

Youth and Crisis: Discourse Networks and Political Mobilisation

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Die Problematik der heutigen Jugend besteht in der ungelösten Problematik der Zeit (und nicht umgekehrt); die Krise der Jugend ist nur eins der sichtbarsten Symptome der allgemeinen Krise unserer Kultur. Nicht die Jugend ist krank, sondern die Zeit ist krank; nicht die Jugend taumelt verwirrt, sondern unser ganzes Kulturgebäude schwankt und steht dicht vor dem Auseinanderbrechen.

Werner Deubel, novelist, 1930

Такое впечатление, что больше всего власть боится молодежи. С одной стороны - понятно, почему. Молодежь - такая специфическая аудитория, что если она действительно станет политизированной и выйдет на улицы, с ней сложно будет договориться. С другой стороны, по большому счету никаких серьезных массовых волнений с активным участием молодежи до сих пор не было. Тем не менее основную угрозу своему благополучию и реализации проекта "преемник-2008" почему-то видят именно в молодежи.

Ilya Yashin, leader of Yabloko, 2005

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the meaning of “youth” and the political mobilisation of young people in key moments of crisis in Europe. Between 2005 and 2011, youth became critical for the consolidation of the authoritarian regime structures in Russia. I show that this process included the restructuring of the discourse about youth, the physical mobilisation of young people, and the isolation of oppositional youth. How valid are these findings for regime crises more generally?

I answer this question through an analysis of the breakdown of the authoritarian Soviet Union during perestroika, the breakdown of unconsolidated democracy during the last years of the Weimar Republic, and the crisis of the democratic regime in France around 1968. The cross-regional and cross-temporal comparison of these episodes demonstrates that regimes lacking popular democratic support compensate for their insufficient legitimacy by trying to mobilise youth symbolically and politically.

By developing a new method of textual analysis which combines qualitative content analysis and network analysis, the thesis offers a novel social science perspective on the meaning of youth in the four cases. My study shows how discursive structures about youth condition the possibility of political mobilisation of young people.

The thesis makes three contributions to comparative politics. First, on an empirical level, my study offers new insights into social movements at moments of regime crisis in different political settings. Second, on a conceptual level, I refine our understanding of the symbolic significance of the terms “youth” and “generation” in moments when society is reorienting itself. I also examine the significance of “crisis” and argue that the term expresses openness and the possibility to remake the past and future. Third, on a methodological level, my thesis builds on the growing interest in textual analysis by developing a novel multi-level approach in three linguistic contexts, which offers insights into the structure of public discourse and the actors involved.

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The world surrounding me during the time I have spent working on this thesis has left its imprint on the final result. Concepts and ideas have travelled across time and space, shaped by people talked to and read. Much of the intellectual context of this thesis is conveyed through the bibliography. However, that is only half of the story. Thanks to the unbureaucratic and generous support of the *Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes* I had the fortune to work on this thesis by and large free from financial concerns. The *Studienstiftung* has accompanied me since I began university in 2006 and I am grateful for its continuous intellectual and financial support over the last years. The research for this thesis was furthermore enabled through funding from a Nuffield Funded Studentship, the *Deutsche Historische Institut*, and the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford. Research stays in Russia and France were benevolently financed through the *Studienstiftung*, and I benefitted from Nuffield College, ECPR, and DAAD funding to attend conferences to present parts of my work.

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During the research for this thesis I spent one year at the *Centre d'études et de recherches internationales* at *Sciences Po* Paris. Anne de Tinguy was always interested in discussing the latest developments in Russia and hearing and reading about my own research. Exchange with Kathy Rousselet and Gilles Favarel-Garrigues also helped me to better understand Russian society present and past.

Being a student at Nuffield College implied daily discussions about the local housing market (worrisome), German politics (horrible), and academic salaries (disastrous). Occasionally, it spilled over into discussions about our research and I am pleased to have had the opportunity to conduct my first large research project in this community of young scholars. I am particularly thankful to James Hollway for having guided my initial explorations of network analysis and to Alexander Gard-Murray for patiently transforming my “English” into English.

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The ups and downs of a thesis had to be most directly borne by my family. My wife Florentine had to sit through Russian films – not all of which were in colour, not all of which had subtitles, and not all of which were from the second half of the 20th century – discussions about gender and *neformaly* during candlelit dinners, and my opinions on the logics of comparative enquiries before falling asleep. Fortunately enough, these discussions were sometimes interrupted by our two children who reminded me of the importance of the stages before youth and the beauty of the present times. Their enthusiasm and love has helped me through moments of doubt, and their laughter and cheerfulness pulled me out of the devastating complexity of comparative historical analysis with three languages. Having had my family at my side gave meaning to these years beyond research. I am grateful for their passion and the time we have spent together in Oxford and the countries studied in this thesis.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
CONTENTS	ix
ILLUSTRATIONS	xiii

PART I: THEME AND HORIZON

SETTING, CONCEPTS, AND THEORY	1
Overview of the Thesis.....	5
Central Concepts.....	7
Crisis: Contingency and Possibilities	7
Youth: Idealisation and Mobilisation	11
Generation and Youth: Related but Distinct	16
Research Design: Structured and Focused Comparison.....	25
Youth and Regime Change: The Processes at Work.....	27
Hypotheses	30
METHOD AND OPERATIONALISATION	35
The Discursive Construction of Social Reality	36
Analytic Procedure	41
Analysing Discourses as Networks	49
Grounding Discourse Network Analysis.....	52
Measuring Significance in Discourse Networks	55
Formations in Discourse Networks	58
Some Remarks on Translations	63

PART II: CASE STUDIES

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AFTER THE COLOUR REVOLUTIONS: CONSOLIDATING AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME	67
A Stable but Insecure Political Regime	69
Youth in Post-Soviet Russia	74
The Discursive Contexts of Youth Mobilisation.....	76
Discursive Formations: Extinguishing Diversity	81
Pro-Kremlin Youth in its Discursive Context	85

Nashi: The Discursive and Social Resurgence of Youth	89
Enhancing the Past through Youthful Heroism	93
Youthful Courage and Creativity: Sports and the Arts	96
All Singing from the same Hymn Sheet?	97
Youth in Discordance with the Regime	100
Rediscovering the Political Dimension of Youth	103
A Triton to the Kremlin: Oppositional Youth.....	104
A Carnival of Mobilisation	106
Mockery of Official Youth Movements	108
Youth Opposition Abroad.....	109
Violent Youth: Threatening the Establishment.....	110
Skinheads and Fascists.....	115
Left-Wing Radicals.....	118
Youth out of Control.....	119
Youth in a Consolidating Authoritarian System	120
THE SOVIET UNION DURING PERESTROIKA: BREAKDOWN OF AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME	125
From Crisis to System Collapse.....	127
Youth: The Vanguard of Socialist Progress.....	133
The Discursive Contexts of Youth Mobilisation	136
Discursive Formations: Disintegrating Truths.....	142
The Komsomol and the Soviet-Leninist Youth Discourse	146
Soviet Grandeur and Generational Continuity.....	150
The Komsomol's Discursive and Social Delegitimisation	153
The End of a Journey Downstream.....	156
Imagining Youth Abroad to Save the Komsomol: Autonomous Youth.....	158
Dreaming about Youth Abroad.....	160
Saving the Komsomol from the Outside.....	162
Youth as Victim and Threat: <i>Neformaly</i>	165
An Innocent Victim of Western Influence.....	169
Youth Contesting the System: Confounding the Rules of the Game.....	174
A Cross-Generational Rejection of the Ancien Régime	179
Youth During Authoritarian Regime Breakdown	181

THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC AND ROADS NOT TAKEN: BREAKDOWN OF AN UNCONSOLIDATED DEMOCRACY	185
The “Golden Twenties” and Perpetual Crisis.....	188
A New Political Stakeholder: Youth in the Interwar Period	191
The Discursive Contexts of Youth Mobilisation.....	193
Discursive Formations: A Stable Diversity	197
Autonomous Youth Mobilisation for Democracy	204
Mobilising for Democracy but Not for Weimar.....	207
Reconciling Europe through Youth.....	213
Youth as Vanguard of Cultural Change	216
Forward to the Future Thanks to Youth	217
The Political Struggle about Youth for the Future	219
Uncertain Present, Contested Future	221
Educating for the Future	223
Youth as Victim of Crises	226
Those Insurmountable Legacies for Youth	229
A Generation Wanted by Nobody	230
Helping Youth out of the Crises.....	233
Youth as Trouble Maker and Threat.....	235
Political Mobilisation of Weimar Radicals	238
Localised Violence: The University.....	240
Youth, Crime, and Punishment	243
Youth and the Breakdown of an Unconsolidated Democracy	245
FRANCE AROUND 1968: CONSOLIDATING A DEMOCRATIC REGIME	249
The Global Contestation of Power Structures	252
A Wandering and Rejuvenated France.....	257
The Discursive Contexts of Youth Mobilisation.....	259
Discursive Formations: Briefly Shaking a Stable Order	262
A Global Revolution: Transnational Spaces of Contestation.....	269
Prelude: A World in Rebellion.....	271
Mobilising Against Oppressive Regimes Both East and West	274
Outside-in: Youth and Cross-Generational Protest	276
Involved Christians: Ecclesiastic “68”?	279
<i>La Mobilisation</i> : The French Future.....	282

Intellectuals: The Future through Present Past	285
Is It Easy to Be Young? Challenges for Youth.....	287
Youth as Normal after la Mobilisation	289
<i>Les Évènements</i> : A Disoriented Generation.....	291
Old Wine in New Bottles: Rebels Without a Cause	294
Tribouilleries: The unrest as a Generational Uprising.....	296
A Mere Crisis of the Educational System.....	300
Who Pulls the Strings Behind the Scenes?	301
Youth After les Évènements	303
Youth in a Democratising Moment.....	304

PART III: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

YOUTH AND CRISIS: DISCOURSE AND MOBILISATION ACROSS SPACE AND TIME	311
Youth Mobilisation and Political Stability.....	315
Authoritarian Regimes	316
Democratic Regimes	321
The Fine Line between Youth and Generation	326
Temporalities of Crises	336
Present Times of Crises: Multiplying Possibilities	337
Updating Pasts and Changing Futures in Crises	342
Concluding Remarks and Avenues for Further Research.....	347
APPENDIX: CODING SCHEME	351
APPENDIX: A COMPARISON OF DISCURSIVE STRUCTURES	353
BIBLIOGRAPHY	355
English Language Sources	355
French Language Sources	369
German Language Sources	372
Russian Language Sources.....	376

ILLUSTRATIONS

Table 1.1: Case Selection	4
Table 1.2: Process Tracing	28
Table 2.1: Multi-level Discourse Analysis	36
Table 2.2: Typology for Newspaper Selection.....	42
Table 2.3: Newspaper corpus	44
Table 3.1: Russian Federation: Newspapers	77
Table 3.2: Russian Federation: Corpus	78
Table 4.1: Perestroika: Newspapers	137
Table 4.2: Perestroika: Corpus	138
Table 5.1: Weimar Republic: Newspapers	194
Table 5.2: Weimar Republic: Corpus	195
Table 6.1: France: Newspapers	259
Table 6.2: France: Corpus	260
Figure 2.1: Discourse Analysis Research Procedure.....	41
Figure 2.2: Unipartite Network	53
Figure 2.3: Bipartite Network.....	54
Figure 2.4: BRIM Modularity Division of a Bipartite Network.....	59
Figure 2.5: Stepwise Network Visualisation “Force Atlas 2”	61
Figure 2.6: Different Layout Algorithms	62
Figure 3.1: Russian Federation: Newspaper Breakdown	78
Figure 3.2: Russian Federation: Corpus Structure	79
Figure 3.3: Russian Federation: Corpus Article Frequency	81
Figure 3.4: Russian Federation: Discourse Network.....	82

Figure 3.5: Russian Federation: Size of Modularity Classes	83
Figure 3.6: Russian Federation: Frequency per Modularity Class.....	84
Figure 3.7: PRO-KREMLIN: Centralities	88
Figure 3.8: PRO-KREMLIN: Discourse Network.....	88
Figure 3.9: DISCORDANT: Centralities.....	102
Figure 3.10: DISCORDANT: Discourse Network	102
Figure 3.11: VIOLENT: Centralities	114
Figure 3.12: VIOLENT: Discourse Network.....	115
Figure 4.1: Perestroika: Newspaper Breakdown.....	138
Figure 4.2: Perestroika: Corpus Structure.....	139
Figure 4.3: Perestroika: Corpus Article Frequency	141
Figure 4.4: Perestroika: Discourse Network	144
Figure 4.5: Perestroika: Size of Modularity Classes.....	144
Figure 4.6: Perestroika: Frequency per Modularity Class	145
Figure 4.7: SOVIET-LENINIST: Centralities	149
Figure 4.8: SOVIET-LENINIST: Discourse Network	149
Figure 4.9: AUTONOMOUS: Centralities	159
Figure 4.10: AUTONOMOUS: Discourse Network.....	160
Figure 4.11: VICTIM & THREAT: Centralities	168
Figure 4.12: VICTIM & THREAT: Discourse Network.....	169
Figure 5.1: Weimar Republic: Newspaper Breakdown	194
Figure 5.2: Weimar Republic: Corpus Structure	196
Figure 5.3: Weimar Republic: Corpus Article Frequency	196
Figure 5.4: Weimar Republic: Discourse Network.....	198
Figure 5.5: Weimar Republic: Size of Modularity Classes	199
Figure 5.6: Weimar Republic: Frequency per Modularity Class	204

Figure 5.7: PRO-DEMOCRACY: Centralities.....	206
Figure 5.8: PRO-DEMOCRACY: Discourse Network	207
Figure 5.9: YOUTH & FUTURE: Centralities	218
Figure 5.10: YOUTH & FUTURE: Discourse Network.....	219
Figure 5.11: VICTIM: Centralities.....	228
Figure 5.12: VICTIM: Discourse Network	228
Figure 5.13: THREAT: Centralities	237
Figure 5.14: THREAT: Discourse Network.....	238
Figure 6.1: France: Newspaper Breakdown	260
Figure 6.2: France: Corpus Structure	261
Figure 6.3: France: Corpus Article Frequency	262
Figure 6.4: France: Discourse Network.....	265
Figure 6.5: France: Size of Modularity Classes	266
Figure 6.6: France: Frequency per Modularity Class	268
Figure 6.7: TRANSNATIONAL CONTESTATION: Centralities	270
Figure 6.8: TRANSNATIONAL CONTESTATION: Discourse Network	271
Figure 6.9: FRANCE & FUTURE: Centralities.....	284
Figure 6.10: FRANCE & FUTURE: Discourse Network	284
Figure 6.11: DISORIENTED: Centralities.....	292
Figure 6.12: DISORIENTED: Discourse Network	293

PART I: THEME AND HORIZON

SETTING, CONCEPTS, AND THEORY

This thesis analyses the public meaning and political mobilisation of youth during four pivotal episodes in Eastern and Western Europe since the First World War. I analyse the authoritarian consolidation in contemporary Russia, the breakdown of the Soviet Union, the final years of the democratic Weimar Republic, and the destabilisation of democratic France around 1968. I refine the understanding of these crises by exploring how the discursive construction of the meaning of youth conditioned the political mobilisation of young people. I argue that the struggle over the meaning of “youth”¹ is revelatory for regime stability during moments of crisis. Three research questions guide the overall enquiry and will be answered using a comparative historical approach.

1. What were the discursive structures about youth during crises in different times and political settings?
2. How did youth mobilise in relation to the wider population during these crises?
3. What processes identifies the prism of youth as being relevant for understanding the outcomes of these crises?

I seek answers to these questions by concentrating on the interaction between “elites” and “the masses”. I suggest that a systematic analysis of the public meaning attributed to youth

¹ When the term youth is employed it is usually understood on the complex socially constructed symbolic level, the objectification, as opposed to a homogenous and biologically defined group. For readability I will refrain from using quotation marks throughout. According to Berger and Luckmann there are different objectifications which shape our apprehension of the reality of everyday life. “The reality of everyday life appears already objectified, that is, constituted by an order of objects that have been designated as objects before my appearance on the scene.” (1966: 35). Within that it is language that provides each of us with “a ready-made possibility for the ongoing objectification of my unfolding experience.” (1966: 53).

provides critical insights for understanding the political salience of youth mobilisation. This approach also generates new insights for studying elite politics. Elite responses to “the masses” shape the dynamics of crisis. My investigation goes beyond static explanations of regime change, a shift pioneered by Linz and Stepan’s emphasis on the ideas, actions, and strategies of elites (1978), which inspired Capoccia’s agent-centred analysis of democratic survival in interwar Europe (2007). Concentrating on youth my work brings ordinary people back into regime change (Bermeo 2003).

In my study I carve out the discursive structures that underpin competing utterances about the meaning of youth and relate them to youth mobilisation in four cases. This includes two stages: first, within-case analysis guided by unified questions and procedures; second, aggregation of findings and comparison across all four cases. The comparison is driven by the assumption that the scope for political youth mobilisation and the discursive structures about youth differ between democratic and authoritarian regimes. Moreover, the development of the discourse about youth and the growth or reduction of youth mobilisation is expected to shape the outcome of crises. While an independent youth might drive regime change, a loyal youth stabilises a political regime.

A key argument of this thesis is that the importance of youth in moments of crisis goes beyond the physical presence achieved via political mobilisation. Some might maintain that the masses, including youth, are irrelevant for evaluating moments of crisis since the central players are elites (Dogan and Higley 1998, Higley and Burton 2006). While I am not suggesting that elites are irrelevant, I contend that the prism of youth offers a novel angle for elucidating what elite confrontations come to signify for ordinary people. By analysing the public discourse on youth we can understand how an elite struggle is expressed and eventually constructed for the wider public. If, in addition, the political mobilisation of young

people is analysed we are able to close the circle, in other words, trace the mobilising impact of the discursive context.

More specifically, I argue that the political mobilisation of young people is constrained by and simultaneously drives a struggle over the meaning of youth. The political practice of young people underpins this discursive confrontation. The discursive dimension also inscribes youth into other important debates about a country's past and its future: youth captures competing socio-political visions in moments of crisis. Youth is particularly suitable to turn into such a signifier given its constant renewal as demographic group. This semantic flexibility permits a multitude of actors to engage in shaping the discursive construct of youth which becomes a multi-vocal nodal point of competing interpretations and refers to a diversity of public engagement of young people.

While the composition of youth is constantly changing, youth as a social category is always present over time. The discourse about youth therefore has a unique temporal flexibility as its temporal horizons are mutable and can coherently be employed to reconstruct a country's past as well as imagine its future. Reinterpreted past and anticipated future merge in discussions about youth: politicians, journalists, and other actors cite glorious contributions of past youth to national advancement and thereby endow contemporary youth with a historic mission, while a lost young generation discursively transforms into a threat to the society's future and delegitimises the entire political system.

The media plays a crucial role in shaping social reality by constructing, reconstructing, and mirroring shared meanings (Humphreys 1994: 2, Schildt 2001: 178-9, Schudson 1995: 31). Therefore my investigation into the negotiation of the meaning of youth will involve a comparative analysis of media sources, specifically of leading newspapers.

The argumentation is developed through a comparison of four episodes. With the aim to understand causal processes through the prism of youth, my selection identifies cases on the dependent variable, the presence of political youth mobilisation during crisis (Haggard and Kaufman 2012: 498) but carefully adds variation to the relevant structural conditions. An interest in the importance of youth in the Russian Federation in the aftermath of the Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” generated the hypotheses for the study and serves as test case to pursue internal validity.

For pursuing external validity, I select control cases which mirror representative variation in the broader population of modern political regimes in crisis. Each new case gradually adds further variation to the Russian episode, although the new cases did not play a role in creating the hypotheses. The variation they add therefore increases the external validity of the findings from the Russian Federation. The validity of the findings in the Russian case is verified through a paired comparison with the perestroika years in the USSR, concentrating on the Russian Republic. This episode of authoritarian crisis takes place in a similar space though with a different outcome. Developing this comparison further, I include the late Weimar Republic which serves as a first control case. This democratic regime lacked popular support during the episode analysed and experienced intense youth mobilisation. France around 1968 serves as a most different control case. This democracy benefitted from popular backing but intense youth mobilisation challenged its stability.

Step 1	Regime Survival	
	Yes	No
Authoritarian Regimes in Crisis <i>Paired Comparison</i>	Russian Federation (2004-2011)	Perestroika (RSFSR) (1984-1991)
Step 2		
Democracies in Crisis <i>Control Cases</i>	France (1968-1969)	Weimar Republic (1929-1933)

Table 1.1: Case Selection

Such a comparative historical analysis is useful because it enables a dialogue between theoretical assumptions and empirical evidence (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003: 13). Comparison allows a systematic investigation of shared but also distinctive features across the cases, *without* claiming that these are identical. The systematic case selection improves prospects for generalisation, as rival hypotheses can be investigated through the comparative design. This research design draws its inspiration from a recent turn in comparative politics back to controlled comparisons, recognising that probabilistic statistical significance does not represent the only way of achieving external validity (Slater and Ziblatt 2013: 1314). Comparative research requires a combination of different research strategies and methods as undertaken in this thesis.

This sample captures representative variation across a hypothetical population of countries that experience moments of crisis as it varies along two crucial dimensions, the outcome and the initial political conditions. To ensure comparability, the four cases share however in important structural traits, i.e. political, social, and economic uncertainty. In each episode, various social and political actors were publically divided over their countries' political futures which at the time were perceived as highly uncertain. The episodes all share in a pluralistic public discourse reflected, in media outlets with distinct ideological orientations. These countries' political systems, during the episodes under study, all allowed for some degree of competition and the public expression of dissenting opinions, two factors that are crucial for the possibility of youth mobilisation.²

² When beating up, imprisonment, or killing of activists is habitual, citizen activism might occur, but under extremely specific circumstances. Youth resistance existed in some of these cases, e.g. the *Weißer Rose* in Nazi Germany or youth opposition during late Stalinism (Fürl 2002, Fürl 2003, Kuromiya 2003, Kuromiya 2004).

OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

This first chapter lays out the basic arguments of the thesis and justifies the approach to answering the opening questions. In the next section I define the key concepts and develop the comparative setting and the process tracing that it underpins. The second chapter introduces a new method developed for this research. I introduce a multi-level investigation of discourse which combines network analysis and qualitative content analysis. This thesis will be the first work to employ this method in multi-linguistic comparative research.

Part II of the thesis, chapters three through six, explores the four case studies individually. I follow the order indicated at the opening, beginning with the Russian Federation and establishing the internal validity of the guiding hypotheses of this research. The following perestroika episode adds variation, which is further increased by the ensuing cases of the Weimar Republic and France around 1968. The treatment of each case proceeds in three steps. First, I briefly contextualise the episode by drawing on secondary literature to qualify the extent to which the case corresponds to the definition of crisis and consider the specific historical conditions for youth and its political mobilisation. Second, I analyse the discourse about youth at the macro level, before exploring in more detail individual discursive formations, specific utterances, and the interlinked political mobilisation of youth. Third, I sketch out some fundamental components of each case study in preparation for the cross-case comparative chapter.

Part III provides the comparative perspective on the country cases. This seventh chapter summarises the contributions of the thesis in three steps: first, a comparison of the relevance of political youth mobilisation and discourses about youth in moments of crisis; second, a conceptualisation of youth and generation across the cases studied; and third, an analysis of the temporalities of crisis.

CENTRAL CONCEPTS

Crisis: Contingency and Possibilities

Socio-political crises are not simply “out there” and identifiable like a fall in GDP or an increase in unemployment. Such crises are made in discursive interactions. A crisis as understood in this work requires that contemporaries perceive of their present as being a crisis. A crisis is therefore constructed in narrative structures, it serves as a label under which contemporaries and scholars unify complex and contradictory processes. I therefore refrain from developing a too strict clear-cut *a priori* definition of crisis and argue that this helps to define a concept capable of travelling across the four cases and leaving room for meanings of crisis provided by contemporaries of the episodes studied. I focus on the actors’ own interpretations of their times as moments of crisis. Only what is perceived as a crisis by contemporaries can qualify as a crisis if this label functions as a category of experience. Crises are a challenge to established political and cultural norms and they force society to develop new heuristic frames: the anomaly of a crisis “eludes established patterns of representation” (Meiner and Veel 2012: 2). The fluid meaning of crisis, as Koselleck argues with his language of historical time, merges past, present, and future (2004 [1985]).

Moments of crisis are of utmost importance both for what they are and what they leave behind, be it change or continuity. First, while a crisis unfolds the possible futures expand: a society might credibly move from one socio-political contract to another. While the crisis develops, decisions gradually limit the range of possible future outcomes and a limitation of the bundle of possibilities to its normal limited span defines the end of a crisis. Second, decisions taken during this limitation set parameters beyond the horizon of a crisis itself since these parameters might generate a process of path dependence. Expressing the previously

possibly futures, a crisis thus becomes relevant in terms of “futures past” and potentially turns into an iconic event, providing references for future discourse. Crises unfold and have consequences over time and our perspective on social change (Pierson 2004: 6). Gamble similarly summarises the importance of crisis: “It matters a great deal how a crisis is interpreted and framed, because that determines non-agendas as well as agendas, the options for action, and the appropriate response” (2014: 32).

The concept of crisis as understood in this thesis refers to the cognitive frames of actors and their drastically changing expectations for the future due to new conditions in the present. When contemporaries understand their time as a crisis, they express the fundamental contingency of their present and manifold possibilities for future developments. If the present is incongruent with what had previously been known or expected to happen, judgements about the feasibility of possible futures evolve. With this heightened contingency, options for the future multiply and are not confined by rational calculations but are instead distorted by hopes and fears. In a crisis, the present is understood as being in contrast with the past, and therefore the future also seems more open. Makropoulos states that crises are those moments when it becomes implausible to extract future possibilities simply from present conditions (2005: 50). These temporal characteristics of crisis make for ideal conditions to investigate youth and generations, as these two concepts also express distinct temporal relations.

An understanding of crisis which centres on the actors’ interpretation of their lived reality ought to overcome exclusively negative definitions of crisis. Jacob Burckhardt’s theory of “historical crisis,” developed during the second half of the 19th century, represents an alternative to dominant deterministic views in the social sciences.³ Following Burckhardt, I suggest that we should analyse crises as “genuine sign of vitality,” periods when “[t]he

³ According to Koselleck, Burckhardt’s account is the main 19th century crisis theory (2006: 207).

historical process is suddenly accelerated in terrifying fashion. Developments which otherwise take centuries seem to flit by like phantoms in months or weeks, and are fulfilled” (1979 [1943]: 224-48). Burckhardt indicates that crises allow the destruction of the old, thereby clearing the way for something new. Crises have a profound socio-psychological impact; in their dynamic “[t]he infection flashes like an electric spark over hundreds of miles and the most diverse peoples [...] all men are suddenly of one mind, even if only in a blind conviction: Things must change” (1979 [1943]: 226).

Given that perceived contingency and fluidity define crisis it is also worth including cases that preserve the *status quo ante*. This variation in cases increases our comparative leverage, helping to identify the causal processes in the episodes studied. Capoccia and Kelemen emphasise that crises, or “critical junctures,” as they prefer to call them given their historical institutionalism, do not necessarily lead to change (2007: 352). Identifying crises only by negative outcomes, like the breakdown of an established system, leads to a considerable selection bias and distorts any analysis of the significance of crisis.

David criticises the almost metaphorical use of “path dependency,” which lacks rigorous definition (1985). Page refined such criticism and warned about conflating increasing returns and path dependency or considering only positive externalities for explaining path dependency (2006: 90-1). Many constraints – such as spatial, budgetary, or cognitive – may drive path dependence. In historical analysis it is important to look at sequences and to unravel the gradual reduction of possibilities which locks in societal developments. By studying the dynamics of crisis it becomes possible to identify the self-reinforcing processes which are prone to consolidation over time, irrespective of whether or not they represent an optimal path.

There are multiple overlapping crises at nearly every particular historical moment (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007: 349-50) and disentangling them is important. For ordinary people, a crisis of the parliamentary system means something different than a crisis in the international order or of financial markets. It is therefore important to specify the unit of analysis with respect to which a particular episode qualifies as crisis. In the episodes studied in this thesis we observe aggregations of different crises which involve the domestic as well as the external situation. In all the episodes discussed, elements of both dimensions culminate in a reevaluation of political regimes, a theme which will be developed in Part II of this thesis.

Taking into account the importance of *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein* [historically-effected consciousness] (Gadamer 2004 [1975]: 298-304), it is fundamental to recognise that crises are not only the result of contemporary discourse. Knight argues that they are “an invitation to ex post facto rationalisations” (1998: 30). The use of the word “crisis” to refer to a specific episode reflects the ways in which descendants, including scholars, make sense of historic situations. A crisis is therefore made and remade *ex post facto* through the struggle over the meaning of a given historical episode. I prefer the term crisis over “critical juncture” to take into account these constructivist insights.

Crisis highlights the process of social construction which involves both contemporary actors and their descendants. My approach thus deviates from the analytic definition that tends to dominate in the social science literature and has started to privilege the term “critical juncture” (Collier and Collier 1991: 29). As Mahoney points out, studies using the term “critical juncture” tend to neglect the contingency of the events which set in motion path dependency following moments of crisis (2000, 2001). Theoretical understanding demands an inductive research procedure to avoid superimposing current categories on the interpretation of past-events. Nünning stresses that moments which are regarded as critical are not

“irrevocably defined once and for all, but instead depend on the respective criteria of relevance, which are subject to historical change and are culturally variable” (2012: 69).

A challenge for employing crisis as an analytic category is that the term has become ubiquitous in political and public discourse of the post-modern era.⁴ Likewise, it has become a heuristic tool for many social science investigations.⁵ Its power lies in the exceptionalism it communicates and its potential to be employed as motto for any moment beyond “the normal”. This overuse also makes the meaning of crisis fluid, manifold, and contradictory. In this work I will not limit the definition of crisis to its “dark side,” though it is often limited in this way (Thom 1976: 34, White 1973: 170),⁶ but will concentrate on the contingency and the open-endedness that the semantics of the term contain.

The concept of crisis in this thesis emphasises the hybrid meanings, navigating between good and evil, continuity and change. The category is open, non-deterministic, and dynamic, allowing for analytical flexibility. In these moments of crisis the role of youth and generation is of particular importance.

Youth: Idealisation and Mobilisation

Experiences made between childhood and adulthood are of singular importance for each individual. Youth constitutes a critical phase in the formation of mind and body, a period during which the parents no longer exclusively embody the social order but when one realises

⁴ Crisis has been prominent ever since Antiquity, initially used for medicine; see (Brunner et al. 1984: 617-50) (Koselleck and Richter 2006). During the 19th century some scholars emphasised that crisis was a timeless feature and part of human experience (Martin 2010: 309).

⁵ The term became central for social science during the second half of the 19th century, prominent in Rousseau, Paine, Burckhardt, or Marx (Starn 1976: 7). This underlines the culmination of the experiences of change across Europe (Boer 2011).

⁶ This open meaning concurs largely with the Greek use of the term; *krísis* implied the obligation to take an irrevocable decision under pressure of time (Koselleck 2006: 203-17); *krísis* is seen as moments of truth when the meaning of men and events became clear (Starn 1976: 5).

that most constraints have origins outside the primary unit of socialisation, the family. Beyond its importance to the individual, collectively youth is a contested space for conflicting ideals of a society's self-understanding, particularly during moments of societal reorientation. This contestation is manifest in the way this period of fundamental personal formation and transformation is publically represented.

The literature on youth tends to homogenise it and emphasise young people's disruptive impact on political stability. Contrary to these assumptions, my thesis argues that youth mobilisation is not always disruptive. Its impact on regime stability depends on how the idea of youth is constructed in public discourse during moments of crisis, how young people mobilise within these discursive settings, and how other age groups relate to youth mobilisation.

The imaginary youth is conditional upon the political mobilisation of young people: "Exaggerating slightly, one might say that young people are the first active individuals in history" (Levi and Schmitt 1997b: 10). Numerous studies take this as their starting point. A classic amongst them is Feuer's work in the aftermath of the student mobilisation of "68". He emphasises the capacity of student movements to mobilise other social groups which he projected back to the early 19th century German War of Liberation against Napoleon (1969: 3-22). In a romanticised and naïve fashion Boren follows this line of argumentation and mystifies the role that student resistance plays in societal progress across time (2001: 4).

Integral to the symbol of youth is a force of attraction originating from an inherent tension. On an individual level youth is transitory and ephemeral, but on the social level it is enduring: there always is a group which can be referred to as youth. Individual impermanence distinguishes youth from other social groups, like gender-based or socio-economic categories, the membership in which does not necessarily expire over time. Moreover, those who

dominate the discursive ascriptions about youth are usually older and thus external to it. Distant memories of their own personal youths, contribute to distortion and homogenisation about “current” youth. During moments of crisis, young people themselves engage with and contest the meaning of youth. Mobilised young people and the resultant meaning of youth turns into a deeply contested space during crises: “Hors des crises, les jeunes sont ignorés”.⁷

Over time the understanding of youth evolves in any given society and *at any moment in time* there are differences between and within societies. “La jeunesse n’est qu’un mot” [Youth is nothing but a word] as Bourdieu famously phrased it (1978); whatever youth means depends on the context of the word’s use (Hamel 1999). Given constant inter-societal exchange, contemporary societies are never hermetically sealed entities and the meaning of youth within a country is itself embedded in transnational structures. It is thus fundamental when analysing youth to be aware of the socially constructed meaning, established through the interplay of wider social structures (political, economic, judicial, and educational). These specific structures explain cultural divergences in definitions of youth and studying them sheds new light on the highly fluid discourse of youth and its variation across contexts.

Given that we all experienced youth once, researchers might struggle to escape the temptation of constructing a youth which fits with their own experiences and preferences and very often the particular argument that they wish to defend. Boren as well as Feuer encounter this problem, though they are not alone in this respect. During the 1970s in particular, studies about youth tended to present unified and programmatic images of youth or students for disrupting existing regimes. Altbach argues: “For more than a century, student movements have had an importance place among the agents of social change. In some nations, students have succeeded in toppling governments or changing politics. In others, they have been

⁷ “Outside of crises, youth is ignored” cf. La Croix, 26.03.1969.

instrumental in various kinds of cultural revivals” (1967: 76-7) and along similar lines Moller presents “youth as a force in the modern world” (1968: 256-7).

The assumption of an oppositional attitude which unified youth also underpinned Western conceptions of youth in communist countries. Western scholars suggested that communist youth mirrored its peers in the West, to be in fundamental opposition “to the demands of the system and [...] of continuing and grave concern to the Communist Parties” (Cornell 1968: 177). During the 1970s, researchers in the Soviet Union itself began to be attentive to the category of youth, notably the pioneering sociologists Ikonnikova and Kon. They argued that one could not talk about youth as a social groups (*molodezh'*) given that lived youth (*molodost'*) was specific to social class (1970: 10). The events of “68” also encouraged scholars to reconsider earlier political youth activism across Europe. Coutrot emphasised for instance “the attitudes of dissent and hope shared by a young generation” during the interwar years in France (1970: 23). These academic definitions of youth clearly carry the marks of their respective present times. Eisenstadt’s explanations of societal evolution through tensions between clearly distinct age-groups underpinned many such unifying perceptions of youth in the 1970s (1956). Erikson’s psychoanalytic studies rendered this conflict-prone perception of youth more prominent as he equalised youth with crisis of identity (1968: 21).

Recent research has often failed to provide a definition of youth robust enough for academic analysis. Sweet memories of their own politicised youth drive Leaman and Wörsching and they even fail to agree on a definition which they find themselves satisfactory. They eventually have to fall back on the age-based definitions of EU statistics which they find themselves inadequate (2010: 2-6). Work by Furlong’s (2007) or Fahmy (2006) is also unsatisfactory, in particular from a comparative perspective, as both rely on inconsistent age-based definitions of youth that are employed across different data sets. Conflating youth with

the teenage years as Johansson does it (2007) is also unconvincing as the teenager, unlike youth, has clearer delimited age-boundaries.

Studies about youth ought to be very sensitive to the contingency of the social category that they are analysing.⁸ Similar to gender, constructed through the repetitive performance of male and female gender roles according to Butler (1999), so is youth a result of performing “as youth” and of discursive structures. Feuer’s point of departure is remarkable in its neglect of self-reflexivity and the discursive structures he is embedded in: “This is a book about the working of the ethical, idealistic spirit in human history. For of all social movements, those composed of students have been characterised by the highest degree of selflessness, generosity, compassion, and readiness for self-sacrifice” (1969: 3). As researchers we should therefore reflect definitions to overcome anachronistic conceptualisations and deal constructively with our own *Wirkungshorizont* [horizon of history of effect] (Gadamer 2004 [1975]: 298-304).

Mindful of these issues, this thesis follows the lead of studies which investigate how the meaning of youth evolves over time. The 40-year-old study by Gillis is still relevant in that it illustrates how youth in Europe turned into a distinct cultural entity during industrialisation, urbanisation, and the emergence of a middle class between 1770 and 1870 (1974). More recently, Mitterauer and Dunphy also follow a constructivist approach to the history of youth (1992), as do the two volumes edited by Levi and Schmitt (1997b, 1997a). These scholars highlight the fact that youth is not a fixed and universalistic entity which can be simply observed but a complex social artefact invested with competing symbols that must be unravelled.

⁸ A striking example is a “Justizwachmeister” explaining in the *Deutsche Rundschau* that his “youth” prevented him from being a member of the federal court at the age of 43, cf. *Psychoanalyse der Reichsjustiz*, in: *Die Weltbühne*, 1930:44, p. 643.

Exploring the meaning of youth in different episodes is therefore central for being able to appreciate the significance of youth as a political actor. This is the procedure the sociologist Pilkington convincingly carried out in her ethnographic study of a Muscovite *tusovka* [a group of like-minded young people] during perestroika (1994). She investigates the interplay between social ascriptions and the self-understanding of this group. The historian Stambolis captures the interplay between the public image and self-perceptions of Weimar youth (2003), as does Bantigny for France just prior to the events of “May 68” (2007). All three contributions underline how adults shape the meaning of youth. Young people internalise this meaning and in the process distort it, which in turn affects how adults reason about youth.

This study takes a similar constructivist approach to youth as its point of departure and provides a systematic empirical investigation in a comparative setting. My focus is on the post-World War I period, when an increasingly self-affirmed youth started to play an ever more visible role as a social actor across Europe (Wallace and Kovatcheva 1998).⁹ In interwar Europe, youth became an important social actor and distinct participant in public life. Youth began to mobilise conjointly in an effort to articulate its beliefs and ideals and defend them in public and did so in ways which forbid unifying understandings of youth.

Generation and Youth: Related but Distinct

This thesis refines the concept of a “generation” by linking it with the German historian Koselleck’s theory of time. Drawing on Heidegger, Koselleck emphasised the inherent entanglement of past, present, and future, and the pivotal role of language in creating and maintaining the temporal relationship between them.¹⁰ Following Koselleck, I argue that the youth of a given time can become a generation when it is believed at the societal level that

⁹ This is not to deny or devalue sporadic acts of youth resistance such as in late Tsarist Russia (Morrissey 1998).

¹⁰ See (Koselleck 1985 [1979], Koselleck 2003) and Olsen’s intellectual biography as useful English language introduction (2012).

they can draw on shared past experiences, a united *Erfahrungsraum* [space of experience], and convincingly project, at least for some of their contemporaries, a coherent collective *Erwartungshorizont* [horizon of expectations].¹¹ During crises in particular the relationship between *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont* is fundamentally reconstituted and therefore a study of generations becomes particularly significant.

People are born continuously we therefore lack a coherent and systematic way to distinguish between generations – unless we consider the dynamics of historical time. Koselleck illustrates the specificities of historical time, which, unlike chronological linear time, is structured by moments of acceleration, deceleration, or rupture. This is decisive for investigating generational dynamics. Using exclusively chronological time is insufficient for explaining the social emergence of the generational tag.

Challenging the established literature, I argue that we fail to grasp the social relevance of the term “generation” if we simply aim at identifying shared foundational experiences, an *Erfahrungsraum*. The relationship between *Erwartungshorizont* and *Erfahrungsraum* is crucial for negotiating generational membership in any society. Current scholarship on the subject, however, is underpinned by this kind of exclusive past-orientation, which can be divided into four camps.

(1) *Psychological*: Each individual is part of multiple generations which are regarded as psychological roles. We all combine multiple generational affiliations, such as grandchild, daughter or son, and perhaps mother or father. These roles imply specific relations, involving

¹¹ Koselleck introduced these terms to account for the disjuncture emerging during modernity of past experiences and future expectations which created the possibility to understand modernity as a new epoch (1985 [1979]: 359). Beyond the specific empirical context Koselleck offered, the two concepts are helpful for this research to underline the anthropological dimension of time. *Erfahrungsraum* refers to the “present past” which is embodied and remembered, conscious or unconscious and includes by being embedded in a social context experiences made by others. The *Erwartungshorizont* represents the “present future” and also is personal and interpersonal by including what is not yet experienced.

certain norms and expectations. This family-centred understanding received much scholarly attention, notably for analysing the conflictual nature of familial transmission as pioneered by Davis (1940). Drawing on psychoanalytical categories (like the Oedipus complex), many authors such as Mendel established a parallel between the individual parent-child conflict and social conflicts between generations (1969), a framing which underpinned Eisenstadt's theory of social change through generational succession (1956).

This early work also reflects generational ideas that have long been part of popular culture. Ivan Turgenev's (1818-1883) well-known novels conveyed the conflictual nature between "Fathers and Sons"¹² in Tsarist Russia. With the 1825 *vosstanie dekabristov* [Decembrist Uprising] generational confrontations became politically significant. Early writings about the *dekabristi* interpreted the uprising in generational terms, and the memory of it inspired later generations of revolutionary martyrs (Beer 2013: 549). Early scholarship further fortified the view of a generation of disaffected youth in conflict with its parents; similar to what happened elsewhere in Europe (Mirsky 1925). Lovell, however, rightly deconstructs the *dekabristi* label and emphasises that it "implies a high degree of retrospectivity" (2008: 579) – a general mismatch between psychological definitions and social analysis.

(2) *Political Sociology*: Political sociologists are also interested in questions of transmission of values between generations and they navigate between generation and cohort to describe age-group effects on political choice. Ryder pioneered this approach and advocated for "the cohort as a concept in the study of social change [...] successive cohorts are differentiated by the changing content of formal education, by peer-group socialization, and by idiosyncratic historical experience" (1965: 843). Some studies on electoral behaviour try to investigate such

¹² The Russian original of this novel is *Otsy i deti* which should translate as "fathers and children" and remains a popular read in contemporary Russia. Other novels by Turgenev deal with the generational phenomenon such as *Dvoryanskoe gnezdo* [A nest of Gentlefolk] and *Rudin* (Oleinikov 2005).

effects and generally claim that age-group effects are important (van der Brug and Kritzingers 2012: 248). However, Neundorff and Niemi acknowledge the challenge of systematically disentangling age, period, and generational effects and indicate some promising uses for recent advances in statistical methods and increasingly available individual-level datasets which avoid assigning generational identities up-front and sometimes arbitrarily (2014: 4). In current political science scholarship, generations gained in prominence which expresses the questioning of older collective identities as analysed by Beck: the disappearance of central social conflicts along class lines and the withering of socialism as an alternative model of modernisation (1986).

(3) *Social History*: Despite the problematic positivist impetus of its founding fathers, this approach remains prominent in many historical studies. Mentré in France (1920) or Ortega y Gasset in Spain (1928) attempted to determine an objective generational rhythm and to define its periodicity. Mannheim offered a refined theoretical account of this approach and his essay has served as a classic for numerous studies on generations (1928). However, most scholars have reduced their perspective on the debate during the interwar period and neglect the fact that the generational tag was used more generally in the period to make sense of phenomena as diverse as literature (Petersen 1926, von Müller 1928), art history (Pinder 1926a, Pinder 1926b), or music history (Lorenz 1928).¹³ Undeniably, the experience of the First World War constituted a fundamental rupture for European societies (and beyond). Subsequently, the alienation of youth became a ubiquitous topic, expressed in the prominence of the generational frame. I argue that generations also projected an *Erwartungshorizont* of interwar European societies.

¹³ Burnett provides a recent overview of the intellectual history (2010).

The persistence of these early perspectives is problematic since, by drawing on Mannheim, many authors adopt a deterministic or homogenising perspective on generations. Herbert, for instance, defines three distinct political generations of Germans during the 20th century (2003) and Roseman studies the unifying consequences of “key experiences” when delimiting generations in German history between 1770 and 1968 (1995: 4). Similarly, Guieu falls victim to a homogenising and programmatic generational understanding between 1920 and 1950 (2010). Conceptual work that draws on Mannheim often determines a generational belonging based on shared and integrative experiences “which is to provide them with a collective memory that serves to integrate the cohort over a finite period of time” (Eyerman and Turner 1998: 93).

(4) *Cultural History*: More recent research departs from the above-mentioned camps and investigates the cultural significance of the use of the term generation. One major improvement over other approaches is that it deals reflexively with researchers’ use of the term generation and the social effects this might have. Lovell highlights another central objective of such analyses: scrutinising when, how, and why contemporaries used the label generation to make sense of political, social, or cultural differences (2007a: 9).

After the First World War the emergence of the generational label expressed the visible self-consciousness of youth as a distinct group demanding the formulation and organisation of its interests, unlike from those of children and adults. Increasingly, the interests of youth were organised in specific movements, either managed by adults or based on initiatives from young people themselves. Gradually, the dialectic process between the self-consciousness of youth and its public recognition as a distinct social category caused its participation in public life specifically “as youth”. To illustrate this point, most of the participants of the Reformation or the French Revolution were by current standards “young people” (many younger than 30 years) – however, it is rare to see someone labelling these events as “youth events”. Only

because participants were, by our current age standards, young people, does not mean that they participated “as youth”. Contemporaries of the early 20th century therefore witnessed a profound semantic evolution during the early 20th century across Europe (Lovell 2007b: 2).

This perspective has gained increasing acceptance amongst historians. In “Stalin’s Last Generation,” Fürst illustrates the importance of the formative experiences of young people during the Second World War in shaping late Stalinist socialism (2010). Similarly, Neuman investigates the meaning of youth during the early years of the Soviet Union (2011, 2012). Both derive their definition of generations from the language used in the periods they studied.

These four approaches are certainly not exhaustive.¹⁴ However, they form the contours of the academic debate about generations. In this respect this thesis is rooted in cultural history, though even this camp has overlooked the importance of the future for grasping the prominence of the generational label at any given historical moment. My research therefore avoids establishing a deterministic link between foundational experiences and generational consciousness and pays attention to *Erwartungshorizonte*.

I argue that the presence of the generational concept is a very specific expression of the discourse about youth. Youth as a symbolic space conveys a society’s temporal orientation since discursive rules about present youth induce speaking about past and future. Because of its temporal flexibility, youth lends itself to the social tag “generation”. However, youth and generation are not synonymous. It is not uncommon for there to be a specific social group youth even though contemporaries refrain from using the label generation. “Generation” is enshrined in an ex post facto struggle over the meaning of particular episodes. The label “generation” often reflects retrospective ascriptions. So it is important when analysing

¹⁴ One could add oral history, which needs to deal with the retrospective nature of such accounts. Raleigh used this method to reconstruct a generational narrative of Soviet baby boomers (2012) and Gildea et al. drew on life-history for the “May 68” generations across Europe (2013).

generation's use to be sensitive to its changing meaning over time, to consider the temporal layers past and future inherent in it. Otherwise, we risk neglecting that the salience of generational labels is often a product of intensive confrontations over the meaning of specific episodes. Scholarship must do more than simply reproduce these struggles. Therefore, I analyse the contemporary meanings of generation and the power struggles underpinning it.

I propose a twofold approach to generations. First, I look at how the term was used as an ordering concept during specific historic episodes. Second, I investigate how the term was negotiated afterwards in making sense of those episodes. The four episodes I have chosen are helpful for understanding when and with what purpose the generational label was used, when it was successful in dominating the interpretation of a particular episode, and when it failed. The arguments that are to be developed in more detail in the case studies are as follows:

(1) *Weimar Republic*. Following the First World War contemporaries used the generational label amply which descendants, scholars and the public, have reiterated as Mommsen confirms (1985). Contemporaries across Europe used the idea of a generation, as Wohl illustrated at the level of high culture (1980), although its prominence and link to youth was most visible in the Weimar Republic (Spranger 1925). Gründel endowed youth with a special political mission (1932) and media discussed this issue in numerous contributions about the political and cultural attitudes of the young generation. Later scholarship also took up the generational paradigm. Numerous academic analyses understood Weimar's "Promise and Tragedy" (Weitz 2007) as a generational phenomenon to explain the specificity of the period. Brandenburg refers to the *Irrwege* [wrong tracks] of German youth (1982 [1968]) and von Hellfeld refers to the "deceived generation" which sought salvation in fascism (1985). Both explain Germany's particular political trajectory using the collective subject "generation," thereby reproducing the contemporary discourse and legitimising it further as an explanation for the dynamics of the episode. The generational label is by and large uncontested to make

sense of this episode, notwithstanding debates about the exact delimitation of generational units (Peukert 1987). The danger with such analyses is that they tend to give autonomy to a generation as an actor without considering its socio-political underpinning.

(2) *France around 1968*. The generational label was not dominant during May 1968 itself but gained prominence later to make sense of “the events” from a specific conservative political angle.¹⁵ Following the Second World War and expressing the deception with political youth during the Interwar period, also French media around 1968 refrained from politically endowing youth with an exceptional mission and rather relied on alternative unifying symbols such as the new 5th Republic. Contemporary intellectuals or journalists employed “generations” to downplay the political significance of the demonstrations by emphasising that these merely reflected a generational disquiet. Retrospective generational ascriptions have followed the anniversaries of the events and labelling 1968 as a generational phenomenon is still highly controversial as it goes along with a tendency of de-politicising the significance of “May 68”.¹⁶ Scholars began to make prominent use of the generational label from 1987 onwards with the publication of Hamon and Rotman’s influential account of the “68” student leaders (1987, 1988). However, just like Sirinelli’s interpretation some 20 years later (2008), their interpretation neglects most of the non-elite and non-student actors by looking through the generational lens. The generational interpretation has been applied in other cases ever since, ranging from Italy (Passerini 1996) to general analyses of “the West” (Fraser 1988, Marwick 1998), and Eastern Europe (von der Goltz 2011). More recent studies like Vigna’s research on workers around 1968 (2007), which go beyond the simplistic reduction to the “Quartier Latin” and the students therein, begin to deconstruct the use of the term generation.

¹⁵ E.g. Charles Flory: La rupture entre générations, in: La Croix, 29.06.1968 or Raymond Aron: La révolution introuvable, in: Le Figaro, 12.08.1968.

¹⁶ In 2008 the acting French president Sarkozy blamed the “generation of 1968” for “French society’s current ills”: Nicolas Sarkozy blames the generation of 1968, in: The Telegraph, 29.04.2008.

(3) *Perestroika Russia*. Contemporaries made little use of the idea of an identifiable, specific generation, although politicians referred prominently to the generational succession of history to sketch the path towards developed socialism throughout the Soviet era. Popular culture, notably films, and newspapers, offer nevertheless some examples from the perestroika period.¹⁷ Amongst many, filmmaker Karen Shakhnazarov, born 1952, captured the changing generational relations with films like his 1984 “My iz dzhaza” [We are from Jazz] or “Kur’yer” [Messenger Boy] from 1987. The latter film conveys young people’s sarcasm and disaffection to working life and the parental generation more general. Some academic analyses at the time also made use of generational interpretations, speaking about a “Gorbachev generation” or the *pokolenie glasnosti* [glasnost’ generation] (Coulloudon 1988, Zacek 1989). Merridale employs it to refer to a new generation of historians that united around Memorial in the 1980s and conducted research into repressions of the Soviet era (2003: 19). Subsequent post-Soviet reinterpretations of perestroika, however, reduced the popularity of identifying as *pokolenie glasnosti* and social and political actors have shunned the label. It is rare to encounter analyses of the perestroika which make sense of this episode by referring to generational ideas. Moreover, there are alternative attempts at generational constructions for the post-perestroika era, such as Pelevin’s Generation “P” referring to the tumultuous years of savage capitalism in Russia after the USSR’s downfall (1999).

(4) *Contemporary Russia*. Since the Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” a number of scholars have begun to refer to a new post-communist generation in a programmatic way to account for value changes some 20 years after the fall of communism (Diuk 2012, Levada and Shanin 2005). Nikolayenko draws on the generational label to demarcate a transition from Soviet times (2007) and in Russia, generation has turned into a fiercely contested symbol which

¹⁷ In the Soviet Union and in the West, for instance Keller’s A Perestroika Generation, in: The New York Times, 01.10.1988; Zdravstvui, plemya mladoe, neznakomoe..., in: Ogonek, 09.01.1988; Po vsem adresam, in: Ogonek, 20.05.1989.

supporters of the presidential policies try to monopolise to unite youth in its support for the political elite.

The four case studies will develop these characterisations in detail. I analyse the use of the label generation as expressing a twofold temporal relationship in order to explore the fine line distinguishing “generation” and “youth”. Political youth mobilisation is particularly relevant to that end as mobilisation furthers the visibility of generation.

RESEARCH DESIGN: STRUCTURED AND FOCUSED COMPARISON

Thus far I have discussed the key concepts that I will use and develop further in the empirical analysis in Part II. These concepts underpin the assessment of the relationship between the political mobilisation of youth and the discourse about youth in moments of crisis. The study also fits into the framework of a renewed strand in comparative politics using controlled comparisons inspired by comparative-historical analysis (Slater and Ziblatt 2013).

Comparing four cases allows me to operate on a less abstract level than large-*N* comparisons and do justice to context-dependent specificities (Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003: 9). This implies careful engagement with the historical debates surrounding the episodes and an in-depth country-expertise (including knowledge of the relevant languages), requirements difficult to meet in large-*N* statistical studies. The small number of cases allows a systematic consideration of primary historical material rather than working exclusively with secondary sources. Analytic categories which respond to the specific characteristics of the case set can be formulated and can therefore travel between cases. The categories are on a level of abstraction which does not enclose cases idiosyncratically. I argue that the mixed-methods approach of discourse network analysis – qualitative process tracing and interpretive analysis combined with quantification derived inductively from primary sources – is ideal for the needs of cross-temporal comparisons.

It is known that the inherently subjective nature of interpretive approaches leads to questions about the confidence in results. A main challenge for interpretive researchers is to avoid only seeing those patterns that conform to personal assumptions and ideals, a possibility that threatens trust in the validity of our findings. I suggest that this criticism can be addressed by the mixed-method approach of discourse network analysis introduced below at the end of Part I. This method allows for an unprecedented degree of consistency, comprehensibility, and, within certain limitations, replicability. Besides this method, I have also incorporated a diverse body of secondary sources to verify and contextualise observed patterns in my studies.

The within-case analysis accepts that there is no linear causal relationship between independent and a dependent variable; its strength is in exploring the complexity and contradictions of causal pathways. Seeking to explore the type of structural conditions and interactions that explain the outcome of interest in the respective case, the procedure follows conventional historical approaches. How do actors incorporate, reproduce, and alter the meaning of youth as exposed in public discourse? How does youth mobilise under these discursive structures? I argue that causal process tracing can improve our understanding of the significance of antecedent conditions, as this allows an empirical investigation into the unfolding of events. This demands an elaboration of standardised questions precondition for aggregating findings (George and Bennett 2005: 67-70).

Critics of small-*N* comparative research tend to also focus on the impossibility, notwithstanding theoretical reasoning in case selection, of holding all potentially relevant variables constant. Proponents of statistical, large-*N* approaches even question the utility of making small-*N* comparisons at all (Goldthorpe 1997). Given the valid criticism concerning causal inference based on small-*N* research, notably the fact that small changes in causal variables may totally alter the outcome (Lieberson 1991: 314), I am not going to join Skocpol in her assumption that “comparative historical analyses [...] attempt to identify invariant

causal configurations that necessarily (rather than probably) combine to account for outcomes of interest” (1984: 378). According to this line of criticism, selection on the dependent variable – that is, based on the presence of the phenomenon under investigation – leads to false causal inference (Geddes 1990, King et al. 1994).¹⁸

This is a fair criticism. However, the dismissal of qualitative comparative work downplays the considerable selection problems faced by large-*N* comparisons. Indeed, hardly any social science research can successfully draw a random sample from a complete universe of cases. There always is profound and justified disagreement over what exactly constitutes the relevant population at stake: how many people are needed for mobilisation and whose counting should be used? What ages does youth include? The answers to these questions are known to differ between researchers and across time.

Youth and Regime Change: The Processes at Work

My empirical analysis proceeds on the basis of a structured and focused comparison of processes taking place in the cases and which stand out through a study of youth (Table 1.2). The contextual variables include those elements that are necessary to operationalise “crisis” as defined in this work. These elements justify the selection of the specific episodes and frame the introduction into the individual cases to examine the extent to which these conform to the definition of crisis. I argue that structural conditions across the four episodes are indeed comparable; in other words, the contextual variables are held constant. All episodes are characterised by a crisis which citizens, politicians, and the media constitute in their negotiation over the meaning of their present. Obviously, there will be many differences in the forms of crisis faced by the Weimar Republic, the Soviet Union’s Perestroika, France

¹⁸ For this point reference to Skocpol’s work on social revolutions became ubiquitous (1979).

around 1968 and the contemporary Russian Federation, differences I will explore in the empirical chapters.

Contextual Variables (Crisis)		Initial Political Conditions		Hypotheses			Regime Outcome
Domestic situation	External precedent	Democratic	Authoritarian	Discourse about youth	Co-optation of youth	Generalisation of protest	
• delegitimisation of older generation - economic decline affecting youth - contested historical reference points • perceived possibility of political change - splits amongst elite - weakness of incumbent	• constitutes a relevant precedent - comparable political setting - constructed connectivity (media, politicians & other actors) • direct flow of finances or people	France "1968"	Russian Federation	centralisation, hegemonic position of state-actors	government directed youth mobilisation prevention of dissent youth activism	isolated contestation specific youth demands	consolidation
		Weimar Republic	Perestroika (RSFSR)	disintegration, dominance of non-state actors	unsuccessful attempts by governments to mobilise youth independent youth activism	mobilisation of other age cohorts cross-societal demands	change
=> challenge upholding governability							

Table 1.2: Process Tracing

The cases are united, crucially, in that people at the time perceived their present conditions as a crisis, in the sense that the interpretations made of contemporary events recomposed the relationship between *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont* of people living through these historical moments. Theoretically, two interrelated processes are conducive to this situation of crisis.

First, a destabilised domestic situation expressed by a delegitimised older generation in general and the political leadership in particular. This could have many conceivable origins, such as high youth unemployment, educational reforms, or historical reference points which the young generation contests. Furthermore, for *Erwartungshorizonte* to evolve and create a situation of crisis, the possibility of change must appear credible for contemporaries, based on a weak political elite or splits within it.

