. This is due to a variety of reasons such as that the PP operates in a space, but is also re-embedded into the locality. Moreover, the PPs and its appearances are highly influenced by structural constraints; external exclusion poses a severe limitation on the globality of the PP. Hence, it can be contended that the PP is an allegory for globalization, but is not a global party, since it lacks the equal distribution among countries with different HDI statuses. Still, the PP exists across nation-states – or despite the existence/boundaries of nation-states – and therefore can be regarded as an enlargement of the political thought beyond nation-states: As some of the participants stated, the members of the PPs gather around ideas and content and not on the basis of a nation-state or an ideology. All this can be regarded as a novelty and be differentiated from the ‘traditional’ party-politics.

Secondly, it has been argued, that the PPs constitute a network; firstly, because they do not encompass typologies of current global players, but characteristics of each. Furthermore, they constitute a network, because they entail the specific attributes of a network defined by Castells: the relations between the different PPs are informal, horizontal, and decentralist. Moreover, the members of the PPs are diverse and the structure emerged organically. Additionally, the ‘Information Age’ (and thus the description of the current world) as depicted by Castells was verified and likewise has had an influence upon the emergence of the party. Within this, the Internet and the potential of reciprocal (or inclusive) communication play a significant role. Lastly, networks can fuse local experiences and global knowledge. Thus, they might be in a crucial position to incorporate various viewpoints - also concerning new forms of democracy – possibly resulting in (globally seen) more nuanced considerations.

Thirdly, the reciprocal communication has an impact on the formation of the notions of democracy. The PPs endorse an alternative democracy arrangement: Liquid democracy, whereat deliberative democracy is its template. It has been discussed in length, that this alternative democracy form has its advantages, such as potentially increased participation, and deliberation, but also its obstacles, such as the unequal distribution of online connections, the digital divide and Internet illiteracy.

Now, reconsidering the research questions: firstly, *‘how do the PP members perceive their globality?’* All of the interviewed members had an awareness of the globality of the PP, however, their impressions were quite diverse. To illustrate: The perceived globality ranged from stating that the PP is a global party to a strong focus on the restrictions that are prevalent in the specific nation-states. However, still it can be argued that a ‘common mindset’ exists, since a clear trend was detectable among the interviewed participants, describing the PP as a global movement. To incontestably state that the PPs have a common ground worldwide further research should be conducted, however it can still be assessed that their globality exceeds the visual, id est the name and the badge.

Secondly, *'what are the PPs' notions of democracy?'* The interviewed members (and others) identified Liquid Democracy - a middle course between direct democracy and representative democracy, with the possibility to delegate votes to a confidant – as their predominant notion of democracy. It has also been claimed, that it might be the intermingling of the place (face-to-face meetings) and the space (LQFB-system) that renders the PP Berlin so prosperous. But also here, further research (e.g. the comparison between intermingled interaction versus only virtual interaction) could provide a sapid input.

Despite this homogeneity of opinions, the implementation of this notion is difficult. Additionally, the contemplation about Liquid Democracy is not finished, since obstructions - whether of a more practical or theoretical nature - still prevail, highlighting the third research question of *'what are the obstacles and possibilities of these notions on democracy?'* Nevertheless, not only obstacles exist, but also possibilities, such as the accentuated role of education and information, which can empower individuals.

Fourthly, the question *'what are the PPs' attitudes towards global governance?'* was again surprisingly homogeneously answered, although the elaborations on the topic were diverse. This can additionally be linked to Castells description of the condition of our world. Global governance was not defined in the interview guide, but the predominant pattern detectable was a negative perception of it. After offering a value-neutral definition of global governance, it became evident that all participants are in favor of a decentralization of a potential future governance. The perceived potential role of the PP within this decentralized form of global governance was diverse; some linked the notions of democracy with global governance, some saw the role of the PP as a facilitator of dialogue, but the majority emphasized increasing access to knowledge, education, and free information.

These conclusions of the research can be expended (and further approved) with additional studies. One issue that was completely left out of this study, but should be scrutinized thoughtfully, are power relations within networks and power conservation in the delegating principle. Furthermore, a comparative case study between two (or more) different PPs could give further compelling results. Besides that, a focus on the regional sections of the PPs (e.g. the PP Catalonia and the PP Spain) will be interesting. Last but not least, the extension of the research beyond Europe was problematic, but is perhaps easier from a different locality.

