SOCIOLOGIZING COMMUNITY NETWORKS IN FRANCE & GERMANY

AUBE RICHEBOURG, FREIFUNK, BERLIN, JUNE 2020

INTRO

- 2018 Start of my PhD in sociology at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris. 2018-2019 Fieldwork in France. 2020-2021 Fieldwork in Germany.
- " (Campaigning for local and free networks: a comparative study between France and Germany))
- Sections of the presentation:
- How did I start the research, why this topic?
- What's happening in France?
- Why comparing France and Germany?

First steps

- 2017 Interest in the defense of an autonomous approach to system administration, building networks and hosting
- Globenet 1992- a chapter of the history of communications had yet to be written
- Contemporary forms of the power of the State and what kind of resistance could be found in the civil society

Dimensions of my research

- The political dimension: defense of values & practices, a specific position, means of action that are oriented to social change
- The (unexpected) work dimension: collaboration, organization, learning of skills, professionalization
- How are these articulated?

My concerns

- The legal frame and the associative activities
- The practice of IT in the association and in other contexts (alone, in a firm, in other groups)
- The organization of the group
- The experience of volunteers in association

Methods

- Observations
- Interviews
- Archives

The landscape of digital activism in France

La Quadrature du net

- Lobbying / Medic
- Loi Hadopi 2009

Free software organizations

- on-the-field
- L'April 1996
- 170 local Linux Users Groups

Free networks-non-profit ISPs

« Paris-sans-fil » (wireless Paris)2003-2007

 Prosecuted by Paris City Hall (2007) and disappeared



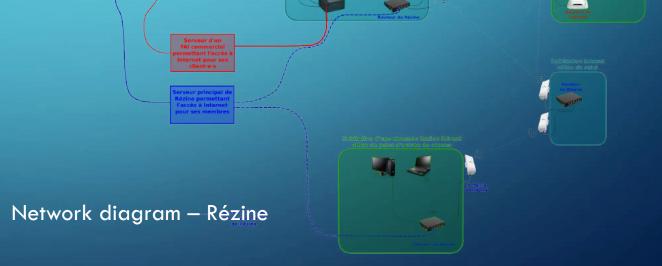
https://www.poptronics.fr/II-n-y-a-plus-de-Paris-Sans-Fil



« France Wireless » - http://www.wireless-fr.org/spip.php?article224

Non-profit ISPs also work with Wireless networks (Rézine, Tetaneutral, FAI-Maison...)

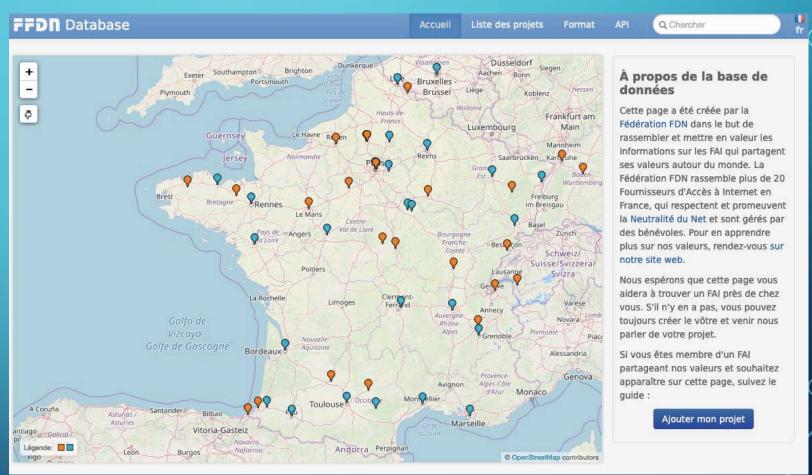




INTERNET

Antenna - Rézine

- 2011 Fédération des Fournisseurs d'accès à Internet associatifs (FFDN)
- Approx. 30 nonprofit ISPs

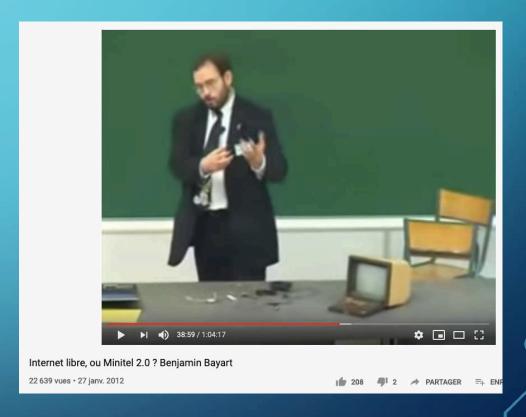


https://db.ffdn.org/

FFDN

- French Data Network (FDN) (1992-) 2004, ADSL
- 2-3 people \rightarrow local ISP > bandwidth from FDN
- Gitoyen (2004), Grenode (2008): Internet Operators + Internet Local registry
- Communization of knowledge & infrastructure + discussing the structural values of the group

- The political agenda of FFDN (courts, opening of FTTH subscriptions)
- Benjamin Bayart (president of FDN 1997-2013)
- The danger of a centralized Internet
- Autonomous infrastructures
- Physical proximity of users and providers



Benjamin Bayart's conference « Internet libre ou Minitel 2.0. ? » https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AoRGoQ76PK8

- The legal frame of non-profit ISPs: Association Loi 1901
- The official « board »: President / Treasurer / Secretary
- Conflicts:
 - The figure of the president
 - Divergent views on how things should be done and priorities

3. COMPARING FRANCE AND GERMANY

- Widespread tradition in sociology
- No automatic translation from the international nature of technological protocols to the international understanding of technological uses
- No transnational movements, why?
- The levels of the comparison
 - The profession level (the careers in IT)
 - The associative status & unformal groups
 - Education (self-teaching, school & higher education)
 - Politics

CONCLUSION

- Interest in Freifunk (Berlin + others in Germany) and IN-Berlin e.V.
- Thank you for listening