Second, the external precedent which political leaders as well as youth and the media perceive as constituting a salient example for the home country's future trajectory. The media plays an eminent role in shaping this connectedness with the outside and diffusing ideas of political change. But the exchange between people, whether physical or virtual, also contributes to a

perceived interconnectedness between countries. Seeing political change unfold elsewhere, contemporaries perceive it as being possible “at home” if the external example is framed and perceived as being relevant (Beissinger 2002, Beissinger 2007). Even though such domestic change was previously excluded from their imaginatory, contemporaries construct the possibility of change notwithstanding underlying constraints.

Feasibility judgements by actors change under conditions of crisis. The analytic distinction between domestic situation and external precedent helps to unravel the concept of a crisis. In a situation where both factors are combined it becomes increasingly difficult for those in power to maintain their rule. Importantly, the two dimensions are interrelated, as domestic conditions shape the diffusion of external precedents. In the same vein, a delegitimised older generation is not sufficient to foster crisis by itself since domestic constraints can restrict mobilisation. In a situation of imperfect information, distorted by actors’ personal expectations, an external event can have a disproportionate impact and lead to drastic reassessments of opportunities and risks.¹⁹

Adjacent to the contextual variables in the table above are the “initial political conditions”. With contextual variables held constant we expect that different initial political conditions will affect those causal processes that can be unveiled through youth. Accordingly, the research design includes democratic and authoritarian political settings. Civic activism depends on the institutional setting’s “political opportunity structure,” the importance of which Eisinger emphasises (1973) and which Tilly formalises (2010). Meyer discusses the impact of political conditions on the emergence of political mobilisation (2004: 140). In the context of Eastern European opposition, Osa illustrates that when mobilisation is restricted

¹⁹ Weyland similarly emphasises the importance of diffusion during moments of regime change in 19th century Europe: “Tapping in the dark in their own country, oppositionists are easily impressed by a shining example elsewhere. The unexpected fall of a foreign autocrat suggests to disaffected groups in other polities that the time has come for the decisive move” (2010: 1152).

like in authoritarian regimes, a more diverse set of people with grievances have an interest in close cooperation to oppose the government (2003). On the other hand, when mobilisation can flourish as in democratic regimes, we might expect a more heterogeneous field with various demands and smaller coalitions. In democratic settings there are numerous opportunities for participation and the chances of it paying off.

Given the fundamental differences in socio-political and ideational context, I am not suggesting that the cases are causally homogenous. Every historical situation is multifaceted in its own way. In order to respond to this challenge of comparison, my thesis advances an argument which concentrates on unifying questions and processes. These leave scope for different causal processes at work and carving out similarities and differences in the discursive and physical mobilisation of youth. This approach places the thesis between political science and history. Following the social scientific tradition, I go beyond the idiosyncratic conditions of my cases to explore similar mechanisms. In the historic tradition, I recognise the importance of contextual differences (Weyland 2014: 19-21).

Hypotheses

The aim of this research is to contribute to our understanding of the outcomes of crises by studying those moments through the prism of youth. Do crises lead to consolidation or change? In what respect does it make sense to speak of consolidation or change? The causal processes underlying the outcomes are studied through three interrelated hypotheses.

The hypotheses were generated based on the exploration of the political significance of youth mobilisation in contemporary Russia as a test case for the comparative research design. The three remaining cases were irrelevant for formulating the hypotheses. Analysing episodes of the perestroika, the Weimar Republic and France around 68, through these hypotheses allows testing for their external validity in a controlled manner.

H1: Under conditions of crisis, a political regime consolidates its power by dominating discourses about youth.

Is political leadership able to centralise discourses about youth and to establish its own interpretation as hegemonic in public discourse? In each episode I analyse the extent to which political consolidation is matched by the capacity of political elites to structure the discourse about youth. If youth is at the centre of a country's self-understanding, the way that discourse about youth is ordered in moments of crisis is highly relevant as the conditions of crisis entail a renegotiation of the societal bases. We would expect it to be the result of intense power struggles on various societal levels which expresses itself in conflicting utterances. Gaining a central position in this discourse should therefore be relevant to the consolidation of a political regime's power and a failure to structure the discourse a factor in regime change.

If a regime succeeds in dominating the meaning about youth, this domination is one causal element contributing to regime consolidation. The discourse about youth captures competing visions about a country's past and future. It increases regime legitimacy if political elite can associate itself with the powerful symbol of youth. But if the discourse about youth disintegrates, I expect this disintegration to contribute to regime change. Given the symbolic importance of youth for sustaining political rule a failure to control the discourse about youth may thus accelerate the disintegration of the incumbent political regime.

For Charles Tilly civic participation and public discourse are intimately entwined and both are part of democratisation: "A regime is democratic to the degree that political relations between the state and its citizens feature broad, equal, protected and mutually binding consultation" (Tilly 2007). Taking the example of policy change in the EU, Schmidt and Radaeli emphasise that the discursive dimension should be understood as being inherent in the process of the evolution of policy making (2004). My approach takes this assumption one step further and

conceptualises discourse as having transformative power in more than one direction, as Clements suggests (2010).

H2: Under conditions of crisis, a political regime consolidates its power by mobilising youth to display popular support for the regime.

Does the government succeed in co-opting youth mobilisation and isolating youth opposition? Along with striving for a hegemonic position in the discourse about youth, a consolidating regime may mobilise youth as a means for expressing support of its policies. Government-initiated youth movements benefit from disproportionate resources and youth opposition is eventually silenced in the process of regime consolidation and effectively dispersed. I expect that if the incumbent government can effectively co-opt youth mobilisation it will help regime consolidation in a situation of youth-initiated regime crisis. If these efforts succeed, youth mobilisation may become a backbone of the government itself. On the other hand, if governments fail to harness youth mobilisation, such mobilisation reinforces the likelihood of political change and makes it appear more likely to the general population. In such cases, independent youth activism can flourish and voice its desire for a new political order.

H3: Under conditions of crisis, youth fails to challenge the existing regime if its mobilisation does not expand to other social groups.

Can youth-initiated contestation go beyond the realm of youth itself? Youth mobilisation can be a successful initiator of governmental change only if it spreads to other age groups. By itself, youth mobilisation is isolated from the wider population and tends to be perceived as specific to the age cohort, a generational revolt. If youth mobilisation is to effectively challenge political power it has to overcome this boundedness, as the regime will only be sufficiently pressured if contestation is dissociated from youth.

When youth mobilisation broadens to include the wider population its contestation is amplified which helps to explain why incumbents are put under considerable strain. Bourdieu's notion of "critical events" (1988) has been productively employed for the generalisation of protest by Gilcher-Holtey in her study of dynamics of "May 68" (1995). "Critical events" are decisive moments of mobilisation which lead to its generalisation as other societal actors perceive the protest as meaningful. Even in authoritarian settings rulers are concerned about political mobilisation given that it affects their perceived legitimacy. If, on the other hand, contestation remains limited to youth it will eventually be possible for regimes to ignore this and dismiss it as a generational revolt lacking wider socio-political legitimacy.

METHOD AND OPERATIONALISATION

This thesis develops a new method for the systematic examination of large bodies of text. The analysis shifts between three related levels which makes for a genuine mixed-methods approach. The quantitative insights significantly increase the confidence in our findings from the interpretative work. Likewise, thanks to the interpretive work, deeper insights into the quantitative results are possible. The approach captures the structure of the discourse about youth as contained by individual utterances across the different articles in the corpus.

This multi-level approach draws on three layers of interpretation. The first is the macro-scopic historical context established by secondary sources, the second the meso-scopic quantitative analysis of discourse networks about youth, and the third the micro-scopic detailed analysis of language games and their individual utterances (Table 2.1). The interpretations between these different interrelated levels are reiterative. This method constantly navigates between the historical contextualisation, the discursive networks, and individual utterances. The sampling procedure is systematic and transparent which allows for confidence in the findings of the discourse analysis and permits cautious generalisation beyond the cases studies. This is beneficial for discourse analysis as social movement researchers criticise the potential blurredness of interpretation in discourse approaches given nebulous sampling (Snow et al. 2013: 366).

Analytic Level		Objective	Function	Source
Macro	Overall corpus & historical contextualisation	Historical contextualisation Structuration of corpus	Generation of hypotheses	Secondary sources (historical research)
Meso	Relations between coded text	Formations in the discourse network longitudinal analysis of discursive formation	Refinement and verification of hypotheses	Discourse networks
Micro	Individual text sections	Content and argumentation analysis	Verification of hypotheses	Language games and utterances

Table 2.1: Multi-level Discourse Analysis

With these three layers I propose to look at the significance of the discursive construction by studying how youth positions itself within the discursive field. How does youth mobilisation shape the image of youth? How do youth respond to the meaning that is made of them? This part of the analysis is similar to what social movement researchers do. I contextualise documents from the individual organisations in the discursive structures to reveal the patterns of member mobilisation and group identity construction. I argue that by looking at the interaction of the discursive level and the mobilisation it is possible to understand the meaning of political youth mobilisation and its impact on the trajectory of the crises analysed.

THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL REALITY

Let *discourse* be understood as the socio-linguistic practices that structure meaning in a given context. Meaning draws on material and immaterial symbols and is created and remade through the application of linguistic rules. It is thus not a property inherent in texts – a fact which distinguishes my approach from content analysis (Krippendorff 2013). Discourse creates a symbolic order and enables those who are able to follow its rules to communicate about a given topic. Discourse conditions the production of knowledge based on rules for

using its respective symbols, such as language. Discourse governs the way a topic can be talked and reasoned about by establishing versions of the social world and identities. Meaning is fragile and contested, a fact which this thesis aims to explore through the competing social realities of youth.²⁰

Discursive formation refers to the specific clusters or structures of meaning that can be extracted from the overall discourse. I follow Foucault who suggested that discursive formations encompass individual constellations of meanings with similar discursive rules (2008 [1969]: 47-58). The meaning of and knowledge about things like youth are represented and altered within discursive formations such as considering violent hooligan youth as a societal threat (Pearson 1983) or student youth as bringing about societal progress (Feuer 1969). Changes within such discursive formations impact on the social reality as captured in the discourse.

Lastly, *language game* is defined with reference to Wittgenstein (2009 [1953]), as the acts of speaking which are embedded in a communicative situation. It is implicit in this conception of speech-acts that there is an inherent link between language and action. Words are embedded in a wider net of social practices and rules which are historically constituted. Only through the compliance with such rules can meaning be continuous which is evolving in each repetition and always contradictory given the infinite number of language games (Krawatzek and Trimçev 2014). If we did not follow the linguistic rules there would be no meaning to our material world. A language game unites those individual utterances and I employ this conceptualisation throughout the thesis rather than Foucault's *énoncés* (2008 [1969]: 109-20). Wittgenstein's terminology of utterance draws our attention to the fact that the individual acts of speaking cannot be considered in isolation but are actually embedded in a socio-linguistic

²⁰ A phrasing obviously borrowed from Berger and Luckmann's social construction of reality (1966).

set of rules. Following Wittgenstein, the individual statements are referred to as utterances, which vary in length but coherently offer meaning about the respective topic.

Drawing on this novel understanding of discourse I develop the method of discourse network analysis as way of navigating between these three layers. I argue throughout this thesis that an investigation of discursive rules should be the primary aim of discourse analysis. These rules are the most significant level of investigation. They determine the sense of our utterances in language games, they represent and constitute social reality at the same time. Wittgenstein makes a similar point in the *Philosophical Investigations* when he suggests that language serves as pivot of culture since “to imagine a language means to imagine a life-form” (2009 [1953]: §19). It is important to identify those actors who are allowed to speak from particular discursive positions, since only certain subjects are audible in a language game and able to become visible and participate in the creation of social reality.

This multi-layered theoretical conceptualisation of discourse and the network analysis as method for its investigation are interwoven. Network analysis explores the interrelatedness of concepts and how the patterns in networks shape the meaning that is attributed to concepts like youth. This analytic aim is inspired by Foucault’s work. My reading is that his studies aimed at investigating how certain *énoncés* were privileged and became dominant over others at specific points in time and space. His emphasis, which inspires my thesis, was on unravelling the logic of the existing discourse which is neither mentality nor consciousness, neither intentions, nor interests of actors (2008 [1969], 2014 [1966]). The textual material is thus not studied to extricate coded messages but rather to trace the changing youth paradigms across cases, to comprehend and explain its variation and changes over time. Indeed, Similar to Wittgenstein I suggest that it is “confusing” to think of understanding as a “mental process” (2009 [1953]: §154) and more rewarding to look at the social relevance of meaning.

The semiotic conception of language and Foucault's earlier work have been rightly criticised for their tendency to reify and hypostatise *langue*,²¹ or discourse, which one could easily comprehend as an autonomous subject of analysis.²² Foucault addressed this potential problem in the "Order of Discourse" (2012 [1971]), emphasising the social embeddedness of discourse. My work develops this embeddedness further by recognising that utterances, *parole*,²³ are never identical since meaning is constituted through analogical repetition of underlying discursive rules (Krawatzek and Trimčev 2014). Therefore meaning is decentralised, contradictory, and complex.²⁴

Though stemming from a different intellectual tradition, the language philosophy of Wittgenstein's "Philosophical Investigations" is in many respects complementary to the French post-structuralist approach.²⁵ Wittgenstein suggests that the use of a word, that is to say its performative dimension, is "extended in time" (2009 [1953]: § 138). If we are to investigate discursive rules we must thus try to understand the meaning of the concepts we are analysing over time. Moreover, to recognise how discursive rules create meaning we have to consider the individual rule in relation to the wider community of speakers. If meaning depends on rules and if we accept that rules cannot be followed by an isolated individual, it is

²¹ "La langue n'est pas une fonction du sujet parlant, elle est le produit que l'individu enregistre passivement [...]" (de Saussure 1989 [1916]: 41) ("Language (*langue*) is not a function of the speaker; it is a product that is passively assimilated by the individual [...]").

²² Russian intellectuals like Tynianov and Jakobsen expressed early criticism which became prominent with Bakhtin's fundamental assault on Foucault (Hutchings 2004). This criticism was also extended to those drawing inspirations from Foucault or Derrida like Butler (Mills 2000: 276-7).

²³ "La parole est au contraire un acte individuel de volonté et d'intelligence, dans lequel il convient de distinguer: 1° les combinaisons par lesquelles le sujet parlant utilise le code de la langue en vue d'exprimer sa pensée personnelle; 2° le mécanisme psycho-physique qui lui permet d'extérioriser ces combinaisons." (de Saussure 1989 [1916]: 42) ("Speaking (*parole*), on the contrary, is a wilful and intellectual individual act. Within the act, we should distinguish between: (1) the combinations by which the speaking subject uses the language code for expressing his own thought; and (2) the psychophysical mechanism that allows him to exteriorise those combinations.").

²⁴ Pêcheux underlined that the emergence of meaning depends on the social context and that it is impossible to infer from meaning to the intention of the subject (1982).

²⁵ For a rightful criticism of the simplistic reception communicated through this label (Angermüller 2007).

only by being embedded in a linguistic context that speaking about meaning makes sense (McGinn 2013: 78-170).

Discourse analysis is subject to several valid criticisms. Some studies merely provide summaries of texts without getting at the level of social practice, whereas others operate in an analytic black-box and suggest conclusions which are hardly transparent and can therefore not be falsified. To bring discourse analysis further, I therefore argue that we need a method which is systematic in the detection of discursive rules and structures of meaning. This makes for clear interpretations and avoids a deductive or a priori setting of discursive formations. If this can be achieved, discourse analysis has the potential to generate findings which are compelling to social science more generally.

Adding network analysis can solidify the explanatory power of discourse analysis. Both kinds of approaches share an emphasis on relations and interactions between different actors and formations of the network. Network analysis complements discourse analysis by bringing technical standards and rigour into the interpretation process. This is not to say that the act of interpretation becomes redundant: it remains the first and most important task for organising the textual data that results from the researchers' encounters with the corpus. As part of interpretation, concepts which summarise the meaning of specific sections are attributed to text. This approach, therefore, does not sacrifice the in-depth understanding gained through conventional interpretative approaches and alleviates concerns about overly subjective results through the combination with a quantitative method.

ANALYTIC PROCEDURE

Having sketched out the theoretical framework I can now move on to unpack the actual analytic procedure. How, precisely, am I going to get at the level of discursive rules? I develop a research procedure that follows the steps illustrated in Figure (2.1).

The case selection and formulated research hypotheses guide the establishment of the corpus. In this thesis the corpus is composed of all articles in major domestic newspapers that refer to youth as a social group during the periods under consideration. The case selection therefore needs to clearly delimit when the crises began and when it ended under the perspective of the hypotheses. The newspapers included in the study vary along two dimensions intended to capture the diversity of discourse. My typology distinguishes between their political attitude and the genre to which they belong (Table 2.2). As ideal-types these categories conceal a great degree of ambiguity and difference, but they are helpful for guiding the selection. These categories contain variation and in aggregate account for many of the relevant voices that can be encountered in public discourse.

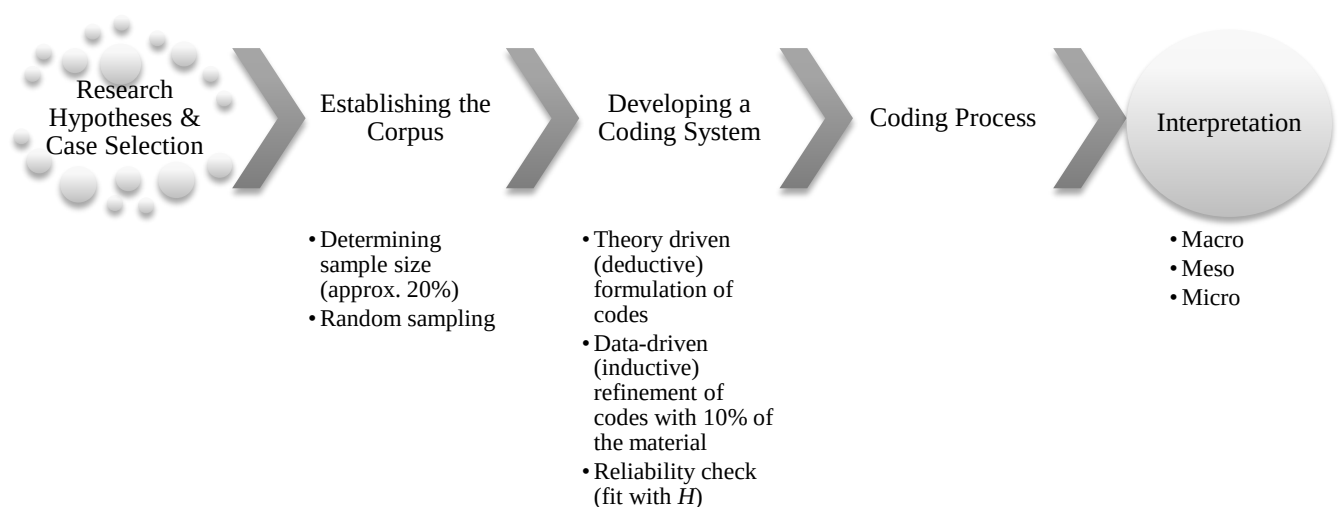


Figure 2.1: Discourse Analysis Research Procedure

Newspapers as a source are particularly insightful because they are widely available and therefore influence public perception of events. Newspapers also absorb adjacent, more specialised discourses, for instance from the artistic, academic, or cultural realm. I divide the genre into mass circulation²⁶ and quality papers²⁷ as I assume that speaking about youth differs amongst them. Mass media can be expected to simplify complex issues and privilege entertainment at the expense of in-depth analyses and should therefore also tend to homogenise the contradictory social reality of youth. On the other hand, we would expect quality newspapers to shed a more differentiated and analytic light on youth mobilisation. Variation in political attitude, which seemed like the second most important factor determining the coverage of youth in general and its political mobilisation in particular, is also included. In moments of regime crisis with various factions of youth opposing or supporting the regime, the media coverage ought to vary according to political attitude. I decided not to include variation according to the scope and sampled exclusively on newspapers which address a supra-regional population, though not always strictly national.

		Genre	
		Quality	Mass Media
Attitude	Conservative		
	Progressive		

Table 2.2: Typology for Newspaper Selection

The sampled newspapers are the most widely read national papers, which is admittedly not always an easy choice since circulation is a rough indication of readership. In certain cases

²⁶ Mass circulation papers are those which aim to appeal to a wide audience with information and entertainment as primary functions. To various degrees, such papers are characterised by simplification of complex socio-political and economic issues and an emphasis on sensationalist news coverage.

²⁷ Quality papers target a specific segment of the population, namely educated elites. Debates attempt to throw light on the complexity of social issues and public intellectuals regularly get a voice in these publications.

their numbers are notoriously wrong or unavailable and it is difficult to estimate the number of readers per copy. In the Weimar Republic as well as in Soviet Russia it was common to pass on newspapers, sometimes to friends and certainly to members of the family. The simple number of printed copies is thus at best only one indication which I supplemented with other criteria. I tried in particular to evaluate a paper's discursive position, that is, its perceived relevance in the national media by evaluating how contemporaries referred to the papers.

Having selected the relevant papers, I went through each individual issue, either via an electronic database, or through hardcopies and microfilm, to determine relevant articles. This first selection process enabled me to exclude "accidental hits," articles which mention youth as part of advertisements for theatre, films, TV programmes, tables with results of youth sport competitions, *Jugendstil* [Art Nouveau], or when "youth" simply figured in the name of a ministry. The final corpus for this study thus consisted exclusively of articles pertinent to my research questions. The corpus, the total population of articles, included over 5,500 articles from 16 newspapers (Table 2.3). The colours for each category will reappear in the network plots, I tried to select colours which do not evoke strong political associations in English-speaking culture to avoid adding preconceptions.

Given the size of the corpus it is necessary to reduce the number of articles to qualitatively explore the discursive patterns. Beyond a resource constraint I argue that this reduction also makes sense methodologically. If we assume that the rules of the various language games in the four episodes are in principle manifest in every utterance then there is no point in examining every article individually as no more variation can be captured. I therefore suggest a coding of a representative random sample stratified at the level of the newspapers.

I take this sample as a first indication of how many articles were necessary to achieve a level of "saturation". If variation persisted beyond the sample, I included more articles in the

analysis. The sample size was estimated at 20%.²⁸ Since I selected the empirical material through archival work, I also included articles which appeared to be of undeniable significance, either because of the speaker, because other articles referred to it, or by its analytic depth. This seemed judicious given their prominent position in the discourse.

Germany Interwar			
Germania	347	Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung	315
Vossische Zeitung	321	Vorwärts	416
		Total	<u>1,399</u>
France around 1968			
La Croix	617	Le Figaro	345
Le Monde	445	L'Humanité	456
		Total	<u>1,863</u>
Russia Perestroika			
Izvestiya	321	Pravda	304
Literaturnaya gazeta	271	Argumenty i fakty	427
		Total	<u>1,323</u>
Russia 2004-2011			
Izvestiya	318	Komsomol'skaya Pravda	429
Kommersant"	456	Novaya Gazeta	357
		Total	<u>1,560</u>

Table 2.3: Newspaper corpus

I develop a multi-stage approach to the coding of the sampled articles. Initially, I define a first coding structure which reflects my research interests. This structure contains the sections which I theoretically determined as being necessary for interpreting the material. Secondly, I refine this coding structure based on a close analysis of ten per cent of the sampled articles in each case to define the precise set of codes for each section. This in-depth reading captures the variation of content across the articles and leads to a very fine-grained coding-scheme which corresponds with the theoretical and empirical focuses of this thesis. The codes need to

²⁸ This is in line with previous QDA research (Mayring 2000: §11) (Schreier 2012: 151-52), confirmed by the sample size for a population of 2,000, a confidence level of 95%, and margin of errors of 5%.

be exhaustive to assure that the variation in the content of the sources is captured. This approach of being guided by the empirical material for developing the heuristic setting is inspired by grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1999 [1967]). With these necessities in mind I tried to develop a parsimonious coding scheme, since an excessively complex scheme would prevent a coherent application of the codes across the cases. However, this balance is difficult to maintain as it is equally important to avoid reducing the discursive diversity too early.

The individual codes which I chose are as unambiguous as possible and closely connected to the language used in the sources analysed. The coding is at the level of utterances, the entities of meaning, which are not always sentences or single paragraphs, but can be shorter or longer. The codes are rarely explicitly in the text but are inferred by the act of interpretation. This coding system serves a central heuristic function and I finalised it before undertaking the interpretation of the four cases. This allowed for comparisons between the cases as each case was handled within the same standardised framework. The final coding scheme is the result of a reiterative process between the empirical material of the different cases analysed and my analytic aims. The scheme is as follows:

Structure: This set aims at capturing the overall characteristics of the corpus. (1) What topics are discussed in relation to youth, ranging from political to social or economic issues as well as cultural and other non-political themes? (2) Who are the authors of these texts, if they can be identified at all? Do citizens engage in the public sphere through letters, do politicians address the public that way, or are journalists prevailing? (3) What discursive positions do these speakers occupy? Beyond the previous social-institutional label of each speaker, authors assume a discursive position from (and for) which they speak. This implies for instance that authors' self-understandings reveal generational or national discursive positions. One frequently encounters the observer's attitude which reports and analyses without being partisan as such. (4) In which genre is the article written? Do the authors express value

judgements, do they report, or express demands? The individual codes of these four sections were mutually exclusive and each had to be attributed to allow for a mapping of the corpus.

Definitions: This set of concepts comprises two categories which capture the manifold meanings attributed to youth. (1) Social Attributes [SA]: Is youth portrayed as being dependent upon the older generation or as having an independent and autonomous status? Youth needs a constitutive “other” to be intelligible, and in statements about youth it is usually at least implicitly clear how the authors see the relation of youth to this other. How is youth in general and its political mobilisation in particular categorised? Is youth understood as being involved or disinterested, enthusiastic or apathetic, well-informed or naïve, precious or a threat? Do contemporaries express great excitement when speaking about youth (“Jugendwahn”) or fear and anxiety?²⁹ The attributes are very detailed and comprise more than 40 codes. (2) Factions [F]: Is youth described as homogenous group or are differences and contradictions amongst it underlined? Is the collective youth described as being composed of, for instance, different genders, socio-economic groups, or political currents? Contrary to the first set of “structural” codes, the definitional concepts are not mutually exclusive as the co-occurrence of different codes helps us understand the meaning of youth.

Evaluations [E]: This set captures how youth and its behaviour is valued. I distinguish between (1) Positive, (2) Neutral, and (3) Negative evaluations. In the interest of clarity, evaluations were attributed in a mutually exclusive way. *Evaluations* and *definitions* are the central codes for extricating the different meanings of youth and unite the largest number of codes in all cases.

²⁹ The code “Jugendwahn” was left in its original German since it captures so well a particular idea about youth in Weimar Germany which will be discussed in the particular chapter.

Tempi [T]: This set of codes aims at investigating the temporal dimension of the meaning of youth. The semantics of political and social language contain in themselves experiences and expectations and this temporal anchorage makes language intelligible. For youth this is of particular relevance, as argued earlier. I investigate two temporal dimensions: (1) Temporal layers: What times are evoked when speaking about youth (past, present, future)? (2) Temporal rhythms: How is the relationship between different temporal layers characterised (repetition, rupture, continuity, acceleration)? The temporal codes were also not mutually exclusive since one of the interesting aspects in the sources is the combination of different tempi – for instance the relation of the future to the present, or the characterisation of present or past as being a rupture or standing in continuity.

References: The last set of codes captures the inter-discursive dimension. Which references to actors or events are expressed to make sense of youth and its political activism? Do authors refer to politicians or academics? Also, which events abroad are of relevance for the home sphere?³⁰

Before discussing in some depth the method of discourse network analysis I wish to pre-empt a concern which is increasingly voiced when someone mentions “coding”. I want to make a case *against* the requirement of inter-coder reliability tests for the type of interpretive work that I have undertaken. I make this argument neither with the aim of hiding the process of interpretation nor to defend arbitrary explanations. However, I want to articulate concerns about the ideology that accompanies such tests.

The idea that one can eradicate the subjectivity of interpretation by burdening a second coder with the task of interpreting the same or part of the material, suggests that there is such a thing

³⁰ Nota Bene: Throughout the empirical chapters of thesis, whenever I refer to the code as a concept, the respective term is capitalised. This is to remind the reader when I operate on the linguistic level of coding which is necessarily abstract and condensed as opposed to the language of the empirical material itself.

as objective knowledge that can be carved out of texts. This idea has infected qualitative work although it speaks much more to quantitative approaches to text analysis, which have become increasingly popular in recent years and are very promising complements (Slapin and Proksch 2008). Nevertheless, the primary measure of quality from quantitative approaches, namely consistency across different coders, should not simply be transposed to qualitative approaches and turned into the primary measurements for evaluating the quality of textual interpretation.

Manual coding of text remains an inherently subjective act and every act of interpretation remains unique. Different researchers frame the material that they are coding with their own conceptual and cultural baggage. Our own conceptions, values, and capacities bias our interpretations of the empirical material we are studying. This is not a drawback. It is this subjective dimension that researchers add to their cases that makes interpretational work valuable and this type of work does not necessarily benefit when we introduce scientific criteria from a different research tradition to evaluate it.

Does this mean anything goes? Is it impossible to distinguish between right and wrong interpretations? That is obviously not what I am suggesting. On the contrary, the coherence and usefulness of our coding, as well as the consistency in attributing the codes, will become clear with the process of interpretation of the quantitative results. Eventually, the interpretation must hold water, that is to say, the empirical material, the utterances of contemporaries, the discursive structures, the political mobilisation of activists, must support the argument that I make. The argument must also relate to the existing historical literature. If this is the case, an inter-coder reliability test would not have increased the quality of our study. Moreover, an ex-post inter-coder reliability test can only correct mistakes in the heuristic setting, the coding scheme, at great costs of recoding the entire material.

By coding with MaxQDA I transformed the textual material into an indexed text with numerical data. This formed the basis for the multi-level discourse analysis (Table 2.1). On the macro level I observed the basic semantic order of the discourse by scrutinising frequency distributions of codes and binary code-correlations. This perspective helps to gain insights into the general structuration of the corpus and the fundamental patterns of the discourse and is useful in its combination with the historical contextualisation. The meso level, the relationship between different codes as expressed in networks, refines this perspective and permits a reconstruction of clusters of meaning across the different articles. These meso-level explorations shape the interpretational work and point to those nodal points which are revelatory for a detailed investigation, i.e. on the micro level. It is on the level of utterances embedded in a specific language game that the discursive formations and potentially abstract associations of codes link back to the empirical material.

The macro- and micro level of analysis are somewhat more conventional and do not require much further elaboration. The discourse network analysis constitutes however a new way of apprehending discourse and will be explained in some more detail.

ANALYSING DISCOURSES AS NETWORKS

Mais ce qui appartient en propre à une formation discursive et ce qui permet de délimiter le groupe de concepts, pourtant disparates, qui lui sont spécifique, c'est la manière dont ces différents éléments sont mis en rapport les uns avec les autres.

But what is unique about a discursive formation and what allows defining the group of concepts, disparate as they are, that are specific to it, is the way in which its different elements are put in relation with one another. (Foucault 2008 [1969]: 83).

This thesis provides the first research to combine manual coding and network analysis in a comparative setting. At its core, social network analysis is based on the idea that the interdependencies of its individual components, nodes and edges, characterise social life

(Prell 2012: 1). For this study, two additional assumptions of network analysis are important. First, for understanding the patterns of behaviour between individual entities (usually people or institutions) their individual attributes must be understood alongside the structural relations between these entities. Second, these structural relations are dynamic since most networks evolve constantly due to interactions (Knoke and Yang 2008: 4-6).

I argue that discourse network analysis is a significant improvement to existing attempts at visualising text through semantic networks. Leydesdorff and Hellsten stand in this tradition of researchers who drew inspiration from the intuitive network-text nexus (2005). Such semantic networks rely on co-word analyses and various ways of evaluating the co-occurrence of key terms across a selection of texts. Word co-occurrences are identified in various ways, ranging from their simultaneous presence in a sliding window of a text of a given width, to their simultaneous presence in a given sentence or paragraph or even in a whole text.

Such purely descriptive approaches have been used for a long while but they need to be treated with considerable caution. Carley underlined that such content analysis has frequently relied on an “overestimation of the similarity of texts because meaning is neglected” (1993: 77). Interpretations which rely exclusively on co-occurrence and even networks or maps of words are one-dimensional and usually fail to situate the meaning of these texts in their socio-linguistic context. I suggest operating on a different analytic level by putting the concepts that drive the meaning of texts in relation to one another. This makes it possible to anchor the ideas that underpin competing interpretations to one another and to derive discursive formations from the specific combinations of concepts. Such an approach effectively uses the potential of network analytic techniques and goes beyond simple descriptions of relations between words. Indeed, most semantic networks tend to be of restricted heuristic value since the properties of the network are rarely appreciated as such, limiting networks to aesthetically pleasing representation of texts. Combining manual qualitative coding with the historical

contextualisation of the cases generates the in-depth case knowledge required for developing convincing causal stories.

More recent quantitative approaches such as “wordfish” might also neglect meaning. Grimmer and Stewart underline: “Automated content analysis methods are insightful, but wrong, models of political text to help researchers make inferences from their data” (Grimmer and Stewart 2013: 270). This is not the space to undertake an in-depth discussion of the advantages and limitations of text as data methods such as “wordfish” or topic-modelling in general as it is applied for studying policy making (Klüver 2013). However, suffice it to indicate that this method faces the challenge of how to situate textual meaning and therefore needs to be particularly careful about its quantitative treatment of intertextual meaning. For “wordfish” in particular, the one-dimensionality of the policy space seems to be a problem as this suggests that each document only provides information about one specific issue, which may not be a robust assumption. Moreover, this approach depends on homogeneous text sources which might be justifiable in the case of party-manifestos but fails to grasp the more complex reality of non-standardised textual discourse. Lastly, a degree of lexical continuity is assumed which may not be present in diachronic studies like the present one (Slapin and Proksch 2008: 720).

Leifeld and Haunss developed an approach for estimating policy networks through discursive interventions. They concentrate, however, on actors’ positions in specific policy areas without trying to extract the discursive meaning of the texts they are analysing (2012). Verd and Lozares suggest a promising sociological approach for identifying the network of actors based on narrative analysis (2014). Their conceptualisation draws on in-depth reading and coding of autobiographical accounts with the aim of establishing a general structure for the narrative and relationships between actors (ego-networks). This approach also has the advantage of

manually interpreting the text before undertaking the network analysis, avoiding thus a pure application of networks on text.

Nevertheless, for the ambitions of this thesis the policy position or biographical approach seems too narrow. I argue that qualitative coding as an act of interpretation can capture the meaning of the different articles, as it can deal with implicit meaning, metaphors, and irony. Above all, through the interpretation I can understand the text as practice of meaning. This method does not merely try to extract “positions” of speakers but to extricate the meaning these convey about the particular topic. My theoretically-driven approach turns complex intertextuality into a matrix. The quantitative results from analysing the matrix are itself contextualised and carefully explored in the process of interpretation in each empirical chapter. It is, to my knowledge, the first time that this combined method is applied to undertake a discourse analysis to understand the struggles behind the linguistic construction of social reality. Applying this method in a comparative setting also increases confidence in the results, exploring the strength and limitations of the approach in differing settings.

The idea of a discourse can hardly be dissociated from that of a network. Indeed, on a metaphorical level the language of networks has been used by discourse analysts for a while. In discursive confrontations, various constellations of concepts make individual utterances meaningful and refer to earlier constellations. Meaning is changing when being updated and embedded in new constellations of concepts. The meaning of an utterance depends on the relations it exhibits with other concepts present and past. These relations compose the language game in which the utterance is embedded.

Grounding Discourse Network Analysis

Social network analysis has conventionally concentrated on relations between entities of the same type, including things as diverse as the transfer of goods between people (Galaskiewicz

1979), interpersonal relations for getting a job and making a career (Granovetter 1974), and the impact of elite networks for the birth of the Renaissance state in Florence (Padgett and Ansell 1993). Such “one-mode networks,” mathematically expressed as adjacency matrices, have been studied in much detail and most of the formal treatment in network analysis has been developed with reference to them (Figure 2.2) (Wasserman and Faust 1994).

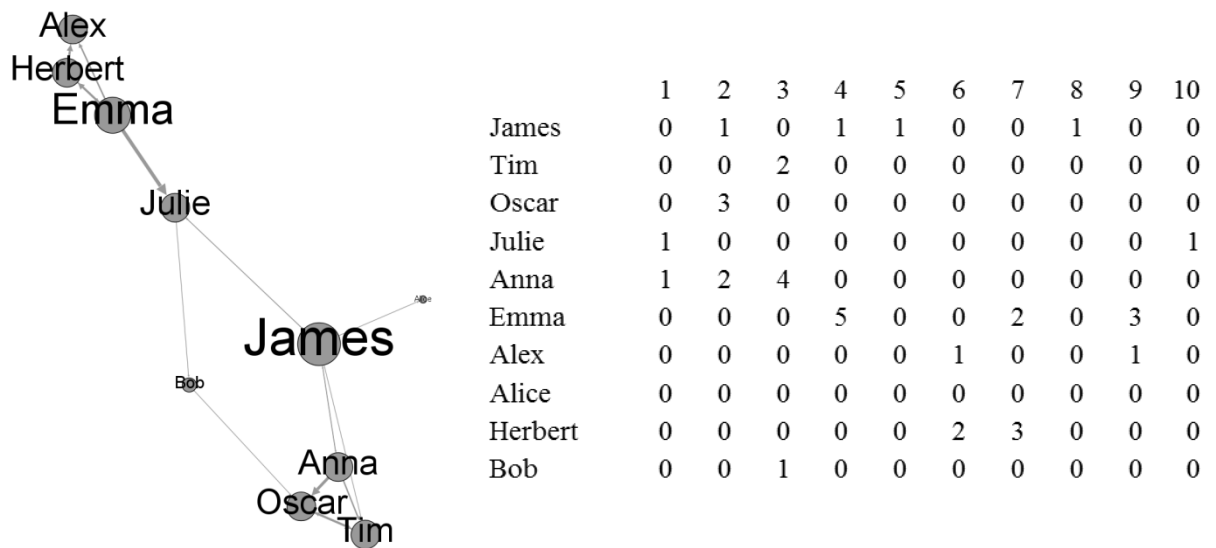


Figure 2.2: Unipartite Network

Scholars have increasingly recognised that relations exist not only between nodes of the same type, but also between nodes of different types, such as actors and their joint attendance of events. Like most real-world networks, discourse networks are also bipartite networks: the nodes are of two disjoint sets and the nodes within one set are never adjacent. More formally, let a graph $G = (T, C, E)$ be composed of a set of utterances such as individual newspaper texts (T), and a set of concepts reflecting the coding scheme (C). Edges (E) exist *only* between T and C , hence there are no edges between the same kinds of nodes. The number of articles is given by m so that $T = \{t_1, t_2 \dots t_m\}$ and the number of concepts by n so that $C = \{c_1, c_2 \dots c_n\}$, giving

$$A = [t_m \times c_n] \quad (1).$$

Such bipartite data has been generated for a long time (Davis et al. 1941) but, represented as incidence matrix, it has usually been analysed only in its adjacency, i.e. one-mode, form, by multiplying with the transpose A^t of the matrix. Recent debates, however, emphasise that the mere analysis of the transpose of weighted bipartite networks distorts central network algorithms, as the two-mode structure is discarded. In one-mode networks it is assumed that ties are formed independently of one-another which is not the case in projected two-mode networks where a large number of ties between different nodes of set c can be created by a single node on t. Moreover, projected two-mode networks tend to be more clustered (Opsahl 2013: 159-60) which is a potential concern if our interpretive analysis relies on determining groups in the network. More specifically, debates concerning optimal modularity division of networks have illustrated that operating merely within the one-mode projection distorts results (Barber 2007). I build on this recent turn in network analysis and treat discourse networks as bipartite networks, with their specific properties (Latapy et al. 2008).

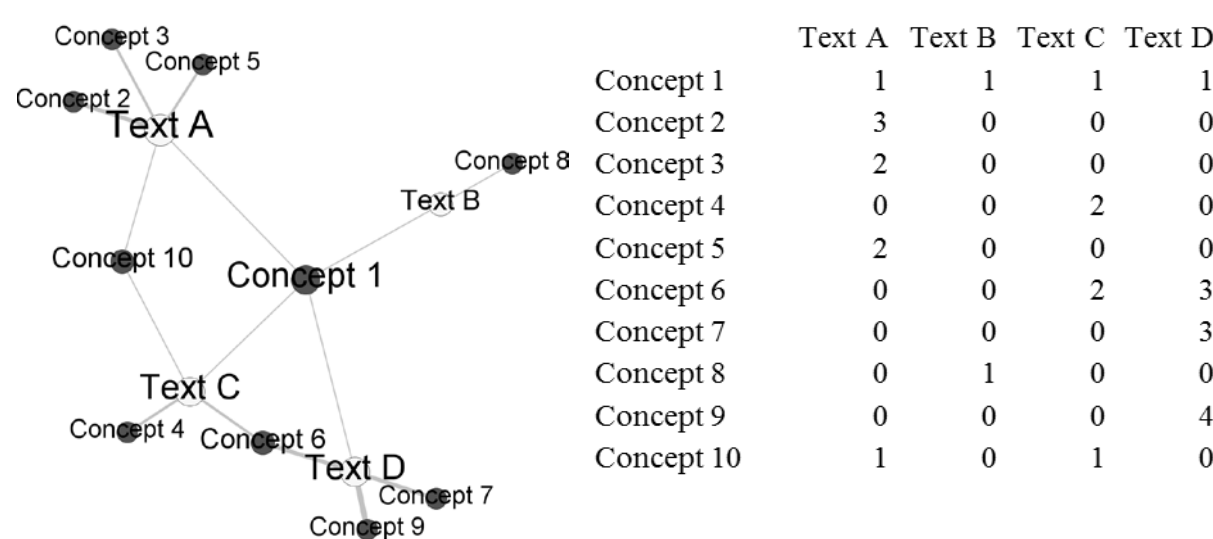


Figure 2.3: Bipartite Network

A bipartite network is summarised both graphically and in matrix form in Figure (2.3). The presence of an edge means that an author uses a given concept (a dark grey node) to make – in my case – sense of youth in a particular text (a light grey node). The thickness of the edge indicates the density of this link, referring to the number of times that a specific idea about

youth was used. Naturally, meaning is contradictory and manifold and can rarely be reduced to one concept even within a single utterance. This echoes the previously developed theoretical assumptions about the rule-based nature of discourse which is manifold and in permanent mutation to be intelligible for human communication. Bipartite networks reflect the theoretical assumption that relations between the concepts used in discourse do not exist independently between them but are established via different utterances.

Measuring Significance in Discourse Networks

Centrality measures establish the significance of specific concepts and articles in a discourse network. This is a first approach to gain a better understanding of the structure of the network, in particular of those texts and concepts which stand out. Of the existing centrality measures (Wasserman and Faust 1994: 167-219), degree and betweenness centrality are the most relevant for my analysis. Degree centrality is the measure of the number of ties a node forms with other nodes in the network. Applied to our discourse network this refers to the number of concepts an article evokes or inversely, the number articles that draw on a specific concept. This measure has the advantage of simply and intuitively indicating which nodes are somewhat more “important”. Formally expressed as follows (Freeman 1978):

$$k_i = C_D(i) = \sum_j^N x_{ij} \quad (2)$$

where i refers to the node under consideration, j refers to all other nodes, N is the sum of nodes, and x is the adjacency matrix defining the particular node x_{ij} (2). Extended to weighted networks, degree centrality has been labelled node strength (3) where the weighted adjacency matrix is w .

$$s_i = C_D^w(i) = \sum_j^N w_{ij} \quad (3)$$

In the present case we are dealing with a weighted network and to account for both the *number* of connections a node has and the *weight* of these connections, degree centrality has been extended by the parameter α (Opsahl et al. 2010: 247), which the researcher has to set according to whether multiple connections are a sign of strength or of weakness.

$$C_D^{w\alpha}(i) = k_i \times \left(\frac{s_i}{k_i}\right)^\alpha = k_i^{(1-\alpha)} \times s_i^\alpha \quad (4)$$

Degree centrality provides a very rough first estimation of some kind of node significance in a network. It is a purely descriptive measure, one which we would have arrived at without network arithmetic since the simple frequency of codes can be determined through conventional coding programmes. However, the property that could only have been analysed with difficulty before now, is edge-weight, that is to say, the number of times a concept is evoked in a specific article. In a bipartite network it is possible to operate with different assumptions about the impact of edge-weights versus having multiple edges. In terms of discourse it is important to identify which utterances are characterised by a low number of different concepts that they evoke but which might thereby solidify a specific discursive strand. On the other hand, certain utterances bridge different discursive strands and evoke numerous concepts which might even be from competing discursive formations.

The ultimate limitation of degree centrality is that it does not take into account the global structure of the network. Betweenness centrality therefore provides complementary information, as it refers to the sum of the shortest (geodesic) paths between two other nodes that go through a particular node. Formally expressed (Freeman 1978):

$$C_B(i) = \frac{g_{jk}(i)}{g_{jk}} \quad (5)$$

where g_{jk} refers to the number of geodesic paths and $g_{jk}(i)$ to those geodesic paths going through node i . Further refinement is needed to take into account the specificity of weighted bipartite networks (Opsahl et al. 2010: 248):

$$C_B^{w\alpha}(i) = \frac{g_{jk}^{w\alpha}(i)}{g_{jk}^{w\alpha}} \quad (6).$$

The scores for betweenness centrality provide interesting insights into the structure of the network and are first indications of discursive subgroups centred on specific nodes which stand out through this measure. A high betweenness centrality for an article-node underlines that the specific combination of its concepts increases the discursive connectivity within the network and brings many nodes together, while a high score for a concept-node points to a concept which numerous articles share and therefore links them. However, betweenness centrality on its own is not without limitations. It is common in networks for many nodes to not be on a geodesic path between any two nodes and thus have a score of zero; however, this would not imply that the concepts or articles represented by these nodes are without meaning.

For the analysis to be meaningful, degree and betweenness centrality should be considered jointly. They are important for understanding the structural components of the discourse network as constructed from the codes that were manually attributed to the articles. Given the high number of codes, it would have been impossible to analyse so many data points to a satisfying degree without such quantitative methods.³¹ Throughout the empirical chapters I represent these two values for each modularity class to show the properties of the network.

³¹ All network algorithms were calculated in R using the ‘tnet’ package, visualisations were made with gephi.

Formations in Discourse Networks

Subgroups in the overall discourse networks, i.e. discursive formations, are probably the most interesting aspects for discourse network analysis as they make it possible to disentangle the complex network structure. My understanding of discursive formation concurs with Foucault's. His quote at the start of this chapter emphasises that the specific relationship of its concepts and the relevant utterances characterises a discursive formation. More formally, edges are more likely to form amongst the nodes of a discursive formation than with nodes of other discursive formations. Repeated reference to shared concepts characterises discursive formations; detecting these discursive formations provides help to classify utterances. The division of the network illustrates which nodes share structural similarities: not on the level of words but on the level of the concepts used by authors.

Modularity, as a measure of fit for a particular division of a network,³² has been defined for unipartite networks (Newman and Girvan 2004). More recently Guimerà (2007) and Barber (2007) refined the measure for bipartite networks. Both make important improvements, though a debate continues in mathematics as to how ideal divisions of bipartite networks are best achieved (Murata 2010). Guimerà's algorithm only takes into account the connectivity of one node-type, which is a fatal restriction for this project. For a discourse analysis we want to discover communities across the two node types and not only within each node type individually. Barber's BRIM (bipartite, recursively induced modules) algorithm suggests promising divisions of the network by respecting the particular bipartite structure of the network (2007).³³

³² Murata defines modularity as "a scalar value that measures the density of edges inside communities as compared to edges between communities"(2010: 110).

³³ Thanks to Michael Barber who has been kind enough to provide the matlab script of this function and to offer help in understanding it.

Although these mathematical quarrels are important, an application of these tools to social science problems also has to confront the challenge of deriving meanings from specific modularity divisions. For this step in the interpretational process the qualitative component is critical, in particular since the divisions of these large discourse networks are always contested, notably for boundary nodes. Even the small hypothetical network highlights the difficulties in modularity division (Figure 2.4). For making sense of the modularity classes, their individual utterances have to be taken into consideration along with the macro-historical context. To avoid reifying discourse in network graphs, all three analytical levels, the historical context, the network structure, the individual utterances, are to be combined for a meaningful analysis.

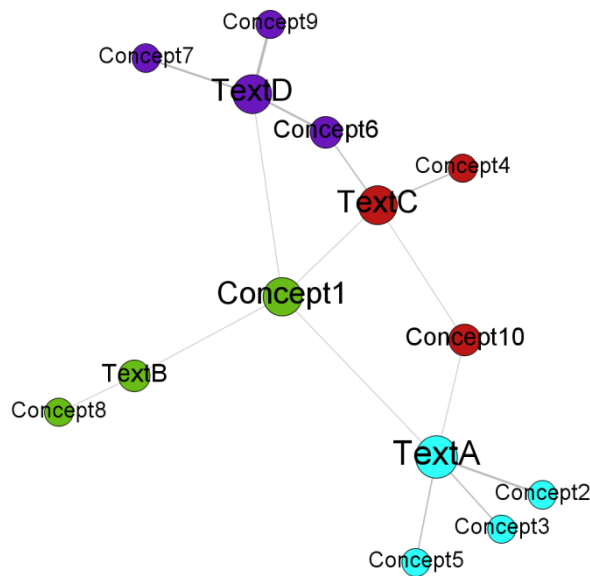


Figure 2.4: BRIM Modularity Division of a Bipartite Network

Nevertheless, even if the community membership of some concepts and articles remains controversial and is subject to revision in the process of interpretation, I suggest using this approach as it provides us with a unique indicator of what groups form the network.

Formally, modularity Q for the adjacency matrix A with m edges is defined as follows:

$$Q = \frac{1}{2m} \sum_{i,j} (A_{ij} - P_{ij}) \delta(g_i, g_j) \quad (7).$$

The modularity value Q expresses the extent to which an edge between i and j in the adjacency matrix A_{ij} forms within modules, relative to the probability in a null model P_{ij} that an edge exists between modules. The algorithm denotes for each vertex i a community group g_i and for each possible assignment the modularity score Q is calculated. The community indices g_i takes values from $\{1, 2, \dots, c\}$. For optimising Q repeated bipartitions are applied to the network data. Initially all vertices belong to one community, $c=1$ giving $Q=0$. In a next step the number of communities is doubled, and half of the vertices are randomly assigned, increasing the value of Q .

This process is repeated as long as Q increases with an increase in c . Once Q drops when c is increased a threshold has been passed and the algorithm switches from extrapolation using larger numbers to interpolation using bisection search in the allowed number of modules. Therefore new values for c are applied to determine Q_{max} . It is in the repeated partitioning that the optimal modularity value is determined. Importantly, applied to discourse analysis, this process eventually demands a qualitative intervention as the optimal division in mathematical terms might not necessarily be the most appropriate for the interpretation of social phenomenon since the algorithm omits attributional data.

The graphic representation of such division into modules is helpful. Taking the earlier bipartite network (Figure 2.2), its BRIM modularity division suggests a division into four communities, leading to Q_{max} of 0.4936 (Figure 2.4). Needless to say, the division is somewhat trivial in this example and Q_{max} is much higher than what can be expected in real world discourse networks. It nevertheless illustrates the processes that will be used in the empirical investigation.

Before beginning the empirical analysis of the four cases I wish to explain a little more about the process of discourse network analysis and direct some attention to the visualisations that

are fundamental for it. Figure (2.5) illustrates three stages of visualising a discourse network. The graph on the left simply plots the edges between concept and article nodes and is of limited value in making useful statements about the structure of the discourse. The second graph adds the labels of the most important concept nodes and degree centrality represents the size of the nodes. The third graph illustrates the modularity division of the entire network by colouring the edges of individual modules in separate colours. Together, these three graphs represent the steps involved in translating a discourse network into a meaningful graphical object.

The second Figure (2.6) shows how alternative layout algorithms can be used to express the same discourse network. The “Radial Axis Layout” places the nodes of each modularity class on a separate axis where nodes can be ordered according to various criteria. This is a very suggestive plot, though it tends to mislead the reader somewhat, as differences for instance between the modules are overemphasised. The “Fruchterman Reingold” algorithm is a classic layout algorithm, although I find it less appropriate for visualising bipartite networks since the attraction strength tends to produce graphs that are highly clustered in a rather unclear centre. Lastly, the “Circular Layout” is sometimes used because the connectivity amongst certain parts of the network can be clearly illustrated. However, I also find it too cluttered around the key concept-codes.



Figure 2.5: Stepwise Network Visualisation “Force Atlas 2”

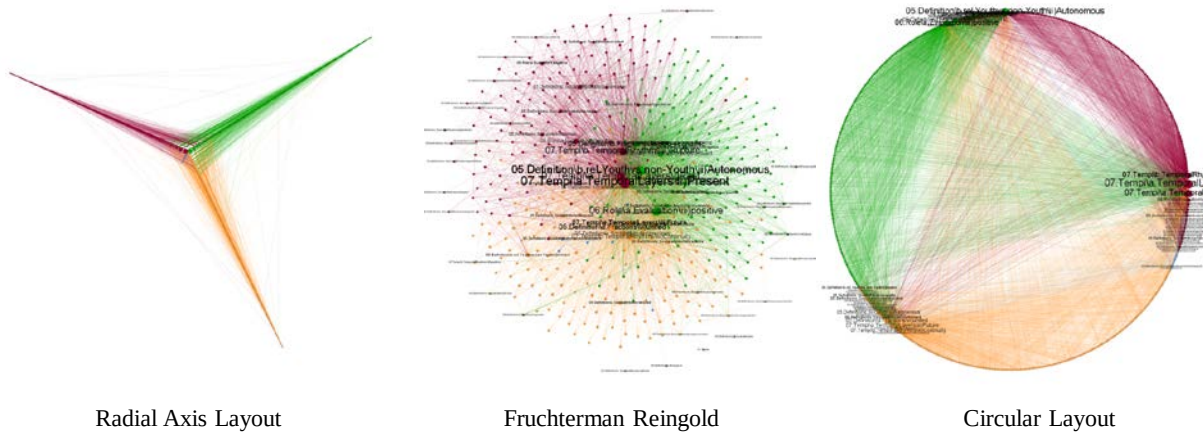


Figure 2.6: Different Layout Algorithms

Given these reservations concerning alternative layout algorithms I opted for the “Force Atlas 2” vector layout algorithm used in Figure (2.5). Nodes repulse each other (similar to magnets) while edges attract one another (similar to springs). The interplay of these two forces leads to a balanced state which represents the network in a configuration that helps to interpret the data.

Beyond representing the entire discourse network, I used “Force Atlas 2” to represent individual modularity classes. For doing so, I coloured the newspapers according to the colours suggested in the selection typology (Table 2.2) and sized the nodes according to degree centrality. Conceptual nodes were coloured in grey and labelled with shortened versions of the codes.

As discussed earlier in Chapter One, this method of discourse analysis operates on multiple levels. With the aim to drill down to the micro level, I looked at the betweenness centrality of articles to guide the selection of those utterances which played a bridging role in their respective modularity class. The quotations that are taken from articles therefore express the underlying insights gained through the network analysis.

SOME REMARKS ON TRANSLATIONS

A discourse study across different linguistic and socio-historical contexts requires great care when it comes to comparing seemingly similar terms. In each of the specific contexts the language contemporaries used has had a long history and communicates different past experiences and future anticipations. It is thus important not to simply set equal terms referring to very different socio-linguistic backgrounds, as this risks becoming a form of teleological unequivocality, blind to differences and the heterogeneous nature of discourse. In the developed comparative scenario, various historical contexts must be considered to carefully express those experiences that are carried within language. The subsequent challenge is to transpose them into another language, without distorting and simplistically equalising.³⁴ The process of translation is twofold, from past into present (Weimar era German into modern German, Soviet Russian into modern Russian), and from the foreign into the current analytic language (German, French, and Russian into English).

For achieving this goal a clear distinction between the analytic conceptual language and the language as embedded in the historic practices was required. It is an advantage that the language of the sources is not the language this thesis is written in. English serves as the analytic language, albeit imperfectly, a form of meta-language into which every experience has to be translated. The obvious problem is that English semantics also communicate particular experiences – but there is no way around that. As a result, the demand on the readers is high as they will have to try to liberate themselves from preconceptions stemming from own expectations which certain terms evoke, and accept being taken on a journey through different language games. To make this constant alienation easier, terms will be used in the original language to emphasise the level of “language in use” which serves as a

³⁴ Already Marc Bloch identified the elaboration of a common language as challenge to comparative work (1928: 39), and Sartori similarly emphasised the necessity to develop conceptual tools that travel (1970: 1034).

signpost and creates a hopefully constructive degree of confusion. Translations are always provided when the term is mentioned for the first time and are, unless otherwise stated, mine. This approach avoids making things equal which contain semantic differences.³⁵

For the act of translation itself, I concur with the remarkable translator Arthur Goldhammer, who argued that “It is usually a mistake to fetishize the lexical dimension of a text. Translation [...] is, like any art, subordinate to a larger order, to a principle of the whole” (2006: 151). I therefore argue that it is insufficient to translate on the level of the individual words, we have to appreciate context and meaning as a whole and not restrict ourselves to mechanistic assumptions about language.

³⁵ Tedious as this might be, it is the most promising procedure to avoid the trap of semantic nominalism defined as “unconsidered transfer of a concept’s semantics from the contemporary political language of one country to the political discourse of another” (Leonhard 2009: 252).

PART II: CASE STUDIES

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AFTER THE COLOUR REVOLUTIONS: CONSOLIDATING AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME

The Putin era leaves us with numerous puzzles. One is the combination of a democratic institutional setting with an increasingly coercive authoritarian rule despite economic and political stability. Between 2005 and 2011, as part of this authoritarian ascent, elections became idle rituals. Besides influencing mass media and setting up fake parties in the aftermath of Ukraine's 2004 "Orange Revolution," the regime became increasingly proactive. Mobilised youth was a key element in the regime's strategy and loudly expressed its support for the political order. Regime leaders employed techniques of the "Colour Revolutions" to consolidate their power.

In retrospect the episode from 2005 to 2011 was a major turning point. During the episode, the direction of change in Russia was open and included possibilities of democratic modernisation (Krawatzek and Kefferpütz 2010). During those years, analysts of Russia's political system suggested labels like "democracy with adjectives" (Bogaards 2009, Collier and Levitsky 1997) or "hybrid regime" (Levitsky and Way 2010). Summarising this development Sakwa understands Russian politics of those years as resulting from institutional competition at different levels and develops the idea of the "dual state," while admitting that Russia is undeniably "at the authoritarian end of the spectrum" (2011: 38).¹

¹ Sakwa borrows a legal-theoretical concept from Ernst Fraenkel who conceptualised the independence of the prerogative state from the formal constitutional state in the Weimar Republic (1969 [1941]).