So, what remains? Within this travel through a transforming and globalizing world and one agent in it, the dichotomy between structures and agency indeed became visible. The tremendous question remains is how to empower everyone to participate when – globally seen – the basics are not yet set for a significant amount of the world's population. This becomes especially obvious when regarding the emergence of a fourth world and the black holes of informational capitalism, to use Castells terminology. Immense effort and resources have to be dispensed to decrease the external exclusion and to transform the contemporary status. Yet, structures hinder and seem to have a negative impact on agency. But simultaneously it has to be kept in mind that structures are anthropogenic. Hence, structuralism and constructivism compose an oxymoron. Nevertheless, since it seems that structures mostly influence negatively and actually create a feeling of paralysis, it is revitalizing to see how a new (potential global) actor has entered the stage. The appearing absence of internal exclusion within the party leads to an increased participation, especially among the young generation. Even though a great deal of obstacles, constrains and uncertainties lies ahead of them, they are not paralyzed, but on the contrary, they act in order to transform the status quo. Moreover, it can be argued that they utilize a structure – the network structure – which could be a proof

that not all structures hinder, but could also help. Especially concerning the Internet, it has never been that easy to access information, education, and to connect to other individuals (however predominantly limited to the global North). This, in turn, empowers the individual and emphasizes the notion of constructivism. Furthermore, it could be debated that through the current transformation towards a networked society, human nature (or the image about human nature as either cruel or compassionate) will change: On the one hand, by having the individual who is empowered to alter her or his (or someone else's) circumstances with the help of education and knowledge, and on the other, by being in connection with a variety of diverse people making him or her more open-minded, permissive towards differences, and possibly more compassionate.

Appendix

Figure 1: Four Democratic Theories (Fishkin, 2009: 65)

Relate to page 35

Chart III. Four democratic theories

	Competitive democracy	Elite deliberation	Participatory democracy	Deliberative democracy
Political equality	+	?	+	+
Participation	?	?	+	?
Deliberation	?	+	?	+
Non-tyranny	+	+	?	?

Source: Fishkin, James, S., 2009. *When people speak*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, p. 65.

Figure 2: Forms of Consultation (Fishkin, 2009: 21)

Relate to page 41

Chart I. Forms of consultation

	<i>Method of selection</i>			
<i>Public opinion</i>	1. Self-selection	2. Nonrandom sample	3. Random sample	4. "Everyone"
A. Raw	1A SLOPs	2A Some polls	3A Most polls	4A Referendum democracy
B. Refined	1B Discussion groups	2B Citizens juries, etc.	3B Deliberative Polls	4B "Deliberation Day"

Source: Fishkin, James, S., 2009. *When people speak*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, p. 21.

Due to confidentiality reasons is a list of the participants (anon. version) and the transcripts of the interviews are only available on demand (and possibly shortened) from the author.

Interview Guide for PPI-GA in Prague on 14th-15th of April 2012

Personal background: Name; Age; Position in the PP

1) Why did you become a member of the PP?

2) What is special/unique about the Pirate Party?

3) The Pirate Parties are dealing with the consequences of the digital age. What do you think are the consequences of the digital age relating to the (Westphalian) **Nation-State**?

3.1) Is the PP a global party? Why/Why not? Does it have the potential?

3.2) Do you perceive the PP as a global party?

3.3) How would you describe the relationship between your PP and other PPs?

4) What does **Global Governance** mean to you? (+World Government)

Taking the point of view that the world needs Global Governance (without a negative connotation) to deal with global problems (such as poverty, hunger, asymmetric warfare, climate change, international crime etc.)

4.1) Do you think GG can be achieved? (To what degree/for what kind of issues)

4.2) What could be the potential role of the PPs/PPI in achieving GG? What addition could the PPs provide?

4.3) What kinds of problems/obstacles concerning GG are existent/could arise?

5) What are the PPs'/PPIs'/your **notion of democracy**? (*Images, political views, attitudes towards democracy*)

5.1) How do the PPs want to counteract selfishness and disenchantment with politics if they want to include all?

5.2) Which sectors of life should be included in the political decision-making?

5.3) How does the PP(-EU/in your country) want to strengthen the participation of citizens in politics (in the EU)?

5.4) Pros- and cons of 5-5.3

6) Where do you see the PP in 15 years?

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