By the time of writing this, the political ambiguity of the episode has vanished. I therefore argue that the episode 2005–2011 is of unique importance and characterised by political openness. Political youth opposition voiced democratic aspirations and appeared powerful to political observers. This had fundamentally changed by the end of 2011 with the crushing of the Russian Winter demonstrations, which began as a response to flawed legislative elections in December 2011. In the aftermath, more pronounced nationalistic policies, the elimination of non-parliamentary and institutional opposition, and extended media control became conventional.

I argue that political youth mobilisation was central for this authoritarian consolidation. Pro-Kremlin movements enthusiastically communicated popular backing for the authoritarian political leadership. They strived for *natsional'naya gordost'* [national pride] and supported the idea of breaking with the embarrassing transition years that left Russia weak. When analysing this episode, the pro-Kremlin movements encourage a reconsideration of the discursive place of youth in the Russian Federation. Changing discursive rules about youth gave meaning to the official youth movements. But these rules also show that the political spectrum of mobilised youth was as diverse as the political opinions of society at large. Scholarship has neglected this complexity and political youth mobilisation therefore provides leverage for grasping the multifaceted political attitudes in Russia more generally.

Considering the hypotheses laid out in the introduction, the following elements will be emphasised. (1) The established hegemony of discursive rules about youth was interlinked with the political activism of pro-Kremlin *molodezhnye dvizheniya* [youth movements] which sustained the increasingly authoritarian setting in Russia. Pro-Kremlin youth began to dominate the discourse about youth into which counter-interpretations could only occasionally interfere. (2) Government intervened on a large scale to mobilise youth, which effectively prevented anti-Kremlin movements from developing and underpinned the

consolidation of the authoritarian system. (3) Youth mobilisation remained enclosed in the restricted realm of youth and did not broaden to include other parts of the population.

A STABLE BUT INSECURE POLITICAL REGIME

Russia's institutional design has been a focus for explaining its political trajectory. Stepan concentrates on the flawed setting of the country's institutions (2005), Fish blames presidentialism (2005), and Colton suggests semi-presidentialism is the cause of democratic failure (2005). However, Levitsky and Way warn that constitutions are imperfect constraints on politicians' behaviour and are insufficient for analysing political regimes and transitions (2010: 183). Some scholars turn instead to political mobilisation to explain regime trajectories (McFaul 2005). Movements' tactics and transnational dynamics were central around the "Colour Revolutions" (Beissinger 2007, Bunce and Wolchik 2006). However, the diffusion of these revolutions was not unambiguous as they contributed to democracy suppression techniques in Russia (Finkel and Brudny 2012) and beyond (Korosteleva 2012).

Unlike Thaa's description of the rebirth of civil society around 1989 (1996), Howard characterised Russians in the 1990s as having "utter and complete disgust with contemporary politics," leading to their withdrawal from the public sphere. This aversion to politics, combined with economic hardship, explains the weakness of post-communist civil society (2003: 139). This is a problematic claim, however, which imposes Western normative ideals about civil society on quite different societies (Hann and Dunn 1996). Kopecký (2003: 9) and Mudde (2003) highlight that allegedly uncivil movements are part of civil society as an organisation's "civility" is contingent. Bermeo illustrates this historically via the changed normativity of European civil society during the 19th century (2000). Russia's political youth

sphere similarly invites us to widen our lenses, as its political activism defies normative conceptualisations of civil society.

During Putin’s first period as president (2000–2008) Russia stabilised as a competitive authoritarian regime (Way 2005). As Yeltsin’s chosen successor, Putin benefitted from the bureaucracy’s support and his image as a potent leader contrasted with that of his predecessor (Desai 2005). “Everyone knew that no one but Putin had a chance, because the entire might of the state was working on his behalf” (Shevtsova 2003: 70). After the turbulence of the transition, Russians, from the bureaucratic elite to ordinary people, preferred consolidation (Carnaghan 2007) and wanted to get rid of the senile and embarrassing Yeltsin. His years left memories of low state cohesion, a chaotic and inconsistent bureaucracy (Baturin et al. 2001, Kahn 2002) where different elements of the state “acted each according to their own plan” (Kryshtanovskaya 2005: 230), and the national humiliation of the IMF bail-out (Gould-Davies and Woods 1999). The political chaos of the 1990s discredited the Russian political class and its institutions (Chebankova 2013: 30-32). A weakly organised party sphere, not to mention the absence of party discipline, incited politicians to enhance personal authority at the expense of institution building.

During his first term Putin eliminated several sources of regime instability, which increased the country’s immunity from outside pressures. The coherence of the bureaucracy improved in both the centre and the regions (Stoner-Weiss 2006: 62). The organisational power of the state increased and state control over key sectors of the economy, like transportation, energy, or communication expanded (Goldman 2008). As a result, trust in the President and in other state and social institutions rose (Sakwa 2011: 15). State-consolidation also changed the political sphere. The consolidated governing party *Edinaya Rossiya* [United Russia] increased the political elites’ unification around one political project (Reuter and Remington 2009: 513-22), effectively eliminating parliamentary competition (Ivanov 2008: 183-4). Gel’man states

that Putin's consolidation implied the "destruction without exception of all opposition parties" and eradicated "meaningful alternatives to incumbent power" (2007: 69). This development coincided with genuine expressions of support for Putin. Rose et al. analyse the 2010 New Russia Barometer Survey and point to a staggering 75% of all respondents holding a favourable view of the political system (2011: 77).

However, in 2005 this support was unstable, and the episode analysed is crucial for understanding Russia's recent authoritarian backlash. Horvath noted that the outbreak of protests in Kiev "transformed 'velvet revolution' from a diplomatic irritation into a catalyst for fundamental change within Russia" (2013: 31). These events evoked memories of 1989, but Andrei Vladimirov went back further and linked them to Waterloo, Napoleon's last defeat, which ended his rule as French Emperor.² Russia's public perceived the swaying of the Ukrainian regime as a possible blueprint since the two countries seemed so similar. Beichelt highlights the structural similarities between them: the electoral regime, the public arena, the lack of civic freedoms, and the vertical power structure (2004: 125). The media showed awareness of these elements and even the regime loyal *Izvestiya* provided room for the desire of Ukrainian opposition leader Yulia Tymoshenko to export an "Orange Revolution".³

By 2005, Russia's political leadership had realised the importance of popular support for its survival once similar regimes in its neighbourhood had collapsed. At that point, Putin's consolidation felt fragile, with looming memories of the instability and vulnerability of the early post-communist period. Pensioners' demonstrations against the monetisation of their

² Revolyutsiya na eksport, in: *Itogi*, 07.12.2004.

³ Revolyutsiya v Kieve prokhorit po vsem zakonam ulichnogo shou, in: *Izvestiya*, 04.12.2004.

benefits compounded the anxiety.⁴ The seniors identified the government and the president personally with this threat to their living standard, as shown by Levada polls.⁵ The situation was particularly tense in the regions, where demonstrations bridged ideological divides⁶ and grew daily.⁷ The magnitude of public unrest warned the regime and highlighted the importance of dealing more creatively with the streets.⁸

In retrospect, the likelihood of Russia’s regime actually crumbling seems small. But in 2005 political and social actors could not know that and they perceived change as possible outcome *at the time*. Media coverage of Russian opposition activists in Kiev and the transnational activist network stretching from Serbia to Georgia and Ukraine (Simecka 2009), as well as the recent eastward enlargement of NATO (and EU), amounted to perceived threats to Russian statehood. These threats forced the political leadership to react. The consolidation of the authoritarian regime can be divided into three components: (1) a redefinition of the regime’s ideology, (2) an increase in repression of the opposition, and (3) active mobilisation to support the regime.

(1) The unified official ideology illustrates the democratic regression. Since 2005, discourses on national identity and Russia’s place in the world have become recurrent and entwined with the idea of “sovereign democracy” which integrated different political streams (Casula 2012: 200). The state elite – the president, the dominant party, pro-government consultants, and think tanks – gradually monopolised the interpretation of this ideology, which emphasised

⁴ A real cause for concern since polls at the time stressed the importance of old people for supporting Putin, “Silovoi” Putin prevrashchaetsya v “pensionnogo”, in: *Izvestiya*, 17.10.2005.

⁵ *Vlast’ spotknulas’ na starikakh*, in: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 31.01.2005.

⁶ *Yaitsom po monetizatsii*, in: *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 15.02.2005.

⁷ *Regiony protiv monetizatsii*, in: *Kommersant*, 18.01.2005.

⁸ The historian Medvedev emphasised the passivity of young people during the Yeltsin era which he contrasted with the activism of pensioners (2000: 268-9).

their opposition to the West and constructed an image of enemies encircling Russia. Youth disseminated this interpretation to the public.

(2) Even authoritarian regimes which seem unchallenged by domestic opposition remain nervous about it. If public opposition triggers doubts about the regime's domestic legitimacy, it might damage their international reputation. Since Putin's second term, "the use of preventive detention and harassment to pre-empt protest actions has become extremely widespread" (Robertson 2009: 531). The limited room for manoeuvre illustrates Putin's belief that independent NGOs, particularly foreign-funded ones (insultingly referred to as *inostrannye agenty* [foreign agents]⁹), threaten Russia. The *obshchestvennaya palata* [public chamber] officially institutionalised civil society (Evans 2008), with generous funds for loyal NGOs (McFaul and Stoner-Weiss 2008). However, the police regularly disrupted assemblies of oppositional groups like *Drugaya Rossiya* [Other Russia].¹⁰

(3) Since 2005 the regime has increased active mobilisation for its stabilisation. The Kremlin became aware that manipulating the media to win elections was insufficient for assuring regime stability but that the active support of the population was necessary. This is most visible in the case of youth, but the change can be seen in the realm of NGOs as well, notably the "socially-oriented NGOs" which Medvedev suggested legalising in 2009.¹¹

This chapter analyses how youth mobilisation stabilised Russia's authoritarian regime. During the episode the discourse about youth evolved which related to its new place as a political

⁹ Introduced in July 2012 by *Edinaya Rossiya*, O vnesenii izmennenii v otdel'nye zakonodatel'nye akty Rossiiskoi Federatsii v chasti regulirovaniya deyatel'nosti nekommercheskikh organisatsii, vpolnyayushchikh funktsii inostrannogo agenta, www.asozd2.duma.gov.ru/main.nsf/%28SpravkaNew%29?OpenAgent&RN=102766-6&02 [01.02.2015].

¹⁰ The Kasparov led coalition of civil society groups and political parties.

¹¹ Poslanie prezidenta Dmitriya Medvedeva federal'nomy sobraniya RF, in: Rossiiskaya Gazeta, 13.11.2009. For the evolving legal landscape (Horvath 2013: 127-35).

actor. Consideration of the discursive embedding of young people’s political activities makes it possible to understand youth’s importance in the political process.

YOUTH IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

The “perestroika” chapter will illustrate the importance of youth in Soviet political thought and its gradual disappearance from the public sphere after 1988. While youth was marginalised following the regime collapse in 1991, social structures which had previously organised its transition to adulthood also disintegrated. Without a generational role model, youth was thrown headlong into market societies replete with both uncertainties and opportunities. New risks emerged during transition, like the threat of unemployment once spending on education and public welfare crumbled (Roberts 2000: 28). The individual transitions of youth went hand-in-hand with the fundamental transition of the entire country.

Russian sociologists analysed the new generation’s difficulty adapting to new realities. Igor Il’insky, for instance, describes alcoholism and a general state of youth in crisis. This view of a lost generation gained visibility beyond research: Viktor Pelevin’s novel “Generation P” bears witness to the transition period’s tumult and the commodification of culture which amalgamated with advertising and shaped disaffected and sarcastic individuals (1999). Whether *P* stands for *pizdet’* [bullshit/fucked up] or Pepsi is irrelevant.¹² It expresses the idleness of a generation which chooses Pepsi just as stupidly as its parents voted for Brezhnev. Forced to believe that they were now in a free society, Russians did not even realise that they suffered a new form of imprisonment where advertising took the place of propaganda. The freedom to make individual choices was as much a farce as under Soviet

¹² Interview with Pelevin: I never was a Hero, in: The Guardian, 30.04.2000, www.theguardian.com/books/2000/apr/30/fiction?INTCMP=SRCH [01.02.2015].

rule. Paradoxically, Pelevin's writings seem especially realistic since the surreal story of a generation living through shock-therapy capitalism is conveyed in ironic and self-distanced comic-style language.

Transitions from youth to adulthood gained in flexibility during the 1990s. The shattering of discursive and social norms and regulations sustained this flexibility and accounted for the absence of youth from the public sphere. This absence combined with low election turnout rates, contributed to the neglect of youth during the 1990s (Colton 2000: 118). But a politically ignored and lethargic youth (Markowitz 2000: 58) changed its tune radically once the "Colour Revolutions" swept across the post-communist space. Youth was visibly important in these revolutions. In fact, "young people had dominated the civil societies [...of...] all democratic revolutions going back to the Philippines people's power protests in the mid-1980s" (Kuzio 2006a: 366).

Roughly 15 years after the downfall of the communist regimes, youth challenged the political rule of the older generation in what Beissinger labelled "modular revolutions". He emphasised *inter alia* the importance of successful prior examples for overcoming the structural constraints that had previously hindered action (2007: 259). The diffusion is enabled by perceived connections between countries, most importantly dense communication channels, shared historical trajectories, and similar institutional designs. Russian youth however, was also held accountable for the failure of a Russian "Colour Revolution": "Russian youth have followed the majority of Russian society in supporting Putin's transition toward 'managed democracy,' great-power nationalism, and a turn away from the West" (Kuzio 2006b: 67).

The effect of diffusion may take different forms, ranging from the "demonstration effect" to actual collaboration and planning (Bunce and Wolchik 2006: 287). However, its ultimate effect can only be accounted for once the domestic context is considered. Since 2005 Russia

has undergone considerable democratic regression due to the leadership’s “preventive counter-revolution” (Horvath 2013). *Molodezhnie organizatsii* [youth organisations] were central to this authoritarian consolidation. Pro-Kremlin movements loudly expressed their enthusiasm for the political leadership, the goal of breaking with the embarrassing transition years that left Russia weak, and politics that affirm Russia’s place as a world-leading nation.

THE DISCURSIVE CONTEXTS OF YOUTH MOBILISATION

The Soviet Union’s collapse changed conditions for Russia’s media fundamentally. The abolition of centralisation and the introduction of free market logic by June 1990 challenged many media outlets in the absence of economic infrastructures (Arutunyan 2009: 32). Under Putin media control increased but was, during the episode under analysis, unlike Soviet-era direct interventions and control. Influence was exercised through ownership, facilitated by absence of a private media tradition, insufficient journalistic training, and continuing self-censorship (Koltsova 2006: 60-66, Oates 2007: 1288).¹³ Nevertheless, print media remained diverse,¹⁴ ranging from investigative papers to tabloids to business and government-controlled outlets. But this diversity has never translated into effective, independent political power (Oates 2007: 1285). The number of newspapers rose significantly during the post-Soviet years – from 42 in 1990 to 405 national papers by 2003 (Arutunyan 2009: 50).

To capture the diversity and the different publics spoken to, I suggest the following categorisation:

¹³ Self-censorship is deeply interiorised, bridging generational change amongst journalists (Pasti 2005).

¹⁴ This is unmatched by TV, probably because newspapers are less important for manipulating the masses.

		Genre	
		Quality	Mass Media
Attitude	Conservative	Izvestiya	Komsomol'skaya Pravda
	Progressive	Kommersant	Novaya Gazeta

Table 3.1: Russian Federation: Newspapers

- *Izvestiya*: remains a highly prominent paper with a circulation of 370,000 by 2007.¹⁵ Bought by Gazprom in 2006 it straddles the divide between quality and mass media (Voltmer 2000).
- *Kommersant*: Russia's leading business paper targeting the small liberal-minded economic elite, circulation of 87,000 by 2008. It has made important contributions to post-Soviet journalism culture aimed at the emerging "middle class".
- *Komsomol'skaya Pravda*: amongst the papers with the highest circulation, around 660,000 by 2008, addresses a varied but mass readership with low analytic standards (Beumers et al. 2009: 22).
- *Novaya Gazeta*: famous beyond Russia for critical investigative journalism, in particular concerning the North Caucasus. Published twice a week, it devotes major attention to Russia's opposition, circulation of 171,000 by 2007.

In total I identified more than 1,500 articles with statements about youth for the period under scrutiny, out of which I coded 312 using nearly 6,300 attributed codes. The selection provides variation to capture much of the discourse and the newspapers are represented roughly equally in the sample (Figure 3.1).

¹⁵ Data from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4315129.stm> [31.01.2015].

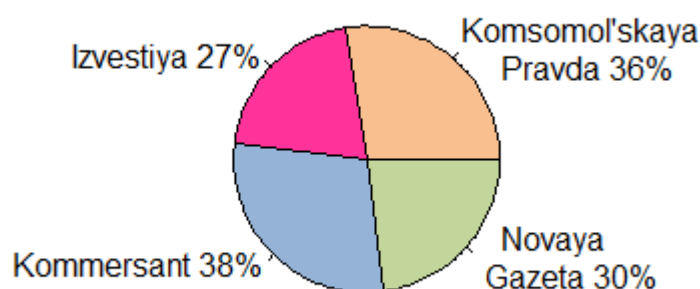


Figure 3.1: Russian Federation: Newspaper Breakdown

Corpus Overview			Time Period	
Total Population	1.560		01.11.2004	Start
Theoretical Sample	312		31.12.2011	End
Effective Sample	312			
Number of Codings	6.277			

Table 3.2: Russian Federation: Corpus

Socio-educational as well as domestic political and economic issues are common for speaking about youth (Figure 3.2). Social and educational articles revolve largely around mobilisation for collective ends in bottom-up initiatives started by young Russians. It is not possible to clearly distinguish between articles about domestic and foreign issues as the two dimensions are usually discussed together.¹⁶ Some articles reiterated concerns about the number of young people leaving Russia to find their fortune abroad¹⁷ and the generational divide was also a topic of debate. “Generation Y” was felt to be apart from its parents,¹⁸ though some journalists inverted the logic and emphasised the societal importance of the older generation.¹⁹

¹⁶ See exemplarily: “Likyushchaya gopota” v gostyakh u “Kommersanta”, in: Kommersant, 05.03.2008.

¹⁷ Novaya volna emigratsii, in: Komsomol’skaya Pravda, 14.10.2011.

¹⁸ Kommandos molodosti nashei, in: Novaya Gazeta, 19.11.2010.

¹⁹ “Eto mif, budto molodye kormyat pensionerov”, in: Novaya Gazeta, 17.08.2011.

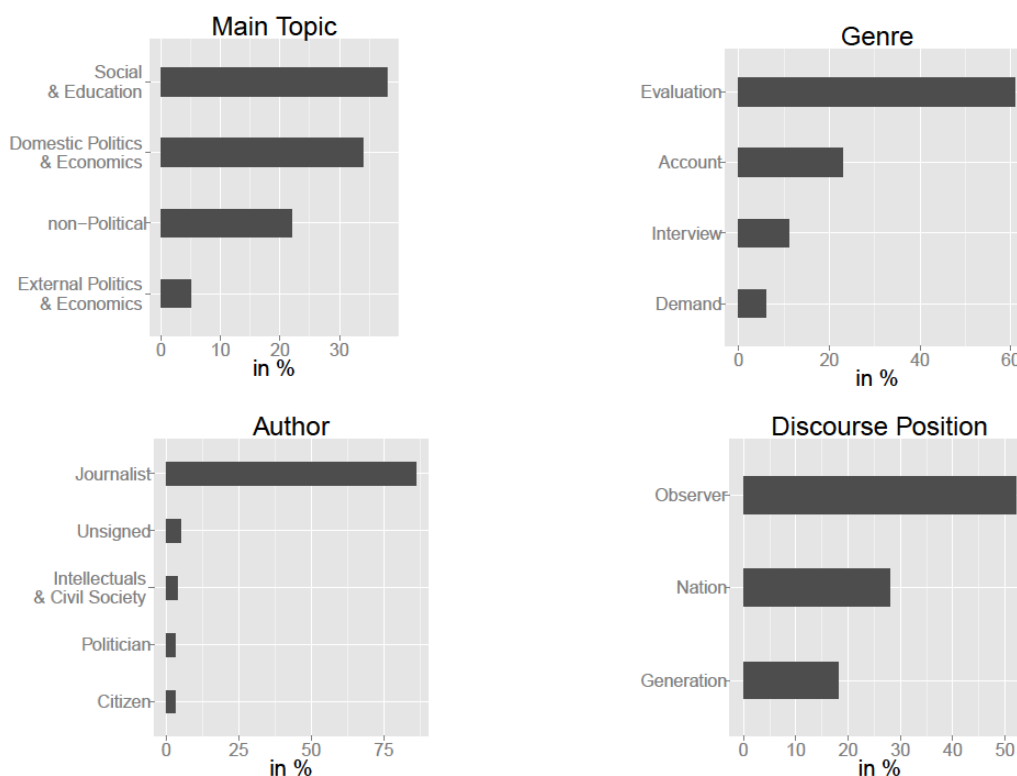


Figure 3.2: Russian Federation: Corpus Structure

Political and economic articles often involve politicians who got involved in youth affairs or spoke about youth issues in the political arena. This category also includes debates about young people's political power. Politicians perceived the "Colour Revolutions" as constituting a precedent and a trigger for Russian youth activism.²⁰ Economic topics rarely occur in relation to youth, except for an emphasis on youth's importance for combatting regional labour shortages.²¹

Non-political topics are also important in the discourse about youth. These primarily focus on sports such as young people in ice hockey, ice skating, or football. Beyond the realm of sports, the cultural involvement of youth in forums like youth theatre²² or youth art festivals²³

²⁰ Grazhdanin nachal'nik kursa, in: Kommersant, 07.03.2005.

²¹ Brosit' vso i uekhat' v saldu, in: Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 10.05.2006.

²² Molodezh' daet vsem prikurit' ot "Shvedskoi spichki", in: Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 04.02.2009; Bog saditsya na svobodnoe mesto, in: Novaya Gazeta, 16.06.2010.

²³ Den' goroda na stolichnykh bul'varakh, in: Novaya Gazeta, 02.09.2011.

was raised. Distinct youth styles were a matter of controversy,²⁴ and youth were accused of simply imitating Western styles.²⁵

In terms of genre, most authors made value judgements, a fact reflected by the dominance of evaluations. Evaluations are particularly characteristic of journalists, the majority of authors. Hardly any journalistic contribution qualifies as an account, the genre that one might intuitively link with them. Journalists were therefore not impartial observers, to the extent to which this is possible, but political and social actors themselves. “Western” media standards are therefore somewhat misleading in the Russian context.

Interventions by intellectuals and civil society actors were usually demands and evaluations. Ilya Yashin, leader of the *Yabloko* youth movement, a Russian social-liberal party, was the most prominent contributor. The discourse positions generation and nation are almost equally distributed between political/economic and social topics. First, this indicates the degree to which a rift between generations was a central concern in Russian society; an observation which goes beyond the realm of youth discourse. Second, the prominence of nation emphasises the extent to which authors identified with and believed being able to assume a position of authority in the name of a national collective. Tolz highlights that there were long-standing difficulties in agreeing upon a Russian national project (2004). However, for the period analysed, there was an increasing identification with “Russia,” reflecting nationalist policies under Putin which reached their current peak during confrontations with Ukraine.

The temporal composition of the entire corpus illustrates the relatively constant presence of the topic of youth in public discourse (Table 3.3). The frequency of articles about youth

²⁴ Novoe molodezhnoe uvlechenie, in: Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 01.09.2007.

²⁵ iPod stanet mashinoy, in: Komsomol'skaya Pravda, 04.09.2007.

remained mostly stable with a peak around 2005-2006. After the “Orange Revolution” youth was a topic of intense debate in public discourse.

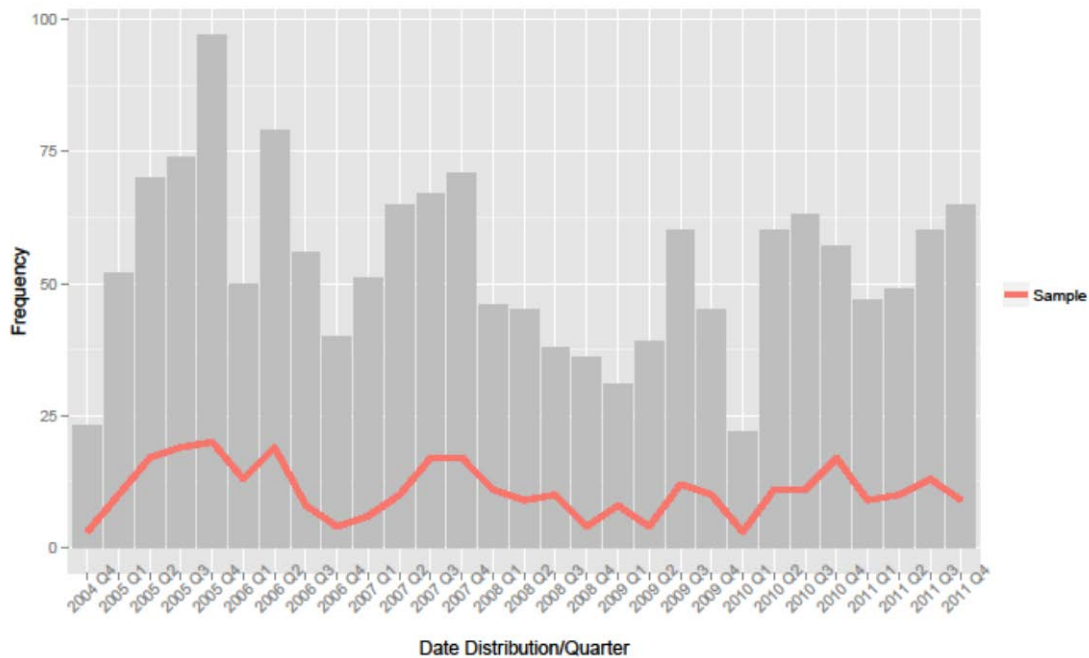


Figure 3.3: Russian Federation: Corpus Article Frequency

Discursive Formations: Extinguishing Diversity

The optimal split of the network suggests a division into four larger formations to characterise the overall discourse about youth (Figure 3.4).²⁶ These differ in size and each formation draws upon concepts that are central to others, which gives meaning and stability to otherwise disconnected concepts. The graphical overlap of different formations expresses this.

The largest discursive formation represents the PRO-KREMLIN youth-image as created in relation to movements loyal to the regime, whereas the second-largest DISCORDANT formation revolves around oppositional youth-activism and the influence of the “Colour Revolution” upon Russian youth. The formation coloured in green centres on VIOLENT youth behaviour as a risk for society, especially through juvenile violence. Compared to the

²⁶ The introduction provides a detailed methodological discussion. The modularity score is 0.2183.

plot also highlights that the PRO-KREMLIN formation relies on a unique core of concepts as these are hardly connected with other discursive formations.

This analysis concentrates on the three largest formations (Figure 3.5), which were at the core of the meaning of youth in Russia and critical to the ways in which different parts of the public made sense of youth mobilisation. Concepts and articles from the two smaller ones are included in the analysis since they are always somewhat interlinked with the most important discursive formations.

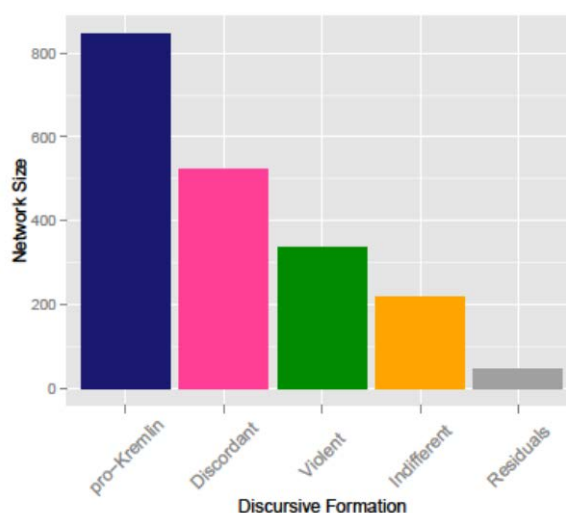


Figure 3.5: Russian Federation: Size of Modularity Classes

A number of concepts are important across modularity classes as they underpin the overall discourse. The importance of `PRESENT` stands out, which underlines that the discourse was primarily geared towards the current period. References to `PAST` or `FUTURE`, so important for Soviet discourse, were less relevant. It seems that it became increasingly hard after the disillusion of the transition period to project the nation into its future and rework its past using the discursive signifier youth. What did persist from Soviet times was the predominantly `POSITIVE` tone used in references to youth, often describing it as `UNITED`.

Another aspect structuring the overall discourse is `AUTONOMOUS` youth vs. youth `IN-NEED`. These codes express the idea that youth was either independent and should best be left on its

own, or that youth needed guidance and care to flourish. The different discursive formations refer to both concepts and which version of youth dominated depended on the precise language game. The comparison with the perestroika episode will underline that the Russian discourse was more diverse and contradictory, illustrating the entanglement with older Soviet discourse traditions and the integration of more recent developments.

The temporal composition of the corpus highlights the importance of youth in early 2005 (Figure 3.6) when the discursive rules of the PRO-KREMLIN and DISCORDANT formations both shaped the meaning of youth. However, over time the PRO-KREMLIN formation gained in importance and effectively marginalised the DISCORDANT formation. Towards the end of the episode, discursive rules increasingly shifted away from youth as a political threat and were instead occupied with violent youth behaviour, which had been ignored during the moments of intense political mobilisation of youth.

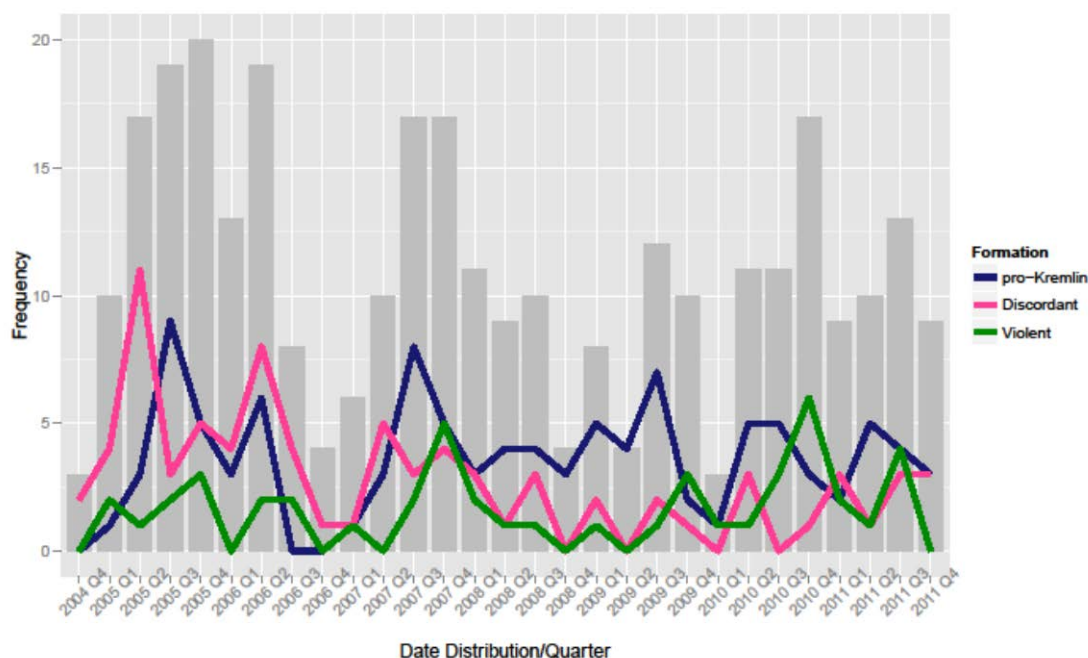


Figure 3.6: Russian Federation: Frequency per Modularity Class

PRO-KREMLIN YOUTH IN ITS DISCURSIVE CONTEXT

No ne menee vazhnym yavlyaetsya i nastroi v obshchestve – sila deistviya dolzhna byt' ravna sile protivodeistviya. Esli vy vidite, chto ekstremisty vybirayut kakie-to novye formy, nuzhno protivopostavit' im takuyu zhe aktivnost'.

But society's attitude is equally important – the force of action must match the force of counteraction. If you see that extremists chose some new forms, it is necessary to oppose them with the same actions.²⁷

The pro-Kremlin youth movements underpinned the largest discursive formation. I argue that the success of the pro-Kremlin youth movement *Nashi* [Our] is inadequately accounted for if it is not embedded in the complex of general ideas about youth in Russia. On the level of the discursive formation I suggest that decisive elements were reminiscent of patterns in the SOVIET-LENINIST discourse to be analysed in the perestroika chapter. I argue that *Nashi* was so successful after the Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” because the leadership provided new meaning and a sense of belonging to a generation having experienced its initial socialisation during the tumultuous transition period of the 1990s. *Nashi* succeed in integrating the wider discursive field about youth and reached a position of hegemony.

The Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” drove this discursive formation. The Russian leadership and media framed youth as central for Viktor Yanukovich's downfall; youth thereby appeared decisive for political change. International media coverage amplified this interpretation which was empowering because it echoed older Soviet patterns about youth. Politically, youth was largely irrelevant throughout the 1990s but events in Ukraine, along with emerging signs of increasing mobilisation by Russian opposition youth movements, changed the discourse.

Moreover, pro-Kremlin organisations such as *Nashi* or *Molodaya Gvardiya* [Young Guard] indicated that Russia's leadership had drawn lessons from the recent past. Losing control over youth went hand in hand with the Soviet Union's disintegration as new spaces in the

²⁷ Putin cited in: Putin poobeshchal studentam pribavku, no ne otsrochki, in: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 26.01.2005.

Komsomol undermined the organisation’s social position and helped to delegitimise the political leadership (Krawatzek 2015). The new pro-Kremlin organisations were thus no mere reincarnations of the Komsomol, despite what media suggested.²⁸ On the contrary, these movements were characterised by participants’ commitment and enthusiasm and genuine support of the leadership (Hemment 2012). The movements converged ideologically with the political leadership even as their freedom increased (in particular at the regional level).

An unquestionably POSITIVE image of youth dominates the discursive formation. This characteristic goes along with the idea that youth was PRECIOUS and ought to be protected and guided. Only then could it develop its full potential for the benefit of society. Thereby the discursive rules construct a link to the past and emphasised the continuity with today’s youth. The temporal distribution of the articles in the formation highlights that, once established, this discursive formation was persistently relevant (Figure 3.6).

The two conservative newspapers and Kommersant shape this formation which may come as a surprise. But the importance of this oppositional paper in the PRO-KREMLIN formation reveals its fascination with developments amongst youth generally and *Nashi*’s success in particular. When speaking about youth, its journalists often relied on statements by politicians or representatives of the organisation and thereby gave room to the unfolding of the respective discourse. Kommersant reiterated the rules of this discursive formation in relation to frequently debated non-political events. In their coverage its authors could hardly leave the discursive constraints behind them. Novaya Gazeta however shunned *Nashi* by and large and

²⁸ Budet li v Rossii oranzhevaya revolyutsiya?, in: In Argumenty i Fakty, 16.03.2005; Vasilii Yakemenko: Ya pokhozh na Khodorkovskogo, in: Kommersant, 11.07.2005; Sovetskii renessans?, in: Ogonek, 01.01.2007, “Nasha” armiya, in: Ogonek, 19.03.2007. An analogy also prominent in Western press coverage: Preempting Politics In Russia, in: The Washington Post, 25.07.2005; Die Schreihälsa des Präsidenten, in: Financial Times Deutschland, 14.06.2007; Putin's Children Russian Protests II, in: International Herald Tribune, 06.07.2007; Youth Groups Created by Kremlin Serve Putin's Cause in the Streets, in: The New York Times, 08.07.2007; Cadre's Campfire Song to Russia, in: Financial Times, 18.07.2007.

concentrated instead on opposition movements' activities. When it talked about *Nashi* its utterances challenged the rules of the PRO-KREMLIN formation.

The graphical representation of the discursive formation (Figure 3.8) emphasises the centrality of concepts such as POSITIVE, PRECIOUS, and CONTINUITY which are highly connected within the overall network. All articles evoked at least one, many even more, of these core concepts. The betweenness centrality provides an important complement (Figure 3.7) and directs attention to the significance of the concept IN-NEED. The comparatively high betweenness centrality, given its degree centrality, emphasises its key role within the discursive formation. It is on the shortest path between many pairs of articles and therefore is a crucial concept for structuring the network. The concept UNITED is also fundamental for these discursive rules and no utterance in this formation would challenge the assumption that youth was a homogenous social body.

This finding is important for understanding the discourse about the pro-Kremlin movement *Nashi* and the justifications for its existence. All those positive attributes linked with youth had a specific connotation because of their inextricable connection with the dependence of youth upon the older generation. Youth could only thrive because the older generation guided it. Otherwise, so the logic of this discursive formation goes, youth would get lost and be involved in destructive behaviour.

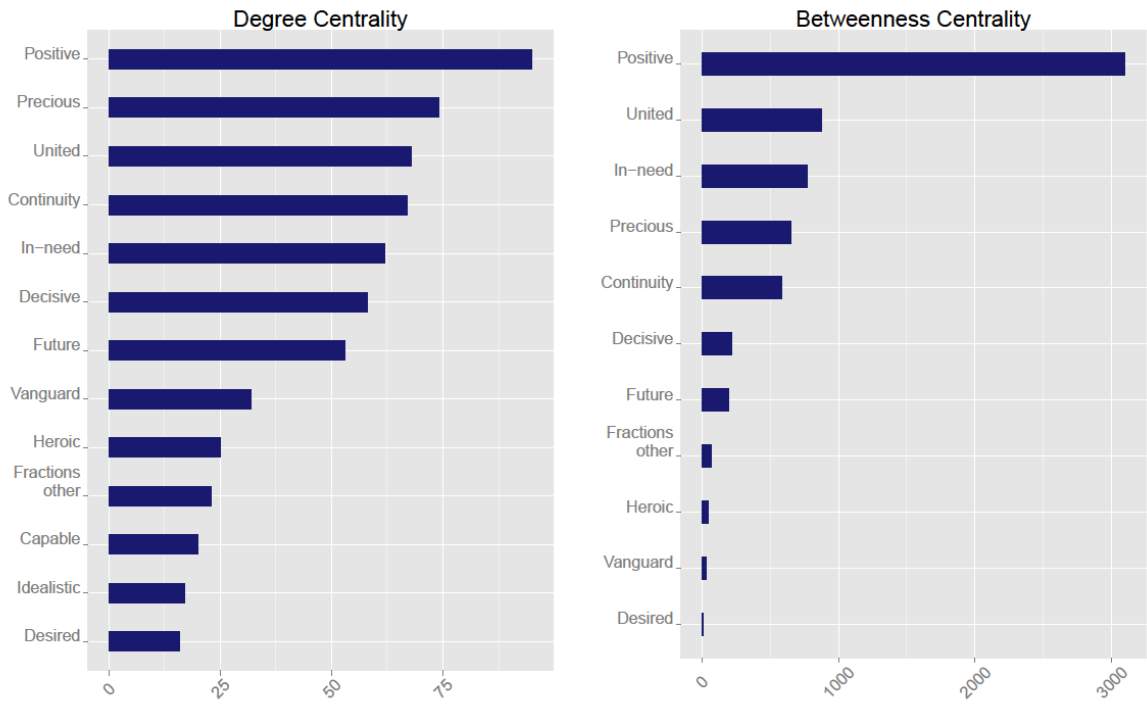


Figure 3.7: PRO-KREMLIN: Centralities

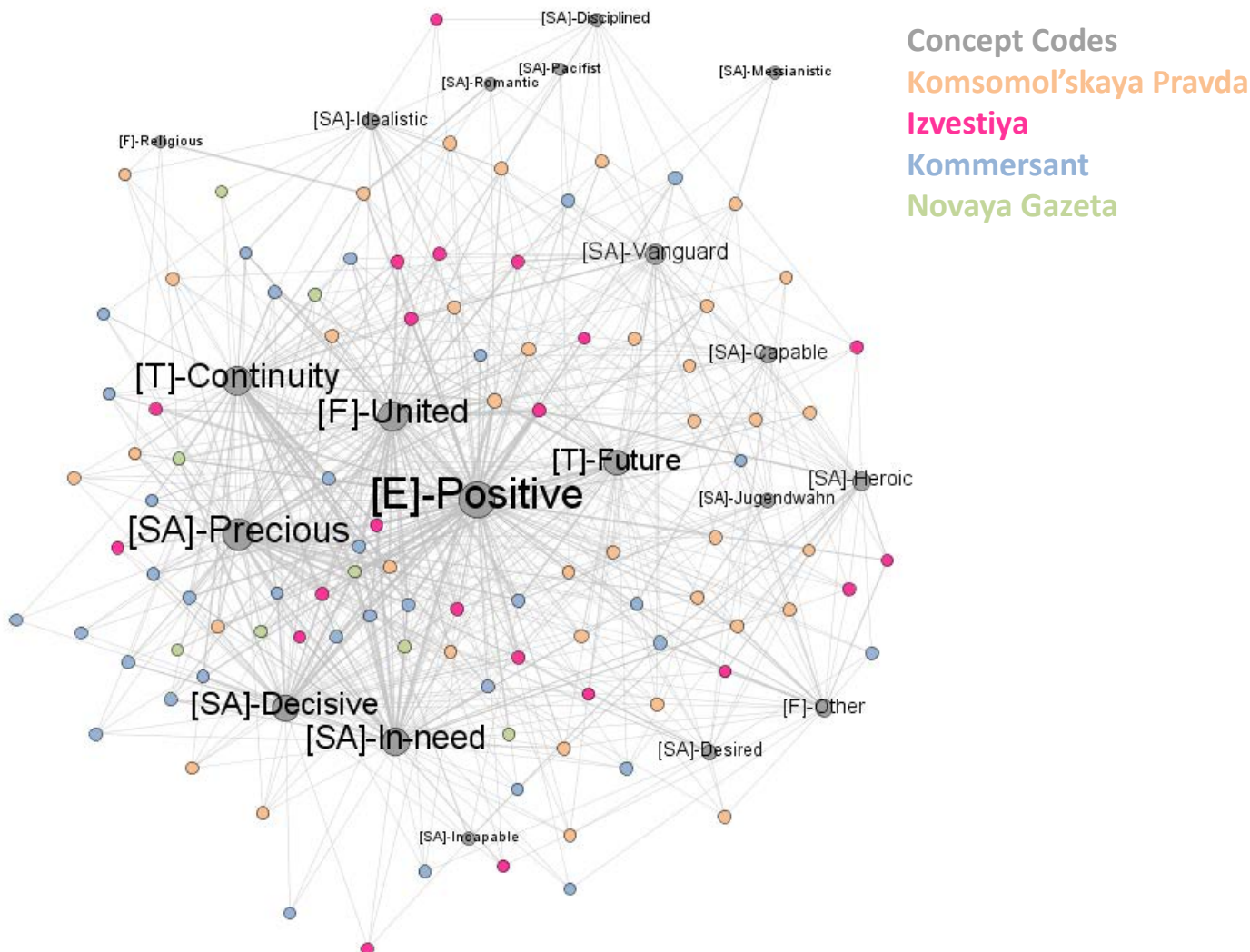


Figure 3.8: PRO-KREMLIN: Discourse Network

Nashi: The Discursive and Social Resurgence of Youth

Prior to the “Colour Revolution” Russian *molodezhnie organizatsii* lacked political relevance. In 2001, just after Putin came to power, Vladimir Yakemenko began to lead the hierarchical *Idushchie vmeste* [Walking Together], but the pro-Kremlin group had little credibility and limited influence as the public considered many of its actions distasteful.²⁹ Moreover, its ideological basis – “Putin is our president and he is always right” as summarised by National Strategy Institute Vice President Viktor Militarev – was deemed too narrow and weak.³⁰

On 1st March 2005 *Nashi* replaced *Idushchie vmeste* and hit the ground running.³¹ Yakemenko remained the uncontested leader, backed up by influential people in the Kremlin, notably Vladislav Surkov, at the time chief consultant to Putin. Surkov monitored the movement, which reiterated his official description of Russia’s political system as “sovereign democracy”.³² Unlike *Idushchie vmeste*, however, *Nashi* never supported Putin unconditionally but chose a more programmatic approach, in “support of his policy aimed at preserving the sovereignty of the country, the implementation of its economic and political modernisation, ensuring its sustainable development”.³³ Most public personalities emphasised their backing of the movement, its ideals, and the necessity of putting youth “under the patronage of large organisations”.³⁴ The discourse about youth evolved as the changes that

²⁹ Sorokov expressed disgust about the campaign against Vladimir Sorokin’s “pornographic” novels and the destruction of his books. The diffusion of pornographic material by one of the members added to problems. (Schmid 2006: 71); *Idushchie vmeste* stood for a public relation disaster: Obyknovennyi “Nashizm”, in: Kommersant, 21.02.2005.

³⁰ Cited in: Russia: ‘A Youth movement needs a leader’, in: Radio Free Europe, 21.04.2005, www.rferl.org/content/article/1058597.html [01.02.2015].

³¹ *Idushchie vmeste* was soon history: *Idushchie vmeste poidut za Tarakanovym*, in: Kommersant, 11.05.2005.

³² E.g. Vladislav Surkov razvel demokratiyu, in: Kommersant, 29.06.2006, echoed in *Nashi*’s manifesto published in: Rossiya – megaproekt nazhego pokoleniya. Manifest, in: Izvestiya, 15.04.2005.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ “*Nashi*” – eto vashi?, in: Kommersant, 11.07.2005.

Ukrainian youth initiated updated memories of the importance of youth in the perestroika period.

Nashi’s manifesto formalised the movement’s mission for the public, and in the present discursive pattern this utterance stood out with a high betweenness centrality. In other words, the manifesto held much of the discursive pattern together as it introduced the concepts that shaped the nascent discursive formation. The utterance limited later debates and framed how *Nashi* would be understood.³⁵ Many of the ideas in the manifesto reappeared over time – either at the level of abstract concepts or as literal repetitions.

The movement’s 2005 manifesto formulated two missions: first, preventing Western powers from exercising any political influence in Russia; second, bringing about a generational renewal to change Russia and overcome the shameful 1990s. The manifesto opened: “You have to either accept the challenge of the global world or escape from it. We are the ones who accept the challenge and believe in our own capabilities.” Andrei Fursenko, minister of Education and Science,³⁶ attended the inaugural meeting and emphasised: “You have to be competitive, to be victorious, successful people, in a successful country”. Darwinist principles applied to the realm of international relations and ideas of risk and encirclement dominated the document: “The weak should adopt the rules of the game from the strong, follow their path in world politics and culturally assimilate. You are leader, follower, or victim.” This world conception revolved around external and internal threats for Russia with *Nashi* as legitimate response. In its self-conception, it was naturally able to fight the ever-present enemies united in an “unnatural union” (a lively mixture ranging from Westernisers, to

³⁵ Cf. FN [32].

³⁶ Fursenko’s presence underlines the official backing of *Nashi*. Fursenko also had a personal reason to be concerned about politicised youth after having been egged by members of *AKM*, see: Novoe politicheskoe pokolenie, in: Vedemosti, 05.04.2005.

ultranationalists, fascists, and liberals) who along with the “external enemy” destabilised Russia.

The idea of a generational renewal structured the manifesto’s second axis, “Our Revolution”. By emphasising the need to replace the generation of “bureaucratic-defeatists” from the 1980s who had “lost faith in Russia” the authors combined *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont*. They rejected the late Soviet past and suggested a departure towards a different future through a “revolution in content but not in form”. Generational rhetoric was central to this rejection. Functionaries older than 30 to 35 years were called “*porazhenets* [defeatists], who failed to guarantee Russia’s leadership in the world”.³⁷ This rhetoric integrated the need for political stability underlined by Putin with calls for “the energy of youth” to modernise the country and protect it from internal and external enemies. The manifesto therefore conveyed a dual idea of revolution, navigating between continuity and rupture, and illustrates my theoretical arguments on generation as the concept is anchored in PAST and FUTURE.

Putin invited *Nashi* representatives to the presidential residence in Zavidovo and told them that the organisation was “a shining example of civil society”.³⁸ Other political leaders also joined the Seliger youth camps³⁹ to establish a belief in threatening “Colour Revolutions”.⁴⁰ Gleb Pavlovsky most bluntly illustrated this hostility: “If the ‘orange revolutionaries’ stick their wet noses out of the underground in Moscow, the presidential administration will volley

³⁷ Chinovnikam-porazhentsam gotovyat smenu, in: Rossiiskaya Gazeta, 27.05.2005.

³⁸ Audientsiya: Vladimir Putin pozazhigal so svoimi, in: Kommersant, 27.07.2005.

³⁹ In 2005 the first Lake Seliger camp attracted 3,000 participants from 45 Russian regions who got training in survival under extreme conditions and political theory. The prominent speakers at the camp included Gleb Pavlosky, Sergei Markov, and Vladislav Surkov. Pavlosky underlined his vision for *Nashi*: “You do not have enough stiffness. You should be able to disperse the fascist demonstrations and physically resist to attempts of an anti-constitutional coup,” cf. Gosti. “Nashi” dlya putina svoi, in: Gazeta, 27.07.2005.

⁴⁰ Komissary seligera, in: Komsomol’skaya Pravda, 15.07.2005.

on these noses from all its gun barrels. A bullet will be driven into the foreheads of these rotten liberal vermin.”⁴¹

By 2005 the social and discursive organisation of youth no longer resembled its marginality of the 1990s. Youth became of singular importance for the stability of the political system which the discursive reorganisation expressed. But despite enthusiastic support for the leadership, worries about the potential threat *Nashi* might constitute, have persisted since 2005. Sergey Mironov, for instance, expressed concerns about *Nashi* and underlined that it remained an open question what would happen to the power of the movement if the country’s political situation changed: “Now it seems beyond doubt that the motives are sincere. But what if something changes? Where will this force be directed to? Against whom and for what? This is a big question.”⁴² Mironov also emphasised that the political elite “inflates the threat of the Orange Revolution in Russia and is simply eager to move youth on its side and to use it as cannon fodder for street fights”. He perceived *Nashi* as potentially splitting youth into “‘nashikh’ i ‘ne nashikh’” [‘ours’ and ‘not-ours’].⁴³

Other pro-Kremlin movements arose, indicating the broader attention granted to youth and its political influence. In 2005, students created *Grazhdanskaya smena* [Civic Change] as a “commitment to the preservation of political stability in the country”.⁴⁴ Along similar lines graduates of Bauman Moscow State Technical University founded *Rossiya molodaya* in May 2006, aimed at “preventing revolutions and coups that lead to the colonisation of Russia”. These movements and the related discursive patterns were squarely rooted in the PRO-KREMLIN formation and referred to a DECISIVE youth. Their convictions were reinforced

⁴¹ U poslednei cherty, in: Sovetskaya Rossiya, 12.04.2005.

⁴² Mironov nashel rabotu Putinu, in: Nezavisimaja Gazeta, 17.03.2005.

⁴³ Sergei Mironov pereshel v oppositsiyu “Nashim”, in: Kommersant, 27.08.2005.

⁴⁴ Studentam propisali patriotizm, in: Kommersant, 12.09.2005.

by commentators' observations of events abroad: "a lack of attention from the authorities for youth and students can be used by destructive forces in violation of public peace and order".⁴⁵

The specific framing of the importance of youth recalled discursive patterns from Soviet times, notably a legacy of it being *PRECIOUS* and *DECISIVE*.⁴⁶

By 2008 the discourse about youth had evolved further. Previously it revolved around preventing foreign influence and hindering domestic opposition – framing youth as a bulwark. Protest movements abroad, particularly in Serbia, once again illustrated the political importance of youth, and Russia's leadership showed awareness of the need to redesign the spaces for youth's controlled political involvement. It declared 2009 the "Year of Youth" to demonstrate its symbolic importance. *Komsomol'skaya Pravda* affirmed that investments in youth augmented the human capital of the entire nation, best achieved with *dobrovol'cheskikh organizatsii* [voluntary organisations] to assure the physical education of youth or promote a healthy lifestyle. Youth was important for the *FUTURE* and thus had to be taken care of.⁴⁷

Enhancing the Past through Youthful Heroism

Youth in the *PRO-KREMLIN* formation established *CONTINUITY* with the country's *PAST*. This relation emphasised the obligation and desire of today's youth to remember the young heroes who died for the nation. Commemorations through youth gave sense to the dead. This relation to the past de-temporalised youth: Putin himself developed upon this very idea when he understood *Nashi* as permanent societal *VANGUARD* also for the future, "the people who are moving ahead".⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Telepravlenie. Smotryashchie vmeste, in: *Kommersant*, 15.08.2005.

⁴⁶ "Molodaya gvardiya" poidet turisticheskim putem, in: *Kommersant*, 28.06.2008.

⁴⁷ "Nasha molodezh' vpolne sposobna pobedit' len', grust', bezynitsiativnost'", in: *Komsomol'skaya Pravda*, 02.12.2009.

⁴⁸ Cf. FN [38].

Legitimacy for Putin’s political project drew primarily on references to the main historic signifier in contemporary Russia, the *velikaya otechestvennaya voina* [Great Patriotic War]. Like in Soviet times, commemorations took place through parades though by 2005 these were multimedia occasions. *Nashi*’s entrance onto the public stage overwhelmingly followed this pattern. Between 50,000 and 60,000 young people, in addition to around 1,000 veterans, marched on Moscow’s streets on 15 May 2005 and commemorated the 60th anniversary of the victory. Wartime songs set the pace for *Nashi*’s first significant public action. The Russian tricolour and *Nashi* flags (red with the white St Andrew’s cross) added colour to the march, flying above the marchers’ uniforms of white shirts with a red star, the dates of the *velikaya otechestvennaya voina* (1941-1945) and the inscription *Nasha pobeda* [Our Victory] printed on the front and Russia’s national anthem on the back.⁴⁹ Medals in the shape of shell casings with the inscription “Remember the war, protect the motherland!”⁵⁰ highlighted historic continuity, as veterans handed them down to the youth.⁵¹ The event emphasised the importance of the struggle against fascism 60 years ago, and linked it with the fight against *Nashi*’s definition of “contemporary fascism”. The commemoration equated current youth with those who defended the Soviet Union in the war. “Today we are all 18 years old!”, shouted the 34 year old Yakemenko.⁵² As a symbol of continuity and the passing on of responsibility, he stressed: “You defended our country on the battlefield – we will save it in the classroom, workshops, and offices!”.⁵³

⁴⁹ “Nashim” razdali gil’zy, in: Vremya Novostei, 16.05.2005.

⁵⁰ “Antifashistkoe” nashestvie, in: Novye Izvestiya, 16.05.2005.

⁵¹ Whether veterans knew what they participated in is doubtful as the Moscow Region Veterans Council advertised the event as a simple meeting with the youth, cf. Triumf voli, in: Kommersant, 16.05.2005.

⁵² Cf. FN [50].

⁵³ Many rank-and-file members internalised this discourse: “I am a free citizen of Russia, today we (*nashi*) accept taking our home out of the hands of the older generation. I swear that Russia will never accept new colonists and invaders, there is simply no space for neo-fascists and their allies.”, cited in: Triumf voli, in: Kommersant, 16.05.2005.

The preservation of the “truthful” past drove masses of young people out on the streets. The equalising of the fight against contemporary “fascism” and the successful resistance to fascism 60 years ago pulled history into the present and made historic lessons of direct relevance in 2005. “Truthful” memory implied support for Russia’s leadership and even the progressive *Novaya Gazeta* admitted: “it is impressive when a crowd of sixty-thousand fills a square”.⁵⁴ Attempts to oppose this dominance received little public attention.⁵⁵ To the contrary, given *Nashi*’s display of loyalty and strength, *Komsomol’skaya Pravda* could stress in 2005: “Supporters and managers of ‘orange revolutions’ should think before becoming active in Russia. It seems that the revolution will not be according to the colours conceived by the distant script-writers. It will be red and white [*Nashi*’s colours].”⁵⁶

Many other utterances expressed this CONTINUITY which linked the current Russian with the past Soviet-Russian society. One example was the reprinting of Brezhnev’s memoirs which centred on the war and the reconstruction effort. According to the review in *Kommersant*:

They teach us how to work better, conclude what we begin, correct mistakes, seek new opportunities, and critically assess what we achieved. Brezhnev shares with youth his huge life experience which teaches us to be Leninist, intolerant of shortcomings, and constantly working on ourselves.⁵⁷

This discourse about youth and generational renewal reconsidered the entire Soviet period and reactivated elements of the SOVIET-LENINIST youth discourse. By doing so this discourse constructed a link between, at times even equalised, Soviet and Russian youth and projected this new Soviet-Russian generation into the future. The social meaning of generation thus

⁵⁴ Denezhnaya massa, in: *Novaya Gazeta*, 19.05.2005.

⁵⁵ E.g. the leader of *Idushchie bez Putina*, Mikhail Obozov, who threw one of *Nashi*’s t-shirts into St. Petersburg’s eternal flame, shouting “Nashism is not going to pass!” Mironov nashel rabotu Putinu, in: *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 17.03.2005.

⁵⁶ *Krasno-belaya revolyutsiya*, in: *Komsomol’skaya Pravda*, 20.05.2005.

⁵⁷ *Pamyatnye poslaniya*, in: *Kommersant*, 31.03.2008.

depended on joining PAST and FUTURE. An interview with President Medvedev illustrated this aspect.⁵⁸ He emphasised the need to bring “the truth” to the people and argued that the truth was inherent in the young generation simply by virtue of their being young. Such utterances de-temporalised youth: heroic actions in the past legitimised current youth giving coherence to a discourse which projected onto current youth a moral mission to protect Russia from fascism. This mission was a “moral responsibility to future generations, and if we now close our eyes to these crimes, in the future such crimes can happen again”.⁵⁹

Nashi continuously exploited the societal importance attached to *Nasha pobeda* and inscribed to it a singular importance of youth. Over time the emphasis shifted to intimidation of “counterfeiters of Russian history”.⁶⁰ Along with a massive “oral history”⁶¹ project, launched in February 2010, *Nashi* conquered a central position in shaping the discursive organisation of memory. Its success forced alternative interpretations to marginal spaces.

Youthful Courage and Creativity: Sports and the Arts

The last language game in the PRO-KREMLIN discursive formation related to the realm of sports and arts. The rules which underpinned this language game importantly complement the dominant discursive formation, creating a holistic view on youth and linking very different themes. This all-encompassing understanding of youth was critical for the dominance of this formation as it could bridge the ideological divides of the country. This inclusiveness is also highlighted by the newspaper composition of this formation.

⁵⁸ Nam ne nado stesnyat'sya rasskazyvat' pravdu o voine, in: *Izvestiya*, 07.05.2010.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ *Nashi* otprazdnovali Pobedu, in: *Izvestiya*, 17.05.2010.

⁶¹ Young people are encouraged to upload interviews they conducted with war-veterans on the website www.41-45.su to contribute to “the largest archive of living history in the country,” given a voice to the “truthful” interpretation of those years, cf. Aktivisty “Nashikh” pochtily veteranov, in: *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 28.05.2010; *Nashi* otprazdnovali Pobedu, in: *Izvestiya*, 17.05.2010.

In sports youth was presented as HEROIC and DESIRED, unquestionably leading to Russian success in swimming, hockey, or football. It seems reasonable to assume that sports coverage attracted wide readership – the image of youth that developed in relation to sports should therefore not be underestimated. A humiliating 1:8 defeat of Russia’s hockey youth team against Canada in 2007 turned into a “crisis in Russian hockey,” which pointed to a fundamental societal crisis. Kommersant ironically emphasised that it believed that “at least at the level of youth Canada could be beaten”. But when Canada smashed the young players who were going to represent Russia at the 2014 Olympics in Sochi, doubts about whether Russia was still playing at a world level arose. The country’s youth lacked “tactic, passions, and dedication”. This was in clear contrast to Soviet-era youth hockey and the constructed link with the past made the present seem even more deplorable. In accordance with the rules of this discursive formation, however, youth was not held responsible for its weakness. Instead, Kommersant emphasised that youth was IN-NEED and that its failure was a sign of neglect.⁶²

All Singing from the same Hymn Sheet?

Nevertheless, this positive and all-encompassing youth discourse needed to find a way of dealing with those activities which obliged the Kremlin to distance itself from *Nashi*. Amongst them was the embarrassing display of excessive patriotism during the 2010 Seliger Camp which the forum’s business partners received with irritation.⁶³ As part of “Zdes’ vam ne rady” [You are not welcome here], *Nashi*’s radical wing *Stal’* [Steel] defaced effigies of prominent opposition activists and human rights defenders with Nazi insignia.⁶⁴ These “ocherniteli rodiny” [traitors of the motherland] included Eduard Limonov, Lyudmila

⁶² “Dal’she – tupik”, in: Kommersant, 06.09.2007; similar utterances concern amongst many others football: Gol futbolista “Alanii” voshel v desyatku luchshikh v Evrope, in: Komsomol’skaya Pravda, 13.04.2011.

⁶³ “Seliger” ishchet sponsorov, in: Izvestiya, 10.04.2012.

⁶⁴ Zdes’ mogli by byt’ vashi golovy!, in: Novaya Gazeta, 13.09.2010.

Alekseeva, Boris Nemtsov, and Mikhail Saakashvili, and youth awarded them the “falsification” prize, for their “betrayal” of Russian interests. The Kremlin ultimately had to condemn this act, illustrating that its control over youth was not complete.⁶⁵ Some activities were beyond the Kremlin’s immediate control and against the interest of at least some in the political establishment.⁶⁶

The movement’s situation changed rapidly in 2011. Vyacheslav Volodin replaced Surkov who took issue with the divide amongst youth that *Nashi* had created. He aimed at building a more inclusive umbrella organisation and split *Nashi* into different projects. *Khryushi protiv* [Piglets Against],⁶⁷ *Stop kham* [Stop Boor],⁶⁸ and the fitness movement *Begi za mnoi* [Follow me] were all explicitly concerned with different social evils and allegedly avoided potentially divisive political topics. Nevertheless, Putin’s “hooray” nationalism and social doctrines still characterised these initiatives. But the organisations offer youth various skills and improve their self-esteem rather than being purely anti-Western. The infiltration amongst current Russian youth is more subtle and employs a highly captivating mix of entertainment and education, judging by recent reports about the annual Seliger camps.⁶⁹ These turned into an annual forum for assembling youth from Russia and beyond, teaching it lessons on topics like history, leadership, and economics.

The December 2011 counter-demonstrations defending the falsified elections underlined that *Nashi* was exhausted. Yakemenko expressed great nostalgia for the movement’s heights in

⁶⁵ Ekaterina Pol’gueva: Inkubator nenavisti, in: Sovetskaya Rossiya 31.07.2010

⁶⁶ Also the brutal upbeating of the oppositional journalist Oleg Kashin in 2010, he almost died, stretched what the Kremlin would want the movement to do, cf. Yakemenko vs Kashin, in: Interfax, 25.03.2011, www.interfax.ru/russia/182899 [01.02.2015].

⁶⁷ Its members dress up as pigs and report about food with expired shelf life in supermarkets.

⁶⁸ The movement says it fights traffic code violations and uncivilised behaviour on the roads.

⁶⁹ Cf. Silvan’s report: www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/kristina-silvan/seductive-power-of-seliger [01.02.2015].

2005, when *Nashi* brought 50,000 people on the streets of Moscow alone.⁷⁰ A deplorable contrast given the small group defending the election results in 2011. Volodin's reforms put an end to *Nashi* as Yakemenko and Surkov had conceived it and transformed the organisation into a web of activities seemingly loyal to Volodin. Youth is now less expected to loudly express its political adoration of Putin. Moreover, the Kremlin drew lessons from the problems with a centralised movement and the criticism that was made of *Nashi*.

The PRO-KREMLIN discursive formation underpinned the resurgence of youth in Russia 2005–11. I argue that this fundamental and all-encompassing discursive change in speaking about youth in Russia legitimised *Nashi*'s success. Part of this discursive formation recalled rules that can be encountered in the SOVIET-LENINIST youth discourse. These were, however adapted to the changed context and linked with today's challenges and threats. Wider discursive rules integrated the multifaceted character of youth and travelled between very different thematic realms.

Discursive shifts are therefore integral for understanding the effects of the Putin-initiated preventive counter-revolution (Horvath 2013). Constant reiteration solidified these rules which become part of the publically accepted truth: for instance, the agreement on the threat of a revolutionary government overthrow. The success of *Nashi* and other pro-Kremlin movements in dominating public discourse and the public sphere testify to the importance attributed to youth as a political actor during this present episode.

⁷⁰ Kreml' otkazhetsya ot "Nashikh", in: Vedomosti, 05.03.2013. Yakemenko stressed in 2012 that *Nashi* is going to be "disbanded": "Nashikh" zakryvayut, in: Gazeta.ru, 06.04.2012, www.gazeta.ru/politics/2012/04/06_a_4151693.shtml [01.02.2015].

YOUTH IN DISCORDANCE WITH THE REGIME

Smotryu na flag – on oranzhevyi. Ponyatno, chto tak spetsial’no – deistvuet kak stop-signal, potomu chto kak-to ukorenilos’: dazhe esli ty molcha stoish’ pod takim flagom, yasno – kto ty i chego khochesh’.

I look at the flag, it is orange. It is obvious that it is on purpose – it acts like a stop-light, because it is deeply seated in it: even if you stand silently under this flag, things are clear – who you are and what you want.⁷¹

The second-largest discursive formation, DISCORDANT, revolves around oppositional youth – an important counter voice in the struggle over the meaning of youth. The two progressive newspapers led this voice.⁷² Given the restricted readership of these newspapers, only a small Russian audience therefore engaged in this discourse, implying that a large part of the population ignored it. This formation associates a positive image with political youth opposition, and comprises attempts to recast the meaning of pro-Kremlin groups. The liberal political spectrum consisted of several small movements, most of which relied on financial support from members. Many of their public activities were innovative, as we shall see. Their internet presence (Livejournal, vKontakte, twitter) made them accessible to a wide audience and ensured their visibility in parts of the public sphere and if covered by the media.

These discursive rules were particularly prominent during the early years of the episode. The distribution is highly skewed to the right (Figure 3.6), meaning that the importance of this way of speaking about youth diminished over time and only captured public attention around specific events. Particularly the “Orange Revolution” contributed to a short-term shift in the understanding of Russian youth which correlated with a period of intense political mobilisation of oppositional youth groups.

The graphical representation of the discursive formation (Figure 3.10) points to the importance within this discursive formation of concepts such as AUTONOMOUS and

⁷¹ Prilichnoe mestoimenie, in: Novaya Gazeta, 15.09.2005.

⁷² Kommersant makes for 38% and Novaya Gazeta for 35% of all articles.

INVOLVED. These underpinned those language games with the highest degree-centrality in the network (Figure 3.11). Authors also emphasised the plurality of youth by referring to POLITICAL FACTIONS. This characteristic highlights the coexistence of numerous small *molodezhnye dvizheniya*, a heterogeneity markedly different from the PRO-KREMLIN discourse which presented an image of a UNITED youth. These factions however contributed to the fragmentation of youth and made it appear potentially contradictory. This discursive formation neglects pro-Kremlin movements, highlighted by the high degree centrality of the OPPOSITIONAL concept (Figure 3.11).

The code IMAGINATION underlines the importance of events abroad for this formation. Discursive rules related foreign youth to Russia's youth and saw the former inspiring the latter. This importance of youth signified a clear break with past behaviour of youth, which explains the frequent references in this formation to RUPTURE, which is technically part of the third formation, VIOLENT. However, the plot of the overall discourse network (Figure 3.4) underlines that this concept linked the DISCORDANT and VIOLENT formations. Finally, the authors in the DISCORDANT formation evoked a number of other social attributes, notably the idea of an ENTHUSIASTIC and DYNAMIC youth.

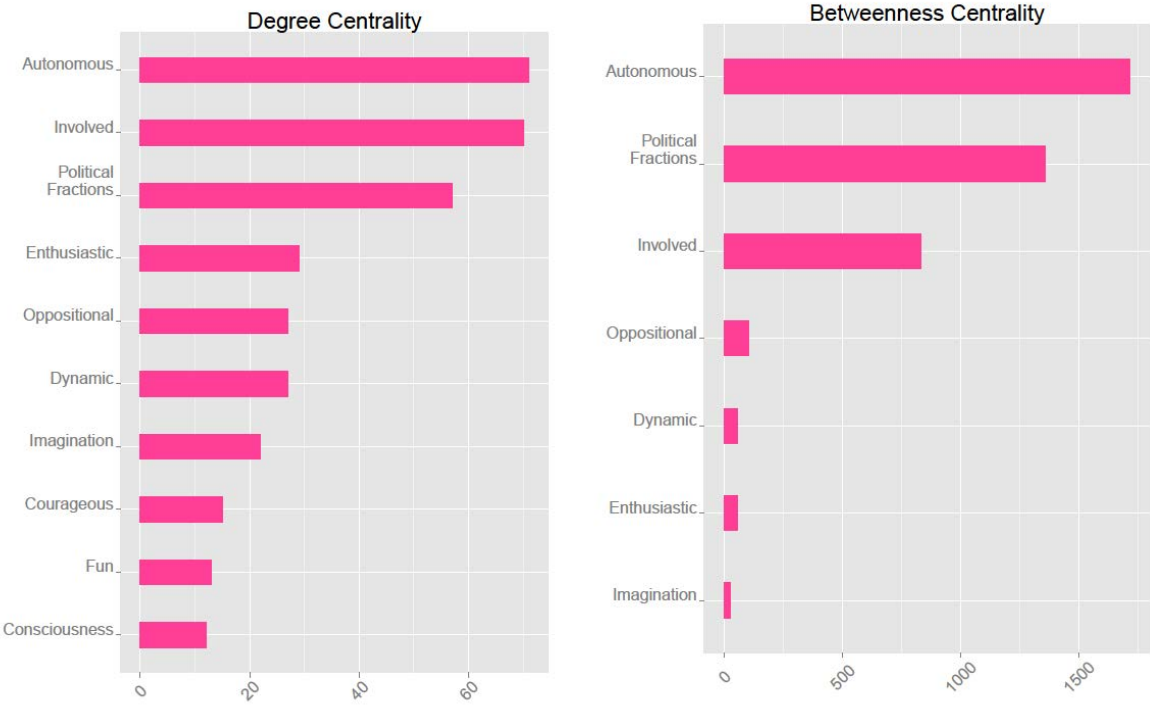


Figure 3.9: DISCORDANT: Centralities

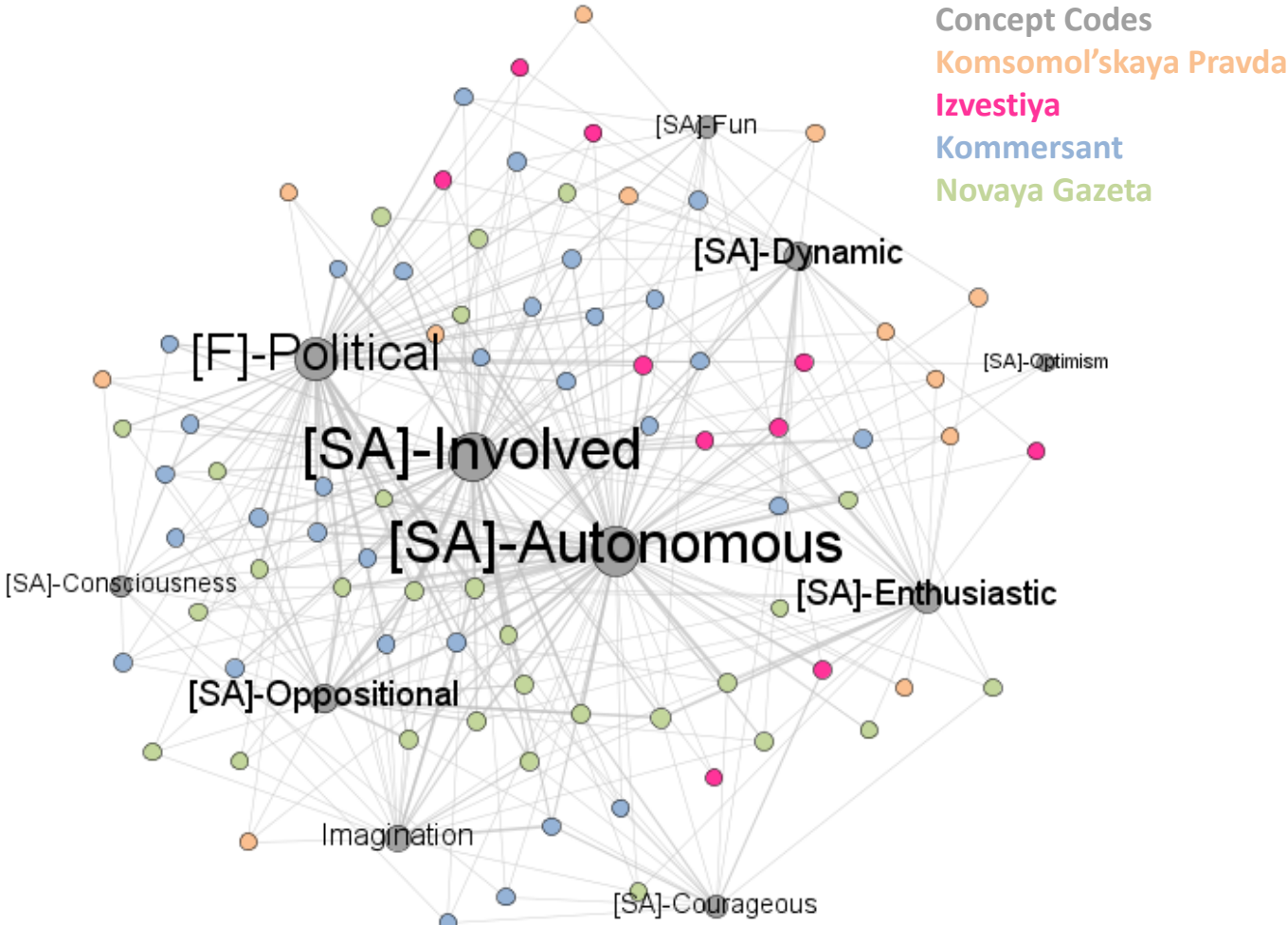


Figure 3.10: DISCORDANT: Discourse Network

Rediscovering the Political Dimension of Youth

In 2004, with growing tensions in Ukraine, culminating in the overthrow of Yanukovich's government, the question arose of what this might imply for Russia.⁷³ Contacts between Ukrainian and Russian youth fortified ideas about a transnational network of oppositional youth activists which might import ideas and techniques into Russia.⁷⁴ By the end of 2004, the ruling *Edinaya Rossiya* party expressed concerns about a potential Russian "Birch Revolution". Members stressed the need to pay close attention to developments amongst youth and respond with a loyal *massovoe dvizheniye* [mass movement].⁷⁵ The political power of youth became a topic of political concern.

Idushchie bez Putina [Walking without Putin], a play on the pro-Kremlin *Idushchie vmeste*, imported the "orange atmosphere" into Russia in December 2004. The Petersburg-based blogger Mikhail Obozov created the movement along with a friend, though journalists quickly claimed that "several hundred people" joined them. It was perceived as "the Russian version of the 'Orange Revolution'".⁷⁶ Irrespective its actual size, the Russian regime felt threatened, since a youth-led government overthrow appeared plausible in the international context. Obozov was consequently arrested in February 2005 after unfolding a "Walking without Putin" poster in front of an *Edinaya Rossiya* rally.⁷⁷

Prompted by developments in Ukraine and subsequent Russian youth activity, the discourse about youth gained a new momentum. Once Ukraine reached the climax of its "Orange Revolution," Russia's media changed the way it referred to youth. It emphasised Ukraine and

⁷³ Sodruzhestvo. Ded moroz oranzhevoi revolyutsii, in: Novye Izvestiya, 15.12.2004.

⁷⁴ Nashi idei nashli podderzhku v sosednei strane, in: Nezavisimaya Gazeta, 28.12.2004.

⁷⁵ Edinorossy boyatsya "oranzhevoi revolyutsii" i sozhdadut dlya ee predotvrashcheniya "massovoe dvizhenie", in: Kommersant, 24.12.2004.

⁷⁶ Politicheskaya sreda. "Idushchie" bez Putina, in: Rossiskie Vesti, 19.01.2005.

⁷⁷ V Sankt-Peterburge zaderzhali "Idushchego bez Putina", in: Izvestiya, 14.02.2005.

Russia’s interconnectedness and updated past references to youth-empowered change. Youth began to symbolise an INVOLVED actor, a clear break with the early post-Soviet period.

A Triton to the Kremlin: Oppositional Youth

“A main lesson drawn by Russian politicians from the ‘Orange Revolution’ was that the street, and not political technologists, plays a decisive role when it comes to real confrontation.”⁷⁸ SOVA reports underlined: “Fighting for ‘young people’ became a priority for virtually all stakeholders after the ‘Orange Revolution’, ranging from the President’s Administration that established the *Nashi* youth movement, to liberal political parties. Right-wing radicals did not lag behind in this activity” (Kozhevnikova 2006).⁷⁹ These utterances illustrate the role of IMAGINATION, the shock created by the “Orange Revolution,” in shaping this discursive formation. The unfolding events in Ukraine mobilised Russian youth and the media encouraged such comparisons.

In this context of constructed similarity, hopes for political change diffused and empowered non-violent resistance by *molodezhnie dvizheniya*. The discursive attribution of power to youth predisposed the public to be highly attentive towards virtually everything concerning youth. By 2005 media across the ideological spectrum devoted attention to Russia’s oppositional youth. Roman Dobrokhoto, along with some friends from the Moscow Institute of International Relations, transformed *Idushchie bez Putina* into *My!* [We!] in April 2005. The organisation gained prominence when it tried to occupy Moscow’s Red Square with

⁷⁸ Svezhaya krov’, in: Novye Izvestiya, 28.02.2005.

⁷⁹ The *Sova informatsionno-analiticheskii tsentr* conducts research on nationalism and racism in Russia and is regarded as highly reliable by commentators and researchers.

orange balloons. Ogonek described Dobrokhotov as the “official distributor of the ‘Orange Revolution’ in Russia”.⁸⁰

In the atmosphere of the post-Soviet space, media and politics waited for the Russian equivalent to Ukraine’s *Pora!* [It is time!]. The media granted excessive attention to efforts by *My!* to sensitise Russians to the importance of democratic values,⁸¹ in spite of its small size – by 2005 *My!* had hardly 30 members. The similar *Oborona* [Defence] attempted to unify the emerging liberal movements. It “tries to move ‘orange’ technology onto Russian soil”⁸² and liberal journalists believed that *Oborona* could mobilise around 5,000 young people in less than six months.⁸³ In retrospect this was a blatant exaggeration, but it is indicative of the expectations these movements created. This potential led to increased state coercion and control, and progressive newspapers emphasised the risks inherent in liberal political involvement.

In progressive media the “orange noises” shaped an image of youth as INVOLVED, AUTONOMOUS, and ENTHUSIASTIC. *Novaya Gazeta* described the courage of anti-Kremlin youth movements⁸⁴ which changed the discursive rules about youth. The actions performed by youth in public no longer conformed to the image of apathetic youth that the Russian public knew from the 1990s. Ilya Yashin reiterated this idea by elaborating on the dynamism of youth and its genuine political interest.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ Tema nomera. Partii zelenykh, in: Ogonek, 10.10.2005.

⁸¹ Was available via the now suspended website of the organisation www.wefree.ru.

⁸² Aktivnaya “Oborona”, in: Novye Izvestiya, 04.04.2005.

⁸³ Conservative membership estimates vary between several hundreds and 2,500; Tema nomera. Partii zelenykh, in: Ogonek, 10.10.2005.

⁸⁴ Prilichnoe mestoimenie, in: Novaya Gazeta, 15.09.2005.

⁸⁵ V vuzakh vosrodilsya institut stukachestva, in: Novaya Gazeta, 27.10.2005.

At the same time, the discursive formations pointed towards the limits of what Russian opposition youth movements could achieve and the many bureaucratic constraints they faced. Being considered fascist or extremist within the dominant PRO-KREMLIN discursive formation, they failed to expand activities beyond a limited level.⁸⁶ In fact, the Russian discursive-political context constituted a major political obstacle. It is not the case that Russian movements “lack many of the features that made youth movements in other postcommunist countries successful” (Schwartz 2007: 77). This assessment disregards the specific constraints and opportunities in the Russian domestic context.

A Carnival of Mobilisation

Russia’s youth opposition put itself in continuity with greater European traditions of youth resistance, notably the “68” student riots in France. This link amplified images of youth as a democratising and revolutionary force.⁸⁷ Such historic references resonated strongly within the post-Soviet context, reminiscent of patterns of the SOVIET-LENINIST youth discourse. Moreover, political youth opposition even though it was not numerous and involved rarely more than 20 people, realised that its voice was best heard when mocking authorities and in theatricised happenings – a practice which also recalled the 1970s. Carnavalesque mobilisation ensured media attention but came at a significant cost, since political opposition rarely expressed a message beyond the rejection of the status quo. This kind of small oppositional activity failed to develop a political agenda and underlined the limits on what can be said and done politically in Russia. Activists rarely engaged in constructive debates about the political course. Numerous articles illustrated this practice, which the discourse network reflects with the code FUN. In other words, particularly since 2006, media considered these ironical theatrical happenings as innovative and amusing but not necessarily a credible

⁸⁶ Prichislyayushchaya sebya k gruppirovke “Yabloko”, in: Novaya Gazeta, 04.03.2011.

⁸⁷ Oprichniki protiv dzhedaev, in: Moskovskii Komsomolets, 01.03.2005.

political force. At times pro-Kremlin groups also adopted this form of mobilisation, pointing to a broader characteristic of contemporary youth mobilisation.

A case in point was *My!* with its theatricised mobilisation which recurrently updated past references. For instance, members stood with empty white posters near Moscow's White House, a reference to a Soviet *anekdot* about a "protester" distributing white leaflets, without any statements. Just as the Soviet citizen had trouble with the forces of order, so did Dobrokhotoev as representative of *My!*.⁸⁸ Allegedly stating that you are "against" something undefined might lead to brief imprisonment. Their opposition lacked content, as *Kommersant* pointed out, but brought five days in prison.⁸⁹

In 2010 *My!* reacted to *Nashi's* glorification of the Soviet past in a similarly ironic tone with a "Back to the USSR" protest. Equipped with Soviet flags (and orange scarfs), members took the conventional route for commemorating victory in Moscow, but marched in other direction, shouting "Give us Censorship" and "Putin is our Leader". Under a veil of irony, the movement underlined that *Nashi's* interpretation of the past was ridiculous. Moreover, the humour expressed frustration and anxiety about Russia's sliding into Soviet-style leadership.

Beyond the liberal-democratic spectrum pro-Kremlin groups also tried to attract media attention through carnivalesque happenings. During the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia, activists of *Nashi* and *Rossiia Molodaya* protested in front of the Georgian embassy, placing pig heads near the building. Afterwards activists drew the map of South Ossetia on the pavement, driving several toy tanks, Georgian troops, across the border. These tanks were

⁸⁸ The video is available at Sobytiya: Aktsiya dvizheniya "My" u belogo doma, www.grani-tv.ru/entries/618 [01.02.2015].

⁸⁹ Aktivistov dvizheniya "My" prigovorili za chistye listy, in: *Kommersant*, 26.07.2006.

loaded with fake dollars with fake blood on the paper. In front of the embassy the tanks were smashed with hammers that activists brought along.⁹⁰

Activities with a similarly important performative dimension included marathon occupations, one of the hallmarks of the velvet revolution. The demonstration against a senior police officer who refused to investigate an alleged attack by an NBP member on *Nashi*'s regional office is one example.⁹¹ Members mobilised and achieved his dismissal and a public apology by stressing that they would live alongside the police building for months to achieve their aim.⁹² The occupation of public space and the attention this guaranteed in the media was an important component of the political mobilisation.

Mockery of Official Youth Movements

Attempts to distort the pro-Kremlin movements were another aspect of the present discursive formation. Progressive media presented *Nashi* in a way that differed from the HEROIC picture which shaped the preceding discursive formation. Given the impossibility of even opposition newspapers bypassing pro-Kremlin youth, ridicule presented one way of dealing with these movements. The songs that emerged during Putin's first presidential term and which became ever more prominent by 2005 were one of the sources of mockery for *Novaya Gazeta*, notably the popular “Takogo kak Putin” [One like Putin] by *Poyushchikh vmeste* [Singing Together] celebrating the President's virtues of strength, moral integrity, and soberness.⁹³

Beyond such semi-erotic admiration, the activity of pro-Kremlin movements outside the big cities created another facet of the discourse about youth. These movements gained a measure

⁹⁰ Flagovaya ataka, in: *Kommersant*, 13.08.2008.

⁹¹ In 2010 NBP [National Bolshevik Party] was forbidden. Its leader, Eduard Limonov, maintains an unclear relationship with the Putin regime.

⁹² *Nashi snyali podpolkovnika militsii*, in: *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, 24.03.2005.

⁹³ *Kul'turnyi sloi*, in: *Novaya Gazeta*, 23.05.2005.

of independence in peripheral regions: in Perm, for instance, *Nashi*, and *Molodaya Gvardiya*, held an unauthorised rally against the misuse of administrative resources by regional authorities.⁹⁴ On the discursive level, such utterances established a view of youth as a decisive political player for *Kommersant*'s readers while at the same time keeping its distance from the movement. The Seliger training camp for "nationally minded managers" was also a subject of mockery. In 2011 the weather confounded Soviet-style discipline and planning when heavy rain and storm caused chaos and anxious parents pressured the leaders.⁹⁵ This pattern illustrated attempts to respond to the omnipresence of *Nashi*. Derision was the only conceivable option to deal with this inevitable topic of youth.

Youth Opposition Abroad

Liberal-democratic movements located abroad but related to events in Russia, like the opposition in Belarus, composed the last language game in this formation. *Novaya Gazeta* emphasised the courage of those young people who spent the night in the centre of Minsk "at 10 to 12 degrees below Celsius, facing wet snow and wind". The youth accepted the continual risk of a police crackdown and some citizens expressed cross-generational solidarity by secretly bringing food to the tent-village. "No aggression, rudeness or even ordinary irritability [*razdrazhitel'nosti*]," was present, even though young people led the event. Such coverage complemented a discursive pattern of youth that was COURAGEOUS as well as responsible.⁹⁶ For Russia this view of events abroad, captured by the code IMAGINATION as events that could be replicated at home, was significant: the discursive rules about youth crossed national boundaries.

⁹⁴ It is unclear however, whether such demonstrations might still be in accordance with the wishes of a Kremlin which fears the extended autonomy of regional governors: *Vospitatel'naya aktsiya*, in: *Kommersant*, 15.05.2006.

⁹⁵ Na "Seliger-2011" obrushilsya uragan, in: *Izvestiya*, 04.07.2011,

⁹⁶ Shumel surovo, in: *Novaya Gazeta*, 13.04.2006.

Kommersant portrayed Egyptian youth demonstrations in 2011 in a similar way. As a victim of the state apparatus’ excessive violence to the first demonstrations, youth was in a prime position to organise “the largest anti-government protests over the past decade” demanding the resignation of Hosni Mubarak.⁹⁷ As part of this discursive pattern, youth in the Arab World turned into shorthand for contestation of the existing political order which was then integrated into the Russian context.

A tiny fraction of Russia’s youth composed this colourful but toothless opposition. In this respect Russia seems not much different from the West – the vast majority of youth pursues whatever leisure activity is affordable instead of joining protest movements. Those young people that made themselves publically heard outside pro-Kremlin movements rejected the almighty political regime at the centre of political cleavages. This rejection brought together a diverse group of people and ideologies, a situation which *Nashi* labelled as “unnatural alliances”. Beyond democratic movements, a range of marginalised and violent left-wing and nationalist oppositional youth activism did exist, to which the next section will be devoted.

VIOLENT YOUTH: THREATENING THE ESTABLISHMENT

Roma priznaetsya, chto ‘sperva strashno, a potom privykaesh’, dazhe ugryzenii net. Takaya nenavist’ poyavlyatsya, chto uzhe vso po figu’.

*Roma recognises that ‘it is scary to begin with, but then you get used to it, you do not even have scruples any longer. Such hatred shows that nothing fucking matters’.*⁹⁸

The last discursive formation revolved around a NEGATIVE perception of youth, VIOLENT, notably nationalist and left-wing groups. It portrayed youth political involvement as a dangerous threat to the established order. The structure of this formation

⁹⁷ Egipetskaya molodezh’ vyshla na peremenu, in: Kommersant, 27.01.2011.

⁹⁸ Young skinhead quoted in: Skinam pozhelali dolgikh let, in: Novaya Gazeta, 17.02.2005.

conformed to what Pearson analysed in the 1980s. In his seminal work on the construction of “youth as risk” he argued that youth crime was always seen as representing a radical rupture from the stable state of past affairs. Pearson analysed how English hooliganism created an alarming picture of departure from an earlier “golden age” (1983).

In contemporary Russia, *Novaya Gazeta* in particular reacted to this facet of youth activism and many of its discussions framed youth using these discursive rules. This might be explained by the paper’s ambition to warn about anti-democratic tendencies in Russia which it saw as driven by some violent *molodezhnye dvizheniya*.

According to SOVA reports, two organisations were central to the extra-parliamentary nationalist-patriotic camp. They acted relatively independent of the Kremlin, seemingly more so after 2009 when alternative sources of funding became available (Kozhevnikova and Verkhovskii 2009: 9). Officials emphasised distance from these organisations, lamenting that “there is no proper political judgement of many criminal acts performed on xenophobic grounds, which only serves to further encourage extremist activity” (Obshchestvennaya Palata 2008: 52).

Established in 2002, *Dvizhenie protiv nelegalnoi immigratsii (DPNI)* [Movement against Illegal Immigration] served as the main right-wing non-party organisation, a potent and vocal actor with offices in more than 30 Russian regions.⁹⁹ The brothers Aleksandr Belov (also known as Potkin) and Vladimir Basmanov, who both began their political careers during perestroika as young members of *Pamyat’*, lead *DPNI*. It used the internet for political communication with the “flexible membership, loose (leaderless) structure, and the network of regional representatives” (Zuev 2010: 269). The lack of a well-elaborated ideology reduced

⁹⁹ Sego dnya. Chya Moskva?, in: Moskovskii Komsomolets, 07.11.2005.

internal tensions and contributed to its success (Laruelle 2009: 74).¹⁰⁰ Thanks to its decentralised structure *DPNI* remained flexible and able to react promptly (Kozhevnikova 2007). Anti-Western references were almost absent, with an ideological focus instead on the “Islamist threat” or the “Yellow peril”. *DPNI* geared its language to widespread anti-immigrant views, hesitant to use the language of xenophobia and anti-Semitism (Kozhevnikova 2006). It enjoyed great success amongst youth and although it was not a youth movement its self-presentation appealed to young people.

The second right-wing movement, *Evrasiiskii soyuz molodezhi (ESM)* [Eurasian Youth Union], was established in February 2005, and aimed at containing the spread of the “orange mood”. Led by Pavel Zarifullin, the movement claims that it “stands as a human shield in the face of the orange bulldozers”.¹⁰¹ *ESM* maintained links with Alexander Dugin’s *Mezhdunarodnoe evraziiskoe dvizhenie* [International Eurasian Movement], which was active beyond Russia (notably Moldova, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan) and adjusted Dugin’s older conspiratorial visions to the changed context in 2005.¹⁰² Since 2005 Dugin appeared on numerous talk shows and in 2008 became a professor at Moscow State University which granted public legitimacy. “US imperialism” catalysed the creation of *ESM* since Western encroachment seemed to threaten national survival.¹⁰³ This “anti-orange” worldview attributed a missionary dimension to the fight against the US, in the manifesto accused of having already “smashed to pieces our fatherland once”.

The left-wing movements had a longer pedigree and most were established during the 1990s. Their manifestos reiterated communist rhetoric and emphasised the injustices and inequalities

¹⁰⁰ Reliable membership estimates are hard to get but “several thousands in total” seems reasonable (Obshchestvennaya Palata 2008: 53).

¹⁰¹ Katekhizic chlena, www.rossia3.ru/katehizis.html [01.02.2015].

¹⁰² Dugin was also part of *Pamyat’* during perestroika but was expelled 1989.

¹⁰³ V Rossii poyavilis’ neoprichniki, in: *Russkii Kur’er*, 28.02.2005

that emerged during Russia's transition years. *Avangard Krasnoi Molodezhi (AKM)* [Vanguard of Red Youth] was the most radical amongst them.¹⁰⁴ It was also the one that decisively shaped the discursive formation since the press repeatedly featured its provocative actions and therefore impacted shaped the construction of youth as a threat. The movement's leader, Sergei Udaltsov, frequently underlined his desire to overthrow the government through a violent revolution.¹⁰⁵ Its members were proactive and their communist ideology motivated and unified them to the point that *AKM* did not require many resources to quickly mobilise adherents. In 2008 *AKM* realised long-standing ambitions of a revival of Russia's Left by creating *Levyi Front* [Left Front].¹⁰⁶

Revolyutsionnyi kommunisticheskii soyuz molodezhi (bol'sheviki) (RKSM(b)) [Revolutionary Communist Youth League (Bolshevik)] operated independently of *Levyi Front*, believing that it had no "common ideology or common action," and represented merely "decorative unity".¹⁰⁷ *RKSM(b)* claimed to have the potential to mobilise several hundred members, and experienced a period of growth in recent years, after having been marginal and close to disappearing at the turn of the millennium. Its revival began in 2005 when the organisation was involved in organising protests against the "anti-social politics of the government" and it joined in popular demonstrations against the 2006 G8 summit in St. Petersburg. *RKSM(b)* occasionally cooperated with other small Trotskyist groups, like the *SKM RF* as well as the Russian Communist Workers' Party (*EIF-PKK*). The boundaries between these movements

¹⁰⁴ Programmnoe zayavlenie AKM, www.akm1917.su/Program [10.12.2013] along with the charter: Ustav AKM, www.akm1917.su/Ustav [01.02.2015].

¹⁰⁵ Ironically, Udaltsov had come to symbolise Russia's democratic opposition in Western media by 2012: Russia accused of kidnapping, in: *The Washington Post*, 26.10.2012; Socialism may be waning, but not for young Russians, in: *The Washington Times*, 23.11.2012; even appeared in one sentence with Gary Kasparov: Merkel kritisiert Pussy-Riot Urteil, www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2012-08/pussy-riot-reaktionen [01.02.2015].

¹⁰⁶ Debates about uniting the extra-parliamentary movements are much older. Sleva ot KPRF zamechno dvizhenie, in *Kommersant*, www.kommersant.ru/doc/1010696 [10.12.2013]; Radikaly otkryli "Levyi Front", in *Kommersant*, www.kommersant.ru/doc/616323 [01.02.2015].

¹⁰⁷ Na levom fronte bez peremen, www.rksmb.org/get.php?2591 [01.02.2015].

were porous and joint actions of this “unnatural alliance” were not rare (Kozhevnikova 2006, Kozhevnikova 2007).¹⁰⁸

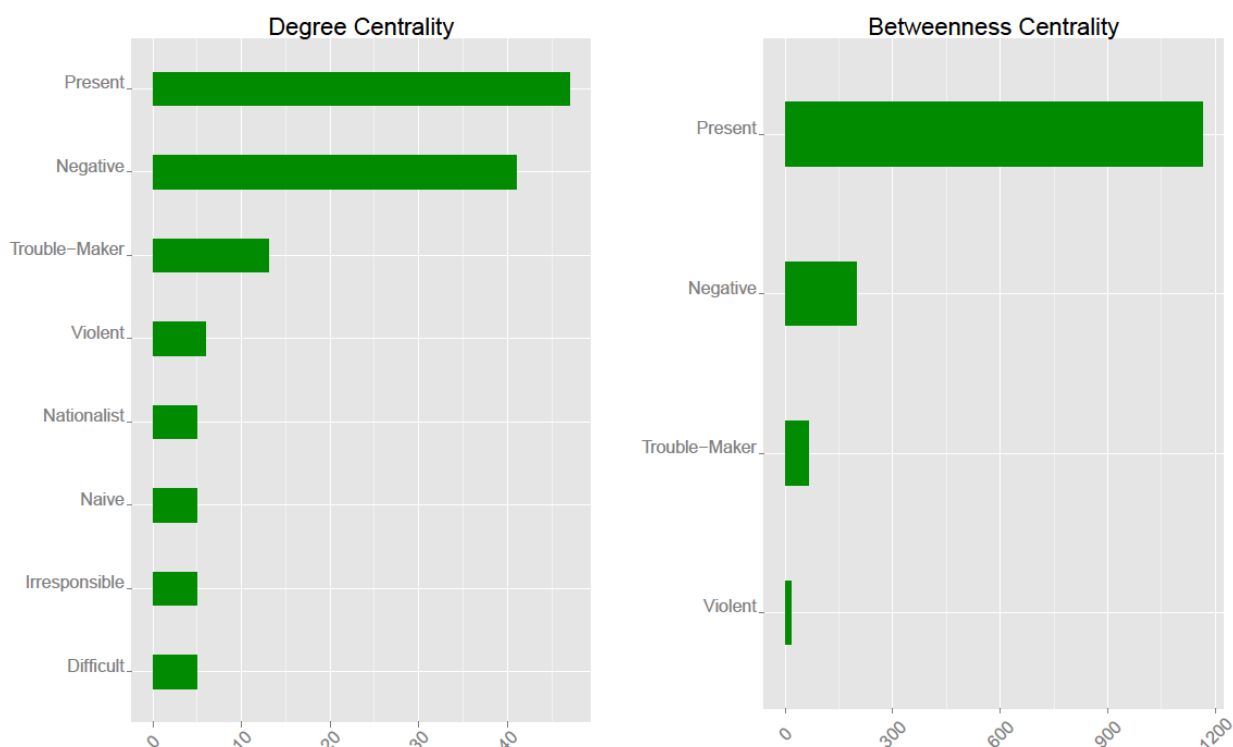


Figure 3.11: VIOLENT: Centralities

A graphical representation (Figure 3.12) illustrates that this discourse network is sparser than the preceding ones and only revolves around a small number of conceptual nodes. The most prominent codes are NEGATIVE evaluations of youth and the emphasis on this being a problem of the PRESENT, as well as references to the kind of RUPTURE that Pearson emphasises with respect to British hooliganism. This phenomenon of violent youth was understood as expressing the crisis young people themselves went through, but it also evoked clearly negative attributes such as VIOLENT or IRRESPONSIBLE.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the legacy of the Soviet-era “it is not their fault” pattern shone through this formation when the idea that

¹⁰⁸ “Derzhite lysogo!”, in: Novaya Gazeta, 02.06.2005; Igrali v dymovye shashki, in: Novaya Gazeta, 19.09.2005.

¹⁰⁹ In that respect Ben Judah stressed the brutalization of Russia’s society following the Soviet Union’s breakdown expressed by high numbers of young people in prison {Judah, #8317}.

youth was NAÏVE was used to excuse its behaviour. The betweenness centrality (Figure 3.11) indicates that NEGATIVE and TROUBLE-MAKER are the concepts which structure the discursive network. In due course some language games shall be explored by linking them back to political mobilisation and utterances which reveal the rules of this formation.

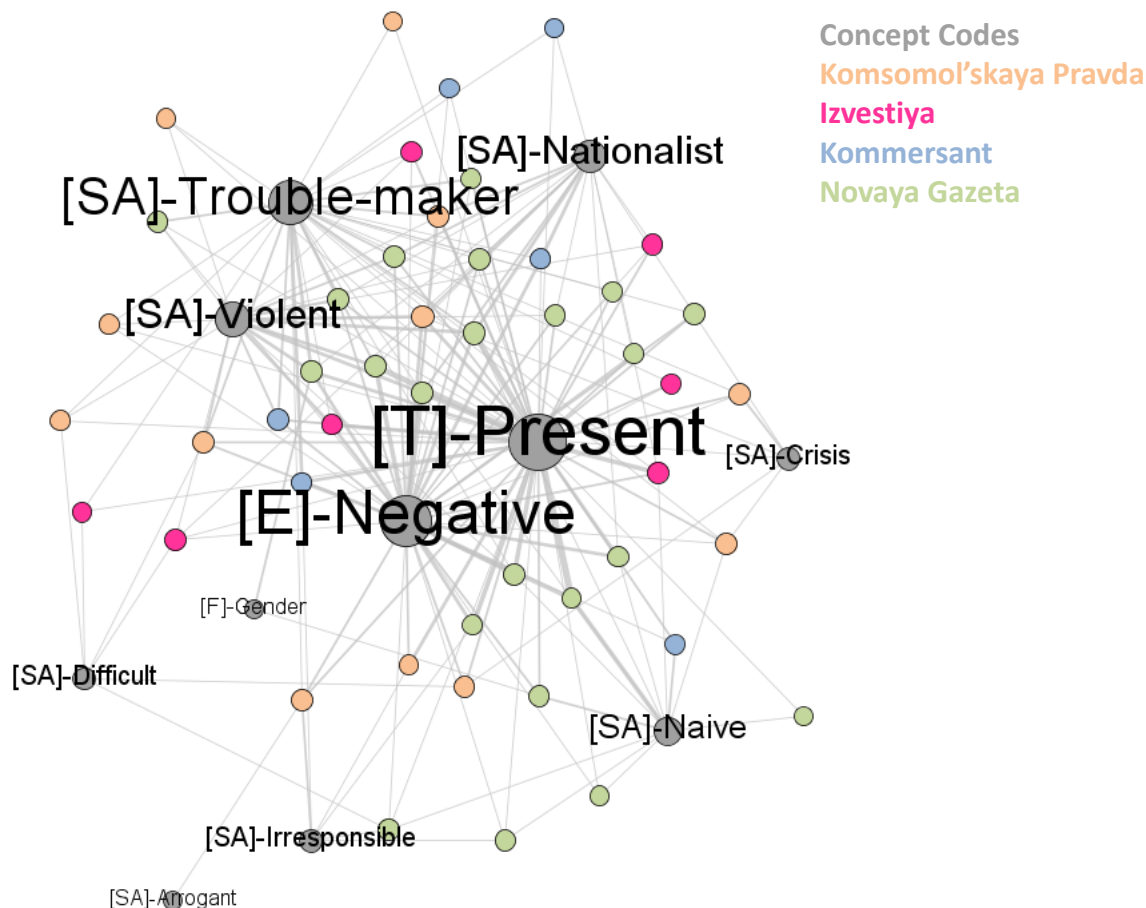


Figure 3.12: VIOLENT: Discourse Network

Skinheads and Fascists

The most important pattern in this discursive formation refers to the violence of right-wing movements. Narrow discursive rules structure the way such activities were made sense of, composing a NEGATIVE view of youth whose activities were depicted as causing TROUBLE, being VIOLENT, and having NATIONALIST motivations. However, beyond outright blame

there was some more complexity to this pattern when those young people were presented as VICTIMISED or simply NAÏVE.

The visibility of a young skinhead presence accompanied easily available nationalist music (such as *Britogolovye idut* [Skinheads go] or *Vait pauer rok* [White power rock]) prominently displayed in some shops. The *svyatoe* [sacred] homeland was the most important thing for these young people, though according to Novaya Gazeta, most had no idea what that actually means.¹¹⁰ But the skinheads had no doubt about its implications: hatred of enemies. Without paperwork and boring bureaucracy, these movements successfully attracted young people who were often fascinated by the possibility of realising their desire to fight (Pilkington 2010).

Beyond sensational actions, this discursive formation revolved around the everyday fascism which affected, for instance, foreign students. After the killing of a student from Guinea-Bissau in Voronezh, officials quickly underlined that this was merely the act of “marginalised youth,” and some young people accentuated that “life is becoming more and more dangerous and depressing”. This discourse also emphasised that the problem was structural; human rights organisations stated that there were about 50,000 skinheads in Russia at the time.¹¹¹ However, speaking about fascist youth often went along with hopes that youth might be able to deal with the problem themselves. The discursive formation therefore also always included youth-based initiatives such as the *Mezhdunarodnoe molodezhnoe pravozashchitnoe dvizhenie* [International Youth Human Rights Movement] or the *Molodezhnaya set' protiv rasizma i neterpimosti* [Youth Network against Racism and Intolerance], which organised solidarity marches to give voice to the rest of Russian youth. However, these acts of solidarity also caused frustration, quoting a kindergarten teacher: “One of my boys was killed, a fifth-

¹¹⁰ Skinam pozhelali dolgikh let, in: Novaya Gazeta, 17.02.2005.

¹¹¹ “Edinaya Rossiya” sozdaet “Moloduyu gvardiyu”, in: Novaya Gazeta, 17.10.2005.

grader, and there were no protests, nothing was organised. And a neighbour was killed who was still a student. And again, no one protested. And for a foreigner, there is so much noise!”¹¹²

These youth activities critically shaped the image of entire cities, the discursive formation thereby include the idea of a *DECISIVE* youth, though with a *NEGATIVE* connotation. One case in point is the transformation of St. Petersburg, the former “capital of culture,” into the “capital of fascism” due to the spread of right-wing extremism.¹¹³ The rules of the *VIOLENT* formation demand that the violent actions be put in perspective, excused by the living conditions, the lack of “normal education,” and an insufficient level of provision for leisure activities – for *Izvestiya* these deficiencies explained why Russian youth sometimes got out of control.¹¹⁴ After all, the dominant discursive formation constrained the pro-Kremlin papers and asserted that youth was inherently *POSITIVE*.

Lastly, the Russian discourse did not consider the activism of skinheads to be the only fascist threat. At times *Kommersant* accused *Nashi*’s mobilisation as being “fascist” according to the discursive rules of this language game. The selling of *Kommersant* toilet rolls with fake *Kommersant* articles under the chief editor’s name printed on them for 10 to 50 roubles in 2008 represented one instance. The demonstration spread across Moscow, starting at the newspaper’s headquarters, and was justified as “revenge” for negative press coverage. But with this action *Nashi* breached several laws: the picketing was larger than stated in the application, there was no permission to use the “*Kommersant*” name, and attributing the articles under the name of the chief editor qualified as libel.¹¹⁵

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Kto sdelal “stolitsu fashizma” iz goroda-geroya na neve?, in: *Komsomol’skaya Pravda*, 04.07.2006.

¹¹⁴ “Rossiya i fashizm – sochetanie chudobishchnoe”, in: *Izvestiya*, 04.05.2006.

¹¹⁵ “Likuyushchaya ropota” v gostyakh u “*Kommersanta*”, in: *Kommersant*, 03.05.2008.

Left-Wing Radicals

The violence of the non-democratic youth opposition received some attention after the publication of Petr Silaev’s autobiographic account *Iskhod* [Exodus] under the pseudonym DJ Stalingrad in 2010. Although his literary account does not aim at being a sociological treatise of the phenomenon, it points to the glorification of violence, the nostalgia for the Soviet period, and the consciousness of a generation lost in transition:

We are all part of the rotten post-Soviet generation. [...] As time passed by all that is left is an abyss of contempt, cynicism, pragmatic nihilism, and tired greed. But the longing for heroism is left somewhere deep inside of us, in myself, in all those other people who still have not renovated their apartment. We had to suffer and die for some cause, but since all that is stupid and does not count any longer, we are just attracted by suffering and death. [...] Melancholy is in our blood, we chew pain, and it pulls us into the grave. (2011: 68-70)

This excerpt from Silaev’s autobiographic writing illustrates a number of important aspects characteristic of left-wing activism. Silaev was active in the left-wing anarchical scene until 2010, when he had to leave the country following at times violent demonstrations against destruction of parts of the Khimki forest for constructing a highway. Police captured him in Spain in 2012. His highly literary writing retraced his experience and testified to his political opinions. He emphasised the generational consciousness and the importance of the Soviet reference point for the self-conception of these activists. The iconic Soviet man is naturally a victim of what society did with him.

The Soviet person is my friend [...] He does not lie, only plays helplessly with the muscles on his cheek-bones. He silently ages in his cramped apartment and grows a beard. On working days he drinks strong tea, on the weekend, vodka. [...] Welcome to the world of the lost, the ugly, the unsociable, the short-sighted ones. This is my home, I do not need another one. (2011: 85)

The generational blame is deeply rooted and directed against all those young people who benefitted from the system change and turned their back on the ideals of Soviet times:

I hate all these people, the entirety of this fucking generation. Everyone who grew up in the 90s, stinking assholes [...] I was interrogated by people born in 1988. Dressed in these nastily trendy clothes, stupid coats with gay hairstyles, they were indistinguishable from those blokes that we used to beat up all those years. [...] Fuck, all these pillocks should go straight in the oven, the one from Auschwitz, no one is sorry for the entire generation, all those aged between 20 and 25, and I can join them, that is ok. (2011: 96-97)

Although Silaev was not a member of *AKM* and his voice is a radical and marginalised one, his attitudes seemed to overlap with other left-wing movements. The acceptance of physical risks could be frequently encountered in *AKM*, for instance when activists may have lost their lives climbing on the Ivan the Great Bell Tower in Moscow, unfolding a banner *Putin, pora ukhodit!* [Putin, it's time to leave!].¹¹⁶ The boundaries between right-wing and left-wing were porous in this discursive formation about troublesome youth,¹¹⁷ and sometimes the rules of the discourse made it possible to lump all of the "opposition" together to discredit them.¹¹⁸

Youth out of Control

The rules of this discursive formation were employed beyond the political realm. A 2005 defeat of Russian youth in football against Denmark obliged to elaborate upon the current CRISIS of youth. *Komsomol'skaya Pravda* illustrated that its behaviour caused trouble, since this loss, accompanied by rowdy behaviour on the pitch, was a disgrace for the entire nation.¹¹⁹ Moreover, youth seemed unpredictable when it came to sports and despite their capability, young people lacked commitment and rigour, so few good trainers wanted to work

¹¹⁶ V Kreml'e potrebovali otstavki Putina, in: *Izvestiya*, 01.06.2005.

¹¹⁷ Cf. FN [108].

¹¹⁸ "Ulichnyi protest", in: *Novaya Gazeta*, 12.01.2006.

¹¹⁹ *Nasha sbornaya poslala vsyu evropu*, in: *Komsomol'skaya Pravda*, 18.11.2005.

with them.¹²⁰ It contradicted the youth picture shaped in the PRO-KREMLIN formation and served as warning what could happen if the state failed in guiding youth.

In a milder form, this pattern of youth being irresponsible concerned Russia’s golden youth, living abroad and supported financially by the money their parents extracted from Russia’s economic and natural resources in the transition period. One such young person caused a mortal “scandalous accident” in a hit-and-run in Geneva. His irresponsible driving without a license stirred debate within Russia about the morality of its “golden youth” and the image of Russia they created.¹²¹ Such discussions also evoked concepts that emphasised the risks inherent in youth and the possibility that its behaviour might be out of control.

This last section illustrates the diversity of the discourse about youth beyond the highly politicised two main formations. To account for the contradictory sense of youth in contemporary Russia, this counter-voice is important. It anchors a negative vision about youth which could be updated to discredit the democratic opposition and affirm the need to take care of youth to avoid it becoming violent and turning against society. Particularly, when such rules could link to democratic discordant youth, blaming it for causing trouble to Russia and undertaking joint actions with other “fascists”.

YOUTH IN A CONSOLIDATING AUTHORITARIAN SYSTEM

In the increasingly authoritarian setting of a “sovereign democracy,” political youth had become radicalised by 2005 in its rejection of the *status quo*. The discourse about youth was therefore highly politicised with little space for those young Russians who supported the

¹²⁰ V sbornoi dolzhny igrat’ svoi, in: Novaya Gazeta, 06.09.2010.

¹²¹ Delo rossiiskikh likhachei v Shveitsarii, in: Komsomol’skaya Pravda, 28.11.2009.

current political system through non-action which expressed a silent approval. Political youth mobilisation was intimately interlinked with governmental policies and its potential to thrive limited by them. The opposition focused on the political system and did not turn into a societal vanguard with a vision on its own. In the aftermath of the Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” some youth took up the revolutionary call and tried to spread liberal democratic ideas in Russia. They adopted new techniques of mobilisation and were initially successful in capturing the attention of the broader public. The international dimension was therefore critical for the initial opening of the discourse at the beginning of the episode. However, with time passing and little success, mobilisation, as well as the interest of the public, shrunk to the point at which “youth movements” became irrelevant for Russian politics.

Young people were important during the 2011 “Russian Winter,” but they protested alongside adults who opposed Putin’s system. Similarly, during the few demonstrations against Russia’s 2014 interference in Ukraine, youth did not speak up distinctively as youth. More recently the absence of democratic youth movements strikes. Youth participated in demonstrations after the falsified legislative and presidential elections 2011–12, but movements which spoke up specifically in the name of youth were absent. *My!* or *Oborona* vanished as the movements’ protagonists outgrew the status of “youth”. Beyond personal transitions, the disappearance of youth movements points to a disillusion with the “youth-driven” change of the “Colour Revolutions”. In Ukraine as well as Georgia evaluations of these revolutions became more nuanced which adjusted expectations as to how profound political change initiated by youth could be. Two of the most prominent youth leaders of 2005, Dobrokhoto and Yashin, remain opposition politicians,¹²² but none of them still speaks for youth and new youth leaders have not emerged. The young people who have gotten involved did so alongside the older generation and the discourse of generational conflict lost in currency.

¹²² They also maintain their “blogs”: www.yashin.livejournal.com/ and dobrokhoto.livejournal.com/.

The following points are significant for understanding the Russian episode:

1. Tightening a new discursive regime

The consolidation of political power of the Russian leadership must be placed in the context of a new and well-defined set of youth-related discursive rules. During the episode of 2005–2011, these rules consolidated through repetition in the media and responses in the political behaviour of youth. The receptiveness of youth by 2005 and its willingness to get involved in pro-Kremlin organisations provided the new discursive setting with legitimacy and coherence. This contrasts with youth in Russia’s transition period of the 1990s when it was portrayed as victim of the economic and political changes (Dafflon 2009: 35-38). The PRO-KREMLIN discourse formation presents a clear rupture with that past. Updating certain aspects of the Soviet discourse of a glorified youth, it links youth’s importance to past achievements and its responsibility for the country’s future. The discourse made it possible to reassess the national past and draw up a project for the future.

2. The interplay between external and internal factors in mobilisation

Media and politicians constructed the 2004 “Orange Revolution” as a significant example for the Russian Federation. Given the perceived proximity between the two countries in terms of history, culture, and the political order, and the close contacts between Russian and Ukrainian activists, Ukraine was seen as a potential precedent for what might happen in Russia. Change abroad had strong repercussions in Russia, since Putin’s regime also felt pressured by the simultaneous home-grown protests of pensioners over the monetisation of benefits.

This situation contributed to changing *Erwartungshorizonte*. Seeing what members of their cohort achieved abroad, young people felt empowered to overthrow the political leadership. The belief in a Russian “Colour Revolution” pushed some youth to become politically active.

However, youth was not only mobilised in support of the ideas of the “Orange Revolution”: pro-Kremlin initiatives and other “anti-orange” movements attracted an important segment.

The case of Russia thereby illustrates how domestic constraints which hamper political mobilisation can be overcome through the power of example. Although the political conditions hardly changed, constraints which existed before and continued beyond, the “Orange Revolution” lost part of their significance for activists, who mobilised regardless of what might have been rationally possible (Weyland 2009: 1152). However, the direction of the power of example is, importantly, determined by the domestic political context.

3. Co-optation of youth: Twofold learning

On the level of the political leadership, a twofold learning process, on the synchronic and the diachronic level, can be observed. Synchronically, Putin and Medvedev realised during the “Colour Revolution” that falsified elections, manipulation of media, and fake political parties are insufficient for maintaining political power. The Russian duumvirate understood that the support of the citizens would need to come in a different form to avoid a “Colour Revolution”. The presence of youth in the public sphere served as an ideal mechanism to silence critiques of the regime’s legitimacy. Diachronically, the Russian leadership could draw lessons from the contribution of the Komsomol’s disintegration to the downfall of the Soviet Union. It is therefore not the case that *Nashi* was a simple reincarnation of the Komsomol, as suggested in Western and Russian media.¹²³ Rather, the Komsomol served as warning not to lose youth politically as shall be argued in the next chapter.

Drawing on these two learning processes, *Nashi* was therefore geared to express the leadership’s power and capacity to deal with destabilising political factors. Furthermore, this

¹²³ Cf. FN [28].

involvement also expressed genuine support for the political system. *Nashi* is more than a continuation of an alleged *dvusmyslennost'* [double think] and involvement with it could be genuine and upright (Hemment 2012: 255).

4. Remaking of history

The first public appearance of *Nashi* emphasised its patriotic fervor to protect the national history and impose a specific interpretation of it. The movement's activists constructed historical continuity by drawing on well-chosen aspects of Russia's past. This specific upholding of memory provided the Russian leadership with moral authority since the success in the *velikaya otechestvennaya voina* justified the need for a hierarchical authoritarian structuring of society.

For youth the cultivation of memory helped make sense of their existence by finding meaning in a past which elided the shameful period of transition. Youth kept patterns of interpretation alive that enabled the construction of an image of historic continuity of youthful heroism. The image also emphasised the historic mission that youth was endowed with in the most important moments of history.

Russia's authoritarian consolidation included dominance of the discourse about youth, alongside the physical mobilisation of pro-regime youth and the marginalisation of oppositional youth. The following chapter explores these same aspects in the case of the Soviet Union during perestroika.

THE SOVIET UNION DURING PERESTROIKA: BREAKDOWN OF AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME

Interpretations of perestroika remain controversial. The view in the West has generally differed from Putin's 2005 characterisation of the Soviet Union's collapse as "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century".¹ This regime breakdown has stirred debate within academia as well, and this chapter refines our understanding of the processes at work by looking at youth political mobilisation and changing discourses about youth. Surprisingly, political youth mobilisation during the last years of the Soviet Union and its meaning for the transition has remained unexplored. An emphasis on the role of elites and their decisions in this moment of crisis prevails. Shlapentokh portrays Gorbachev as the "single motor of initial change" (2001: 190); similarly, but in broader terms, Hahn depicts the reform period as a revolution from above involving "high- and/or middle-ranking officials and bureaucrats" (2002: 5).² However, such explanations fail to fully account for the significant changes of perestroika as they ignore the voices of ordinary citizens.

Elite-centred explanations contrast with contemporary observations of an emerging civic culture driving Gorbachev's reforms. Although these reforms did not lead to democracy, (contrary to some expectations; see Lewin (1988)), an increasing diversity in the public sphere during *glasnost* 'openness' – through letters or protests – characterised the episode. In January 1987 Gorbachev demanded that ordinary citizens express themselves more freely

¹ State of the Nation Address 25.04.2005, www.fas.org/irp/news/2005/04/putin042505.html [01.02.2015].

² Equally (Brown 1996, Goldstone 1998, Kotz and Weir 1997, Sakwa 1990).

(1987f). But young people had already mobilised prior to Gorbachev's arrival in power. Success at the local level encouraged them, as involvement in the public seemed like a valuable way to put authoritarian structures under pressure. I argue that the mobilisations of citizens in general followed largely from the example of youth leaving the Komsomol's confines.

The last years of the Soviet Union were extraordinary for youth, who were deeply affected by the resultant changes. As this chapter aims to demonstrate, youth's political mobilisation contributed to the political developments. Young people mobilised within countless *neformaly*³ across Russia. Media and politicians framed their activities as decisive for the social changes that perestroika implied. Political activities in those years encouraged a profound restructuring of the symbolic meaning of youth and an erosion of the previously established discursive order. This restructuring affected the process of the Soviet system's discursive, symbolic, and organisational disintegration. Following Gorbachev's rise to power, the Komsomol as societal vanguard lost its legitimacy and contributed to the dissolution of the USSR itself.

This second case study introduces variation on the Russian episode analysed in the preceding chapter, while staying within a geographically and socio-politically related context. The perestroika episode takes place at a different moment in time – a different historical context therefore needs to be integrated into the analysis. Moreover, this paired comparison adds variation on the outcome of crisis, with the perestroika having led to regime breakdown. Regarding the hypotheses, the following arguments are developed: (1) Discourse about youth became increasingly diverse, a diversity which captured the manifold political opposition

³ The term *neformaly* distinguishes these groups from the formalism of official youth organisations and denotes their lack of an official status; alternatively *neformal'nie ob''edineniya molodezhi* [informal associations of youth] or *samodeyatel'nie ob''edineniya molodezhi* [independent associations of youth]: A vy kto takie, in: Pravda 30.03.1987.

young people expressed. With the reforms of *glasnost* in progress, the leadership could no longer maintain its control over the discursive order surrounding youth. (2) Government interventions to control youth political involvement were ultimately unsuccessful. (3) Youth mobilisation broadened to include other groups, which effectively put the existing regime under pressure.

FROM CRISIS TO SYSTEM COLLAPSE

During perestroika the term *krizis* [crisis] gradually became ubiquitous in the Soviet public.⁴ The population increasingly questioned the coherence of Soviet symbols and the leadership no longer enjoyed a monopoly over their meanings. I argue that the two components of crisis which I discussed in the introduction prevailed in the late Soviet Union: a relevant external precedent created by Gorbachev's enthusiastic reception amongst opposition in communist Eastern Europe which amplified mobilisation of the young oppositional *konkretny* generation (Kenney 2002: 121-3) combined with a delegitimised older generation. These two aspects explain when and why contemporaries' *Erwartungshorizonte* expanded.

Scholars have suggested competing interpretations of the collapse: short-term vs. long-term factors, economics, politics, or ethno-national relations, elite-decisions vs. mass mobilisation (Dallin 1992, Sakwa 2013). Although people in the Soviet Union had enjoyed a rising standard of living (Kotz and Weir 1997), and Ligachev emphasises that little stratification existed (2010), economic problems, such as the overly expensive military-industrial complex (Gaidar 2006), were undeniable. Writing shortly after the collapse, Knight puts the events in their long-term economic context, pointing to the tensions between Soviet realities and the

⁴ Impressively captured by posters, e.g. Yuri Bulkhin's 1988 "Krizis," which shows a dirt-producing industrial heart that contaminates and destroys the environment (Crowfoot and Litvinov 1989).

demands of modern economics (1991). Knowledge about Western consumer goods provided a benchmark for people to judge the performance of political rulers, desacralizing the aim of constructing communism (Péteri 2010). Suny (1993) and later Beissinger (2002) prominently account for the importance of nationalist mobilisation, whereas Walker emphasises contradictions in the ethno-federal structure itself (2003). He points to the Janus-faced combination of the rhetoric of the “voluntary union of republics” and the perceived *de facto* centralisation of power. Russian scholars also identify the inadequacy of nationalities policies during *glasnost*: Stankevitch laments for instance the central authorities’ inflexibility and slowness (2005: 428-32).

By the mid-1980s, the accumulated changes of the post-Stalinist era began to challenge the coherence and credibility of the Soviet model. Accumulated long-term problems rendered mass mobilisation and elite decisions contagious. A feeling of alienation pervaded society during the 1980s which changed the understanding of socialism from being in opposition to the West and democracy to being social democratic and pro-Western (Lévesque 1997).

Soviet history had known acclamations to reform intentions. During *glasnost*, however, such calls changed the political language and gradually pushed the limits of public discourse, as the case of youth highlights. Yurchak argues that discourse comprised new topics, metaphors, comparisons, and ideas (2005: 2-4). In 1985, for instance, Gorbachev evoked the Soviet commonplace of “a period of particular importance” (1987a: 431), but in 1987 things sounded different when he spoke of “Perestroika and New Thinking for Our Country and the Whole World”:

Problems have grown faster than they were solved. Soviet society has become increasingly unmanageable and we thought we would just manage, but Lenin already warned us about what actually happens now: ‘The car does not go where the driver thinks it does.’ An unbiased

honest approach brought us to the indisputable conclusion that the country was in a pre-crisis state. And now we need radical reforms to implement revolutionary changes. (1987e)

This chapter disentangles the period to understand how the individual components unfolded over time. Placing youth mobilisation and the public meaning of youth at the centre allows us to comprehend the public meaning of the conjunction of economic, social, and political crises.

(1) *Change as usual* (until February 1986): Compared to the preceding General Secretaries of the Communist Party, Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, Gorbachev embodied change.⁵ The youngest leader since Stalin, he had already emphasised by December 1984, before he led the country, that the Soviet Union needed a transformation. At that point he advanced the idea of *uskorenie*, acceleration of social and economic developments (1987c). But teleological readings should be avoided. Citizens, as well as Gorbachev, were unaware of the transformation ahead and scholars initially understood the reforms as a simple replication of Brezhnev's attempts (Schroeder 1986). Though Gorbachev's language remained enmeshed in the conventional Soviet discourse around the party, Lenin, and the construction of socialism, his reform initiatives led to first opposition within the party, notably from Egor Ligachev who urged the media to underline the positive aspects of Soviet life (Harris 2004: 33).

Dissatisfied with the limited socio-economic progress of *uskorenie* by 1986, the political leadership adopted the reforms of *glasnost*'. On the face of it this move was not itself in conflict with the system, since *glasnost*' was enshrined in traditional Soviet (and even Tsarist) political language.⁶ Nevertheless, the move indicated the leadership's commitment to reform. An open media was meant to serve as barometer for discerning public concerns through open

⁵ Andropov was born in 1914 and Chernenko in 1911, whereas Gorbachev was born in 1931.

⁶ *Glasnost*' has a history in Soviet and Russian thought and was ubiquitous in public by 1987 (Sallnow 1989: 38).

discussions of current socio-political problems. Journalists began formulating more critical questions in official newspapers and granting space to dissenting points of view. Alongside party members, historians, and the public, they began to criticise Stalinism, a move which illustrated the incipient diversification of the public sphere.⁷

(2) *Change unlike what came before* (February 1986 – March 1988): The XXVII Congress opened on the symbolically significant 25 February 1986.⁸ Gorbachev tested the boundaries of constituent parts of party symbolism, though still without abandoning them. He acknowledged that society was in a stage of developed socialism and integrated this “qualitative transformation” with the basic pillars of Soviet ideology: Marxism-Leninism, the vanguard role of the working class leading the peasantry and the intelligentsia, the historical foundation of the October revolution, and a reiteration of the main goal of the 1961 party programme, i.e. the construction of a communist society (1987d). Despite such continuities, this Congress differed by calling upon citizens to contribute to the political course. Innumerable newspaper readers’ letters testify to their responsiveness (Bridger and Riordan 1992).

Following the Congress, journalists and readers discussed new topics. Drug abuse, the deteriorating quality of health care, general “moral decay,” or the ubiquitous generational disintegration illustrated the depth of the crisis. In April 1986 the Soviet press failed to report on the Chernobyl disaster, and the leadership failed to react, which highlighted the need for a more open and vigorous media and pulled young people, for instance in Ukraine, into

⁷ Stalin critical author Yevgeny Evtushenko published his poem “Fuku!” in *Novyi Mir*, even praised in a *Pravda* editorial, keeping in mind that Evtushenko was arrested in 1937 as an enemy of the people: “... V ocheredi za nadezhdoi”, in: *Pravda*, 12.01.1986.

⁸ The 30th anniversary of Khrushchev’s first de-Stalinisation speech, not retained by Soviet media: Stage is set for Gorbachev the Great Reformer, in: *The Times*, 24.02.1986.

opposition politics (Kenney 2002: 124-6).⁹ In Pravda Gorbachev emphasised: “[T]here is nothing stronger than the force of public opinion, when it can be put into effect. And it can be put into effect only in conditions of criticism, self-criticism, and broad public openness.”¹⁰

By January 1987 the political leadership extended the meaning of “democratisation” to include “popular energy”. This broadening conveyed a commitment to achieve a new type of society and provided encouragement for politically involved actors. Democracy included new meanings and patterns of actions which caused direct elite resistance (Gill 2011: 224). During this phase, the meaning of political symbols became obscure. The 70th anniversary of the October Revolution illustrated this blurring. Gorbachev stressed the importance of learning from the past while also proposing “revolution” as a means for overcoming the past (1988a). He also offered a fresh view of Stalin who “made an incontestable contribution to the construction of socialism but also committed gross political errors and abuses” (1988b).

(3) *Change and contestation* (March 1988 – Spring 1989): Boris Kagarlitsky underlined the intensity of the summer of 1988 (1990: 1-30). The CPSU’s XIX Party Conference in June 1988 developed radical reforms of the political system and a new institutionalised political framework, anticipating decisions the Central Committee would take in May 1989.¹¹ Moreover, ethno-national tensions mounted to confrontations unprecedented in their magnitude and level of violence, first and foremost between Armenians and Azeris (Beissinger 2002: 74). The “October myth” about the unity of the multinational society

⁹ E.g.: “9-ya studiia”. O chem napominaet chernobyl’, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 27.05.1986.

¹⁰ Glasnost’ sorevnovaniya, in: Pravda, 04.08.1986.

¹¹ E.g. competitive secret ballot elections, limited tenure for office holders, new legislative, and executive structures.

seemed in question. Nina Andreeva's letter "Ne mogu postupat'sya printsipami" [I Cannot Forsake My Principles] highlighted some voices of opposition to Gorbachev's reforms.¹²

By late 1988 Gorbachev declared that perestroika had entered a second phase requiring a different political strategy (1989b, 1989c) in light of disastrous economic performance following reforms (Harris 2004: 57). Although Gorbachev affirmed that perestroika continued the October Revolution, expanding pluralism cast doubt on its foundational elements. In particular the leading role of the monolithic party and its capacity to represent society's manifest diversity were in dispute. The populace, mid-ranking regime functionaries, and increasingly independent politicians reshaped the meanings of the Soviet order's central symbols in this hybridity. Some changes were incompatible with older Soviet narratives (Gill 2011: 235): evaporation of traditional ideological cornerstones, recognition of legitimate differences within society, different forms of property in the economy. In the lead-up to the elections of the Congress of People's Deputies in May 1989, when a significant number of party officials were defeated, new political, cultural, and electoral opportunities led to countrywide mobilisation (Kagarlitsky 1990: 5).

(4) *Change and decline* (Spring 1989 – Spring 1991): The collapse of Eastern European communism had a transformative impact on the USSR (Kramer 2011), and the 1990 amendment of the 6th clause of the Soviet Constitution on the leading role of the Party opened fresh opportunities for mass electoral mobilisation. Independent parties emerged, as the Communist Party was no longer the "leading and guiding force of the Soviet society". The loss of its principal role in political decision-making reduced the party to a merely administrative body. The dogmatic interpretation of socialism vanished, notwithstanding an

¹² The Leningrad teacher's letter, published 13.03.1988, remained without reaction for three weeks and caused popular concerns about a reversal of *glasnost*: Printsipy perestroiki: revolyutsionnost' myshleniya i deystviy, in: Pravda, 05.04.1988.

official commitment to socialism. Political leaders' interventions fuelled the omnipresence of *krizis*.¹³

The institutionalisation of social movements in popular fronts or political parties gradually marginalised politically involved youth. In the tumult of the Soviet Union's collapse, youth was no longer central. Cross-generational movements such as *Memorial* gained in visibility towards the end of 1989 (Adler 1993), and political elites were the ones who negotiated the final transition. However, the emancipation of youth before the onset of perestroika is critical for understanding the later developments. After having first been turned into a central political subject, youth turned into a political object during the state collapse. The XVIII Party Congress in July 1990 adopted its programmatic declaration "Towards a Humane, Democratic Socialism," acknowledging that the party and society were in a profound crisis which precipitated the formal dissolution of the USSR in 1991 (Plokhy 2014).

YOUTH: THE VANGUARD OF SOCIALIST PROGRESS

Given its demographic weight after the Civil War, youth was crucial for the Bolsheviks' future Soviet society. The revolutionary leadership aimed at representing itself as a new generation, irrespective of its biological age. Youth thereby became more than a transitory phase between childhood and adulthood; it turned into a disputed symbolic space. This space, as Kuhr-Korolev argues, united competing visions of a socialist utopia with the radical ideas of cultural transformation of the 1920s (2005: 323). Comparable with the French Revolution of 1789, the establishment of a new discursive order in the Soviet Union that consolidated under Stalin characterised the early post-revolutionary period (Yurchak 2005: 49).

¹³ Gorbachev captures this contingency in: *Energiyu molodezhi – delu perestroika*, in: *Pravda*, 16.11.1989.

In this new discursive order, the working class was the paramount source of economic innovation and social progress, embodying the “new Soviet person”. This working class had youthful (male and female) vigour. The famous statue “Rabochii i kolzhovnitza” [Worker and Communal Farm Woman] summarised the Soviet Union’s self-image. Made in 1936 by Vera Mukhina and originally designed for the Soviet pavilion at the Paris International Exhibition 1937, it was eventually placed at the entrance of the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition. A male worker and a female collective farmer over 25 meters tall are depicted, jointly holding a hammer and a sickle above their heads. Both are young, committed to their cause, and determined to achieve their aims. This statue is emblematic of works designed for public reception and reiterates the outstanding importance of youth in carrying the October Revolution forward, whether working on collective farms, fighting in the war, advancing the socialist cause, or bringing peace.¹⁴

But despite all the hymns of praise, the USSR suffered from generational tensions. A collective of authors published “On the Question of the Two Generations” in 1924. The article manifested such tensions as the authors fiercely disputed diverging interests between generations.¹⁵ In the early Soviet Union inequalities due to economic scarcity and competition also favoured male adults over young people and women (Koenker 2001: 807), contributing to distinct political interests of youth (Neumann 2012: 283).

Whereas the “Great Patriotic War” consolidated the image of heroic (male and female) youth contributions to fighting fascism, cracks in the Leninist portrait became more pronounced after Stalin’s death in 1953. Independent youth activism gained momentum and visibility (Fürst 2010: 343): “It was a time of greater intellectual freedom and the emergence of

¹⁴ Komsomol member Zoya Kosmodem’yanskaya was amongst the most famous war-time heroes, considered the Soviet Joan of Arc and said to have died in a German prison camp with the words “It is happiness to die for my people.” and “Stalin is with us.” (Sartori 1995: pp. 182).

¹⁵ K voprosu o dvukh pokoleniyakh, in: Pravda, 01.01.1924.

independent literary and arts associations” (Pilkington 1994: 50). The best known of these currents are the *stilyagi*,¹⁶ whose visibility the polemics in the press grossly amplified (Edele 2002). The media featured debates about nonconformist youth behaviour, with complaints relating, *inter alia*, to “speculation with clothes”¹⁷ and youth presenting itself as intellectuals in Western outfits.¹⁸ Such debates contrasted with Soviet publications, which presented an image of harmonious generational succession: “From their early childhood, the boys and girls of the Soviet Union are grateful to the Soviet system for their happy life and for the opportunities they have of enhancing their knowledge. This is not propaganda” (Sorokin 1971: 53).

Under Khrushchev, major economic projects and the introduction of decentralising *sovnarkhoz* [Regional Economic Council] were important aspects of young people’s reality (Kibita 2013). Publicity aimed at involving youth during the 1950s and 1960s and the supposed success of these campaigns turned into future references. Young people also served an important role for cultural diplomacy in those years: carefully selected and prepared youth travelled to the West in official organisations (Kozovoi 2011: 222).

The Komsomol institutionalised youth.¹⁹ Fürst illustrates, however, that even during Stalin’s repression, youth was never as obedient to the Komsomol as political leaders claimed (2002). Despite distinct organisations, the Marxist ideology forbade a separate youth culture: everyone was supposed to share the socialist way of life and youth had to be integrated in a harmonious generational succession. Hence it was crucial for the leadership to ideologically

¹⁶ Groups of young people which emerged during late Stalinism and united around an unusual Western style of clothing; for an introduction see Litvinov (2009).

¹⁷ The speculation refers to the selling of allegedly Western clothes: Pozor turneyadtsam! Rabochie ‘Krasnogo Vyborshitsa’ sudyat podyrya i spekulyanta, in Komsomol’skaya Pravda, 04.09.1960.

¹⁸ Frenk Soldatki – mestnyi chuzhezemts, in Komsomol’skaya Pravda, 25.08.1960.

¹⁹ Officially “Vsesoyuznyi Leninskii Kommunisticheskii Soyuz Molodezhi (VLKSM)” [All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth]. For readability I use the conventional abbreviation.

purify young people; generational conflict would question the proclaimed logic of historical development. The public ignored or ridiculed the small fraction of problematic youth. This practice created a rigid discursive setting, unable to integrate the social realities of *glasnost*, which exhibited the heterogeneity of actual youth. Incapable of reinventing itself, Soviet discourse about youth crumbled around 1988, even before the political union.

The crisis of Soviet society was particularly pronounced for youth. Since 1979 it had participated in a devastating war in Afghanistan which raised new questions about the political system and undermined the Komsomol's legitimacy. This was an important development since in the 1980s the institution was, with around 42 million members,²⁰ amongst the largest in the USSR but at the same time one of the least liked.²¹

THE DISCURSIVE CONTEXTS OF YOUTH MOBILISATION

This section discusses the discursive rules governing the meanings of youth in the Soviet Union between 1984 and 1991. I explore how the practices formed by these rules constituted “youth” and analyse how “the constructed” responded to, internalised, and thereby reshaped this discursive setting. The heavily censored media and historically accumulated self-censorship constituted an effective constraint for every actor in Soviet public discourse (Pasti 2005). But during *glasnost* the press evolved quickly and by using its freedom regained popular respect (Milojković-Djurić 1991: 53): “People are stealing magazines from the mailboxes because they are so eager to read them.”²² Circulation of all major newspapers

²⁰ Molodym idti dal'she, in: Izvestiya, 08.07.1984.

²¹ Sotsiologicheskoe issledovanie. Peremeny v politicheskom soznanii, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 17.02.1990.

²² Moscow Summit: President Charms Students, But His Ideas Lack Converts, in: The New York Times, 01.06.1988.

increased (Bridger and Riordan 1992: 4-6) and readers' letters illustrated the nascent public debate.²³ These developments culminated in Gorbachev's 1990 press law granting everyone the right to set up a newspaper, at least in principle (Tolz 1992). The role media played had changed from party propaganda to instruments of democratisation (Zassourskij 2004: 222-29). Nonetheless, some changes were superficial given persistent self-censorship and owners' interference in the editorial process (McNair 1991: 49).

The newspaper sample (Table 4.1) captures the manifold nature of discourse in this context. Other papers could have been chosen and I included articles that achieved relevance beyond their initial medium, i.e. when newspaper articles or academics made reference to them. Nevertheless, this selection is varied and broadly representative.²⁴

		Genre	
		Quality	Mass Media
Attitude	Conservative	Izvestiya	Pravda
	Progressive	Literaturnaya Gazeta	Argumenty i Fakty

Table 4.1: Perestroika: Newspapers

- *Izvestiya*: founded during the 1917 February Revolution it expressed the views of the Soviet government. Less ideologically pronounced than other official publications and read primarily by intellectuals and academics.
- *Literaturnaya Gazeta*: established during the 19th century and later became the Union of Soviet Writers' official organ. Discussed socio-political issues during *glasnost*, with intellectuals expressing their views.

²³ Not only did the quantity of letters increase but, many were no longer anonymous, no matter how critical they were (Cerf et al. 1990: 19-20).

²⁴ Ogonek might have been an interesting complement (Lovell 1996), but a first reading indicated similarities to *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and *Argumenty i Fakty*.

- *Pravda*: official voice of the Party and compulsory reading for members, easily available for a wide audience, circulation of 11 million (Roxburgh 1987: 55).
- *Argumenty i Fakty*: critical paper founded in 1978 with an important role for public debate during perestroika; achieved a circulation of more than 33 million in 1990.

In total I identified 1,323 articles of which 276 were manually coded, with a total of 6,203 codes attributed. The theme of youth was particularly prominent in *Argumenty i Fakty* and was present to a roughly equal extent amongst the three other newspapers (Figure 4.1).

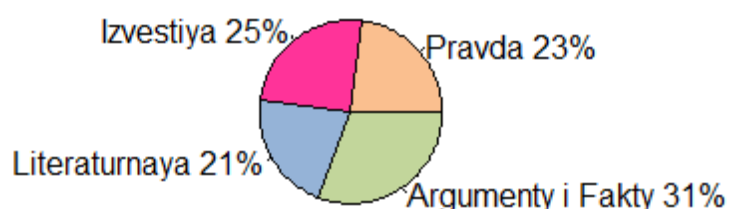


Figure 4.1: Perestroika: Newspaper Breakdown

Corpus Overview		Time Period	
Total Population	1.323	01.02.1984	Start
Theoretical Sample	264	31.08.1991	End
Effective Sample	276		
Number of Codings	6.203		

Table 4.2: Perestroika: Corpus

Social issues and education dominate the topics relating to youth (Figure 4.2) and became increasingly varied during *glasnost*. The prominence of articles about “things foreign” and comparisons of other countries with the USSR stand out. *Pravda*, for instance, emphasised that youth in Algeria had nothing to do in its spare time²⁵ and *Izvestiya* that West-German youth was a victim of unemployment.²⁶ *Argumenty i Fakty* made the most prominent use of such comparisons, featuring topics like youth unemployment in capitalist countries, the

²⁵ Kak “ubit” svobodnoe vremya?, in: *Pravda*, 05.08.1988.

²⁶ Despite an emphasis on youth as a victim of unemployment, the journalist underlined its capacity to act: *Protestuyushchaya molodezh*, in: *Izvestiya*, 22.07.1987.

attempts of young Americans to convince President Reagan for reform,²⁷ or the social situation of British youth.²⁸

Such examples illustrate a media shift during *glasnost*. In 1984 the press emphasised the Soviet system's superiority when comparing with other countries, a stance which had disappeared by 1988. Journalists left it up to the reader to determine whether problems of Swedish or Algerian youth might have an equivalent at home. Such comparisons were explicit by 1989. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* addressed the question of education in Japan and voiced doubts about the future of Soviet society by suggesting parallels between the erosion of the social safety net in Japan and the USSR.²⁹

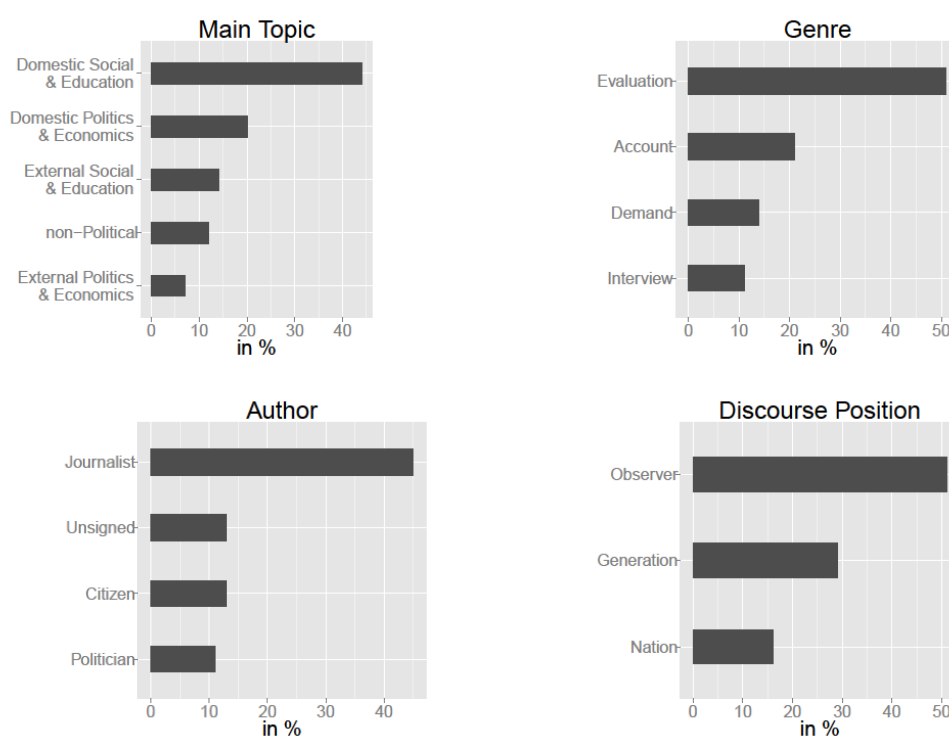


Figure 4.2: Perestroika: Corpus Structure

²⁷ Kapitalizm protiv cheloveka, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 02.10.1984.

²⁸ It appeared authentic written by Keith Klark, Moscow correspondent for the “Morning Star”: SSSR – Glazami inostrantsev, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 01.01.1986.

²⁹ Shkola XXI veka, in: Literaturnaya Gazeta, 31.05.1989.

Political and economic issues are furthermore associated with speaking about youth. Prior to *glasnost* these comprised the heroic involvement of youth in agriculture and various past or present economic projects.³⁰ With the erosion of the Komsomol's authority, public debate evolved. The press increasingly questioned the Komsomol's current role and future tasks, contrasting its present state with the glorious imaginary past that the organisation evoked. But criticism of the Komosmol was initially accompanied by defences, even in progressive media.³¹

Non-political articles frequently revolve around cultural topics, expressing a desire to regulate youth. Journalists underlined the need to control the evolution of tastes in fashion.³² Other topics included young people's fascination with films³³ or interviews with musicians.³⁴ With the expansion of *glasnost*, young people's attraction to heavy metal groups could also be acknowledged.³⁵

Many of the articles about youth contain evaluations; that is, most articles implied value judgements, with only a few restricting themselves to descriptions. Politicians and readers whose letters were printed primarily expressed demands. These demands often reflected concerns and hopes about current developments amongst youth. Journalists wrote almost half of all the articles. Besides categorising authors by professional labels, authors are also identified by their discursive positions. Some journalists spoke from a generational (20%, primarily adult) or national-collective (14%) position, but a majority of articles were written

³⁰ S imenem Lenin, in: Pravda, 12.06.1984; Kogda molodeet kolkhoz in: Izvestiya, 09.02.1984; Molodye sily nauki in: Argumenty i Fakty, 23.07.1985.

³¹ Chemu uchit' opyt puchshikh, in Pravda, 02.08.1984.

³² Mnenie spetsialista. Molodezhnaya moda segodnya i zavtra, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 01.07.1986.

³³ Kakie fil'my lyubym yunye, in: Literaturnaya Gazeta, 14.08.1985.

³⁴ With the front singer of *Ariel* [Ariel] about Soviet rock, its successful export to capitalist countries, and importance for socialist upbringing Vasha muzyka optimistichna, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 23.07.1985.

³⁵ Kul'tivirovanie rok-muzyki, bezyslovno, "podogrevaet" strasti, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 14.03.1987.

from a discourse position qualifying as observer (66%). This category also captures the unsigned articles and indicates traces of the authoritative language in Soviet media. Without clear authorship and/or written in a distant manner, such unsigned articles presented undisputable knowledge rather than information. Newspapers printed a high number of readers' letters, a striking number of authors were therefore ordinary citizens. Their most common discursive position is that of a generation (83%) and demonstrates that generational disintegration encouraged citizens to act. Politicians spoke primarily for the Soviet collective (50%), but also as a generation (40%), emphasising the need to bring different generations together to confront current challenges.

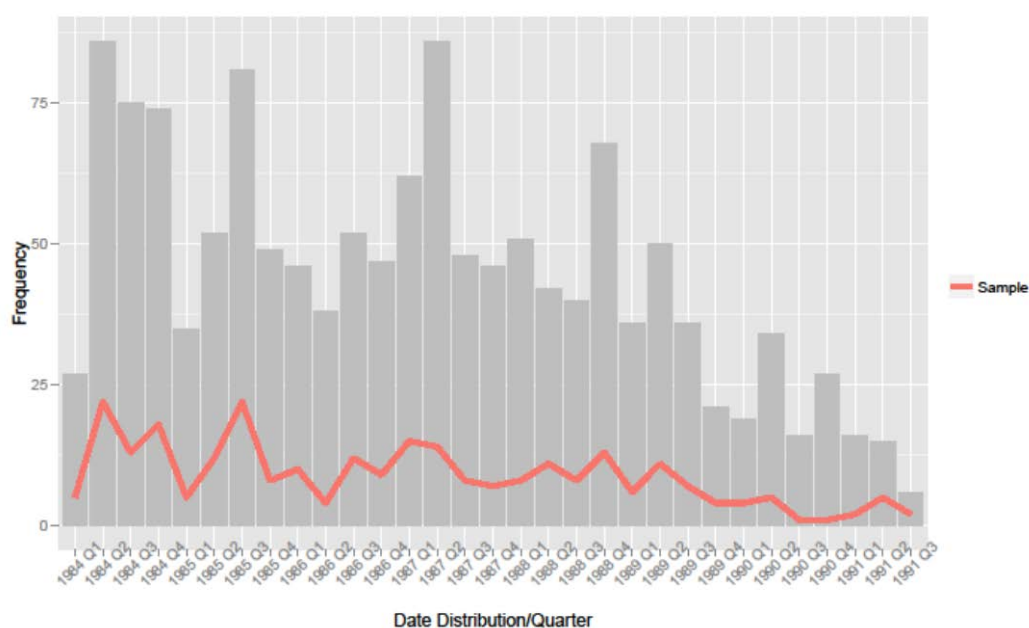


Figure 4.3: Perestroika: Corpus Article Frequency

I argue that youth-initiated political mobilisation challenged the discursive rules about youth and the political regime more fundamentally. Youth's mobilisation progressively broadened during perestroika to include other groups. Youth gradually disappeared as a distinct, politically relevant group, a fact which the temporal composition of the corpus (Figure 4.3), i.e. the frequency of articles about youth over time, underlines. Gradually, youth no longer

mobilised specifically as youth. Contestation eventually became a general phenomenon before political elites precipitated the regime collapse.

Discursive Formations: Disintegrating Truths

The modularity division of the discourse network suggests a split into five communities (Figure 4.4): three large discursive formations which are central for the following explorations, along with two small residual groups (Figure 4.5).³⁶ The opacity of discourse makes clear-cut distinctions between these formations unrealistic and the plot reflects this. Not only are there links *within* each modularity class, but there are also many links *between* classes, pointing to those nodes which structure the overall discourse. The community division guides the qualitative analysis since each discursive formation captures a particular way of speaking about youth.

The formation coloured in purple revolves around the idea of a victimised youth which also might constitute a threat to the established order. The second formation, coloured in turquoise, emphasises youth's special status and its heroic role in constructing the future socialist society, which echoes the Leninist discourse on youth so influential throughout Soviet history. Lastly, a third formation can be distinguished within the network, coloured brown, which relates to youth being an autonomous actor, but one which acted in accordance with propagated socialist values.

The visualisation of the network shows that the SOVIET-LENINIST and AUTONOMOUS discursive formations are densely connected and overlap with each other. The VICTIM & THREAT formation is slightly more scattered and is linked with nodes in

³⁶ The introduction provides a detailed methodological discussion. The modularity score is 0.217.

the two residual formations. These links may indicate that a more diverse discourse revolved around this new idea.

A number of bridging-concepts provide coherence to the overall discourse as they unite what would otherwise be disconnected parts. The PRESENT, which reflects the understanding of contemporary issues, becomes revealing when looked at in combination with the temporal rhythms. In other words, is the present understood as a RUPTURE or a CONTINUITY with the PAST and FUTURE? Looking at the individual newspapers, in the conservative, pro-government *Izvestiya* and *Pravda* the majority of authors framed the present as part of a continuous socialist *Erfahrungsraum*. In light of the contemporary crisis, they displaced the communist salvation to the FUTURE. On the other hand, the regime-critical newspapers *Literaturnaya Gazeta* or *Argumenty i Fakty* emphasised that the PRESENT was a RUPTURE with the PAST.

A POSITIVE image of youth structures the overall discourse. Notwithstanding the crumbling legitimacy of the Komsomol, overall, youth was presented as a decisive societal force. Its anticipated heroic involvement in the construction of socialism and its importance for holding society together characterised its publicly created image.



Figure 4.4: Perestroika: Discourse Network

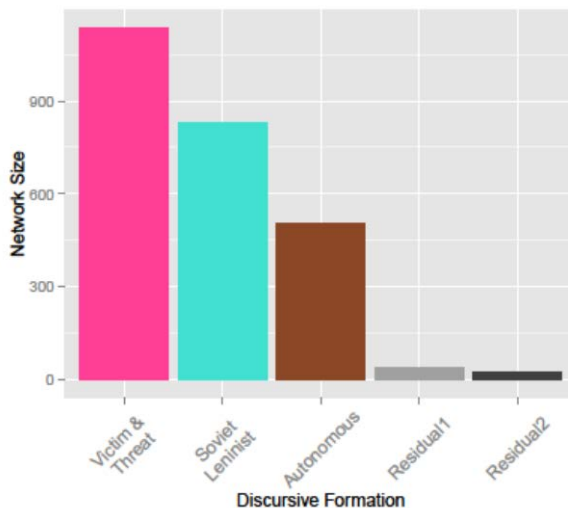


Figure 4.5: Perestroika: Size of Modularity Classes

The temporal dynamics of the discursive formations are also revealing (Figure 4.6). The temporal mean of each formation lies in the first half of the period analysed and the mean is

always larger than the median. The frequency of articles about youth that follow the rules of each discursive formation therefore declines over time. Comparing the three formations highlights, moreover, that the SOVIET-LENINIST formation peaks earlier than the VICTIM & THREAT discourse which is more prominent at a later point during perestroika.

These general remarks provide the background for the following exploration of individual discursive formations. The aim is to compare the rules which underlay the way youth was socially constructed in public discourse with how youth mobilised for political ends. The different discursive formations are made of conflicting regularities which are tied to how youth mobilised during perestroika. I argue that we can only properly understand the process of youth mobilisation by taking into account changes in the discursive context. The analysis shows that the temporal dynamics across two divergent discursive formations underpins the meaning and the mobilisation of youth in the late Soviet Union, a dynamic which refines our understanding of the processes surrounding the USSR's breakdown.

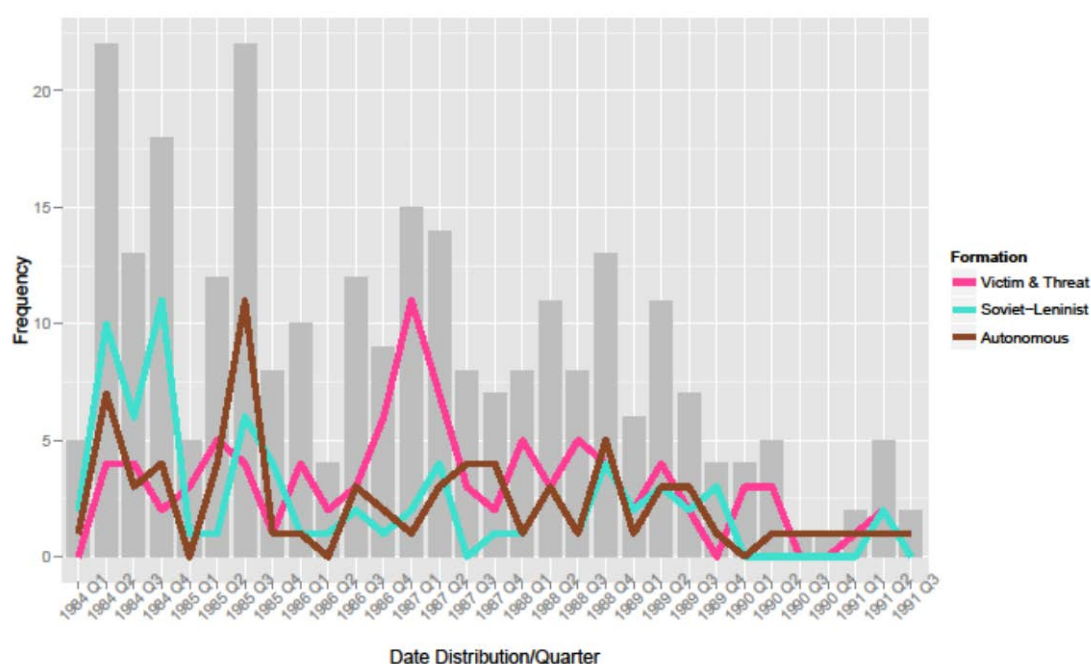


Figure 4.6: Perestroika: Frequency per Modularity Class

THE KOMSOMOL AND THE SOVIET-LENINIST YOUTH DISCOURSE

Na plechi molodezhi lozhitsya ogromnaya otvetstvennost'. Otvetstvennost' za stranu, za sudby sotsialisma, za mirnoe budushchee vsei chelovecheskoi tsivilisatsii.

On the shoulders of young people lies an enormous responsibility – for the country, for the fate of socialism, and for humanity's peaceful future.³⁷

On the eve of perestroika, Chernenko reminded the Komsomol of its historic task. As “reliable reserve for the Party” the Komsomol had to actively assist “in the communist education of the younger generation in the struggle for the triumph of the ideals of communism”.³⁸ The organisation, according to Chernenko, “guaranteed the continuity of the revolutionary generation in a socialist society”.³⁹ Ritualised language, the continuity from Chernenko to Gorbachev, had meaning for individuals and maintained the Soviet ideology. Perestroika-era sociologists also highlighted the ritualised dimension of participation (Sundiev 1987: 58). The importance of the Komsomol for the socialisation of Soviet youth made participation and replication of its rules a rite of passage into adulthood:

The uniqueness of the late-socialist context lay in the fact that those who ran the Komsomol [...] understood perfectly well that the constative dimension of most ritualized acts and texts had become reinterpreted from its original meaning. [...] Eventually the replication of the fixed and normalized forms of discourse became an end in itself, and the constative meanings of these discursive forms became increasingly unimportant. (Yurchak 2005: 25-26)

Already before perestroika the legitimacy of the Komsomol's socialising ritual eroded. Youth began to leave the organisation as it lost faith in the performative reproduction of these social rules. Youth had joined the Komsomol to reproduce the ritualised acts of the institution. Their constative meanings, whether they were good or bad, true or false, are misleading ideas for understanding participation. However, after the fall of the Soviet Union the concept of

³⁷ M.S. Gorbachev, *Molodezh' – tvorcheskaya sila revolyutsionnogo obnovleniya*, in: *Pravda*, 17.04.1987.

³⁸ *O dal'neishem uluchshenii partiinogo rukovodstva komsomolom i povyshenii ego roli v kommunisticheskom vospitanii molodezhi*, in: *Pravda*, 07.07.1984.

³⁹ Cf. FN [20].

dvusmyslennost' [double think] became prominent in analyses of Soviet society. Levada argued that citizens opposed official norms internally while voluntarily submitting to them in public (2011: 64). During perestroika sociologists drew on this idea to understand participation in the Komsomol: "A similar *dvoistvennost'* [duplicity] of conduct in the context of tight social control (family, school, university) gives rise to a double standard of evaluations." *Dvoistvennost'* explained the emotional disorder of youth, who were struggling with contradictions between public and private behaviour (Sundiev 1987: 58).

It would be simplistic to consider participation in the Komsomol to be a fake. The Komsomol's legitimacy eroded during perestroika because youth lost faith in the performative reproduction of these social rules. The rigidity of the discursive rules about youth clashed with the dynamics of change. Despite efforts to maintain the discursive rules, this tension gradually called into question the Komsomol's symbolic claim to embody the future as well as the past of Soviet society.

The Komsomol's loss of social and discursive legitimacy went hand-in-hand with the decline of the SOVIET-LENINIST discursive formation. This formation refers to ideas that had structured Soviet discourse since the 1920s, corresponding to the official vision of Soviet youth. It remained prominent during the early phase of perestroika but gradually faded in importance following the arrival of Gorbachev as head of the Communist Party and disappeared way before the Soviet Union's collapse (Figure 4.6).

The two conservative newspapers dominate this formation. Two-thirds of all articles originated from these two papers, contrasting with an equal distribution of newspapers in the overall sample (Figure 4.1). However, given the power of these discursive rules, articles even in progressive newspapers could not avoid following them.

The Soviet youth discourse dominated the pre- and early reform period. Discursive practices throughout the Soviet period had shaped these rigid rules and underpinned the symbolic importance of youth. The idea of a homogenous youth striving for the establishment of socialism characterises the SOVIET-LENINIST discursive formation. Given its central role in Soviet ideology, it framed youth as *PRECIOUS*, something to be nourished, protected, and requiring specific care. But I will argue that a close reading of individual utterances shows that this discourse was multifaceted even before Gorbachev rose to power. His reforms accelerated the manifestation of inconsistencies in this formation. This section explores the characteristics of the SOVIET-LENINIST formation while defending the argument that these rules initially succeeded in integrating contradictory elements.

The graphical representation of the discursive formation as a network (Figure 4.8) emphasises the crucial concepts for holding the network together. Most articles are linked to the formation's core concepts. These concepts shape the discursive formation's rules, expressed by their degree centrality (Figure 4.7). Other conceptual nodes are relevant for certain parts of the network. Codes like *DISCIPLINED* or *COURAGEOUS*, are placed at the margins since fewer articles make use of them. Even though they have low degree centralities, they illuminate the margins of this discursive formation. Betweenness centrality also provides important information about the nodes that structure the overall network. Within this formation the proportion of anonymous and unsigned articles is more than 30%, which emphasises the importance of unquestionable, de-personalised knowledge.

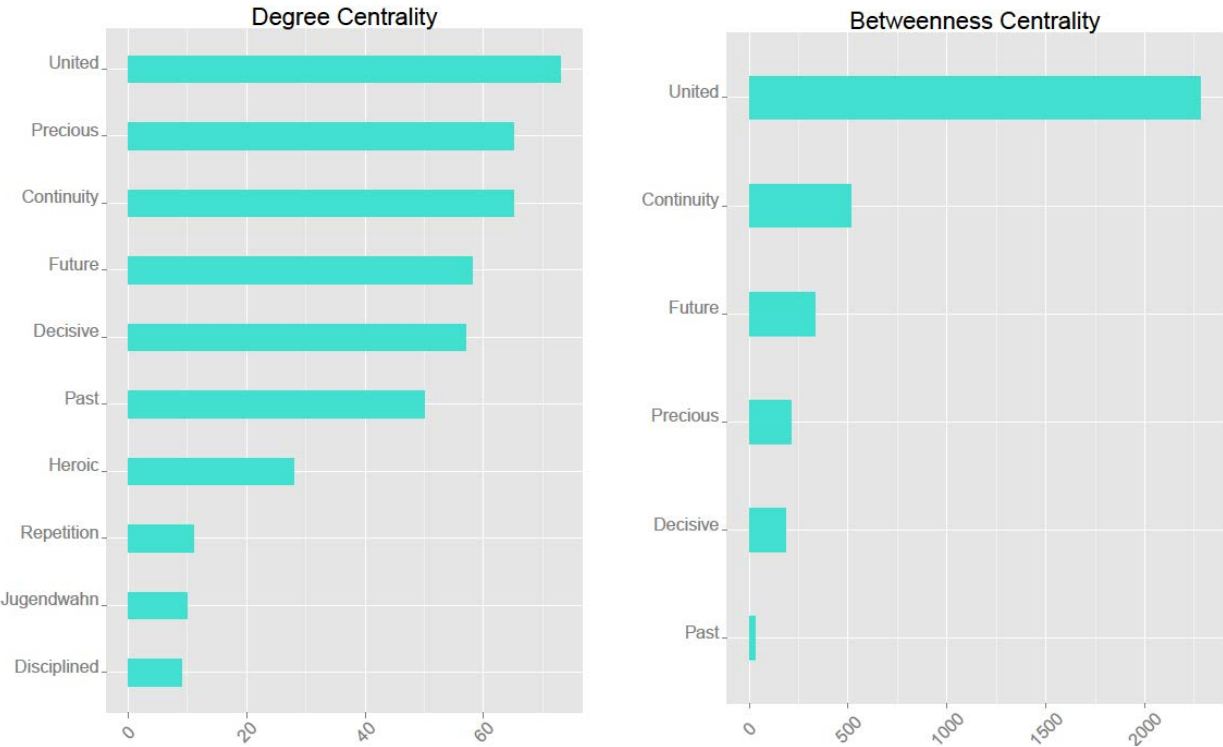


Figure 4.7: SOVIET-LENINIST: Centralities

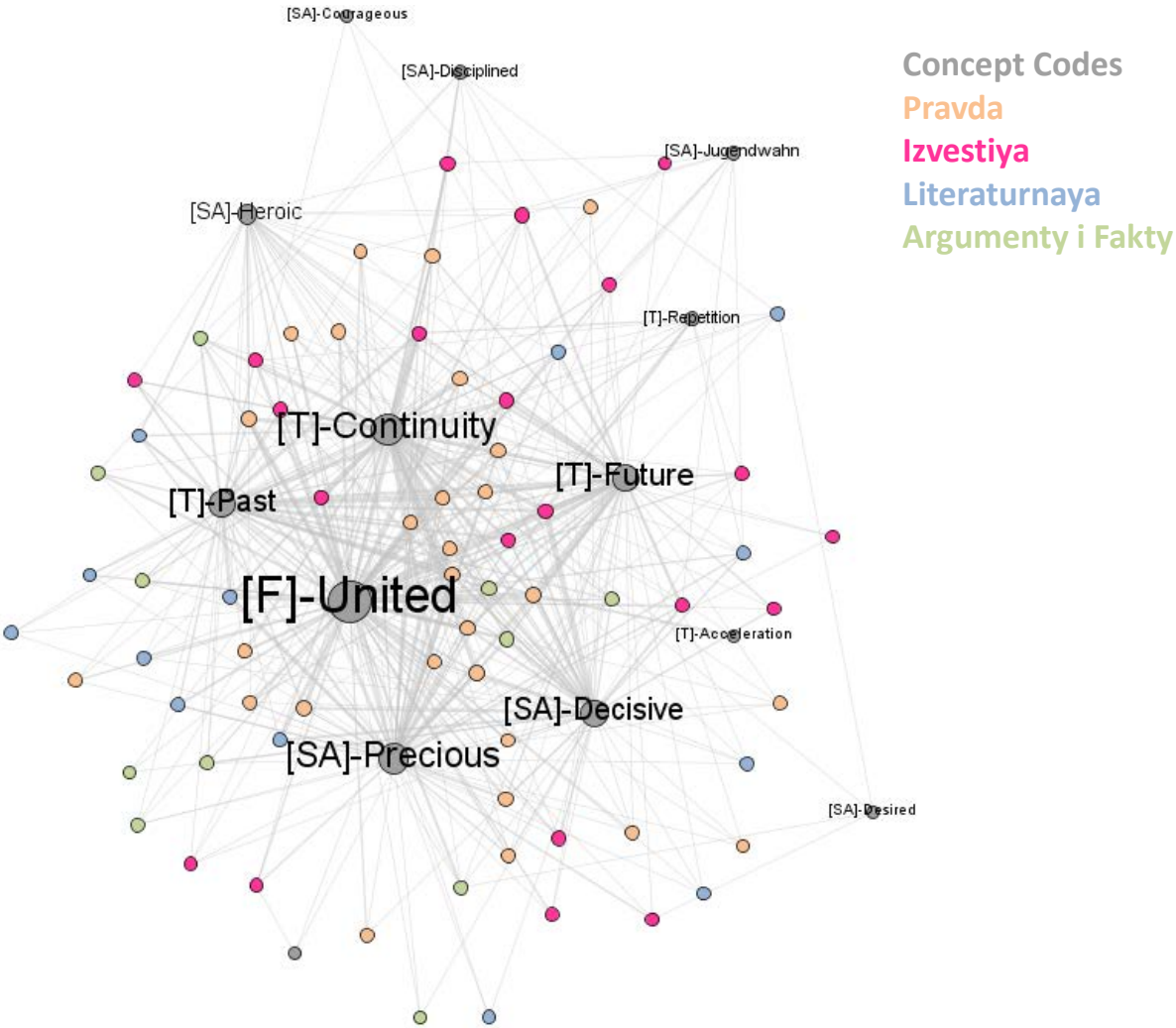


Figure 4.8: SOVIET-LENINIST: Discourse Network

Soviet Grandeur and Generational Continuity

Critical to the SOVIET-LENINIST formation was the collapsing of PAST and FUTURE into PRESENT. In other words, the two “absent” temporal dimensions extended the present. The press portrayed society in relation to visions of the future and anticipations of the communist future’s success justified present sacrifices. The relationship with the past was also significant, especially historic references to the October Revolution and the heroic effort during the *velikaya otechestvennaya voina* [Great Patriotic War].⁴⁰ Until the early phase of perestroika, the political leadership and the media coherently continued the “ritualised” rhetoric around the Komsomol through “performative reproduction” (Yurchak 2005: 25).

References to the past became popular once society critically examined long-established narratives of communist progression. Not knowing where Soviet society might head to, “looking back” became central for social self-reassurance. The war justified military-patriotic education to teach youth “feelings of love for the motherland and hatred for its enemies”.⁴¹ In the context of 1984, emphasising the decisive role youth played in past events, *Izvestiya* recalled and de-temporalised heroic memories. PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE collapsed:

The party and the people (*narod*) will remember the heroic deeds of the Komsomol for the protection of our national borders during the Civil and Great Patriotic War. For all generations of Soviet people, they will always serve as inspiring example of loyalty to the patriotic, military duty. It is sacred for our Komsomol army to preserve and continue the wonderful traditions of our fathers.⁴²

This nexus of “youth–triumphant victory” and “youth–selfless sacrifice for the people” fostered Soviet identity and shaped the public image of youth in the early 1980s (Zinoviev

⁴⁰ Despite all socio-political changes, opinion polls during perestroika indicate e.g. that Stalin’s role remained unchallenged by many young people (Davies 1989: 194).

⁴¹ *Vo vremya vrucheniya nagrody*, in: *Izvestiya*, 29.05.1984.

⁴² *Ibid.*

1983). Reiterated memories of large-scale economic projects linked youth throughout Soviet history with present youth.⁴³ Part of these discursive rules was the idea of an engaged youth: “At the machine, with the wheel of the combine harvester, in the science lab, millions of young people, showing the heroism of ordinary, everyday work, continue to chronicle the Komsomol’s glory.”⁴⁴ This sacralised the young generation within the Komsomol which competed with the party for the most important symbolic place.⁴⁵ Historic references and anniversaries bypassed current economic difficulties and instead underlined the importance of youth for alleged economic successes, since “almost half of all our scientific and technical intelligentsia are people younger than 30 years”.⁴⁶

The notion of generation was a conceptual cornerstone of the discursive formation. As argued in the introduction, the term expressed *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont*, it linked PRESENT to PAST, and, anticipating further developments, PRESENT to FUTURE. This association also introduced an important moral component in publically expressed social thought. Youth owed its comfort to the efforts of the older generation and was therefore indebted to them. Chernenko underlined this in 1984 to a Komsomol audience: “You, dear comrades, belong to a generation of Soviet people which [...] have unprecedented opportunities. You will be on the shoulders of achievements which, even yesterday, seemed like a fantasy.”⁴⁷

The celebration in 1984 of the 60th anniversary of the Komsomol’s founding allowed Izvestiya to showcase the natural and harmonious succession of generations. Every generation passed through the Komsomol, which “links the biography of all the generations of Soviet

⁴³ Party resolution: O dal’neishem uluchshenii partiinogo rukovodstva komsomolom i povyshenii ego roli v kommunisticheskom vospitanii molodezhi, in: Pravda, 07.07.1984.

⁴⁴ Cf. FN [20].

⁴⁵ Yunost’ rodiny - Komsomol, in: Izvestiya, 29.05.1984.

⁴⁶ Molodye sily nauki, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 23.07.1985.

⁴⁷ Cf. FN [41].

people”. The symbolic and physical integration of the institution into Soviet society was thus a serious concern.⁴⁸ During the 60th anniversary celebrations, *Izvestiya* reiterated the logic of social progress across generations, describing current youth as “the most educated in the entire post-October history of generations”.⁴⁹ The idea of generation and its link with the Soviet past and future expressed abstract Soviet ideology in terms of citizens’ everyday reality. “Generation” travelled to the workplace, and Chernenko emphasised in November 1984 that all generations needed to work jointly to improve socialism.⁵⁰

Constant repetition enshrined in public consciousness these main contours of the Soviet idea of youth. Generational narratives remained largely unchallenged, and they underpinned collective identities entwined with Soviet memory discourse. Literal repetition turned ideology into common knowledge, which existed as truth within the authoritative discourse, memorable for citizens, once stripped of its complexity. Throughout the first half of the 1980s, the party maintained the idea of a younger generation “in full force, with all its enthusiasm and passion for developing socialism”.⁵¹

Discussing the future assumed that it could be controlled by acting on youth and the educational system.⁵² Chernenko pulled PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE together. He emphasised, as Lenin had, that youth had to be forced to approach socialism, lest it end up on the wrong path in current times, simultaneously insisting that the “real characteristics of the distinctive features of modern youth” had to be understood. Eventually he projected youth

⁴⁸ Cf. FN [20].

⁴⁹ *Leninskii Komsomol*, in: *Izvestiya*, 28.10.1984.

⁵⁰ Chernenko s rukovoditelyami molodezhnykh organizatsii sotsialisticheskikh stran, in: *Izvestiya*, 06.11.1984.

⁵¹ Cf. FN [45].

⁵² Cf. FN [38].

into the future which would be better than the present thanks to the energy of youth for constructing socialism.⁵³

The Komsomol's practices had turned into ritualised acts devoid of mobilising potential well before perestroika, despite the persistence of discursive rules about a unified socialist youth. The everyday experience of youth in the Komsomol and their longing for new freedoms contrasted with the discursive rules drawn upon by utterances (Andreeva et al. 1989).

The Komsomol's Discursive and Social Delegitimisation

Cold War tensions increased with the Reagan administration (Garthoff 1994: 8-15). Soviet concerns about the West misleading youth through radio, books, magazines, and music augmented. Izvestiya maintained in 1984 that Komsomol-led education was vital "to help young men and women form a high ideological and moral-political culture, to produce strong immunity against the influence of bourgeois ideology, and any form of petty-bourgeois consumer psychology".⁵⁴ This task was possible thanks to the party's leadership, the "first condition and the most important guarantee of the continuity of the revolutionary generation".⁵⁵ The Komsomol extended the party's influence and Chernenko maintained that the energy of youth ought to be mustered "around the old guard".⁵⁶ The political leadership constructed an image of youth as **ENERGETIC** and **DECISIVE** but in need of guidance.

Waves of criticism of the Komsomol emerged under Brezhnev (Solnick 1998: 70). During early perestroika such criticisms included formalism and bureaucratic procedure without

⁵³ Cf. FN [41].

⁵⁴ Cf. FN [45].

⁵⁵ Cf. FN [20].

⁵⁶ Cf. FN [41]; the CPSU selflessly accepted this duty *Leninskii Komsomol*, in: *Izvestiya*, 28.10.1984.

questioning the institution as such.⁵⁷ But the expansion of such critiques indicated how the Soviet master discourse began to crack before Gorbachev rose to power. By June 1984, Pravda already acknowledged: “We cannot ignore that some of the young people are prone to dependency and sometimes waste time. In many ways, this is the result of flaws in the Komsomol.”⁵⁸ Youth questioned the Komsomol’s social rules, personal progression through replication of Soviet norms of order. Shows organised by the Komsomol were losing their appeal for youth, as Izvestiya recognised:

There is a certain discrepancy between the forms of work and the increased material and spiritual needs of youth. Komsomol organisations often remain aloof from the pressing problems that really trouble youth. [...] Formalism, paperwork, and bureaucracy are intolerable in any case. They are doubly, triply intolerable within the Komsomol.⁵⁹

When even official media began to openly question the way the institution was handled, the gulf between lived youth and its institutional embodiment became ever more apparent. Soviet political leaders acknowledged that the Komsomol was failing in its core missions, but excused this failure reflecting natural conditions, the “inherent desire of youth for the new”. Chernenko admitted: “the Komsomol committees, sometimes, stay away from the pressing problems that really excite youth” and subsequently asked the committees “to strengthen everyday concrete organisational and educational work, [...] to strengthen the link between the Komsomol workers and the masses of youth”.⁶⁰

The omnipresent talk of the Komsomol’s crisis made attempts to link past glories to the current situation of doom incoherent. The lives of young people contradicted their glorified

⁵⁷ Also in current Russia the memory of the Komsomol is very positive coming clear in Robin Hessman’s documentary “My perestroika” or in press coverage, e.g.: “Leninskii’ komsomol byl i ostaetsya molodym rezervom nashei revolyutsii”, in: Pravda, 29.10.2013; Primer geroev zobet k bor’be, in: Pravda, 31.10.2013.

⁵⁸ Tvoi zadachi, Komsomol, in: Pravda, 02.06.1984.

⁵⁹ Cf. FN [20].

⁶⁰ Cf. FN [45].

representations in the Soviet press, and by 1984 the party was suggesting improving Komsomol-provided education and mentoring since “some young people are characterised by work and social passivity, individualism, indiscipline and other negative traits”.⁶¹ Some journalists adopted a more critical stance and discussed for instance the significance of the death of young people during the *velikaya otechestvennaya voina* and the movie “Solo truby” (Trumpet’s Solo), which revolves around a family’s suffering after losing a son in the war.⁶² Prudent criticism touched upon the difficult integration of young veterans returning from the war in Afghanistan, which was, however, still framed within the overall heroic image of youth defending socialism abroad.⁶³

Representatives of the Komsomol attempted to oppose this disintegration and shifted the policy emphasis “from tedious meetings and pointless civic projects to such matters as improving scientific and professional training, construction of youth housing complexes, and improving treatment of veterans”.⁶⁴ Chernenko reiterated the heroic narrative of generational progress:

We have every reason to be proud of the Leninsky Komsomol of Soviet Youth. It is adequately manifest everywhere – at work, school, the military service. Young people honourably continue the work of the older generations, bravely taking the call of the party for solving the most important problems for the country.

Gorbachev himself was socialised through the Komsomol and fought to reverse dispersal. In 1987 he insisted on the organisation’s importance, equating participation with sense by bridging the contemporary feeling of crisis with anticipated decisive future roles for youth

⁶¹ Cf. FN [38].

⁶² Acknowledging the human tragedy, the movie nevertheless conformed to the official interpretation and accentuated the heroic contribution of families: Odin iz 20 000 000, in: Literaturnaya Gazeta, 11.02.1987.

⁶³ Za 1987 g. v afganistanie ordenom krasnoi zvezdy nagrazhdeno bolee 4 tyc. chelovek, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 12.03.1988.

⁶⁴ Soviet Youth League Falls on Difficult Times, in: The New York Times, 07.02.1988.

(1987b). The purpose of young people's engagement was thereby placed in the future which was intended to compensate for the lack of contemporary meaning. In June 1987 the 34-year old Viktor Mironenko was nominated as the Komsomol's General Secretary in an attempt to increase the organisation's appeal to young people.⁶⁵ His reforms included a reorganisation of its bureaucracy, finances, and relationship with local organisations, which gained in independence. Aimed at making local structures more responsive to local realities, the decentralisation led, instead, to opportunism by local agents and an inability of Moscow bureaucrats to control the periphery (Solnick 1998: 112-16). These reforms contributed to a power vacuum at the centre of the organisation, further harming its reputation and increasing incoherencies as local agendas diverged ever more widely from the centre.

Nevertheless, by 1988 reasons for replicating those social norms no longer convinced youth (including Mironenko's own son).⁶⁶ The meaning of participation had changed further by 1989 when Gorbachev demanded that young people no longer accept rules imposed "from the top" but critically examine them instead: youthful energy was central to perestroika (1989a). While this reiterated the SOVIET-LENINIST discourse, it amplified predispositions towards change and the critical atmosphere encouraged youth to join *neformaly* instead of the Komsomol. The organisation increasingly became an instruments of local members' personal interests and their expanded economic opportunities (Shubin 2006: 18).

The End of a Journey Downstream

The SOVIET-LENINIST discourse disintegrated during perestroika. The temporal composition of the formation (Figure 4.6) underlines that only a few articles followed the rules of this discursive formation after 1985. Even those utterances that followed the rules

⁶⁵ A radical rejuvenation compared to the 49-year old predecessor Boris Pastukhov.

⁶⁶ Cf. FN [64].

became gradually more critical, referring to the failure to meet youth demands for leisure⁶⁷ or problems related to housing.⁶⁸

Gorbachev's early statements rooted him in the SOVIET-LENINIST discourse. In 1985, for instance, he reminded the Politburo of the extraordinary role played by young people in the *Stakhanovite* movement:

[N]o matter the size of the historical task, it could never be solved without the active, energetic, and manifold participation of young people. And today, more than ever, it is important to make full use of the energy of the young generation for innovative solutions to the grand challenges facing our society.⁶⁹

Gradually, however, his tone became more critical. Mentioning formalism and disaffection of youth, he linked these observations to wider social problems. The Komsomol's malaise was thereby not exceptional but pointed to a fundamental imbalance in "the whole social atmosphere". As a solution he suggested bringing the party closer to society: "delo partii – delo naroda" [the cause of the party – the cause of the people]. In 1985, the discursive rules still maintained that the party was the most appropriate actor to resolve society's problems.

Gorbachev's speech at the 1987 Congress of the Komsomol, "Youth – The Creative Force for Revolutionary Renewal," combined inherited expectations with youth's new discursive and social reality.⁷⁰ He bridged the disintegrating discursive patterns and narrated Soviet history based on experiences of successive young generations – their involvement during the revolution and the Civil War, the *velikaya otechestvennaya voina*, and the post-war reconstruction. But after reiterating the rules of the SOVIET-LENINIST formation, he

⁶⁷ S zabotoi o podrostkakh, In: Pravda, 17.11.1985.

⁶⁸ Response to letter, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 03.12.1985.

⁶⁹ Nemerknushchie traditsii trudovogo podviga, in: Izvestiya, 21.09.1985, reprinted in (Gorbachev 1987a)

⁷⁰ Cf. FN [37].

turned to the Komsomol, complaining about its rhetoric and unnecessary bureaucracy describing it as a “grave and dangerous disease”. He went on:

Sometimes, in analysing the world of the Komsomol’s leaders, one gets the impression that *the masses of young people are moving on one side of the street and their leaders are moving on the other* and, furthermore, in *the opposition direction*. I think this is largely due to the general situation and atmosphere in the country. So we shall not lay the blame for everything on the young alone. [italics added]

This represented a major shift: “The Komsomol has no right to relieve itself of the responsibility for such a state of affairs.” Gorbachev mentioned mistakes in the “upbringing of youth,” notably that “we have been preaching too much to our young people” rather than discussing with them. His assessment illustrates how delegitimised the Komsomol had become and the incapacity of the political leadership to control supposedly pro-regime youth in times of regime breakdown. When youth was needed to uphold the regime’s legitimacy it refused to participate in ritualised performances any longer and thereby accelerated the system’s collapse.

IMAGINING YOUTH ABROAD TO SAVE THE KOMSOMOL: AUTONOMOUS YOUTH

Speaking about events abroad offered a continuous opportunity to depict youth as a VANGUARD: AUTONOMOUS, OPEN-MINDED, and INVOLVED. Throughout perestroika this formation maintained those discursive rules which no longer made sense in the context of the Soviet Union itself. The newspaper composition differs from the overall corpus with a dominance of Izvestiya (34%) and an underrepresentation of Literaturnaya Gazeta (15%).

This formation is comparatively small (Figure 4.5), expressing slightly marginalised hopes rather than a clearly distinguishable current in discourse or political youth mobilisation. The graphical representation illustrates that the formation is not densely connected (Figure 4.10) and the centralities (Figure 4.9) underlines that a large number of concept-nodes constitute the network, indicating the variety of this formation's discursive rules.

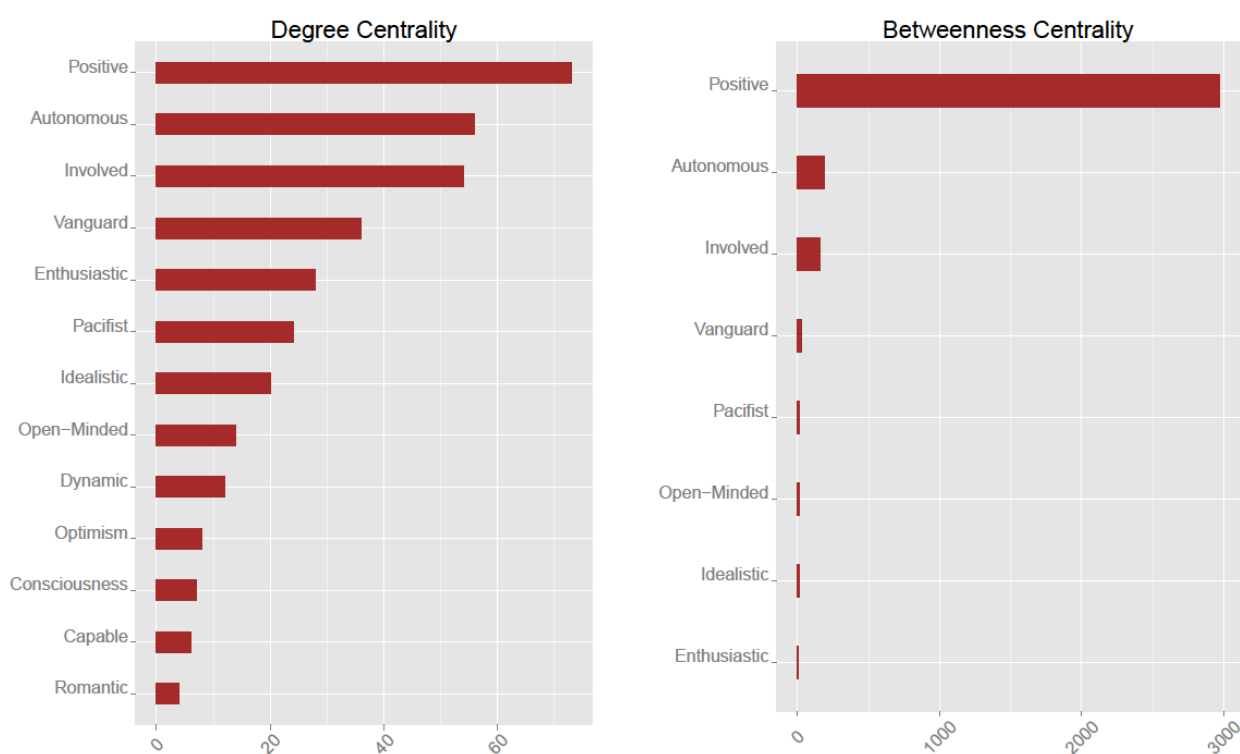


Figure 4.9: AUTONOMOUS: Centralities

The most important concepts are AUTONOMOUS, INVOLVED, and VANGUARD; the first two are critical for structuring the overall network. The temporal peak of this formation is later than the SOVIET-LENINIST one (Figure 4.6).

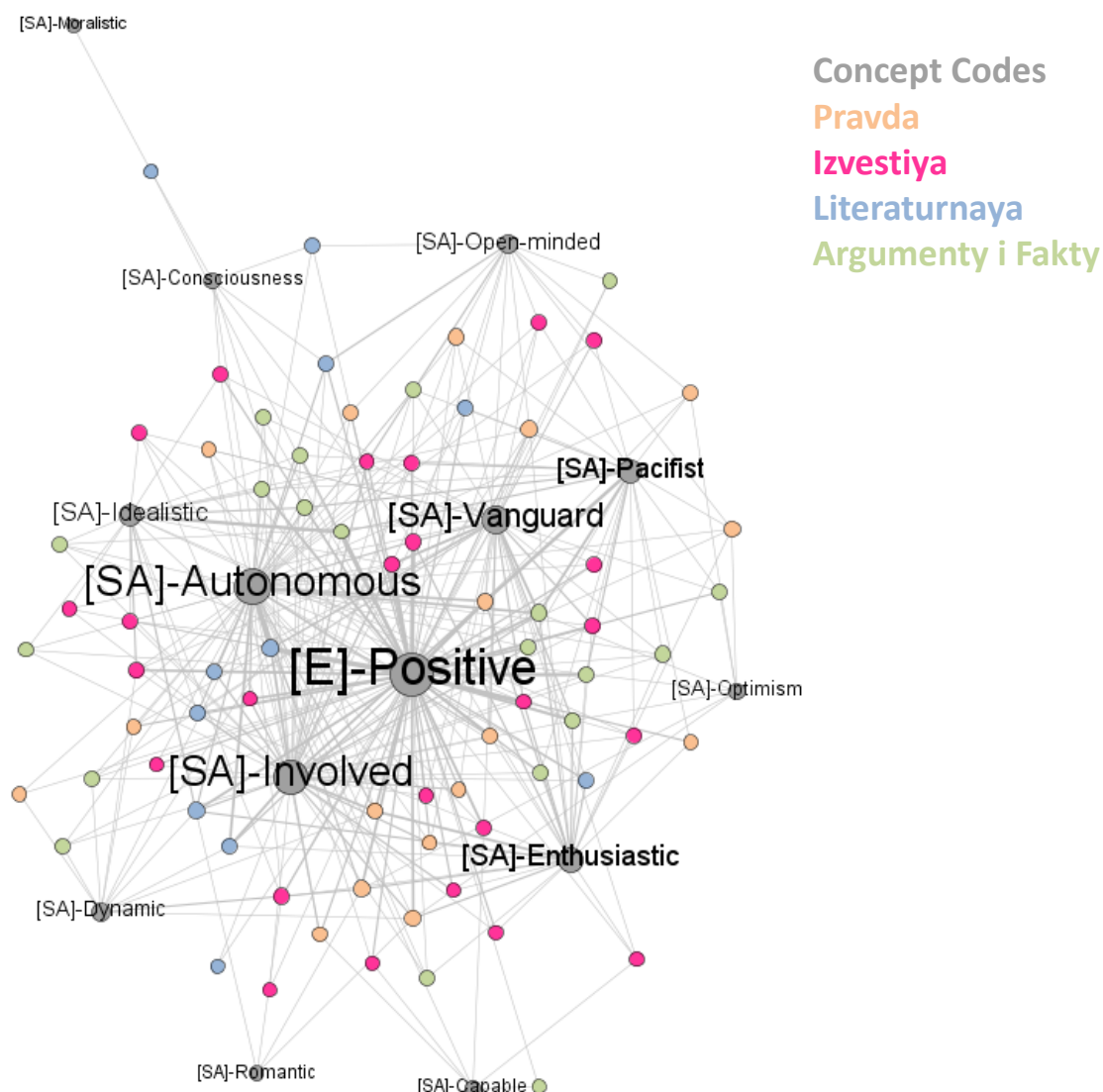


Figure 4.10: AUTONOMOUS: Discourse Network

Dreaming about Youth Abroad

The memory of the 1960s “student riots” in the West served as a key reference for expressing Soviet youth ideals. The riots symbolised the revolutionary character of youth as bearer of the truth but exploited by Western bourgeois democracies. Rebellion against this oppression “became one of the manifestations of the crisis not only of the bourgeois system of education but the capitalist system as a whole”. Resistance ranged from rejecting the capitalist culture of consumption through counter-culture to erecting barricades in the streets. Either way, the idealised memory of youth involvement expressed hopes for a “more humane way of life, one

that opens a wide scope for personal development”.⁷¹ Memory of youth resistance against the Vietnam War similarly served as proof of youth’s idealistic political involvement. Soviet media interpreted American youth as a preserver of memories about Vietnam which President Reagan suppressed to prepare the country for an intervention in Sandinistas Nicaragua.⁷²

Media also projected the idealised image of past youth onto contemporary youth in capitalist countries. *Izvestiya* spoke about French youth actively opposing “the bourgeois propaganda on reforms of the public sector education system”.⁷³ This narrative showed youth mobilising other generations, emphasising the might of youth-ignited mobilisation against capitalist oppression.

HEROIC and DYNAMIC youth also helped to develop Cold War rhetoric. The liberal *Argumenty i Fakty* emphasised in 1984 that youth in capitalist Germany was a moral leader since it protested against US “Pershing II” missiles in Swabia.⁷⁴ Youth in the “near abroad” also fed the Soviet imaginary. The phrase “Youth takes up the baton” praised the idealism of young Poles making contacts with peers in the USSR to solve social and political problems and to “participate fully and creatively to achieve a new state of socialist society”.⁷⁵ By suggesting this interpretation *Izvestiya* ignored the oppositional activity which had developed amongst youth in Poland and elsewhere in Eastern Europe (Kenney 2002: 168-75).

With perestroika unfolding, the gulf between these idealised pictures of youth abroad with the situation in the USSR became clear. The rules for speaking about youth abroad evolved accordingly. Speaking about Japanese youth, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* expressed concerns about

⁷¹ Litso “svobodnogo” mira, in: *Argumenty i Fakty*, 03.04.1984.

⁷² *Orientir*. O chem oni ne khotyat vspominat’, *Argumenty i Fakty*, 04.06.1984.

⁷³ *Sobytiya za rubezhom: Protest molodezhi*, in: *Izvestiya*, 28.04.1984.

⁷⁴ *Vek XX i mir*, in: *Argumenty i Fakty*, 13.11.1984.

⁷⁵ *Molodezh’ prinimaet estafetu*, in *Izvestiya*, 13.07.1988; similarly already in *Protestuyushchaya molodezh’*, in: *Izvestiya*, 22.07.1987.

their current rejection of the older generation. By 1989 journalists were implying that these problems also affected the USSR.⁷⁶

Saving the Komsomol from the Outside

In 1987 Gorbachev drew on ideas relating to youth abroad and transposed them to the domestic context in “Practical Actions to Deepen Perestroika”.⁷⁷ He emphasised the support and enthusiasm of youth for perestroika. As a real VANGUARD youth “does not need to be restructured (*perestraivat'sya*) but only readjusted (*nastraivat'*)”. CAPABLE youth was DECISIVE for social change but “ideological enemies” tried to subvert it. However, thanks to *glasnost* and freedom of discussion, youth could effectively combat this noxious influence.

In 1988, at the height of perestroika, Gorbachev discussed youth according to the rules of this formation in a report to the Central Committee. He emphasised that the Komsomol ought to be independent and work without adult interference, or waiting for instructions from above in order to realise its potential. He emphasised that party committees had to respect the organisation's independence, a significant move from the SOVIET-LENINIST formation: “Comrades, a new generation grows and forms itself in front of our eyes, the generation of perestroika.” Forming this generation was critical to perestroika and this contemporary use of generation captures *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont*, the distinctiveness of the present:

We need to show young people our full political trust, change the way we communicate with young people – communication and edification. ‘Fathers’ in relation to their ‘children’ must give room for this dialogue. To fully restore the confidence of youth, we must learn again to

⁷⁶ Shkola XXI veka, in: Literaturnaya Gazeta, 31.05.1989.

⁷⁷ Prakticheskimi delami uglublyat' perestroiku, in: Literaturnaya Gazeta, 15.07.1987.

speak to it, to talk to it as equals, openly and honestly and remember that only the truth can help us. As much truth, as much faith.⁷⁸

Retracing young people's involvement since the Civil War, *Argumenty i Fakty* emphasised in 1988 that the Komsomol had always led society. In fact, "the best parts of Soviet youth" voted "with both hands for perestroika" and expressed a commitment to improve society, notwithstanding disagreements about musical taste and clothing style.⁷⁹ Even letters in *Pravda* showed that young people took initiatives and wanted to participate in social life to support "the health of present and future generations".⁸⁰ Given the Komsomol's lost legitimacy, Soviet media could no longer unify youth under the organisation's label. To the contrary, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* acknowledged the multiplicity of *neformaly* across the country and tied those with the AUTONOMOUS discursive rules.⁸¹

With *glasnost*' unfolding, speaking about *neformaly* evolved. Ideas developed in discussion about imaginary foreign youth and travelled back into the domestic context. For example, in an article about Yaroslavl, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* underlined the youth's selflessness, its contribution to social progress, and its role in advancing topics of cross-societal importance such as the implementation of democracy:

One can sympathise with the atomised movements, or one can resist them, but the main thing remains, and that is to understand that they are caused by the objective necessity to somehow approach those issues which had not seen any progress for decades.⁸²

Addressing a student forum in 1989, Gorbachev mixed elements of the SOVIET-LENINIST youth tradition with the ideals projected on youth abroad. In the opening of his

⁷⁸ Report by M.S. Gorbachev, in: *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 29.06.1988.

⁷⁹ *Molodezh' 80-kh*, in: *Argumenty i Fakty*, 29.10.1988.

⁸⁰ Letters, in: *Pravda*, 11.12.1988.

⁸¹ *Miloserdniya proshu*, in: *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 14.06.1989.

⁸² *Kak zhivut "neformaly" Yaroslavlya*, in: *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 05.08.1987.

speech, he again rooted society in the Soviet metanarrative: “The October Revolution was no accident. It was a great historic breakthrough into the future.” Gorbachev underlined the importance of youth for constructing socialism but then shifted to the need to reduce party influence, in an indication of dissolving discursive patterns, and the peak of the multifaceted crisis. Gorbachev highlighted the distortion of Lenin’s thoughts by Stalin and demanded that students “get rid of blind obedience, apathy, and indifference”. He also deviated from the Leninist doctrine: “The party sees youth as an active driving force for the revolutionary renewal of the country.”⁸³ In contrast to earlier views of the Komsomol, he claimed that youth independently contributed to revolutionary renewal and served as a bearer of perestroika’s need for ENTHUSIASM and IDEALISM. The need for party leadership was significantly reduced when he portrayed youth as the inherently good force and the party to be “at your side”.

Not only the political leadership expressed the need for independence and autonomy, but also the Komsomol itself. In 1990 the Ukrainian Komsomol leader Anatolii Matviyenko tellingly asked “Are you not grown up, ‘little brother’?” to complain about the limited autonomy of the youth movement.⁸⁴ He complained that “for a long time the Komsomol was treated like the small brother of the party”. Faced with the collapsing communist regimes across Eastern Europe, he argued that the system could only survive if youth and party acted as equal partners. The Komsomol stated with unprecedented confidence that the CPSU would not survive if it lost the youth, at a time when communist regimes in Eastern Europe had started to fall.

⁸³ Cf. FN [13].

⁸⁴ Ne vypos li “mladshii brat”?, in: Pravda, 22.08.1990.

YOUTH AS VICTIM AND THREAT: *NEFORMALY*

Eto vy vinovaty, eto vy nas vospitali takimi!
It is your fault, you brought us up like that!⁸⁵

During perestroika *neformaly* attracted those young people who were disenchanted with the Komsomol (Shubin 2006: 16). Initially *neformaly* referred to the new cultural movements, notably punks, rock fans, and *metallisty* [heavy metal fans] and were not exclusively linked with negative stereotypes. But even the communal pursuit of personal interests, like music or computers, brought young people into conflict with authorities (Fain 1990, Riordan 1988). Conservative members of the establishment interpreted such behaviour as politically-motivated competition with the Komsomol.⁸⁶ Generational tensions thereby became paramount, manifest in the opening quotation of this section which emphasised an opposition between “us” and “them”.

Juris Podnieks’ 1987 documentary *Legko li byt’ molodym?* [Is It Easy to Be Young?] emphasised how much the awakening of youth and the growing generational rift preoccupied Soviet society. Though Podnieks initially wanted to make a film about the hopes and dreams of youth, he eventually discovered their disillusion with socialist ideals instead, expressing a sharp and polemic rejection of Soviet society. This captured the pulse of the time, spreading across the USSR and furthering the visibility of the generational divide.⁸⁷ Podnieks conveyed a shift in Soviet society and in 1988 even Pravda gave voice to young people’s alienation.

⁸⁵ Young person in: *Mysli lezut v golovy*, in: *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 04.05.1988.

⁸⁶ *A vy kto takie*, in: *Pravda* 30.03.1987; similarly *Pochemy timur utopil portfel?*, in: *Pravda* 14.12.1987; or Reader’s request in *Bol’she prav – vyshe otvetstvennost’*, in: *Argumenty i Fakty*, 09.12.1986.

⁸⁷ *Razbitye stekla* Jurisa Podnieksa, in: *Ogonek*, 04.04.1987.

We are sorely lacking in confidence, in particular the lives of young people are affected by the domestic turmoil. Youth leaders of our country during the 1920s are now perceived as fiction, now there are practically no young people in significant leadership positions.⁸⁸

Earlier accounts of youth tended to emphasise the *dukhovnyi vakuum* [spiritual vacuum] in which it lived, failing to find any purpose in existence. Journalists were concerned that young people would remain “slaves of their passions” if this vacuum remained unfilled.⁸⁹ The gatherings of young people around sports, heavy metal, breakdance, or rock music had continuously puzzled Soviet sociologists. Kataev tried to unite the diversity of youth with a Marxist analytical frame (1986) and Sundiev dismissed *neformaly* as the “emotional compensation” of those who “experience a severe lack of opportunities for interaction” (1989: 59). However, he admitted:

The positive changes that occurred in the lives of our country encouraged a sharp upswing in social activity of young people. This transformed the old *neformaly*, and almost daily we observe a clamouring for public recognition. It is symptomatic that the groups’ efforts are primarily focused on those matters that have caused great concern among the public at large. (1989: 61)

During perestroika youth gradually spoke out on an ever-wider range of topics, which increased its importance in the political arena. Young people became a barometer for the general mood of society and after 1987 the Soviet press emphasised the outstanding role *neformaly* played in social upheaval (Shubin 2006: 16). In the autumn of 1987 the internal structure of *neformaly* evolved, however, as older leaders joined in. The new leaders sharpened the groups’ profiles and they acted more self-consciously, formulating explicit political demands and concepts in light of the changing political reality. *Neformaly*

⁸⁸ Letter by Alena Ivanova, 17 years, in: Pravda, 11.01.1988.

⁸⁹ Chto ty dumaesh’ o molodezhi, in: Literaturnaya Gazeta, 22.01.1986. Complaints about unemployed youth wasting its time with pointless activities was another version of the moral decay implicit in the generational drifting apart: Response to Letter in: Argumenty i Fakty, 16.07.1985.

multiplied,⁹⁰ though it is important to note that many people participated in several *neformaly* as well as the Komsomol.⁹¹ In this expansion mobilisation lost its characteristic as youth mobilisation and the symbolic and political importance of youth vanished. Over time the VICTIM & THREAT formation also lost importance, along with the dissolution of youth mobilisation into general mobilisation and the disappearance of youth in public discourse (Figure 4.6).

Given the discordance of such ideas with established discourse, progressive newspapers dominate this formation, in particular *Argumenty i Fakty* (42%).⁹² The network representation of the discursive formation (Figure 4.12) indicates that there were many concept-codes in this formation, and beyond a small number which held the overall network together, most of them were peripheral. This highlights the polyphony of this formation which, unlike the SOVIET-LENINIST formation (Figure 4.8), lacked a clear centre. The network representation also highlights the structural similarities of the progressive newspapers, whose articles tend to be clustered together, pointing to similar discursive rules for speaking about youth.

The number of conceptual nodes with high degree centralities also emphasises the dispersion of this formation (Figure 4.11): more nodes are vastly connected within the network, as on average each article refers to a larger set of concepts when speaking about youth. However, betweenness centrality suggests that a core of concepts structured the overall discourse. Those nodes placed on the periphery are relevant for specific aspects of the discourse but still relied on the central nodes: RUPTURE, which emphasises the feeling of living in a distinct time period with reconstituted *Erwartungshorizonte* and a changing social structure, youth IN-

⁹⁰ In December 1987 Pravda spoke of more than 30,000: *Demokratiya i initsiativa*, in: Pravda, 27.12.1987 and in February 1989 of more than 60,000: *Demokratiya ne terpit demagogii*, in: Pravda, 10.02.1989. Most were young (Petro 1991: 103).

⁹¹ Cf. FN [64].

⁹² *Literaturnaya Gazeta* accounts for 27% of all articles.

NEED of the older generation, and youth being VICTIMISED or misled by Western influence and the disintegrating Soviet Union.

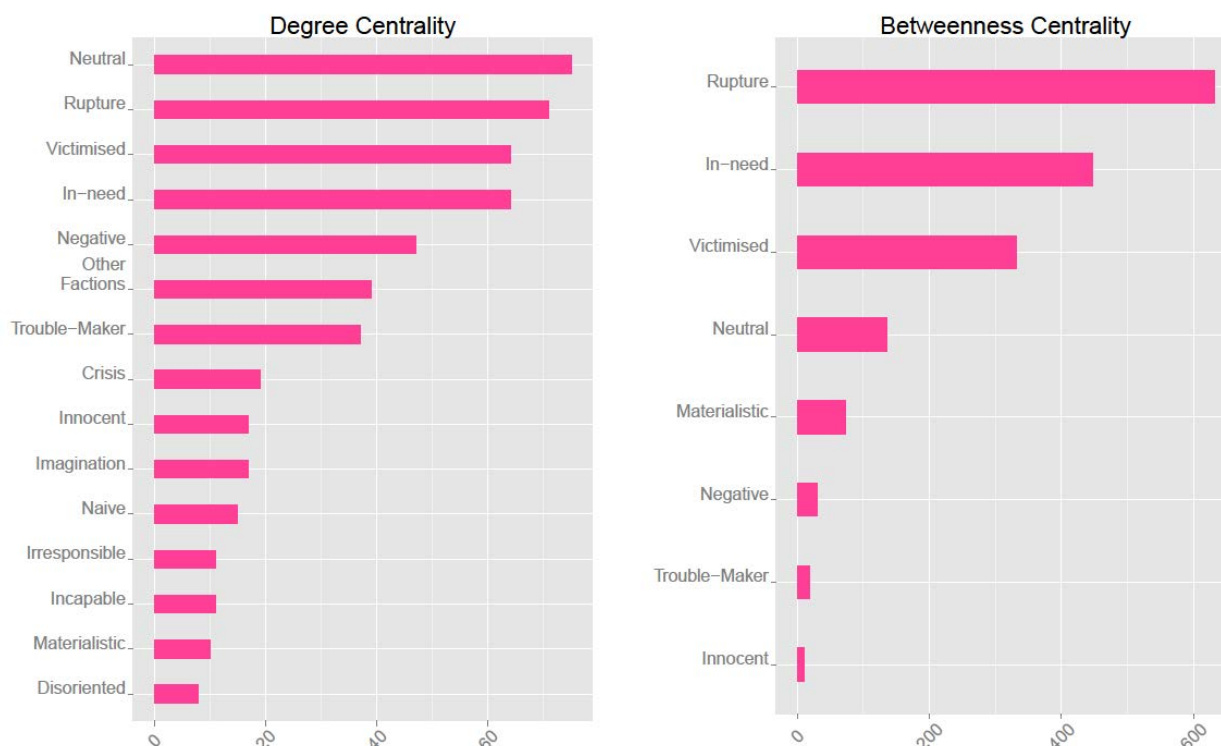


Figure 4.11: VICTIM & THREAT: Centralities

The idea of a generational divide is central for this discursive formation. Youth expressed a social rupture, in conflict with earlier Soviet youth for whom *nasledovanie* [social inheritance] assured generational continuity. With *glasnost* such tensions were publically debated. Although Soviet youth ideals shin through the discursive formation, for instance in the portrayal of youth in this contingent period as endowed with extraordinary power and as changing social norms, even Izvestiya admitted by 1987 that youth's power might harm society.⁹³

⁹³ See the interview with the sociologist M. Kh. Titmy: Okhota k peremene mest, in: Izvestiya, 15.01.1987.

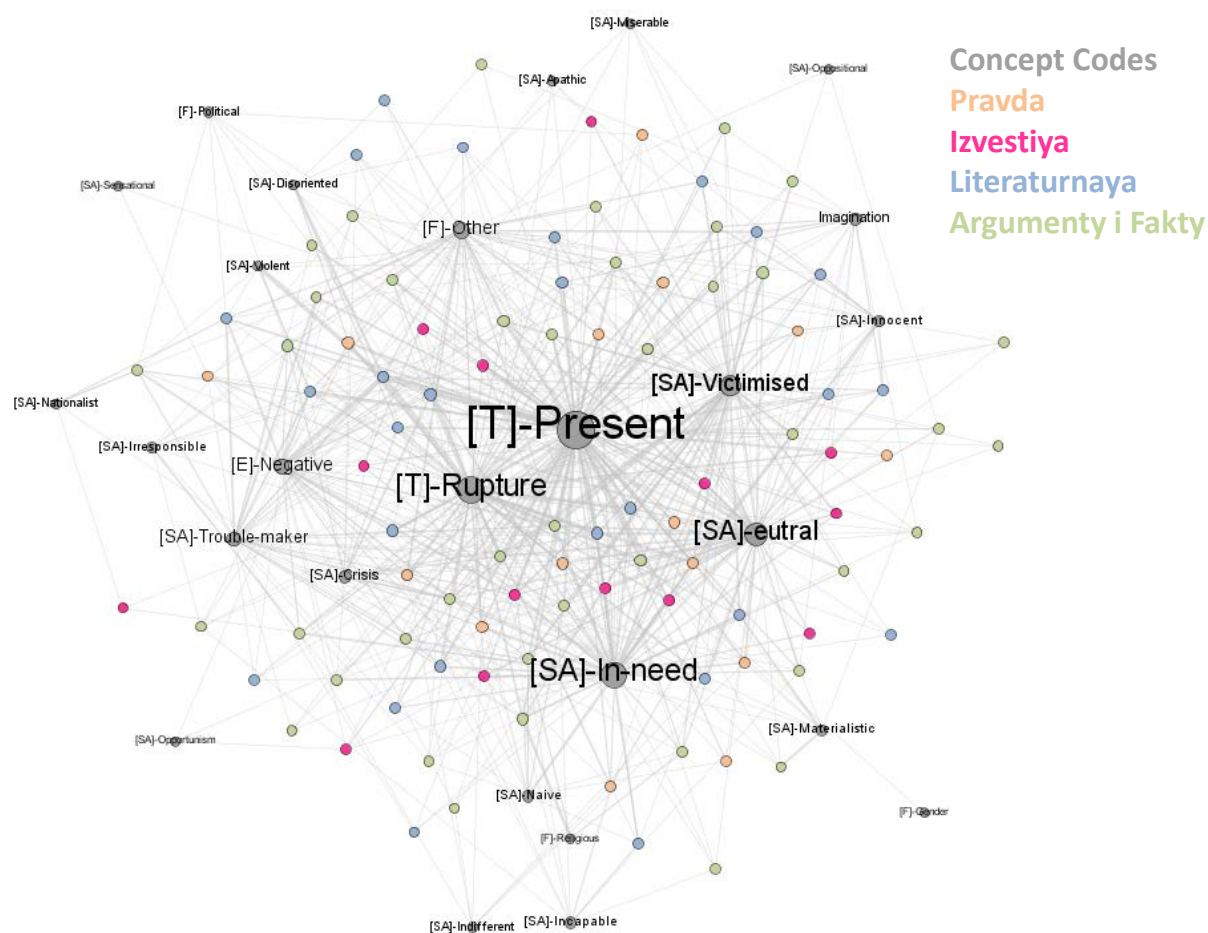


Figure 4.12: VICTIM & THREAT: Discourse Network

An Innocent Victim of Western Influence

A 1985 survey found that Soviet youth frequently listened to Western radio, including political debates (ManaeV 1991: 73). Stories about travel to the West fuelled anxieties about a capitalist West misleading Soviet youth (Kozovoi 2011: 224). Media accused Western propaganda of shamelessly exploiting the vulnerable Soviet youth. The First Secretary of the Estonian Central Committee, Karl Vaino, reiterated the leading role of youth for constructing socialism but accused the West of moving the ideological front into everyday life. Thus even fashion, music, or sports turned into weapons of the enemy. Pravda portrayed youth as a naïve victim in need of guidance. In 1984 Vaino indicated something that could not yet be said

within the discursive boundaries when he acknowledged that Soviet youth were fascinated by the West, though he also excused youth and emphasised its commitment to socialist ideals.⁹⁴

A second version of victimisation referred to religion, which had been considered the most conservative social element since the 1920s. *Argumenty i Fakty* accused *religioznyi ekstremizm* [religious extremism]⁹⁵ of stirring up anti-socialist feelings among youth during early perestroika. Using judicial language and referencing the constitutional guarantee of separation between the church and the state and educational system, the journalist argued that inciting young people to join faith-based groups violated “human rights” by causing hatred between believers and non-believers as well as between different groups of believers. In this view *religioznyi ekstremizm* was anti-constitutional. Importantly, youth was innocent here, as it was adults who encouraged young people to join religious groups.⁹⁶

Writer Vladimir Amlinsky (1935-1989) summarised the prevailing disapproval of the Komsomol during the 1987 meeting of the Union of Writers: “In recent years, the Young Communist League lived a separate life from youth.”⁹⁷ He also mentioned the emergence and rapid spread of *neformaly* to capture the changes in Soviet society crystallising amongst youth. In 1987 Amlinsky expressed self-confidence, predicting that “without even noticing, the ‘rebels’ are converted into *zauryadnykh meshchan* [petty bourgeois]⁹⁸, and even into speculators, collecting records, LPs, posters and magazines, trying to outrun one another with their collections”.⁹⁹ But by the end of 1987 *neformaly* were no longer limited to

⁹⁴ Net nicheinykh rubezhei, in: Pravda, 03.04.1984.

⁹⁵ This referred to Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Islam, or the by then popular East-Asian spiritualities.

⁹⁶ Religioznyi ekstremizm i molodezh', in Argumenty i Fakty, 19.03.1985.

⁹⁷ Speech reprinted in: Literaturnaya Gazeta, 06.05.1987.

⁹⁸ *Meshchanin* is difficult to translate but also conveys the notion of pedant or *Spießbürger*.

⁹⁹ Kul'tivirovanie rok-muzyki, bezuslovno, “Podogrevaet” strasti, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 14.03.1987.

entertainment. It was the opening of a new phase of youth mobilisation, characterised by unprecedented themes and participants' commitment, and ENTHUSIASM:

Three sleepless nights were spent drawing up appeals, drafts, and petitions, and sorting through the complex twists and turns of a polemical struggle could not but have an effect. And there it was. It was Sunday, so their weary faces caused understanding smiles from subway passengers. It was all over [...] but everything was just beginning.¹⁰⁰

The meetings of *samodeyatel'nikh obshchestvennykh* were a rupture for participants. According to Ogonek: "For how many years there has been nothing of this kind?". The unleashed civil forces concerned every aspect of Soviet society: culture, ecology, law, and economics. Perestroika seemed to provide new opportunities. *Laboratorya obshchestvennogo samoupravleniya* [Laboratory of Public Self-Management] stated: "The processes that are taking place in society in connection with perestroika gave rise to *samodeyatel'nikh obshchestvennykh organizatsii* and *obshchestvenno-politicheskikh organisatsii*."¹⁰¹

Doubts about the Komsomol's authority and integrity spread and readers complained about bureaucracy and distance from real life. Dimitri Ostroushko, member of the Komsomol's Central Committee, had already admitted by 1986 that "[u]nfortunately, the criticism addressed to the Komsomol is largely valid".¹⁰² He confirmed the need for the Komsomol to overcome its formalism and regain youth. By 1987, even Pravda published such debates, emphasising the need to cater to leisure demands to combat growing disaffection among youth; the flagship communist newspaper mentioned that more than a third of all Komsomol members were only members on paper.¹⁰³ Nevertheless, hopes persisted that radical

¹⁰⁰ Proshchanie s bazarovym, in: Ogonek, 05.09.1987.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Response to letter, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 09.12.1986.

¹⁰³ V krug i vne ego, in: Pravda, 16.02.1987.

restructuring of the institution would make it possible to regain youth and redevelop the lost political spirit.¹⁰⁴

Even more remarkably, by 1989 Viktor Mironenko, First General Secretary of the Komsomol (1986–1990), could complain on *Izvestiya*'s title page that "[t]he Komsomol is merely a tool in the hands of the party" and that all talk about its leading role lacked substance since its political role had continuously been undermined.¹⁰⁵ The party was accused of exploiting youth in his programmatic article: "The risks remain, because what is old never goes without fighting."

Perestroika provided new opportunities for political activism which the press now covered. Journalists focused in particular on the emerging culture of IDEALISTIC civic-debate:

They argued everywhere. They argued in small-groups sections and in the general meetings. They argued in the meeting rooms and in the corridors. They argued in the cafeteria, hastily downing sandwiches to satisfy their polemical hunger.¹⁰⁶

Youth mobilisation was not restricted to rejecting the establishment but also suggested means of change. Viktor Zolotarev participated in the October 1987 coordination meeting and emphasised youth's new ambitions:

The feeling of civic bankruptcy, depression and timidity in the face of the lordly indifference of bureaucrats is now being crowded out before our very eyes by a growing feeling of civic involvement, by a sense of our own guilt for the bad things within and around us, by a completely new desire to participate directly and personally in the process of social improvement.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Rastit' dostoinuyu smenu, in: *Pravda*, 08.10.1984.

¹⁰⁵ Risk ostaetsya, ibo staroe nikogda ne ukhodit bez boya, in: *Izvestiya*, 03.01.1989.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. FN [100].

¹⁰⁷ Cf. FN [100].

One *neformaly*, *Miloserdie* [Compassion], proposed more extended forms of local economic self-management and provided material and spiritual assistance to pensioners and veterans. Similar groups emerged: *Sotsial'nyi mir* [Social World] held public events to foster social cohesion, and *Grazhdanskoe dostoinstvo* [Civic Virtue] assisted in the detection, publicising, and elimination of bureaucratic mistakes. There was a growing number of *neformaly*, and 47 *molodezhnykh ob''edinenii* attended Moscow's first coordination meetings.¹⁰⁸ They jointly pursued public interests, unlike the earlier youth groups revolving around entertainment.

The legacy of suspicion, however, still limited mobilisation. Old anxiety about “extremism” contributed to a persistent negative perception of mobilisation during perestroika. Gleb Pavlovsky, one of the leaders of the *Klub sotsial'nykh initsiativ* [KSI, Club of Social Initiatives], deplored “an extremist struggle against extremism”.¹⁰⁹ Led by Pavlovsky, Boris Kagarlitsky, and Michail Malyutin, KSI was one of the most important progressive associations, (Igrunov 1988) and aimed to coordinate multiple left-wing groups, provide a coherent ideological base, and conduct research on the history of Russia's left.

Political mobilisation in these years was strikingly diverse and included support for perestroika, its opposition, and criticism for not going far enough. *Al'yans* [Alliance] and *Demokratiya i Gumanizm* [Democracy and Humanism] demanded a profound restructuring of the entire political system to develop a pluralist society with freedom of assembly and a free press. The *Kol'tso ob''edinennykh initsiativ* [Ring of Joint Initiatives] advocated self-criticism by the party and society, openness, democratisation, and new thinking. By 1987 some officials gave credibility to the *neformaly*, confirming that they were contributing to social transformation society. Yuri Lyubtsev, Communist Party spokesperson in Kazakhstan praised the *neformaly*:

¹⁰⁸ Neformal'no o neformalakh, in: Moskovskie novosti, 13.09.1987.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

These [youth] associations [...] have a common idea – participation in the transformation of society. It is difficult to foretell which of today's young leaders will become political and state leaders [...] but their energy makes one take an optimistic, rather than a pessimistic view of the future. Many of these youngsters are people who are potentially ready to give society new concepts and new ideas.¹¹⁰

Youth Contesting the System: Confounding the Rules of the Game

During 1988 the debate about *neformaly* expanded further. Reactionary interpretations described them as psychologically disturbed, consuming excessive amounts of alcohol and drugs:

All this leads to a loss of the older generations' leading role. However, the older generation is the carrier of traditional culture, ideals and values, the perception of which changes along with the changing attitudes towards the older generation. Traditional values become outdate for youth with the desire for independence and self-expression.¹¹¹

By 1988 risk and threat became important ideas when speaking about *neformaly*. Yuri Shchekochikhin, a prominent youth sympathetic journalist, explored the relationship between *neformaly* and the criminal world in Kazan and concluded that mafia style groups like *Pentagonom* [Pentagon] or *Serymi volkami* [Grey Wolves] attracted “socially active young people”. This was worrisome because young people had to join if they wanted to prevent marginalisation by their peers.¹¹² Similarly, Pravda tended to frame *Pamyat'* [Remembering] as a threat, accusing it of misusing new freedoms for its own interests.¹¹³

The debate around the previously cited letter by Nina Andreeva provoked further mobilisation. “Students nowadays, following the period of social apathy and intellectual dependence, are gradually becoming charged with the energy of revolutionary changes.”¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Professor A Ambrumova, cited in *Neformaly glazami psikhologa*, in: *Argumenty i Fakty*, 20.02.1988.

¹¹² *Ekstremal'naya model'*, in: *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 12.10.1988.

¹¹³ *Pamyat' i drugie*, in: *Pravda*, 27.12.1988.

¹¹⁴ Cf. [Fn. 12].

She interpreted these developments as worrisome, because “numerous arguments among students about the country’s past” emerged. The letter became a critical event, causing disputes and triggering a shift in the discursive rules of speaking about youth. The letter’s reception consolidated the presence of those *neformaly* opposing perestroika. The most prominent one was *Pamyat’*, which framed itself as a “literaturnoe istoriko-patrioticheskoe ob’’edinenie” [literary historic-patriotic association] centred on protecting Russian culture, allegedly threatened by a Zionist-Freemason conspiracy (Engel 1987: 896-7). *Pamyat’* united diffuse feelings of threat originating from *neformaly*.

The importance attributed to *samodeyatel’nie kluby* [independent clubs] increased once media understood them as barometer for the wider social mood:

In truth there remain issues of trust and confidence, understanding and misunderstanding, which are based on much more compelling reasons than age barriers. Broadly speaking we are left with the issues of democracy, since independent social associations claim their right to influence the life of society.¹¹⁵

By the summer of 1987, the awakening of youth, understood as a generational drifting-apart, preoccupied Soviet society. It became clear that in its simplest form, the socialist narrative was no longer adequate for talking about the everyday reality of young people as epitomises by Juris Podnieks’ or Shakhnazarov’s films.¹¹⁶ Even seemingly non-political behaviour like youth’s consumption patterns or cultural interests expressed a generational gulf. The discursive rules from earlier Soviet times had transformed, now affirming that “[t]oday’s adolescents are different from their peers twenty years ago, not in terms of psycho-physiological maturation but by their social and psychological experience”.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Kak zhivut “neformaly” Yaroslavlya, in: Literaturnaya Gazeta, 05.08.1987.

¹¹⁶ Cf. FN [87] and Shakhnazarov’s *Kur’er* mentioned in the introduction.

¹¹⁷ Poidem v teatr?, in: Literaturnaya Gazeta, 23.10.1985.

When Ronald Reagan visited the Soviet Union for a summit in May 1988, the trip's "centerpiece" was his appearance at Moscow State University, "the Soviet Union's most prestigious university," to encourage "the forces of change now unleashed".¹¹⁸ His speech revolved around the importance of freedom and democracy, how fundamental these inextricable elements had been for the United States and the significance of youth for enduring transformations:

Your generation is living in one of the most exciting, hopeful times in Soviet history. It is a time when the first breath of freedom stirs the air and the hearts beat to the accelerated rhythm of hope, when the accumulated spiritual energies of a long silence yearn to break free. (1988: 67-68)¹¹⁹

This "Moscow Spring" – as Reagan described it – also manifested itself in the audience's reactions. Even though it had probably been selected by the Komsomol, "[l]aughter and applause seemed heartfelt".¹²⁰ The questions illustrated the fascination of some young people with Reagan's political and societal vision.¹²¹

Nevertheless, the Soviet press was not sure what to make of the speech: "The president's speech was almost entirely devoted to propaganda, proclaiming the advantages of the American system and the desire to teach our youth how to proceed now."¹²² Some comments illustrate *glasnost*: Izvestiya, for instance, reprinted most of the speech in a non-judgemental way and included some of the delicate questions asked to Reagan.¹²³ The Soviet press

¹¹⁸ Cf. FN [22], White House planners saw this as most important element "to reach out to the Soviet people" (Whelan 1990: 44).

¹¹⁹ Online available: www.youtube.com/watch?v=1lutYGxMWeA [01.02.2015].

¹²⁰ Cf. FN [118].

¹²¹ A remarkable fascination given Reagan's negative reputation after having called the Soviet Union an "evil empire": Vstrechi s liderami stran zapada eshche ne osvobodilis' ot propagandistskikh khodov, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 04.06.1988.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ MGU zadaet voprosy, in: Izvestiya, 01.06.1988, notably on the disappeared 300 young soldiers in Afghanistan.

neglected, however, remarks on the global trend towards democratisation which they feared their Soviet readership would interpret as being applicable to the domestic situation.

This visit constituted a critical event for civic activism as it provided *neformaly* with new space for self-organisation and mobilisation. The presence of hundreds of journalists protected *neformaly* who marched along the capital's streets: the militia let them pass. A crack-down, like the one during the anti-Stalin demonstrations on 5 March 1988, would have been too great a risk to the summit. Activists gradually extended their self-organisation. The new opportunities for mobilisation bended the discursive rules about youth further.

One of the immediate results of the visit was a Western-style place for public debate, which the city's prosecutor Lev Baranov brought up a number of times before the summit.¹²⁴ "On Pushkin Square, which has become Moscow's equivalent of Hyde Park corner, young people are daily contesting the official Soviet version of historical events and even questioning the one-party state."¹²⁵ Students used this more relaxed atmosphere and staged demonstrations of around 100 people in front of Izvestiya (Brovkin 1990: 235), which despite *glasnost* Izvestiya did not mention. Nevertheless, "Moscow authorities have quietly adopted a more tolerant attitude toward unauthorized public demonstrations," a move which the New York Times perceived as a "significant step toward greater freedom of political expression".¹²⁶ Changed attitudes towards political mobilisation endured and Moscow's police received orders neither to interfere with street demonstrations nor to detain protestors.¹²⁷ Whereas the

¹²⁴ Proposal to set up speaker's corner in Moscow, in: Reuters News, 23.03.1988.

¹²⁵ Gorbachev greets up for his make-or-break test, in: The Times, 25.06.1988.

¹²⁶ In Moscow, Tolerance of Protests, in: The New York Times, 08.06.1988.

¹²⁷ Yuri Mityunov, an organiser of protests, illustrates the spillover: "At first we thought it was a show for the summer, but the summit is over and the police still leave us alone. Now we hope it is a small step toward democracy in our country." In: Ibid.

Soviet press had traditionally considered independent protests as unpatriotic, the rules of public discourse had now evolved.

The XIX Party Conference of the CPSU in 1988 opened in an atmosphere of mobilisation and eroding discursive rules driven by the engagement of young people, publically chanting “Death to Stalinism!” or “Down with Bureaucracy!”. Something had qualitatively changed:

There have been many, many demonstrations in Moscow, but there was something different about today. Three days before the Communist Party’s first special conference since 1941, the city seemed full of nervous possibility, energized by the sense that, for the first time in decades, the debate is not wholly decided in advance.¹²⁸

Tumults nevertheless characterised mobilisation because the rules of the game were renegotiated, leaving police without clear guidance on how it should react. Protestors themselves had not yet acquired an internal structure:

‘Fascists!’ screamed one man. The officers started circling the most vocal protesters and hauled off the leader of the Democratic Union, Yuri Mityunov. Pushing and shouting matches broke out. At one point, a group of uniformed policemen formed a wedge and stampeded into the crowd, and, one after another, protesters fell to the concrete like tenpins.

‘There’s perestroika!’ shouted one officer as he threw a young man to the sidewalk.

‘Fascists!’

‘Get moving! Get moving or be arrested!’

‘Down with Stalinism!’

Milling in the crowd were Hare Krishnas, ecology activists, little girls eating ice cream. In the Izvestia building, journalists and office workers packed the windows and looked down on the crowd as it moved, amoebalike, from one part of the square to another.

‘Free-dom! Free-dom!’

Minutes later, a new demonstration began at another end of the square. About 20 people lifted portraits of Mikhail Gorbachev, Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Tale of Two Cities: Old and New Moscows; Some Protests are Polite and Peaceful, Others Reminiscent of ‘60s, in: Washington Post, 26.06.1988.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

When Gorbachev affirmed his desire for change, the *Erwartungshorizonte* of social actors widened as socio-political reform appeared likely. There were good reasons to get involved in the public sphere and the leadership's responsiveness encouraged popular demands.¹³⁰ Now perceived as legitimate and effective, youth-initiated mobilisation expanded beyond youth. Public figures such as the physicist Andrei Sakharov, historian Yuri Afanasyev, human rights activist Lev Timofey, or Ogonek editor Vitali Korotich, carried on the youth-initiated contestation on a different scale: mobilisation was no longer geared towards rejecting the "old generation" but the "old system" which provided a cross-generational cause.

A Cross-Generational Rejection of the Ancien Régime

Youth mobilisation at the beginning of perestroika sparked a society-wide awakening and encouraged others to go out on the streets. However, once adults began to supersede the position of youth as the drivers of political, economic, and social change, youth lost its position as a core subject of politics. It turned into an object and was marginalised in the years to follow. The symbolic capital of youth seemed exhausted after having been overstrained during the Soviet period.

The importance of such engagement was most visible locally as illustrated by the demolition of the Hotel *Angleter* in March 1987 in Saint Petersburg. The building in the centre of the city (Saint Isaac's Square) symbolised the Tsarist and Soviet intellectual past and was amongst the few that had not been destroyed during the war.¹³¹ It was run-down and had been forced to close in 1985. City authorities undertook its demolition in 1987, with a new hotel opening on the same site in 1991. The mobilisation against the demolition failed but it started the

¹³⁰ Without suggesting that mobilisation was without risks as Western press testified: Fledgling Party Struggles for a Voice as Official Crackdown Intensifies, in: The Times, 29.08.1988; Political Groups Emerge Despite Official Repression, in: The Times, 21.08.1989.

¹³¹ Tovarishch lensovet, in: Ogonek, 07.11.1987.

“Petersburg Spring” movements dedicated to protecting local heritage. The most important of these was the youth group *Spasenie* [Rescue], led by 24 year old Aleksei Kovalyov, who attempted to negotiate with the bureaucrats (Kagarlitsky 1987).

During perestroika, these demonstrations were amongst the first not to be punished by local authorities. They shaped the public image of citizen mobilisation, emphasising that “most organisations have the best intentions”.¹³² Debates about cultural heritage, particularly about how to deal with pre-revolutionary buildings, were central to public debate.¹³³ Many other examples testify to young people reacting to demolition of their cultural patrimony by local authorities, such as the young Muscovites around Cyril Parfenov who saved the 18th century palace of the merchant Shcherbakov’s from demolition for the construction of the third ring road.¹³⁴

After 1988 “youth” became gradually marginalised although it participated in other *neformaly* such as *Memorial*. But in the years to follow youth was downgraded to an object rather than a subject of politics. By the time of the transition it no longer figured importantly on agendas. Politics gradually left the streets, and those elements that did remain on the street were increasingly institutionalised by national fronts and new political parties.

¹³² XX S’ezd VLKSM: Golosuem za perestrojky, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 25.04.1987.

¹³³ Cf.: S predsedatelem ispolkoma leningradskogo gorodskogo soveta narondnykh, in: Ogonek, 07.11.1987, the interviewed Vladimir Khovyreva emphasised the role of youth and that representatives of “youth associations” were included in debates about future projects.

¹³⁴ Cf. FN [100]; Tupik tret’ego kol’tsa, in: Ogonek, 28.03.1987.

YOUTH DURING AUTHORITARIAN REGIME BREAKDOWN

Even before Gorbachev's arrival in power youth manifested its discontent with the communist regime. Through the reforms of *glasnost*, however, youth discontent spilled onto the streets and required integration into the discourse about youth. The political leadership's failure to control the politicisation of youth expressed the regime's fading legitimacy to the population. The perestroika case therefore adds important variation to the research by investigating the inverse scenario of the authoritarian consolidation that occurred during the Russian episode analysed in the previous chapter. The Soviet Union did not collapse because of political youth mobilisation but the questioning of the Komsomol and the Soviet order more general which youth undertook gradually prepared the possibility of the end of this seemingly eternal Union.

1. The eroding discursive setting

The meaning of the term youth, a key discursive signifier in Soviet discourse even before perestroika, gradually eroded. New practices rapidly put the formerly hegemonic interpretation, seen in the discursive rules of the SOVIET-LENINIST formation and strengthened by a historic process of sedimentation, under pressure. Projecting the Soviet collective into the future and navigating through its past with the help of the symbol youth was increasingly difficult since the symbol was increasingly and disturbingly at odds with the lived realities of youth.

This disintegration made room for a new set of discursive rules for speaking about youth in the late Soviet Union. Those new rules took shape in relation to the political behaviour of *neformaly* and gradually took the lead in Soviet discourse about youth around 1988. They provided an alternate narrative about the meaning of youth as represented in the public sphere, referring to deviant youth and questioning the authority of the parental generation and the political system in which it had been socialised.

2. Mobilisation of youth and the need for reform

While public discourse challenged the symbolic place of the Komsomol as the unifying organisation for youth, the political leadership made attempts to maintain the organisation's importance. However, these acclamations of past glory and future potential were increasingly incoherent given the social conditions of youth and its visible withdrawal from the Komsomol. Over time, it became impossible to deny the need for reform. Given the Komsomol's importance for the Soviet order in general as one of the largest political bodies in the country and a significant economic actor, its crisis fuelled and exposed the Soviet Union's fundamental socio-political tensions.

3. Youth as a mirror of society: generalisation of protest

During perestroika, debates about youth turned it into a central component of the debates about the course of political reform. In light of the undeniable estrangement of youth from the Komsomol and empowered by expanding discursive-political opportunities, youth expressed the need for more fundamental reforms of the political system. The political mobilisation of *neformaly* gradually broadened to include other strata of society and the groups were increasingly seen as a mirror of society.¹³⁵

Until 1988 Soviet media tended to associate the term *neformaly* with youth-created initiatives, but after 1988 the nexus between the two slowly dissociated. Eventually those youthful *neformaly* turned into adult-led parties and popular fronts, and the contestation of the political regime was gradually dissociated from the younger generation.

¹³⁵ Molodezh' kak zerkalo obshchestva, in: Argumenty i Fakty, 16.07.1988; youth therefore expressed the more fundamental societal malaise: Smena pokolenii, in: Izvestiya, 19.05.1988.

4. Role of the media

Glasnost was central to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Only in the context of new, albeit restricted, media freedom could a new discursive setting, not only about youth, emerge. What may previously have been part of alternative public spheres (Rittersporn et al. 2003), could now achieve general relevance. Beyond all diversity in the press coverage of *neformaly*, the discursive rules in speaking about youth shifted. The shift communicated to the political leadership and society at large the gulf between generations: in a first stage dividing the younger from the older generations, later on young society from old leadership.

The disintegration of the discourse about youth which expressed the shattering of long established truths contributed to the Soviet Union's collapse. Youth independently mobilised in opposition to the regime, and over time its contestation became cross-generational. In the next chapter we shall explore these aspects in a case distant in time and space, the breakdown of democratic Weimar.

THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC AND ROADS NOT TAKEN: BREAKDOWN OF AN UNCONSOLIDATED DEMOCRACY

The young radicals of the Weimar Republic played a decisive role in one of the most momentous breakdowns of a democracy in Europe. Violent street actions by both left- and right-wing youth groups contributed to a general feeling of instability. Paramilitary groups emerged to uphold – according to them – public order (Schumann 2009).

The erosion of Weimar's democracy accelerated from 1929 onwards. Explaining the breakdown has been the subject of ongoing controversy, in particular Chancellor Heinrich Brüning's role (Bracher 1971 [1955], Conze 1964). Köppen recently argued that Brüning's *Sparpolitik* [austerity policy] was not merely situational crisis management but driven by his political convictions and aspiration to restore the monarchy (2014). Moreover, Bermeo claims that President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Brüning with an explicit agreement to govern without parliament (2003: 39). Recent scholarship confirms that Brüning too quickly accepted Hindenburg's limitations on the government (Kolb and Schumann 2013: 259-60). Weimar's last chancellors, Franz von Papen and Kurt von Schleicher, were even more sceptical about democratic government. Von Papen was attracted to Mussolini's form of corporatism (Nicholls 1991: 134) and Schleicher's military background contributed to his distaste for the Weimar system, which he saw as a symbol of the defeat of 1918.

January 1933 was a turning-point: Hindenburg named Hitler as chancellor quickly foreclosing alternative political developments (Bessel 2004). Hitler dissolved the Reichstag and in March

1933, the *Ermächtigungsgesetz* [Enabling Act]¹ enshrined Hitler's unlimited power which sealed the democratic collapse. The following year the process of *Gleichschaltung* [Forcing into line] systematically eliminated non-Nazi organisations (such as parties and trade unions) which might otherwise have challenged the new political course. Civil liberties were curtailed and political opposition banned.

Contemporaries and subsequent scholars have pointed to the critical role of political mobilisation of youth in this breakdown. Young people from different social strata mobilised politically and contemporaries intensely discussed their public presence. Youth constituted a key political stakeholder and every political party attempted to incorporate youth and appear youthful. Therefore, intense discursive confrontation characterised the symbolic space of youth as rival political groups fought about its meaning.

This chapter builds on the rich and well-developed scholarship on the political engagement of young people in the Weimar Republic. However, a systematic analysis of the discourse about youth and its importance for political mobilisation in this period has not yet been undertaken. My work highlights aspects of the Weimar Republic's breakdown that remain neglected. I develop an argument which underlines the contingency and openness of the political situation. Looking at Weimar through the prism of youth highlights the range of possibilities open to contemporaries until February 1933. The discursive structures about youth emphasise this wideness of possibilities clearly and help to understand the processes at work during the breakdown of a democracy.

Drawing on the definition of a crisis as laid out in the introduction, this chapter does not simply reproduce the crisis discourse which contemporaries created. Even though

¹ Amendment to the Weimar Constitution giving Hitler *de facto* power to enact laws bypassing the Reichstag, and officially entitled "Gesetz zur Behebung der Not von Volk und Reich".

contemporaries expressed contradictory futures through crisis, in the wake of Peukert's analysis of the Weimar Republic as the "crisis of classical modernity" (1987: 266-71) scholars narrowed down the width of contemporary meanings of crisis.² The prism of youth is indeed a strong reminder of the hybridity of crisis. In its political mobilisation youth embraced and reinforced the contradictory tendencies within Weimar and by analysing youth we understand that Weimar was both high-culture and political chaos, renewal and doom. Although political elites orchestrated the end of the democratic interlude, they depended upon the involvement of "ordinary people" (Bermeo 2003: 37). The broad support for and legitimisation of the democratic dismantling drew on the radicalisation and growth of political extremism amongst the population.

This third case study increases variation by changing the spatial and temporal location as well as the regime type. The previous two cases took place in authoritarian regimes, whereas the Weimar Republic qualified as a democracy, albeit an unconsolidated one. I argue that this unpopular democracy conforms to the three hypotheses developed in relation to the Russian case. (1) Political elites in power failed to dominate the discourse about youth and (2) were unsuccessful despite numerous attempts to bind and mobilise youth. This failure proved fatal, since it underpinned the public de-legitimisation of parliamentary democracy. (3) Adult civil society did not hinder anti-democratic youth mobilisation, some even accepted it and welcomed it as expressing the necessity of breaking with the existing political regime.

² This reduction of the crisis from the perspective of its disastrous outcome can be encountered with Mommsen who understood Weimar through the prism of the fatal crisis of its political system (1989: 361pp.), Winkler adds to that the economic burden of the crisis (1993: 557-94) and Wehler more broadly understands crisis as a universalistic category to explain Weimar's trajectory (2009 [1987]: 229pp., 592pp.).

THE “GOLDEN TWENTIES” AND PERPETUAL CRISIS

After the First World War the number of democracies worldwide almost doubled. This was only a short interlude, and most of these regimes had collapsed by the end of the 1930s: “[t]he liberal democracies scattered throughout the world by the peace settlement of 1919 were the product of abstract theory, stuck no roots in the soil, and quickly shrivelled away” (Carr and Cox 2001 [1939]: 29). In an attempt to contrast Weimar with the democratic nature of the West German Federal Republic, Eschenburg stressed that Weimar’s democracy was improvised following Wilhelmine Germany’s defeat in the First World War (1951).³

Nevertheless, in the early years of Weimar a majority of citizens shared a desire to leave the authoritarian past behind. The November Revolution of 1918 expressed support for an egalitarian *Volksstaat* [People’s State] (Rosenberg 1964) and kindled hopes for a responsive political system (Albertin 1997: 59-60). Democratisation offered new possibilities for participation, which citizens took advantage of with an *Aufbruchstimmung* [sense of a new beginning] (Berman 1997: 417).⁴ The progressive media prominently covered the pro-Republican *Reichsbanner* festivities of 11 August, the day when Friedrich Ebert signed the constitution (Ziemann 2013). Youth welcomed the new beginnings, to overcome the constraints of the world of its fathers (Stambolis 2003: 92). Indeed, for contemporaries November 1918 was not a traumatic rupture, though it would be re-interpreted as one after 1945 (Fritzsche 1990: 21-27, Niess 2013: 17-26).

During the late 1920s, however, citizens distanced themselves from fragmented and incoherent government policies (Boldt 1997: 45). Support for the parties in government

³ Kershaw points to the relevance of the Weimar experience as moral and constitutional guidance for Western Germany after the Second World War (1990: 26).

⁴ An example is the re-foundation of the Deutsche Demokratische Partei (Nuschke 1928: 25).

declined sharply between 1928 and 1933. Votes for the democratic opposition remained constant but too few for a majority (Stögbauer 2001: 252). Parties set up youth movements to mobilise the disaffected electorate, but youth often felt that the older generation did not listen to them (Mommsen 1985: 58). Long term factors as well as political decisions further undermined democracy's legitimacy: reparations and war guilt, both enshrined in the peace settlement of the Versailles Treaty of 1919, the myth of the "unbeaten" German soldier who was forced by the home front to surrender unnecessarily,⁵ and the failure of governing majorities all destabilised the country.

A succession of divided minority governments hollowed out the semi-presidential democracy ever more.⁶ After the September 1930 elections, none of the previous coalitions could gain a majority and a coalition with centre-right parties was unacceptable to the SPD's left-wing. Agreements on socioeconomic policies in particular were hard to achieve and seriously undermined the political system's stability. The increase in public expenditures for reconstruction had contributed to an inflationary spiral which had already started during the 1923 struggle over the Ruhr. Harsh stabilisation policies followed as preconditions for renegotiating the Versailles Treaty. Under conditions of economic pressure through the global economic crisis, these policies increased hostility towards the Allies, who were held responsible for the suffering these policies caused. When Hitler was named chancellor in January 1933, Germany's democratic experience ended. The 33% share of the votes won by the NSDAP during the last free elections in November 1932 signified a remarkable increase compared to the party's first campaign in 1928, when it received only 2.4% of the votes.

⁵ Leading members of the military claimed that German soldiers would have never surrendered on their own. The *Dolchstoßlegende* [stab-in-the-back myth] maintained that they were "unbeaten in the field" and that the Social Democratic political leadership around Philipp Scheidemann and Matthias Erzberger was responsible for the defeat; e.g. (Petzold 1963).

⁶ This draws on Skach who distinguishes consolidated majority, divided majority, and divided minority government (2005: 15).

The period from 1924 to 1929 has been referred to as the “Golden Years” of the Weimar Republic, indicating a blossoming of art, culture, and science (Schrader and Schebera 1987). Germany became part of the League of Nations with the 1925 Locarno Treaty and increased its international political participation under Gustav Stresemann’s committed leadership. However, political instability at the domestic level accelerated once the centre-right *DVP* had left the government in 1931. Even the supposed “Golden Years” were already characterised by frequent governmental dissolutions: a delusive stability according to Peukert (1987: 191), a duality of “promise and tragedy” for Weitz (2007).

Dualistic approaches neglect that the distinction of cultural euphoria and political mourning resulted from reinterpretations of the interwar period after the Second World War (Rossol 2010: 1). Scholars like Weitz imply a dichotomous reading of the Weimar Republic’s present which neglects that contemporaries entwined “promise and tragedy” in their understanding of the present. In other words, contemporaries did not divide Weimar into political misery and cultural glory. The prominence of youth in Weimar’s discourse underlines this superposition. By discussing youth, social and political actors appropriated the future and demonstrated competing expectations about the country’s capacity to overcome its difficulties. By referring to youth, different socio-political utopias were projected onto the present. Interpreting the present as a crisis made it possible to depict the current situation as a temporary phase.⁷

The “Golden Years” ended around 1929-1930, when two critical developments affected the country and further politicised youth: the global economic crisis intensified battles over the distribution of economic resources, and the formation of the first presidential cabinet in March 1930 seriously damaged the democratic regime (Kolb and Schumann 2013: 112). Their co-occurrence de-legitimised the democratic system, and many young people held the older

⁷ Graf underlines the optimism of intellectuals using “crisis” (2005: 106, 2008: 371).

generation responsible for their disastrous situation (Krabbe 2010: 51-4, Wehler 2009 [1987]: 236).⁸

1929 is the point of departure for my analysis.⁹ The US stock market crash deepened the global financial crisis and the drying up of US credit rendered Weimar's economic situation more dire. In this climate, anti-democratic voices promising to revise the Versailles Treaty's reparation clauses, spread quickly. Borchard emphasised the presence of "powerful factors of economic stress which endangered the system, and even caused it to collapse" (1991).¹⁰

Amongst the interwar democracies, the case of the Weimar Republic is particularly interesting since citizens actively contributed to its demise. Street confrontations embodied the persistently high level of political violence (Schumann 2009). Youth participated eagerly in these struggles, mobilising distinctively as youth, though for very diverse causes. I do not intend to make a revisionist claim concerning the reasons for the failure of the democratic experience in Weimar. Rather, I wish to correct a misunderstanding about the involvement of young people in the changes taking place around them and how the idea of "youth" was discursively used in this crisis.

A NEW POLITICAL STAKEHOLDER: YOUTH IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

Towards the end of the 19th century a new discourse about youth emerged in Germany which embraced romanticism, the echo of the *fin-de-siècle*, and underpinned a diversity of youth movements. Germany's sizable *Jugendbewegung* [Youth Movement], rooted in romanticism,

⁸ Criticism concerning the old party leadership of the liberal parties was frequent (Mergel 2002: 420).

⁹ Which is not to deny the existence of earlier (anti-)democratic mobilisation of youth.

¹⁰ For nuances on the causal power of the economic conditions, (King et al. 2008: 958-9, O'Loughlin et al. 1994: 373),

cultivated a distance from party politics, as its members' writings (Förster 1923, Messer 1924) and contemporary sociological analysis (Lützens 1925) attest. But even the socialist workers' youth around Carlo Mierendorff and Theodor Haubach was remote from Weimar's everyday politics with its emphasis on the emotional experience that socialism should represent (Stambolis 1982: 55-65).

Contemporaries accounted for the visibility of this new social group, as this chapter highlights. Generational theories emphasised the specific conditions of the Weimar Republic. Its youth was perceived as a historic agent in its own right (Weinrich 2013: 38). Referring to Mannheim, contemporaries underlined the importance of unifying experiences in the constitution of a generation (1928). During the interwar period, innumerable phenomena were analysed through the generational prism ranging from literature and music to political behaviour. This prominence indicates how the concept of generation resonated with contemporaries (Mommsen 2003: 116).

However, as argued in the introduction, anchoring the concept of generation merely in the *Erfahrungsraum* is insufficient to explain when socio-political developments are understood in generational terms. The case of the Weimar Republic in particular emphasises that only by taking into account the *Erwartungshorizont* (Koselleck 1995) can one understand why the generational concept had such political salience in Weimar. The projection of youth into the future was as fundamental for the generational self-understanding as the interpretation of key historical events such as the First World War (Deubel 1930: 2). During the interwar period, youth gradually left the private realm unlike the *Jugendbewegung* and the *Wandervogel* which largely limited themselves to discussions of spiritual and existential topics.

Having established the relevant context for youth mobilisation in the Weimar Republic, the remainder of this chapter will explore the discursive structures of the meaning of youth and the political mobilisation of young people.

THE DISCURSIVE CONTEXTS OF YOUTH MOBILISATION

A wide range of newspapers circulated in the politicised climate of the Weimar Republic. By 1930 more than 11,000 titles were in publication (including dailies and weeklies) (Büttner 2010: 322), the most successful of which appeared three times a day. Circulation was high, curbing the constitutional freedoms of the press was amongst Hitler's first acts (Ross 2008: 292).¹¹ The term *Meinungspresse* [opinion press] still captures the self-understanding of the German media today, a characteristic which originated during the Napoleonic Wars (Ross 2008: 2). In the interwar period, the diversity of outlets expressed pluralism and divergent interests as well as the readiness of entrepreneurs to take economic risks.

The media landscape revolved around two centres. On the one end of the political spectrum sat Ullstein, a Berlin-based liberal editor and owner of *Vossische Zeitung*, *Kölner Zeitung*, *Berliner Tageblatt*, and *Frankfurter Zeitung*.¹² On the other end was Alfred Hugenberg,¹³ owner of one of the most influential media empires in Europe (Humphreys 1994: 16-19). Despite this concentration of power, competing spheres endured around liberal, social, and Catholic publications (Schildt 2001: 196). I selected four outlets to capture the diverse public discourse:

¹¹ Ross cites an overall circulation of 15.8 million for 1932 (2008: 292). The press maintained its role for political opinion-making as radio gave little attention to news (Büttner 2010: 321).

¹² These are *bürgerlich-liberale Zeitungen*, cf. (Stöber 2005: 237).

¹³ Hugenberg, member of the DNVP, was fiercely anti-socialist (Humphreys 1994: 19).

		Genre	
		Quality	Mass Media
Attitude	Conservative	Germania	Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung
	Progressive	Vossische Zeitung	Vorwärts

Table 5.1: Weimar Republic: Newspapers

- *Germania*: close to the Zentrum party, it became one of the main Catholic voices, maintaining a forum for the conservative establishment.
- *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (DAZ)*: amongst the best known conservative papers, gradually developed an anti-republican attitude but supportive of Brüning during the 1920s.
- *Vossische Zeitung (VZ)*: defender of liberal politics with international reputation, therefore an early target for Nazi attacks. Had a particular prestige as one of Germany's oldest print outlets (Oels and Schneider 2014).
- *Vorwärts*: founded in 1876, this Socialist paper maintained a critical attitude towards developments in the USSR. Forbidden in 1933, it continued to circulate in exile for some years.

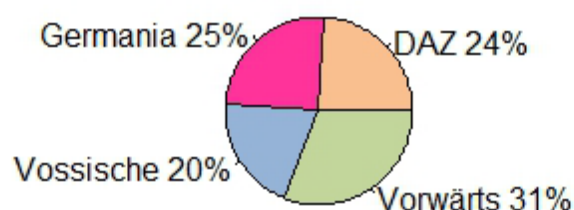


Figure 5.1: Weimar Republic: Newspaper Breakdown

My analysis also draws on other papers but less systematically than these four: notably *Die Weltbühne*, one of the central organs for the radical *bürgerliche Linke* [bourgeois Left]. Despite its small circulation it had influence beyond its readership; other newspapers echoed

its reports, and prominent intellectuals regularly contributed (Deák 1968, Madrasch-Groschopp 1985).

In total I collected 1,399 articles, of which 319 were coded with a total of 5,932 attributed codes. The topic of youth was particularly prominent in the progressive mass newspaper *Vorwärts* and spreads to a roughly equal extent between the other three (Figure 5.1).

Corpus Overview			Time Period	
Total Population	1.399		01.10.1929	Start
Theoretical Sample	280		28.02.1933	End
Effective Sample	319			
Number of Codings	5.932			

Table 5.2: Weimar Republic: Corpus

What topics formed the context for contemporary understandings of youth? Who were the authors that were defining the meaning of youth? What type of discursive position did they occupy (Figure 5.2)? Contemporaries linked youth predominantly to social issues and questions of education. Social-educational topics include debates about learning *stricto sensu*, associated at times with the demographic dimension. Domestic political-economic topics figure as the second most prominent theme, with many extolling the importance of youth political involvement. Non-political aspects are the third most significant topic: such articles centre on societal and cultural aspects of youth, including debates about gender relations, sports, and new media.

The frequency of citizens amongst the authors of articles is remarkable. Students often spoke directly for their generation, trying to change the way youth was portrayed to the general public. Adults also wrote letters or opinion pieces, either welcoming or condemning the public behaviour of youth. Citizens, intellectuals, and representatives of civil society usually intervened from a clear generational discourse position. The discourse position “nation,” as might be expected, is of great importance for politicians’ interventions. Almost all of them

spoke as representatives of a Weimarian national community – a programmatic way of addressing the highly fragmented public. But a quarter of all articles by journalists formulated demands and hopes for a national polity.

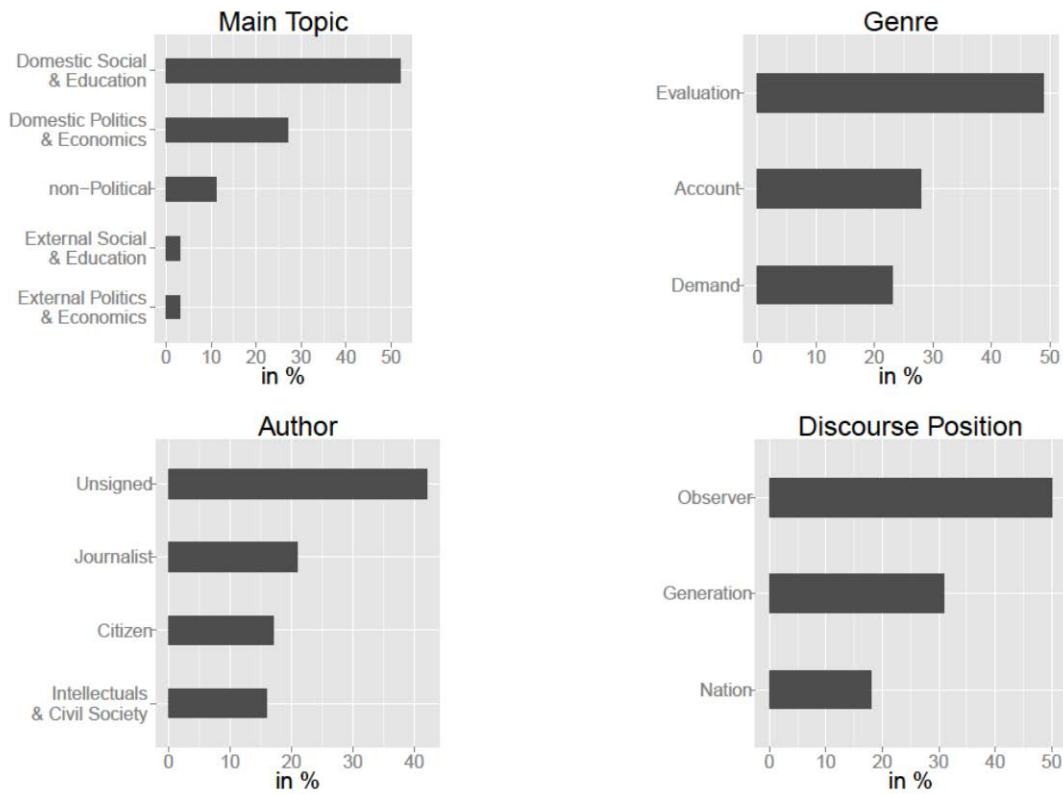


Figure 5.2: Weimar Republic: Corpus Structure

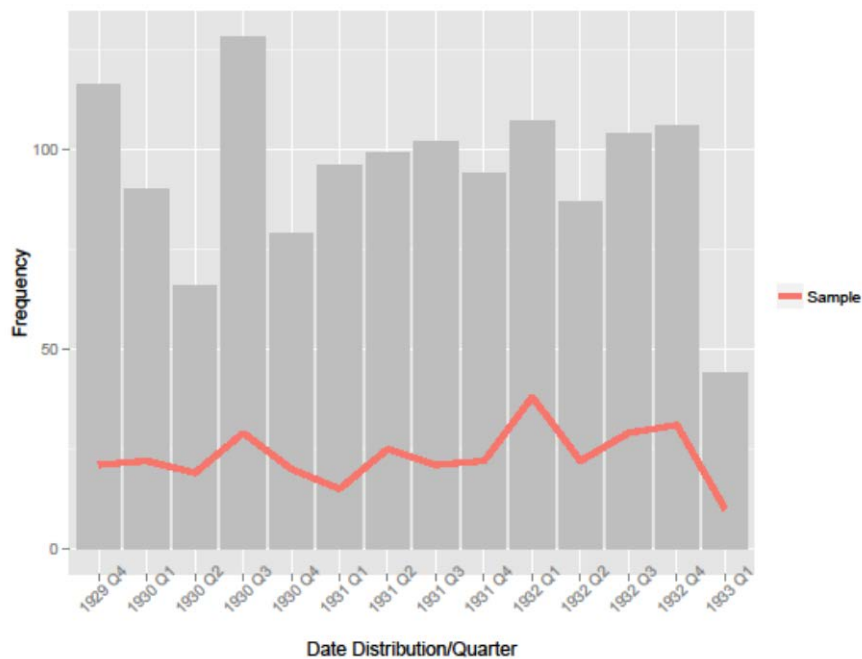


Figure 5.3: Weimar Republic: Corpus Article Frequency

A large proportion of articles remained unsigned. Their style suggests that journalists wrote them and their anonymity differs from the authoritative anonymity of the USSR. It did not convey an objective truth from a speaker allegedly external to the discourse. Unsigned articles were opinion pieces which took distinct national or generational discursive positions. Weimar's *Meinungspresse* implied that newspapers maintained starkly diverging political positions – a feature captured in Figure (5.2) by the large proportion of evaluations and demands voiced throughout the press. Political mobilisation of youth became increasingly violent after 1929-30, with particularly intense political confrontation around 1932. The dynamics of this mobilisation are expressed in the frequency of news about youth. The corpus (Figure 5.3) is almost equally distributed,¹⁴ pointing to the constant importance of youth before the NSDAP's 1933 takeover.

Discursive Formations: A Stable Diversity

The Weimar corpus can be interpreted as four discursive formations alongside a small fifth one (Figure 5.5).¹⁵ The network plot expresses how distinct each formation is and which concepts bridge different formations (Figure 5.4). The grey module is a residual, made up of scattered nodes that do not fit elsewhere, but it is not a discrete discursive community. The visualisation also highlights the overlap between the burgundy PRO-DEMOCRACY and the orange YOUTH & FUTURE formations. The former revolves around the idea of AUTONOMOUS youth that is INVOLVED in public and represents the VANGUARD of society saving democracy. The latter unites articles and concepts which projected a FUTURE DECISIVE role on youth and put this youth-to-come in CONTINUITY with PRESENT youth, understood as being PRECIOUS for the *Volk*.¹⁶ By 1932 such arguments gained traction when

¹⁴ The mean (16.07.1931) is slightly smaller than then median (29.08.1931).

¹⁵ The introduction provides a detailed methodological discussion. The modularity score is 0.247.

¹⁶ Berlins Jugendarbeit, in: VZ, 03.04.1930 as well as Das Volk von Morgen, in: Germania, 29.06.1930.

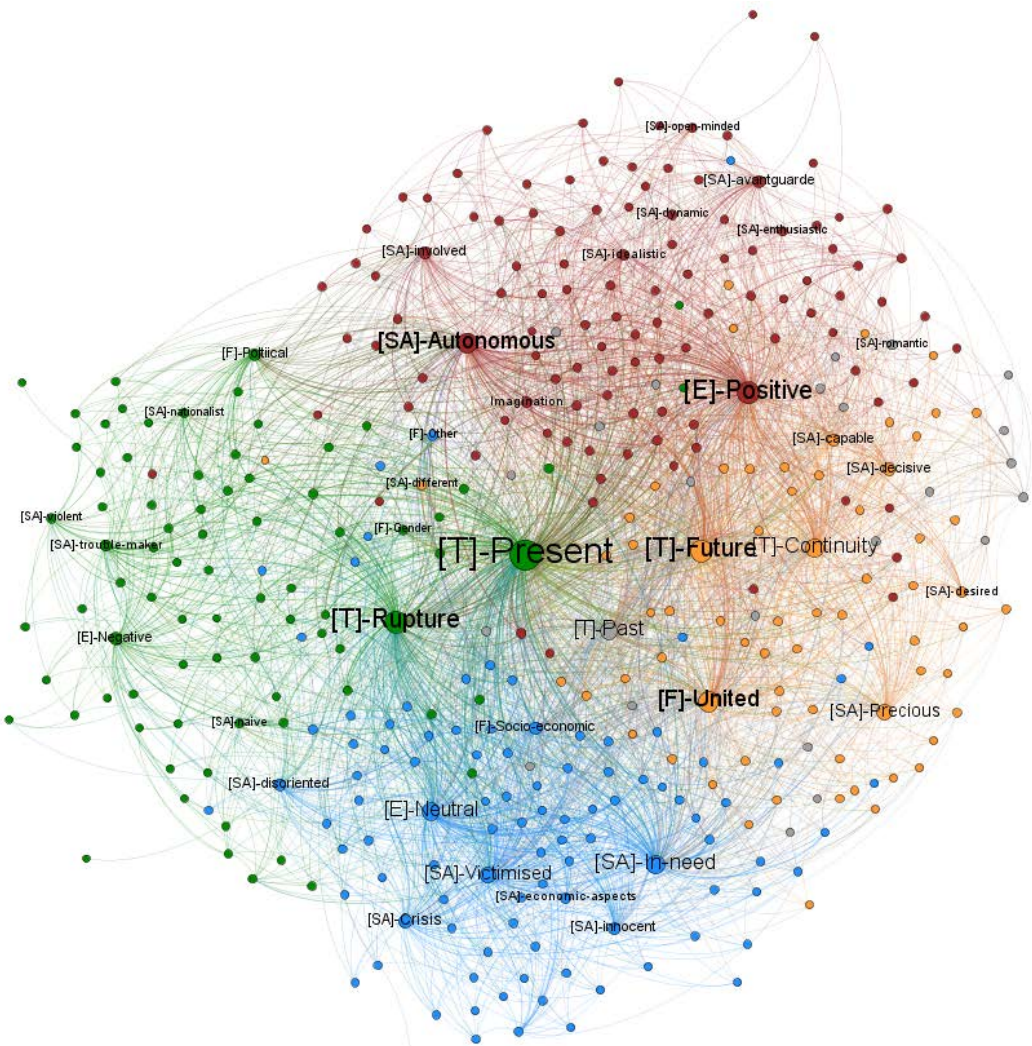


Figure 5.4: Weimar Republic: Discourse Network

¹⁷ Volk ohne Jugend, in: VZ, 30.08.1932.

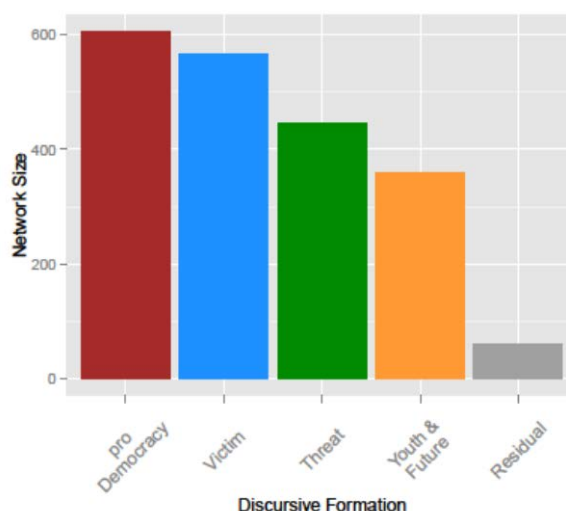


Figure 5.5: Weimar Republic: Size of Modularity Classes

The blue VICTIM discursive formation comprises utterances about youth in CRISIS, dependent on the older generation and also understands youth as INNOCENT. Throughout the episode *Jugendnot* [hardship endured by youth] was a commonplace¹⁸ as economic deprivation and soaring unemployment rates dominated the everyday life of youth.¹⁹ Moreover, contemporaries explained political radicalism through unemployment and interpreted the economic situation as a threat to the country's social stability.²⁰ Authors did not simply condemn juvenile crimes but portrayed youth as victimised and often driven by hunger.²¹ Ideally, families would be a safeguard against political radicalism, but economic uncertainties put pressure on them. The return of sons unable to find work intensified family tensions in times of scarcity.²² Comparisons put Weimar's situation in perspective, pointing, for instance to problems of youth unemployment and gangs in Chicago.²³

¹⁸ Jugend gegen Radikalismus, in: VZ, 27.01.1931; Kümmert Euch um die arbeitslose Jugend, in: VZ, 19.05.1932.

¹⁹ For readers' letters see Helft der Jugend!, in: DAZ, 20.03.1932.

²⁰ Kümmert Euch um die arbeitslose Jugend, in: VZ, 19.05.1932.

²¹ Mißbrauchte Jugend, in: Vorwärts, 11.03.1931.

²² Unnütze Esser!, in: Vorwärts, 04.12.1931 and Väter und Söhne, in: Vorwärts, 01.11.1931.

²³ Chikagos Verbrecherjugend, in: Vorwärts, 17.06.1932.

The discursive rules of the green formation construct youth as a THREAT to the established order and unlike past youth. The theme of a generational gulf ran throughout Weimar's discourse on youth. Contemporaries agreed on the cross-European relevance of this idea, but during the increasingly violent confrontations from 1931 onwards they maintained that Weimar's youth cultivated a uniquely strong group identity.²⁴ By 1933 the presence of a generational gulf became uncontested.²⁵ During the last three years of the Weimar Republic this included feelings of abandonment among youth, which worsened because of parents' inability to support their children in economic difficulties.²⁶

Presenting youth as a distinct generation, journalists also projected a unique political mission onto it. By 1932, the conservative DAZ reiterated young people's criticisms of the parliamentary system and held up those criticisms as evidence of the political system's delegitimisation.²⁷ Detailed descriptions of youth violence painted a picture of a threatening generation, impossible to sympathise with, particularly when innocent people were killed.²⁸ Political leaders emphasised the demographic weight of young people, who needed political education to avoid being "bewitched" by communists and nationalists into casting "extremist votes".²⁹ Readers' letters illustrate that youthful radicalism and rejection of democracy was already a subject of popular concern by 1930.³⁰

Some further remarks on those concepts that link discursive formations are required. It is counterintuitive, given the dominant view on the undermining of democracy through youth, that nearly all newspapers evaluated youth primarily positively. The code POSITIVE links

²⁴ Ansprache an die Jugend, in: VZ, 08.09.1931; Deutsche und französische Jugend, in: VZ, 01.12.1932.

²⁵ Der Jugend eine Gasse, in: VZ, 06.01.1933.

²⁶ Wege zum Jugendgericht, in: Vorwärts, 10.02.1931.

²⁷ Deutsche Jugend wird wehrhaft, in: DAZ, 28.10.1932.

²⁸ Die Sechszehnjährige, in: DAZ, 11.02.1932.

²⁹ Wie wählt die Jugend, in: Vorwärts, 01.03.1930.

³⁰ Warum die Jugend radikal wählte, in: DAZ, 04.10.1930.

half of the utterances about youth in the Weimar Republic sample, particularly those about a democratic youth and those evoking the future when speaking about youth. On the other hand, authors also emphasised that the current period was distinct, and frequently used the idea of a RUPTURE in relation with PRESENT, PAST, and FUTURE. In other words, past youth and youth to come were framed as being different from current youth, which was usually characterised either as threat or as victim. The idea of RUPTURE was particularly prominent in Germania, expressing that it perceived contemporary youth as alienated. The Vossische Zeitung was less decided in that respect and maintained a more positive view on youth than its progressive counter-part, Vorwärts. While this highlights that the Vossische Zeitung engaged in less reporting about violent student confrontations, it also points to an idealistic youth image in the paper. The exception of Vorwärts highlights the space the newspaper gave to violent clashes and the economic hardship of youth. The DAZ, similar to the Vossische Zeitung, advanced a positive image of youth and saw it in CONTINUITY with past and future.

Was the younger generation understood as being IN-NEED of the older generation or, on the contrary, portrayed as being AUTONOMOUS? What were the implications of these conceptualisations? AUTONOMOUS youth, across the ideological spectrum, was associated with POSITIVE evaluations when it related to the democratic mobilisation of youth. This idealised image of youth portrayed it as a progressive social actor – when it could act independently. However, AUTONOMOUS youth also evoked fears of youth as a threat and out of control. This concept therefore links two opposing discursive formations.

Evaluations of youth being IN-NEED were more mixed. Only the conservative DAZ associated it with POSITIVE evaluations, illustrating the paper's paternalistic tone, with an emphasis on guiding youth to allow its flourishing. The other papers associated youth IN-NEED with NEUTRAL evaluations, indicating discursive rules that link deviant youth and other undesirable behaviour. Although youth IN-NEED was most prominent when journalists

understood youth as a victim, they also tended to use this idea when speaking about the importance of taking care of youth as a means to shape the future.

The older generation placed further emphasis on youth IN-NEED of guidance. Hugenberg was a protagonist in this debate. In 1931 he underlined in his DAZ that the fight for the support of youth was a key political mission.³¹ In 1930, Hindenburg had expressed a similar opinion when addressing various *Jugendverbände* [youth associations] to remind them of their political responsibility.³² Seemingly, only adult guidance would allow youth to flourish – an idea which the economic crisis fortified.³³

Though the discourse revolved around youth, certain utterances were specifically concerned with students. The conservative press maintained until 1932 that independent universities were critical for transmitting ideals to future societal leaders.³⁴ Germania offered idealised visions of students, anticipating their contributions to a peaceful European future through Franco-German reconciliation.³⁵ Across the episode, however, a competing set of discursive rules understood students as the cause of violent troubles: their vandalism destroyed public authority,³⁶ and fights at universities³⁷ contributed to this negative view. A gendered picture of masculine violence complemented this idea of a malicious generation.³⁸ From 1932 onwards, debates about clashes between communist and national-socialist student groups intensified. Weimar's *Meinungspresse* engaged in this struggle. Vorwärts condemned Nazi

³¹ Hugenberg über Jugenderziehung und Staat, in: DAZ, 29.08.1931.

³² Hindenburg antwortet den Jugendverbänden, in: DAZ, 16.03.1930.

³³ Amongst many see: Dienst an der Jugend, in: DAZ, 16.11.1929; Haltlose Jugend, in: Germania, 15.11.1930; Hilfe der erwerbslosen Jugend!, in: Vorwärts, 20.02.1931; Dosierte Jugendertüchtigung, in: VZ, 09.12.1932.

³⁴ Um die Universitäten, in: Germania, 20.10.1932.

³⁵ Das Mannheimer Studententreffen, in: Germania, 23.09.1930; Die junge Generation, in: Germania, 09.04.1931 – a theme also developed within Vorwärts: e.g. Unsere Studenten, in: Vorwärts, 09.10.1930.

³⁶ Neun Studenten vor dem Richter, in: Vorwärts, 11.01.1930.

³⁷ Universität Köln, in: Germania, 01.11.1929.

³⁸ Studentenunfug in Thüringen, in: Vorwärts, 16.07.1930.

activity and expressed sympathy for defensive communist acts.³⁹ The conservative press made less clear judgements, but avoided open support of nationalists.⁴⁰

No discursive formation dominated before the Nazi take-over put an end to free debate and public diversity. The temporal composition of the discursive formations indicates that each persisted over the period analysed. Contemporaries voiced competing interpretations until the very end of the Republic. Viewing the breakdown of Weimar democracy through the prism of youth therefore underlines the persistence of multiple possible futures until February 1933.

Drawing on these remarks, I shall now explore the characteristics of each discursive formation in depth. The aim is to analyse the discursive rules that underlie the public usage of the term youth, along with the way youth mobilised for political ends. This combined analysis makes it possible to identify how discursive structures shaped the way young people could mobilise and how contemporaries perceived of public activities. Analysis of the political significance of youth involvement contributes to our understanding of youth behaviour in a democracy that was in crisis, lacked popular support, and ultimately collapsed.

³⁹ Neue Studentenkrawalle, in: Vorwärts, 19.01.1932; Universität geschlossen, in: Vorwärts, 23.01.1932; Neue Studentenkrawalle, in: Vorwärts, 10.02.1933.

⁴⁰ Die wahre Universität, in: DAZ, 05.02.1932.

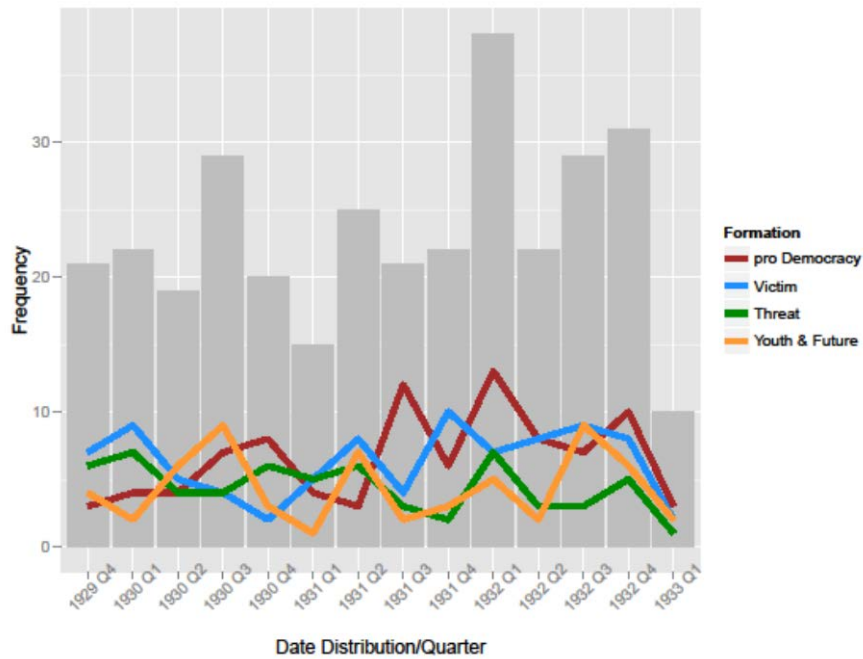


Figure 5.6: Weimar Republic: Frequency per Modularity Class

AUTONOMOUS YOUTH MOBILISATION FOR DEMOCRACY

Die Jugend, die noch unvergiftet ist vom politischen Haß, fähig ist, von anderen die guten und nicht die schlechten Eigenschaften zu lernen und zu erfassen, wird nach einer Richtung hin beeinflusst, die unerläßlich ist zur Idee des Weltfriedens und der Weltverständigung.

The youth, not yet poisoned with political hatred, is able to learn and to grasp from others the good and ignore the bad qualities. Young people are influenced in a direction essential for the idea of world peace and understanding.⁴¹

Scholarship on Weimar has privileged those youth activities that undermined democracy. Amongst many, Swett (2004) and Brown (2009) emphasise the radicalism of Weimar's youth, which was critical to the public sphere. Berman rightly underlines that civil society failed to play its Tocquevillean function (1997: 417). However, the largest discursive formation revolves around an AUTONOMOUS youth, engaged for democracy and associated with POSITIVE evaluations.

⁴¹ Jugend stürzt die Grenzpfähle, in: VZ, 21.07.1931.

A tendency for backward reading of history tends to bias understandings of Weimar. Knowledge of its collapse distorts views of the episode. Contrary to the view that dominates the literature, I argue that a careful analysis of contemporary sources, highlights the importance of Catholic, Republican, and socialist youth. Pro-democratic mobilisations were central for the way in which those who lived during the final years of the Weimar Republic made sense of their present. From 1931 onwards, the importance of this discursive formation even augmented, as increasingly violent confrontations on the street provoked some youth to support Weimar's democracy (Figure 5.6). The lens of youth therefore offers a new perspective on the collapse of democracy. I argue that pro-democratic youth mobilisation was an important part of what youth meant for contemporaries.

Although youth engagement supported democracy, it hardly stabilised the Weimarian democratic system. Indeed, these groups also expressed democratic ideals which delegitimised Weimar's version of parliamentary democracy. Mobilisation and its discourse undermined the regime's legitimacy even amongst those who did not support fascism or communism. All of the sampled newspapers contributed to the pro-democratic idea of youth. The textual analysis underlines, however, that each newspapers had distinct ideas about Weimar's democracy and the involvement of youth. The resemblance on the level of codes, the meso-level, is therefore deconstructed through careful interpretation on the micro-level, i.e. the contextualised utterance. I argue that despite its size, the PRO-DEMOCRACY formation was eventually weakened because it was internally very diverse and contradictory.

The overall network indicates the importance of the codes AUTONOMOUS and POSITIVE for structuring the discursive network (Figure 5.8). Betweenness and degree centrality (Figure 5.7) point to the place of RELIGIOUS – this code refers to factions amongst young people and portrays a new generation divided on questions of religiosity, an idea promoted particularly by the Catholic newspaper Germania. Moreover, concept-codes which contribute to the image

of an active and politically INVOLVED youth are important. Actors in public discourse constructed youth as a VANGUARD and a number of associated conceptual codes fortified this perception. Also the importance of IMAGINATION is noteworthy.

The network (Figure 5.8) suggests that a section of the discursive formation revolves around events outside of Weimar Germany. Some utterances about foreign youth followed the PRO-DEMOCRACY discursive rules and portrayed youth abroad as IDEALISTIC and HEROIC, which in turn shaped the rules for Weimarian youth.

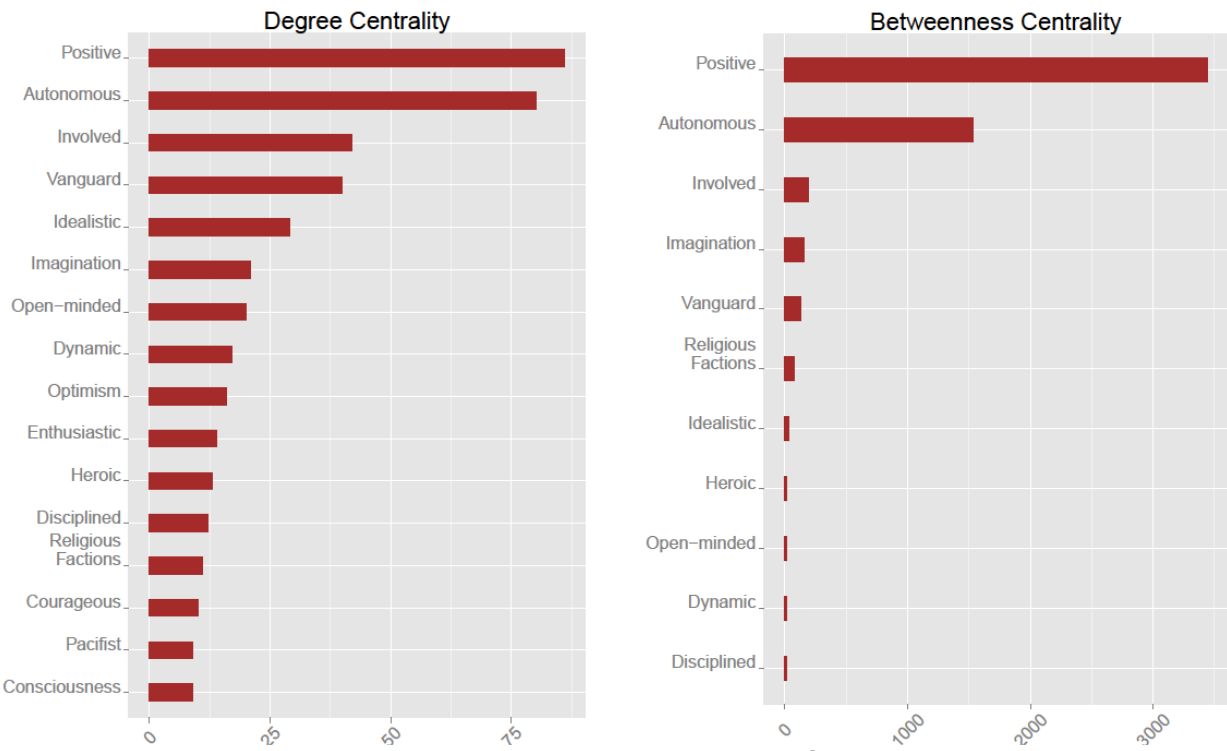


Figure 5.7: PRO-DEMOCRACY: Centralities

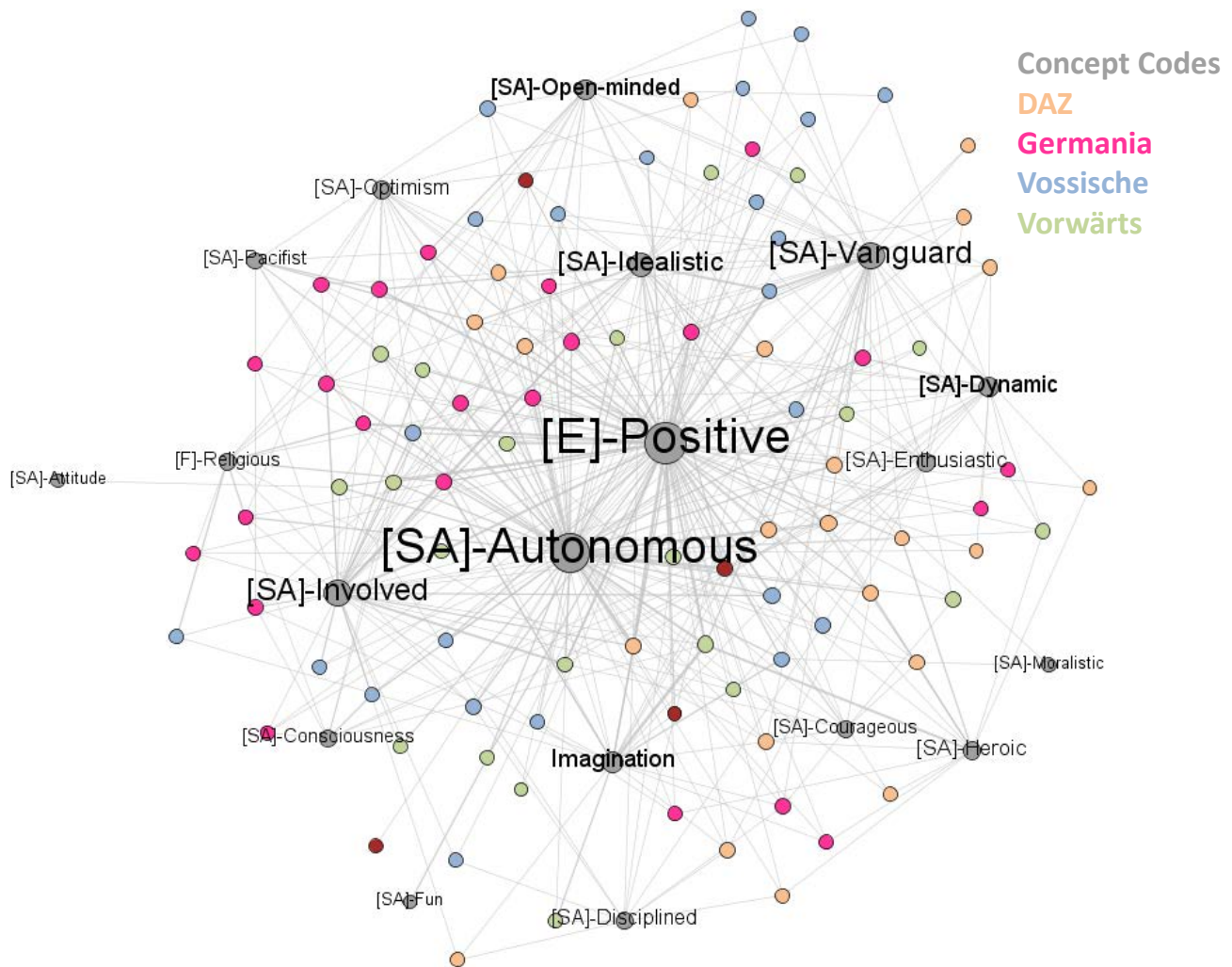


Figure 5.8: PRO-DEMOCRACY: Discourse Network

Mobilising for Democracy but Not for Weimar

Pro-democratic youth mobilisation followed three patterns which were each specific to different sections of the public. Newspapers hardly spoke about rival groups at all which clearly distinguishes the discursive formation internally. Moreover, this points to the important fragmentation of the public sphere.⁴²

Towards the end of the Weimar Republic it became indisputable that the republican *Reichsbanner* had lost its hold amongst youth. Its members, seen as HEROIC, continued to unite but by 1932 contemporaries expected no great results from them. This is in stark

⁴² Jones notes that disunity on the Right was as important a prerequisite for national-socialism as disunity on the Left (Jones 2014: 2).

contrast to the period before 1923. Ziemann's analysis of the *Reichsbanner's* war commemorations illustrates the success of slogans such as "Nie wieder Krieg!" ["No more war!"] for uniting young people (2013: 38). Criticism of the Weimar Republic like the *Dolchstoßlegende* and desire for revenge were far from dominant in those early years.

By 1932 *Vorwärts* supported the *Reichsbanner's* attempts to save the Republic. But the paper was aware that current economic hardships hindered mobilisation beyond those strongly committed members who participated without material incentives. Nevertheless, *Vorwärts* maintained that this small group was INVOLVED and potentially DECISIVE for Weimar's future since engagement increased civic skills and spread republican ideas: "In these days of highly endangered political freedom in Germany it is a strong political necessity to politically educate the republican youth."⁴³

The *Republikanischer Studentenbund* [Republican Student Association] shared this outlook. The *Studentenbund* collaborated closely with the *Reichsbanner* to support a democratic Weimar notably during the "Wartburgfest der Republikaner" in 1929.⁴⁴ But its support was attached to demands that the leadership failed to accommodate, such as taking decisive actions to end anti-republican violence. Its activities underlined dissatisfaction with the current democracy. Strikingly, in 1931 the *Studentenbund* general assembly adopted a resolution supportive of republicanism but not the Weimar system and VZ portrayed youth as INVOLVED.⁴⁵

With political tensions increasing, the *Studentenbund* attenuated its idealistic positions. In the heated political confrontations of 1932 members supported Hindenburg, the "Greis" [old man], who seemed able to calm the violence. Notwithstanding his age, the *Studentenbund*

⁴³ Die Jugend der Republik, in: *Vorwärts*, 26.05.1932.

⁴⁴ Wartburgfest der Republikaner, in: *Illustrierte Republikanische Zeitung*, 22/1929, S. 340.

⁴⁵ Jugend gegen Radikalismus, in: *VZ*, 27.01.1931.

argued that he could overcome the generational gulf by “Aufrichtigkeit und Reinheit des Willens” [sincerity and purity of will]. Like republican youth he was willing to sacrifice his energy for the entire “Volk”.⁴⁶

In March 1932 Lothar Harmann, a representative of the *Republikanischer Studentenbund*, claimed that despite the difficult circumstances in which the new generation grew up, many supported the Weimar Republic:

The majority of us do not belong to the generation that fought in Langemarck.⁴⁷ [...] This youth was placed into political and economic fights, because today she must fight for her existence. She wages this battle with all the passion and fanaticism which is proper to genuine youth.⁴⁸

The use of the term generation in republican language conforms to my theoretical understanding. Utterances drew on a shared *Erfahrungsraum* and projected a united *Erwartungshorizont*. However, the *Studentenbund*’s support for Hindenburg was not nearly as mobilising as the earlier struggles for an idealised democracy. This support was merely a pragmatic choice which primarily conveyed its rejection of fascism.⁴⁹ During the last months of the Weimar Republic, the *Studentenbund* lost visibility. Letters from its members testify to the impact of Nazi-violence on the *Studentenbund*, particularly where fascist violence could not unload against communists because none were present.

Socialist youth movements constituted another pro-democratic voice which understood themselves as fighting a decisive battle. In 1930 Max Westphal, the leader of the socialist

⁴⁶ Jugend für Hindenburg, in: VZ, 12.03.1932.

⁴⁷ Langemarck (now Langemark) is a village in Flanders where severe battles took place in 1914. It turned into a symbol for the war in the Weimar Republic and when German youth realised in 1928 that German soldiers were not appropriately buried they initiated reburial which began 1930 (Weinrich 2013: 247-66).

⁴⁸ Jugend für Hindenburg, in: VZ, 12.03.1932.

⁴⁹ For a similarly pragmatic support of Hindenburg by the “Landesverband der Statsbürgerlichen Jugend Berlin Brandenburgs” see Jugend an Hindenburg, in: VZ, 23.07.1932.

working youth, underlined its importance for political development. Drawing on his insider perspective he confirmed that by 1930 a majority of youth supported Hitler or Thälmann, but argued that youth was not simply radical or automatically supportive of extremes. He therefore criticised the proposal by the *Deutsche Volkspartei* to increase the minimum voting age from 20 to 25 and made the case for nuances: “One should emphasise that the political thinking and acting of a large number of young people takes place within reasonable parameters.” 10% of the million members of the social democratic party were younger than 25 years old which underlined this fact. There were more young social democrats than members of the communist party altogether.⁵⁰

Social democrats agreed that youth should be more politicised. Its political education was DECISIVE for Weimar’s and the party’s future. In 1930 the *Vossische Zeitung* published numerous letters to illustrate that some youth had internalised such visions, defining themselves as INVOLVED and ENTHUSIASTIC for politics. Erich Borchardt argued, for instance, that youth was pure and spoke the truth, whereas assessments by the older generation were always biased and inauthentic. Therefore youth criticism of the parliamentary system was particularly relevant. Moreover, adult-driven politics seemed irrelevant as they failed to address the important question of national unity. German youth, so Borchardt suggested, distrusted the fragmented parliament. Others reiterated similar thoughts. Herbert Lode portrayed an OPTIMISTIC and IDEALISTIC young generation, poorly understood by adults: “All those who want to disillusion youth misjudge its resistant and healthy idealism, which will repeatedly reveal itself amongst the largest part of German youth.”

Another writer, Georg Hase, maintained that Weimar would fail without young people’s support. Youth was less informed about the “Irrgärten der Parteipolitik” [maze of party

⁵⁰ Anschlag auf das Jungvolk, in: *Vorwärts*, 22.07.1930.

politics] but benefited from a pure perspective on the current misery. But youth turned radical because of Weimar's failures:

The word 'radical', for the largest number of the young offspring, is only to be applied insofar as they condemn the party intrigues root-and-branch and distance themselves totally from "Halb-und Hohlheiten" [half-truths and empty words] of today's parliamentarism. Incidentally they believe in Republicanism and do not want to have anything in common with the radical guards of Stalin and Hitler, which appear radical to the outside with raw brute force.⁵¹

A leading quality newspaper and the central outlet in Weimar's media landscape, the *Vossische Zeitung*, resisted the downward trend during the economic crash (Fulda 2009: 23). The choice of letters published show that its editors saw them as representative. Socialist student associations maintained that students had a special role in the political struggle. Described as ENTHUSIASTIC, their political demands undermined Weimar's legitimacy since they understood it as a transitory regime, prior to a proper "soziale Volksstaat" [social people's state].⁵² The violence of the confrontations in 1932 further undermined democratic ideals. The pro-republican forces urged people to defend them and the SPD-led union of the *Eiserne Front* [Iron Front] tried to attract youth to resist National Socialism.⁵³ Progressive media fortified the idea of a DECISIVE and DYNAMIC youth and contributed to the view that the young generation held the entire nation's destiny in its hands.⁵⁴

Finally, the conservative Germania granted ample attention to the Catholic pro-democratic stream of youth mobilisation. The way it addressed youth and related it to the political realities intensified criticisms of Weimar's democracy, however. Catholic journalists sacralised elections and added a spiritual dimension to political acts – expectations far from

⁵¹ Ringende Jugend, in: VZ, 10.08.1930.

⁵² Unsere Studenten, in: Vorwärts, 09.10.1930.

⁵³ In October 1931 the *Reichsbanner* and various smaller socialist movements established the *Eiserne Front* with a more radical line which had particular success amongst young people (Lösche and Walter 1989: 519).

⁵⁴ An die deutsche Jugend, in: Vorwärts, 31.01.1932 and a unique role was attributed to socialist working youth, Jugend und Gegenwart, in: Vorwärts, 31.05.1932.

parliamentary reality. A movement like the *Windthorstbünde*, therefore, was already carefully phrasing its relation to democracy by 1929, emphasising that “it is currently quite difficult to maintain our faith”. In their daily practice the Catholic movements focussed on the kind of existential questions which Weimar’s politicians neglected.⁵⁵

Faced with intensified political confrontation, the language game around Catholic youth movements anticipated the need for a spiritual front against public violence. In 1931, Germania maintained that Catholic youth was vital for Weimar as the only social force that stood up for Christian values.⁵⁶ Catholic youth movements endorsed religious guidelines and placed less emphasis on a generational rupture in their rejection of liberalism and individualism (Götz von Olenhusen 1987: 100). However, opinions on the street were hardly receptive to such arguments and these groups’ public visibility remained low. Despite their numbers – by 1933 the *Katholische Jungmännerverband Deutschlands* [Catholic Young Men’s Association of Germany] had around 365,000 members – Catholics failed to occupy a discourse position beyond Germania and remained within a restricted section of the public sphere.

The *Kolping-Jugend*, a Catholic youth movement with social and educational ambitions, supported democracy but criticised the economic conditions. Modern economics, so they argued, wiped out individuality while turning people into productive masses – a worrisome prospect for youth, which needed to build its own personality. Such remarks were linked to criticism of the political leadership and became sharper when journalists referred to conditions in Soviet Russia, highlighting that even the Bolsheviks had started to value

⁵⁵ Wahlentscheidung der katholischen Jugend, in: Germania, 13.11.1929.

⁵⁶ Zweite Jahrestagung der katholischen Jugend Deutschlands, in: Germania, 03.02.1931.

personal quality and responsibility.⁵⁷ A Catholic-Soviet alliance was rare and therefore all the more remarkable, as it remained conventional to condemn the distress of Soviet youth.⁵⁸

Reconciling Europe through Youth

The idea of a democratic rescue by youth could transcend partisan mobilisation. Such discursive rules contain utterances which associate youth with a mission of reconciliation between European countries.⁵⁹ In 1931, the German novelist Thomas Mann emphasised that European youth occupied a unique position, it experienced the present more intensely than any other groups and thus only youth could face the truth. For Mann, the adult generation was decaying, in contrast with youthful OPTIMISM and “Tatendrang” [zest for action]. Even compared to its European peers, Weimar’s youth stood out:

A young Frenchman who travelled in Germany recently said to me: ‘Oh my God, we also have young people but they are *petits bourgeois*, small and immature [unfertig] adults wearing a *Schniepelrock* [tailcoat] and pince-nez on their nose. Youth in a picturesque sense of the word, which understands itself and feels and behaves as youth, which adds to the life and the picture of the country its own, distinct note – that we do not have unlike you.’

Mann stressed that youth caused the most important changes in Weimar’s culture. Youth was critical for exposing the shortcomings and the conservative nature of the bourgeois society: “It is probably unique to our contemporary period that it received so many of its signals and key words from the young generation.” For contemporary observers like Mann it seemed clear that only generational renewal could save Europe.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Der Tag der Kolpings-Jugend, in: Germania, 08.09.1931.

⁵⁸ Die flandische Not, in: Die Weltbühne, 1929 15, p. 555 – it should be mentioned that with the intensified ideological confrontations between communists and nationalists a more pro-Soviet viewpoint could be expressed in the liberal newspaper, for instance Béla Balázs: Die Furcht der Intellektuellen vor dem Sozialismus, in: Die Weltbühne, 1932:6, p. 15.

⁵⁹ Hans-Erich Kaminski, journalist and writer, argued that Europe’s youth is already on the move to look for honest ideals, unlike the inherited ones, cf. An einem Sterbebett, in: Die Weltbühne, 1931:42, p. 589.

⁶⁰ Ansprache an die Jugend, in: VZ, 08.09.1931.

International student meetings solidified the idea of an OPEN-MINDED and INVOLVED youth. It overcame the world of its fathers which was focused on national competition. Compared to the adult parliamentary democracy, students across Europe seemed to be engaged in proper political debates without shunning controversies.⁶¹ An IDEALISTIC young generation expressed dissatisfaction with phoney representations of democracy. Franco-German antagonism was put aside when talking about youth and by 1931 a journalist in Germania even expressed admiration for the *Cité Universitaire* in Paris, which offered outstanding conditions for intellectual flourishing. With admiration he described France as an ideal for Weimar to follow: a stunning contrast with the discourse in those socio-political realms where competition and hostility dominated.⁶²

Sixty French and German students met in Mannheim to declare that an improved relationship between the two nations was a pre-requisite for European “Verfriedung” [peace advancement] in the fall of 1930. They developed ideas about a future “United States of Europe” and suggested that the Catholic Church, the “humanistic trans-European bourgeoisie,” and the “international social democrats” could realise such a vision.⁶³ Franco-German reconciliation remained central in the discourse about youth. Described as OPEN-MINDED and as a societal VANGUARD, youth took into account differences in the way of life that characterised each nation and overcame them through open exchange. The IDEALISTIC youth represented a united European generation, “race theorists turned pale in the absence of differences”.⁶⁴

Such youth-driven international reconciliation rejected on a synchronic level the present adult generation and created on a diachronic level a discontinuity with past youth. For instance,

⁶¹ Zerfall der Studenteninternationale, in: Germania, 18.08.1930.

⁶² Cité Universitaire, in: Germania, 15.01.1931.

⁶³ Das Mannheimer Studententreffen, in: Germania, 23.09.1930; for an analysis of Franco-German youth (Tiemann 1989).

⁶⁴ Jugend stürzt die Grenzpfähle, in: VZ, 21.07.1931.

during the 1930 annual assembly of the International Student Service, the socialist Otto Friedländer stated that current students wished to join the workers and help them critically reflect about the production process, unlike past students who were said to have been self-centred and careless.⁶⁵ This rejection of past youth was observed across Europe. Germania marvelled about *Jeunesse Catholique Française* [French Catholic Youth] as an IDEALISTIC movement of youth that crossed socio-economic boundaries.⁶⁶

This awakening encouraged Weimar's youth by drawing parallels between French and German Catholics. Both operated in hostile environments and therefore needed to affirm their opinions while remaining open to non-believers to gain numeric strength.⁶⁷ In a similar spirit, Germania understood Belgium's Catholic youth as capable of national renewal. Its journal "Esprit Nouveau" is described as a self-conscious albeit tolerant departure from the older generation.⁶⁸

The socio-political mission of German youth abroad complements this discursive formation. Public engagement of Scouts in the Baltics appeared decisive for preserving German culture. The *Deutscher Baltischer Pfadfinderbund* [German Baltic Scouts], a merger of smaller scouting organisation founded in 1928, had to respond to local threats of Bolshevik intervention. Accordingly, scouts received military training and became part of this HEROIC struggle:

In the battle for preserving the German national customs [Volkstum] in Latvia, the scouts already play a role which must not be undervalued, in particular since its intake made up in no trivial part of the sons of small German craftsman, clerks and workers. Their way of life brings

⁶⁵ Die Arbeit des Weltstudentenwerks, in: Vorwärts, 28.08.1930.

⁶⁶ International Reconciliation, in: Germania, 24.11.1931; similarly Die neue katholische Jugend Belgiens, in: Germania, 31.12.1932.

⁶⁷ International Reconciliation, in: Germania, 24.11.1931.

⁶⁸ Die neue katholische Jugend Belgiens, in: Germania, 31.12.1932.

them close to the Latvians, leads to many intermarriages and therefore endangers the Germanhood in those circles gravely.⁶⁹

Once the national confrontations had gained in intensity by 1933, the mission of youth abroad to save and expand German influence became more radical. The conservative press drove this interpretation. Talking about Danzig for instance, the DAZ described ENTHUSIASTIC support for a Germanic city. Such articles constructed an image of youth as AUTONOMOUS and a VANGUARD for bringing society forward.⁷⁰

Youth as Vanguard of Cultural Change

The picture of youth as an AUTONOMOUS VANGUARD would be incomplete without discussing the cultural changes of the time. In 1930 the writer Werner Deubel lamented in the monthly journal Deutsche Rundschau that Weimar Germany had grown obsessed with its youth as representing modernity not only in political but also in cultural terms – its haircuts, interest in cars, modern architecture, and new gender relations (1930). For the progressive Vorwärts, the “new women” emerged in the immediate post-war context, captured by Arnold Zweig’s novel “Junge Frau von 1914” [Young woman of 1914]. In 1932 the journalists sketched a generation of emancipated and culturally aware women for whom equality was not a goal but a reality.⁷¹ The possibility of legal abortion and divorce had changed women’s social status, although even the progressive Vorwärts expressed reservations. In a long and sarcastic comment, new gender images were criticised and the triviality of divorce regretted.⁷²

Youth seemed aware of such developments and capable of reflecting upon them. A report in October 1931 about a young persons’ discussion evening expressed this view. They

⁶⁹ Jahre deutsche Pfadfinderei im Baltenland, in: DAZ, 02.05.1930.

⁷⁰ Danzigs Jugend bekennt: “Danzig bleibt deutsch”, in: DAZ, 11.01.1933.

⁷¹ Junge Frau von 1914, in: Vorwärts, 12.01.1932.

⁷² Söckchen als Scheidungsgrund, in: Vorwärts, 20.05.1932; for a contextualisation (Hölscher 1999: 180)

articulated concerns about perpetuating unbalanced gender relations, “women at the stove” which extended to risks for a family’s economic situation. In Berlin, socialist youth groups met regularly to discuss such developments and the articles portrayed them as IDEALISTIC and ROMANTIC, complementing the image of youth as a pro-democratic force. Within this setting youth looked beyond material problems of contemporary marriages and underlined its spiritual significance, beyond an “economic arrangement and sexual union”.⁷³

FORWARD TO THE FUTURE THANKS TO YOUTH

Die deutsche Jugend ist die Zukunft unseres Volkes.

The German youth is the future of our folk.⁷⁴

The fourth-largest discursive formation, YOUTH & FUTURE, intersects with the preceding one (Figure 5.4). Its rules consolidated the perception of pro-democratic youth involvement but relate more specifically to the “present future” which youth expressed. When negotiating its meaning, contemporaries also discussed how they envisioned the tomorrow of the Weimar Republic. Contemporaries presented youth as the most tangible embodiment of their future.

The engagement with Weimar’s future contradicts conventional assumptions in current scholarship. Ever since Peukert claimed that the Weimar Republic represents the “crisis of classical modernity” (1987: 266-71), the discourse of crisis that contemporaries of the interwar period produced became the consensus.⁷⁵ This enclosed interpretations of Weimar within a horizon of doom (Föllmer et al. 2005: 16-22). However, crisis did not imply an absence of visions for the future and the horizons of expectations of such interpretations are

⁷³ Jugend und Ehe, in: Vorwärts, 08.10.1931.

⁷⁴ Reichskuratorium für Jugendertüchtigung, in: DAZ, 15.09.1932.

⁷⁵ Cf. FN [2].

worth investigating. Fear about the future was not the only characteristic of daily life. The omnipresence of crisis in Weimar's discourse also points to the openness of the situation as interpreted by contemporaries. The YOUTH & FUTURE discursive formation is equally distributed across the episode (Figure 5.6). Until the end of the democratic period youth was a space for negotiations about the country's future.

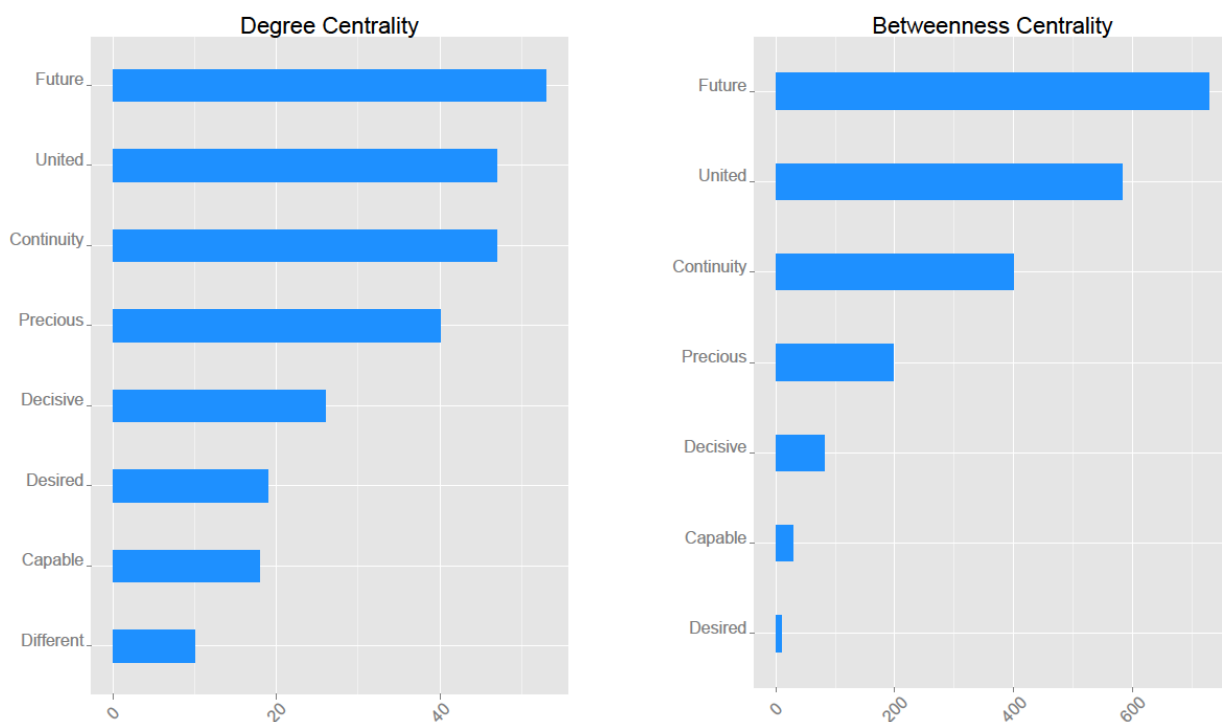


Figure 5.9: YOUTH & FUTURE: Centralities

Conservative newspapers dominate the discursive formation; moderately conservative voices sought salvation in imagining the future.⁷⁶ Moreover, the code CONTINUITY figures prominently in the network and indicates that contemporaries interpreted the PRESENT as having predictive power for the FUTURE. The centrality measures as well as the plot as a network show that POSITIVE attributes are associated with discussions about the FUTURE. Referring to the tomorrow of the Weimar Republic in the context of youth included optimistic

⁷⁶ Germania constitutes 30% and DAZ 33%

projections by contemporaries of the future which they imagined youth would shape. Despite violent confrontations, youth seemed CAPABLE and PRECIOUS for the country.

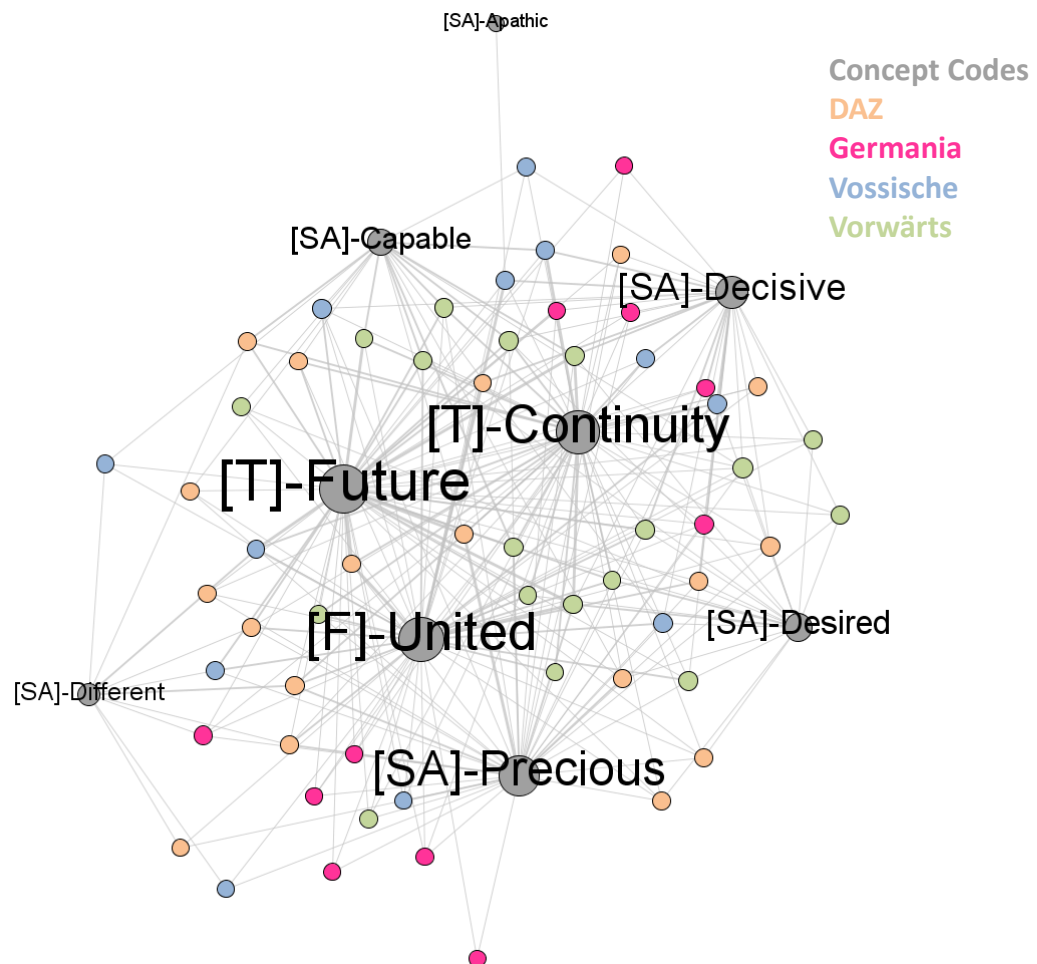


Figure 5.10: YOUTH & FUTURE: Discourse Network

The Political Struggle about Youth for the Future

Youth was crucial for the country's economic life given the gap in the age pyramid created by the war. For the socialists youth represented tomorrow's workforce and youth movements needed support to assure that this FUTURE would reflect socialist ideals. Vorwärts maintained that the only way of attracting youth was through open and honest discussions about the present.⁷⁷ In September 1930, following the "Reichstagswahl," social democrats attempted to

⁷⁷ Partei-Jugend-Konstruktive Politik, in: Vorwärts, 30.05.1931.

appeal to women and youth: “We wish to achieve the victory of social thought through the union of the weak based on the self-determination of the people.”⁷⁸ In Vorwärts’ argument, appeals to basic instincts of hatred left women and youth indifferent.⁷⁹ However, Mommsen qualified the actual socialist engagement with youth as “a farce” (1985: 58), which Gerstorff had also suggested in 1930.⁸⁰

The discrepancy between political rhetoric and the daily experience of contemporaries seemed stark. Carl von Ossietzky emphasised that the conservatives around Hugenberg failed to offer a convincing alternative to youth.⁸¹ Conservative media tried to contest socialist attempts to occupy the meaning of youth. The DAZ accused the socialists of inciting and indoctrinating youth and abusing its naïveté, capturing youth’s attention with an abundance of flags and music in a manner distastefully similar to the communists.⁸² The conservative currents presented youth UNITED in this fight for symbolic meaning. In particular Artur Mahraun’s *Jungdeutscher Orden* [Young German Order] emphasised that real change could only occur with the young generation in the parliament. The leader of the “Conservative Revolution” described the FUTURE as a departure from the current state of affairs and drew a continuous line from today’s youth to the Weimar Republic’s tomorrow, aiming for a synthesis of Prussia and Weimar in a right-wing alternative to national-socialism.⁸³ Mahraun, largely ignored in scholarship, would later be known to contemporaries for his involvement in founding the *Deutsche Staatspartei*. The *Orden* was the second largest right-wing organisation (second to the *Stahlhelm*) and attempted to reconcile democratic voices with neoconservative and radical

⁷⁸ Frauen und Jugend werden vereint, in: Vorwärts, 13.09.1930.

⁷⁹ Wie wählt die Jugend, in: Vorwärts, 01.03.1930.

⁸⁰ Der Reformismus am Ende, in: Die Weltbühne, 1930:49, p. 818.

⁸¹ „Gebrochene Beine“, in: Die Weltbühne, 1929:39, p. 461

⁸² Jugendverhetzung in einem städtlichen Gebäude, in: DAZ, 24.09.1930.

⁸³ Die Aufgabe der Jugend, in: VZ, 02.08.1930.

nationalist ideology – it later merged with the left-liberal *DDP*, followed by the creation of the *Staatspartei* in September 1930 prior to the elections (Crim 2014: 205-12).

Uncertain Present, Contested Future

Weimar's uncertainties underpinned every projection into the FUTURE. Uncertainties defined the *Erwartungshorizont*, and the discourse about youth established a distinctive temporal link which pulled the FUTURE into the PRESENT. The FUTURE became part of the PRESENT as it contained the conditions of the future.⁸⁴ Appeals to take care of youth expressed this "present future". Professor Reinhold Seeberg emphasised, for instance, that it was crucial to end the current neglect of youth. For Seeberg it was a given that youth represented the FUTURE which conveyed the CONTINUITY between today and tomorrow. Only by educating the most talented young people would Germany's future be better than its present. It was therefore worrisome for Seeberg to observe that an ever larger fraction of German families were failing to properly educate their children, particularly during adolescence. This neglect was fatal for Weimar's FUTURE.⁸⁵ Heinrich Bachmann, a Catholic intellectual, similarly portrayed youth as the *Volk* of tomorrow – he underlined that it was important to shape youth in the PRESENT to influence the FUTURE.⁸⁶

Beyond such broad appeals the discursive rules included demographic debates known across the globe (Alison 2007). The debate about eugenics was neither specific to conservative circles, nor to Germany.⁸⁷ Weimar's conservative press emphasised the importance of family bonds, united by the sacrament of marriage, for bringing up children. For Georg Foerster only the sacramental marriage could prevent further "Verwahrlosung" [depravity] amongst

⁸⁴ Zum antiimperialistischen Kongreß, in: *Die Weltbühne*, 1929:29, p. 84

⁸⁵ Dienst an der Jugend, in: *DAZ*, 16.11.1929.

⁸⁶ Das Volk von Morgen, in: *Germania*, 29.06.1930.

⁸⁷ Momentuous debates across central and southeast Europe (Turda and Weindling 2007), notably Romania (Bucur-Deckard 2002) but also in Western European, e.g. Britain (Stone 2002), or Scandinavia (Porter 1999).

youth.⁸⁸ Spilling over into European discussions about the “science of human improvement” (Comfort 2012: 1-28), Germania quoted Professor Mudermann in 1931 to emphasise the importance of the genes which parents transmit to their children. Youth, made up of future parents, was expected to be cautious when choosing a partner so as to improve society’s genetic endowment.⁸⁹

Progressive media were also concerned about degeneration. VZ published evidence of declining birth rates and Dr. Friedrich Burdörfer’s “Volk ohne Jugend” [Folk without Youth] (1932) gave scientific legitimacy to their interpretation, which suggested that increasing and enhancing the population could save the national economy. Understanding youth as consumers, Burdörfer set them equal to employers, as a way out of the economic crisis. In 1932 Dr. Heinz Caspari made predictions through the year 1990 and expressed concerns about a future lack of young people, a disaster which would make the Weimar Republic “one of seniors”. This future was made all the more dangerous by the “Slavic threat”: “This shift in the demographic core entails serious risks for European peace and for Germany itself.”⁹⁰ Initiatives from abroad inspired contemporaries and in 1932 the Catholic press marvelled about Italian protections for children and mothers and Mussolini’s encouragement for refining the national race.⁹¹

Discussions about youth and the future also concerned intergenerational relations. Citizens described difficulties in interacting with parents and medical doctors such as the psychologist Sophie Lazarsfeld commented on this phenomenon. She transposed individuals’ personal difficulties to the public level. According to Lazarsfeld, the problematic relationship between

⁸⁸ Krisis und Erneuerung der Familie, in: DAZ, 31.07.1932.

⁸⁹ Jugend und Eugenik, in: Germania, 17.06.1931.

⁹⁰ Volk ohne Jugend, in: VZ, 30.08.1932.

⁹¹ Italiens Mutter- und Kinderschutz, in: Germania, 02.10.1932.

mothers and daughters due to changing gender ideals led her to consider the relationship between “new” and “old” and its implications for the FUTURE. She maintained that too little freedom was left to the young – in families or in public, and she warned that they would turn against adults if not granted more space.⁹² Such discursive rules are of relevance for understanding the Weimar Republic’s tomorrow. A RUPTURE on the individual level was linked with a larger RUPTURE on the societal level, threatening societal continuity itself.

Educating for the Future

Military education for Weimar’s youth burst the chains created by the Versailles Treaty. In the fall of 1932 Wilhelm Groener and Kurt von Schleicher established the *Jugendertüchtigung*, creating hopes for a FUTURE that would finally leave the embarrassing past behind. Thanks to its military spirit, the *Jugendertüchtigung* was supposed to turn youth into real men ready to defend their nation.⁹³ This development further mythologised the First World War and glorified a soldier-maleness which the conservative press contrasted with the feminine and weak parliamentary system.⁹⁴ The conservative press expressed excitement for such developments⁹⁵ and showed bemusement over the concern *Jugendertüchtigung* created in France.⁹⁶

Schools and universities were places where the Weimar Republic prepared its future. Debates about pedagogical reforms were critical for imagining the country’s future. New pedagogical approaches seemed able to transmit a sense of community and belonging to youth. The

⁹² Mutter und Kind, in: Vorwärts, 22.11.1932.

⁹³ Die Richtlinien für die Ertüchtigung der Jugend, in: DAZ, 16.09.1932.

⁹⁴ Deutsche Jugend wird wehrhaft, in: DAZ, 28.10.1932.

⁹⁵ Reichskuratorium für Jugendertüchtigung, in: DAZ, 15.09.1932.

⁹⁶ Französischer Sturmangriff gegen die deutsche Jugendertüchtigung, in: DAZ, 16.09.1932. This concern was said to be absent in English perceptions of *Jugendertüchtigung*, apparently sympathetic to the German initiative as promise for Germany’s FUTURE and the country’s normalisation: Englisches Verständnis für den Plan der deutschen Jugendausbildung, in: DAZ, 17.09.1932.

Jugendbewegung was accused of de-integrating and individualising youth, a process which contemporary observers argued the schools needed to counteract.⁹⁷ Some school directors inferred that politics should be kept outside the school. To be unifying, the school should represent the impartial interests of the people, just like the army, and not political partisanship. Teachers could also not be expected to change opinions according to the prevailing political currents.⁹⁸

Financial cuts which endangered the capacity of schools to teach therefore jeopardised the national FUTURE. New pedagogical approaches⁹⁹ subject to heated debate demanded that teachers not only offer objective knowledge but also be accessible to students, a demand which required small (and thus expensive) class size.¹⁰⁰ Concerns about overcrowded schools supported these approaches and illustrated a fear of failing to adequately prepare youth.¹⁰¹

The future that was transmitted to the young generation was imagined to be European. Dr. Hans Hartmann, author of “Die junge Generation in Europa” [The Young Generation in Europe] expressed this *Erwartungshorizont*. The pan-European ethos of the lively culture of student exchange and the cross-European reform pedagogies characterised this expectation, notwithstanding “tendencies of nationalism”.¹⁰² Universities also had a special mission for the FUTURE in their attempts to find true answers to societal problems.¹⁰³ In 1932 DAZ could still point to the positively reviewed German university system. Abraham Flerner’s international comparison of universities underlined that Germany benefitted from a real

⁹⁷ Jugendkrise und Erziehungsreform, in: VZ, 15.03.1930.

⁹⁸ Entpolitisierung der Schule, in: DAZ, 17.02.1932.

⁹⁹ Rettet die Jugend, in: Vorwärts, 17.04.1931.

¹⁰⁰ Jugend, Erziehung und Politik, in: Vorwärts, 02.10.1931; Dem Kinde die Werkstatt, in: Vorwärts, 19.06.1930.

¹⁰¹ Sind die höheren Schulen überfüllt?, in: DAZ, 08.07.1932.

¹⁰² Die Jugend hat das Wort, in: VZ, 10.06.1932.

¹⁰³ Bekenntnis zur Universität, in: DAZ, 29.06.1930.

scientific tradition, integrated with teaching and learning. Its universities were said to prepare students for free and independent thinking. Flerner's only criticism was that universities reproduced dominant class structures which contributed to class antagonisms.¹⁰⁴

Teaching for the future of Weimar was not confined to public institutions: the idea of educating the young generation spread across different realms. Pope Pius XI claimed that the Catholic Church possessed a higher right than the state in terms of education (Götz von Olenhusen 1987: 60). Conservative newspapers echoed this belief. Church representatives claimed that schools provided a merely civic education which could not assure that young people turned into full members of the national community, given the missing spiritual dimension.¹⁰⁵ In the struggle over youth, the Church referred to its 1,000 years of experience in education.¹⁰⁶ Wilhelm Solzbacher, a young activist, endorsed ecclesiastic ideals about youth and portrayed the young generation as being in need of guidance to assure that the FUTURE would conform to Christian values.¹⁰⁷

This discursive formation critically complements our understanding of the PRO-DEMOCRACY formation. Journalists, politicians, and young people themselves anchored the discourse about youth in the socio-political development of the Weimar Republic, and the political behaviour of youth created hopes for Weimar's tomorrow. This interpretation reached across different political camps and stretched into numerous social realms. Jointly, the two preceding formations make up the most significant part of the Weimarian discourse about youth. The ultimate weakness of this discourse, according to my argument, is due to the lack of internal coherence highlighted by my close textual analysis. Given this fragmentation,

¹⁰⁴ Die wahre Universität, in: DAZ, 05.02.1932.

¹⁰⁵ Christusjugend in der Großstadt, in: Germania, 17.11.1932.

¹⁰⁶ Die Kirche kämpft um die Jugend, in: VZ, 06.09.1930.

¹⁰⁷ Für alkoholfreie Jugenderziehung, in: Germania, 23.08.1930.

other competing ideas about youth, which benefitted from being unambiguous, won the battle for public visibility.

YOUTH AS VICTIM OF CRISES

So muß ein Teil der Jugend sich an Utopien verlieren oder in jene aktiven oder passive Formen der Verzweiflung geraten, die für die Jugend selbst wie den Staat, der ohne gesunde Jugend wie ein Baum ohne Wurzeln dasteht, gleich gefährvoll sind.

Some young people are bound to lose themselves in utopias or fall into active or passive forms of despair, equally dangerous for them as for the state, which without a healthy youth is like a tree without roots.¹⁰⁸

The second-largest discursive formation revolves around the idea of youth as a VICTIM of economic difficulties, the disintegration of the family, or the failures of parliamentary democracy. Associating youth with societal problems amplified those problems and these discursive rules shaped an image of youth as dependent on the older generation. As a symbolic space, youth was constructed as a victim of economic and political problems for which it was not responsible and which it could not solve. The discursive rules were of particular importance for utterances in the second half of the episode (Figure 5.6), when the consequences of the economic crisis spilled over into the socio-political dimension.

The rules of this discursive formation were prominent within the progressive mass media *Vorwärts*. It discussed at length the impact of the economic situation on youth, its upbringing, its professional perspectives, and emphasised the impact on young workers who lacked the capacity to respond to this misery. Discussing the universities, *Vorwärts* solidified the discursive rules: financial cuts, overcrowded classes, and teaching which inadequately prepared young people for “real” life. Lastly, the socialist newspaper debated the observed “disintegration” of families in which sons were thrown into previously unknown difficulties.

¹⁰⁸ Der Jugend eine Gasse, in: VZ, 06.01.1933.

IN-NEED and NEUTRAL are fundamental concepts in this formation (Figure 5.12), which avoided an outright negative picture and rather understood youth as being VICTIMISED and in CRISIS. The rules of the discursive formation linked difficulties with an INNOCENT youth. It was not understood as being UNITED but SOCIO-ECONOMIC distinctions underlined that the crisis affected youth unequally.

In 1932 Dr. Günther Birkenfeld and Jochen Klepper published articles which captured the core of the discursive rules of this formation.¹⁰⁹ These utterances summed up earlier discussions and set limits for later debates about youth. The two novelists wrote extensively about Weimar's youth and its misery. They cite a poem by a 16-year-old "Landarbeiter" [agricultural worker] named Gerhard which is illustrative:

Sitz ich voller Grant und Schmerz,	Wie sie mir noch gar nicht stehn,
Denke nach mit ganzem Hasse,	Sie kehren wieder ohne Schwanken,
Was erschüttert mir mein Herz?	Ich kann das selber nicht verstehen. ¹¹⁰
Ich habe oft Selbstmordgedanken,	

The media created generational affiliations as it raised awareness of the shared lack of orientation. Characterised by fatalism and cynicism, youth appeared mentally older than it should have been. Dependent on the older generation, youth craved parental attention. Parents, themselves embittered, were unable to respond. Family disintegration amplified the isolation: "Children never knew the example of the working father." Paternal unemployment linked with domestic abuse of young people, understood by Birkenfeld and Klepper as "ohnmächtiger Zorn" [helpless anger]. The authors thus did not condemn the older generation: "Fathers do not drink for pleasure but out of need."

¹⁰⁹ Eine Jugend wird geopfert, in: Vorwärts, 08.09.1932, 15.09.1932, 22.09.1932, 29.09.1932.

¹¹⁰ Which translates roughly as follows: I am sitting with bad temper and pain, / am thinking filled with hate, / what is shattering my heart? / I often have thoughts of suicide – / as they do not fit me yet, / they return without swaying, / I cannot understand this myself."

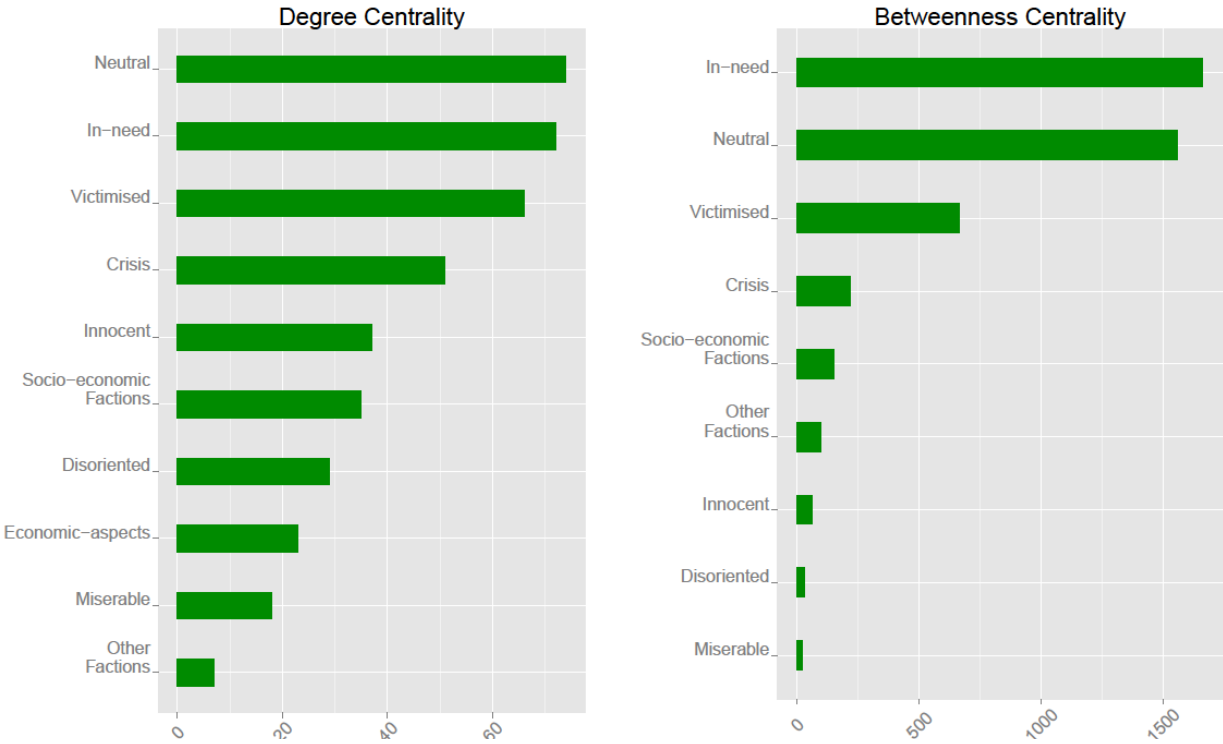


Figure 5.11: VICTIM: Centralities

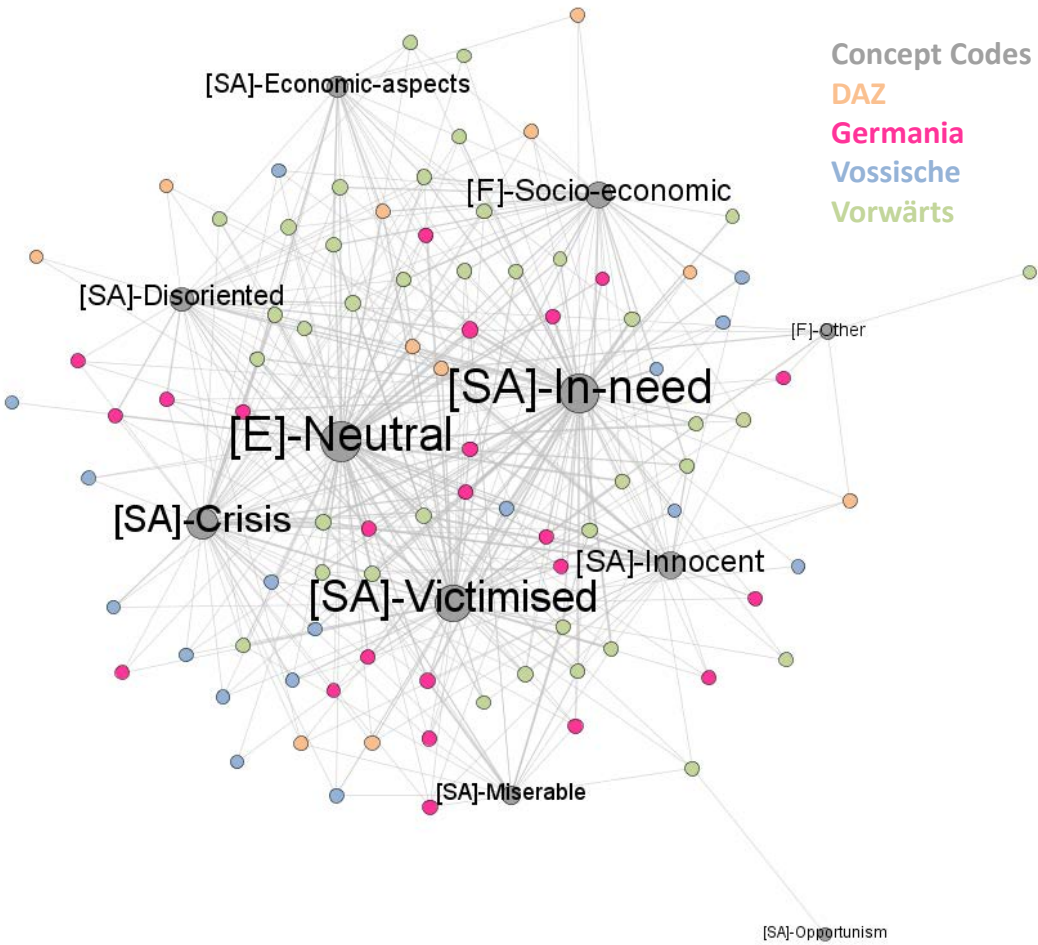


Figure 5.12: VICTIM: Discourse Network

Those Insurmountable Legacies for Youth

References to the effects of the past were one way to externalise responsibility from youth. Newspapers pulled the PAST into the PRESENT; through re-enactments the PAST served a central programmatic function for understanding PRESENT troubles. This discursive practice enclosed the Weimar Republic within the space of experience of the First World War. In 1930 a series of student letters to the DAZ gave an insider perspective into this persistence. Each letter formulated political demands derived from effects of the “present past”. Ludwig Eisenhard, for instance, saw the fragmentation of Weimar’s politics as the most significant consequence of the war:

The societal splintering is explained with the dreadfully bleak past which today’s students had to go through. Our parents were born into a happy and victorious Germany with world-wide recognition. At that time it was easy to approve of this state and to dedicate all youthful might to it. For us, however, when we first went to school with pretty satchels, our fathers went to the fields with knapsacks and bayonets. Even if back then we did not yet understand the horrors, this horrible war is in our memory, deep in it, ineradicable for the rest of our life.¹¹¹

Violence and isolation during the war explained fragmentation, and such utterances express the CRISIS of youth in a gendered way, concentrating on young men. Hundreds of competing student organisations, all primarily concerned with individual partisan interest, manifested this “verhängnisvolle Uneinigkeit” [fatal disaccord]. The past explained the present situation: inflation wiped out savings and made it impossible for young people to study, the badly conceived political system left the government weak and made room for political factions driven by economic interests. Lastly, the current generation grew up humiliated after the shameful peace settling: “The disappointed man, like a wandering moth, pushes towards the glorious light of the revolutionary parties, which allegedly bring happiness. Dazzled [geblendet] by the light he loses the sight of the general interests of the *Volk*.” The youth born

¹¹¹ Revolutionär oder Staatserneuernd, in: DAZ, 08.06.1930.

during the war years was described as a VICTIM of bad upbringings which often led to the juvenile court. Another boy wrote that he had never met his father, that his mother never understood him, that she married again, and forbade him to live at home.¹¹²

Fiction contributed to the perception of an encircled youth, prisoner of the older generation and suffering from the legacy of past events. The art historian Ernst B. Schwitzky described the suffering of youth in prosaic terms: an older generation caught within its suffering and incapable of seeing the beauty of youth, the beauty of a 16-year-old blond girl with a green hat, encircled by older people, grey, continuously smoking, eating greasy meat, Russian eggs, drinking beer. The 16-year-old “blossoms like a risen morning star” but cannot flourish since the old generation has covered her in smoke and greyness.¹¹³

A Generation Wanted by Nobody

Across all social strata youth seemed grey and insecure, worried about the future, an unwanted generation.¹¹⁴ The idea of a MISERABLE youth became firmly anchored in discourse.¹¹⁵ The conservative Germania associated the despair with the working class talking about “Kleinverbrecher” [petty criminals] who used to be honest men.¹¹⁶ High rates of unemployment prevented young people from even thinking about the possibility of getting a job and they ended up as “Landstreicher” [vagrants].¹¹⁷ Within the rules of this formation,

¹¹² Wege zum Jugendgericht, in: Vorwärts, 10.02.1931.

¹¹³ Die Sechszehnjährige, in: DAZ, 11.02.1932.

¹¹⁴ Jugend, wir rufen Dich!, in: Vorwärts, 01.10.1932.

¹¹⁵ Jugend in Not, in: Die Weltbühne, 1930:6, p. 204

¹¹⁶ Haltlose Jugend, in: Germania, 15.11.1930.

¹¹⁷ Jugend in Not, in: Vorwärts, 02.06.1932.

youth bore no responsibility for its misery, the state was to blame for failing to provide structures which offered more than warm pea soup to the unemployed.¹¹⁸

For the catholic Caritas organisation, unemployment affected above all young people's "inner disposition" and made it necessary to investigate the pedagogy of the unemployed. By 1931, Catholic associations were said to provide the only way of dealing with "souls of unemployed young people". However, in this Catholic interpretation the crisis sometimes also had purifying effects and the potential for renewal: "For the young generation simplicity and purity once again have meaning."¹¹⁹

Vorwärts prominently emphasised socio-economic fractions and saw "Auszubildende" [trainees] as the first victims of the economic crisis.¹²⁰ But the rules of the discursive formation included other professions and even a young architect stressed that the university had prepared him badly for that liberal profession.¹²¹ This problem was particularly grave for current youth. Growing up during the "Golden Twenties," it expected the situation to improve and yield to a new golden age. Nevertheless, youth remained motivated to find work:

Again and yet again, the will is stopped by the barricades of unemployment, indifference and despair, often surmounts the distrust by parents and kin, who frequently think and speak according to the proven recipe: 'Who really looks for work will find it.'¹²²

Debates about the value of work emphasised the importance of financial considerations but also of inner development. However, by 1931 Vorwärts had to admit that youth faced a depressing reality. Contemporaries acknowledged that youth's energy had been rendered

¹¹⁸ Ohne Arbeit, in: Vorwärts, 21.04.1932.

¹¹⁹ Um die Seelen der jugendl. Arbeitslosen, in: Germania, 01.12.1931.

¹²⁰ Die Lehrlingsnot, in: Vorwärts, 06.03.1931.

¹²¹ Der junge Architekt, in: DAZ, 20.11.1932.

¹²² Odyssee der deutschen Jugend, in: VZ, 30.01.1932.

superfluous,¹²³ leaving youth DISORIENTED. It therefore needed assistance, and the local council of Berlin set up homes to offer some education which consolidated the rules about youth IN-NEED, strengthened by a consensus that “youth without hopes is the greatest risk for society”.¹²⁴

This interpretation seemed authentic, since young people themselves affirmed that they lacked self-esteem. They no longer dared to go out on the street because of shame and felt isolated: “Too little attention is paid to the fact that the currently young generation, aged 14-26, lived its childhood under war and post-war conditions, and therefore could not find the moral support needed for its inner consolidation.”¹²⁵ Such images were accepted and recognised as true – an art exhibition drew attention to the misery of youth. The accompanying daily discussions were well attended and contributed to constructing youth as the lost generation.¹²⁶

Furthering this idea of a lost generation, a Catholic student named Leni Deppner-Gerburg asked peers in 1932 to get involved in Catholic associations to oppose the questioning of values. She regretted the continuous mechanisation of life and the apparent “Diesseitigkeit des Denkens” [earthliness of thinking], which she saw as obstacles for confronting current hardship.¹²⁷ Such attitudes were said to lead to fatal egoism and the young generation was blind to those problems of contemporary times affecting the entire “Volkskörper” [national body].

Intergenerational tensions were linked with youth in crisis and micro-level conflicts received ample attention, notably the impact of young men returning home once they could no longer

¹²³ Rettet die Jugend, in: Vorwärts, 17.04.1931.

¹²⁴ Kämpfende Jugend, in: Germania, 28.05.1932.

¹²⁵ Hilfe der erwerbslosen Jugend!, in: Vorwärts, 20.02.1931.

¹²⁶ Dienst an der Jugend, in: VZ, 26.11.1929.

¹²⁷ Über die gemeinschaft der kath. Studentinnen, in: Germania, 01.05.1932.

afford to live independently. They were downgraded to disobedient “children, [...] another useless mouth to feed”.¹²⁸ According to Vorwärts this downgrading was expressed in the domestic abuse of young people and children who took up space and disturbed parents’ routines. Journalists connected the MISERABLE state of youth with the adult generation. They described alcoholic fathers who came back home late at night and woke children up to beat them. Beyond physical wounds, the mental ones worried contemporaries, who expected that they would cause future problems for the Weimar Republic.¹²⁹ The new generation’s self had been crushed before it had a chance to develop its own personality.

Helping Youth out of the Crises

The Vossische Zeitung summarised the sorry state of youth:

Youth used to mean that one was full of hope [...] But today the hopes for the future that used to characterise youth have given way to a dull despair. Youth is sceptical concerning life in general as well as jobs, which in these times of crisis have no space for it.¹³⁰

The exceptionally difficult situation led to discussions of various initiatives to help youth. Within this particular language game, youth was persistently described as an object that needed care. Dr. Arnhold, director of the *German Institute for Technical Training* maintained that the young generation was a national interest and that the leadership was responsible for assuring its integration into practical life. Skills, such as the ones his institute offered, would be useful for acquiring competences which might be applied elsewhere.¹³¹ Unemployment and poverty emphasised that youth needed protection. During the winter in particular

¹²⁸ Väter und Söhne, in: Vorwärts, 01.11.1931.

¹²⁹ Unnütze Esser!, in: Vorwärts, 04.12.1931.

¹³⁰ Kümmert Euch um die arbeitslose Jugend, in: VZ, 19.05.1932.

¹³¹ Helft der Jugend!, in: DAZ, 20.03.1932; similar activities existed, e.g. the “Notwerk der deutschen Jugend” [Network of German youth] which occupied youth for a couple of hours each day, acquiring practical skills and developing intellectually: Die Not der Jugend, in: Vorwärts, 27.12.1932.

assistance for youth had to be inclusive and extensive since many could not even afford one warm meal per day.¹³²

Some initiatives deviated from the idea of dependence and proposed that youth could help itself. Young people mobilised against “bürgerliche Parteien” [centrist parties] which failed to protect them from unemployment. The young social democrats understood themselves as the only force offering shelter.¹³³ Debates about young workers, aged 18-28, emphasised the possibility of mutual help for manoeuvring through the job market.¹³⁴ Other youth initiatives included an advice office operated by these young democrats, which began as a guide to the labour market but was gradually reduced to pointing youth to places offering benefits or a cheap meal.¹³⁵

The adult generation also tried to consider the needs of youth. The director of the *Jugendwohlfahrtspflege* [Youth Welfare], Dr Gertrud Bäumer, recognised that youth was IN-NEED of specific care. She acknowledged that the spirit of the old generation had dominated bureaucracies and therefore the *Jugendwohlfahrtspflege* encouraged young people to help their peers.¹³⁶ But according to DAZ, bureaucratic obstacles fostered an anti-state attitude of some parts of youth.¹³⁷

Weimar’s economic downturn, as argued in this section, had far reaching implications and youth was understood as being its first victim. By presenting youth as an innocent victim it became the consensus that youth constituted a very specific social group which competed with the older generations for the restricted German “Lebensraum”. Given this feeling of an

¹³² Das Notwerk für die deutsche Jugend, in: Germania, 23.12.1932.

¹³³ Jugend im Kampf, in: Vorwärts, 25.12.1929.

¹³⁴ Jungarbeiter im Hoheneck, in: Germania, 03.02.1930.

¹³⁵ Jugendberatungsstelle der Jungdemokraten, in: VZ, 03.11.1929.

¹³⁶ Dienst an der Jugend, in: VZ, 16.11.1929.

¹³⁷ Jugendwerk, in: DAZ, 28.02.1933.

overcrowded country, youth seemed IN-NEED of help from an adult generation which merely left a very narrow alley for it.¹³⁸ With further economic deterioration, such representations of youth as a victim became firmly integrated in Weimar's popular culture. Hans Fallada's 1932 novel "Kleiner Mann – was nun?" [Little Man, What Now?] explores the consequences of economic doom through the prism of a young couple, a book which rapidly turned into one of the era's classics and was made a film in 1933.

YOUTH AS TROUBLE MAKER AND THREAT

The THREAT discursive formation comprises rules which understood youth mobilisation as undermining the existing political order and was prominent across the period analysed (Figure 5.6). The progressive Vorwärts and the Catholic Germania frequently referred to youth in this way. Its authors opposed fascist and communist-induced violence and legitimised socialist or Catholic mobilisation respectively. However, despite their political significance, discussions about violent youth never gained a dominant position in public discourse of the last Weimarian years.

Only a few conceptual codes are relevant to this discursive formation. Almost all articles are linked by a combination of PRESENT, NEGATIVE, RUPTURE, and TROUBLE-MAKER. Various other concepts which play structuring roles for specific parts complement the network (Figure 5.14). Similar to the cases analysed in the other chapters, the combination of youth as a TROUBLE-MAKER who brought the PRESENT into disorder was perceived as being new, a departure from a golden epoch. Youth mobilisation was discussed using only a small number of similar themes: passionate mobilisation was usually interpreted as being

¹³⁸ Der Jugend eine Gasse, in: VZ, 06.01.1933.

either NATIONALIST and purely VIOLENT, or a sign of NAÏVE youth. Influenced by forces beyond itself, youth was also described as IRRESPONSIBLE and youth seen as INCAPABLE.

Popular literature and arts illustrated the contemporary absorption in debates about the generational gap, which became a matter of common wisdom.¹³⁹ The “Generationsgesetz” [law of generational succession]¹⁴⁰ and the “Jungmanneseindrücke” [impressions of a young man] were said to shape the whole nation and politics could only be understood through the young generation. This generation, moreover, was seen in Germany as more radical because of the war and lacking in educational and professional training. For the DAZ the generational gulf ran between those who were 30-45 years old by 1930 and who had fought the war and those who were younger and had not participated.¹⁴¹

Youth reiterated these radical ideas. The student Ursula Klosse wrote about the wretched German youth and lamented her egoistic and narcissistic peers who undermined the Republic’s foundations. By trying to be authentic and living a life according to their own desires, they failed to contribute to the community and fell short of all ideals.¹⁴² Similarly, commentators remarked in 1931 that the older generation had exploited the immaturity of youth: “The tragic situation of a good part of today’s youth is that it believes it is being revolutionary whilst it is in reality reactionary and therefore misguided about its real political position.”¹⁴³

To restrict a subversive potential of youth, the conservative press agreed that to prevent fragmentation, youth ought not to be socialised into particular parties. Germania argued:

¹³⁹ See the prosaic description of the generational drifting apart in *Kleine Kindertragödie*, in: DAZ, 30.08.1931.

¹⁴⁰ The term “Generationsgesetz” indicates the common place the generational logic had become in Weimar. Perceived as a natural law, it was also projected onto conditions abroad: *Philosophie-Studentinnen in Buenos Aires*, in: Germania, 20.10.1929.

¹⁴¹ *Generation und Politik*, in: DAZ, 12.01.1930.

¹⁴² *Ein junger Mensch spricht*, in: Germania, 25.10.1931.

¹⁴³ *Wo steht die Jugend?*, in: VZ, 23.05.1931.

“First of all, the state had to be comprehended out of the idea of the *Volk*, in every *Volksgenossen* one ought to look for the human being and in every human being for God’s creature. It is therefore not about de-politicisation of youth but ‘Entparteiuung’ [“de-party-fication”].”¹⁴⁴

The partisan positions of newspapers fragmented debates about anti-democratic political youth mobilisation. The conservative as well as the progressive media condemned or entirely ignored any mobilisation to which it was ideologically opposed. This practice created further political polarisation. Nevertheless, until 1933 the future of the Weimar Republic was openly debated. The prism of youth highlights the multiplicity of political currents which remained credible forces for political victory and illuminates how contemporaries interpreted the rise of the Nazis, as one among many radical voices.

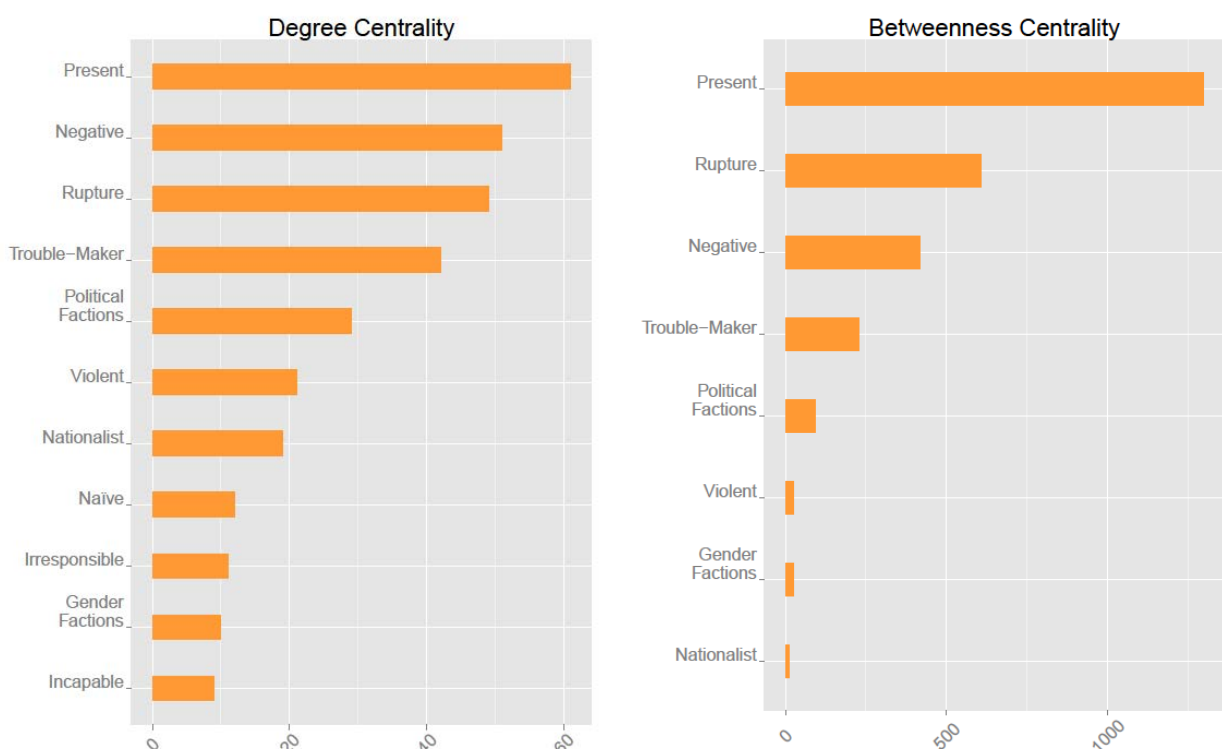


Figure 5.13: THREAT: Centralities

¹⁴⁴ Um Jugend und Staat, in: Germania, 25.06.1930.

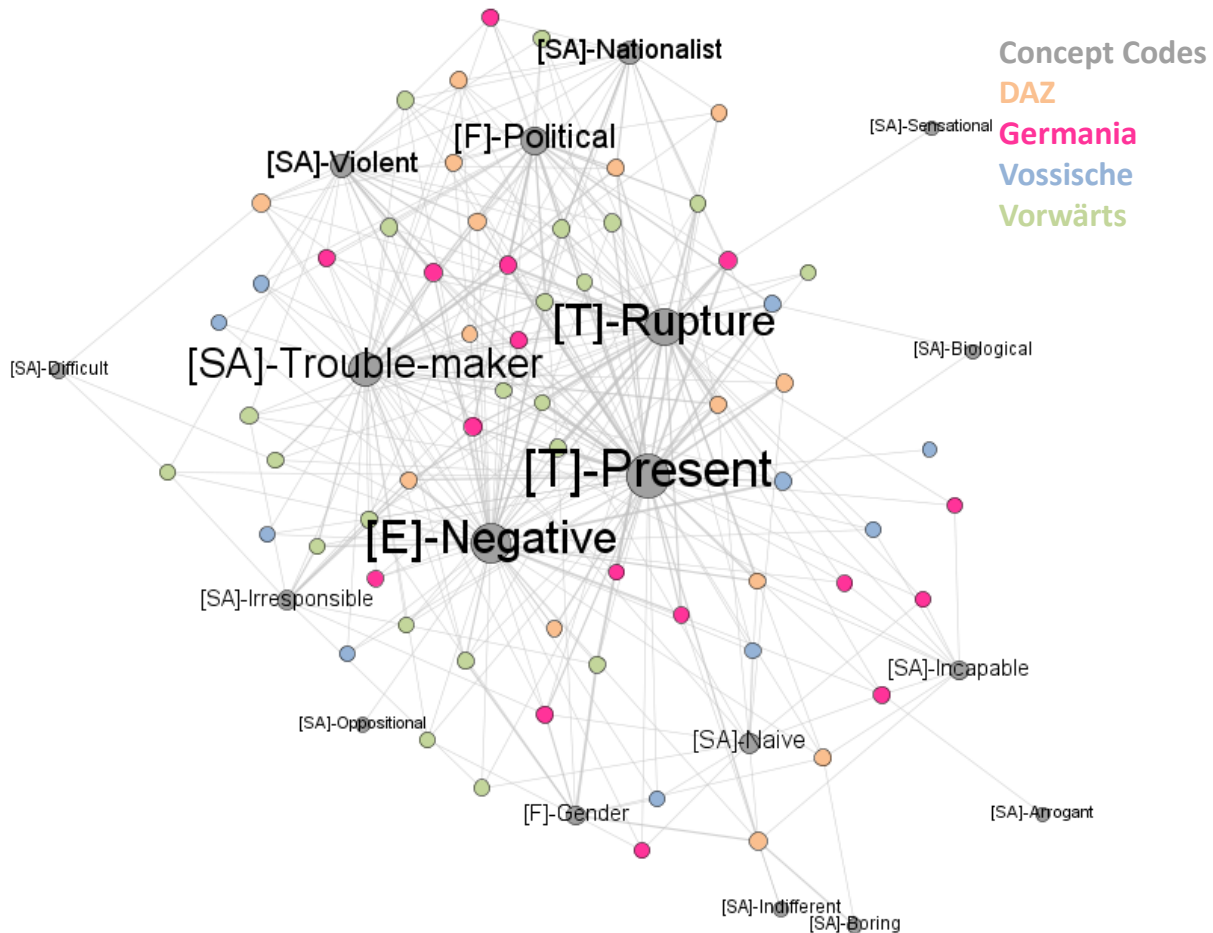


Figure 5.14: THREAT: Discourse Network

Political Mobilisation of Weimar Radicals

Throughout the period analysed, the language game about Weimar's radicals opposed communist and fascist groups. Confrontations were common after political meetings since competing groups knew when and where opponents met.¹⁴⁵ Detailed reports about the dynamics of the often armed conflicts underlined that the distinction between communists and fascists was situational – individuals frequently changed political allegiance even between diametrically opposed groups. Germania gave insight into this practice and thereby emphasised the picture of a VIOLENT young generation lacking a credible political commitment. Youth appeared “leichtsinnig” [frivolous] and even politically uninvolved

¹⁴⁵ Kommunisten erschießen einen Nationalsozialisten, in: DAZ, 15.12.1929.

people might get killed in its arbitrary violence, like a young postman who was mistaken for a political enemy.¹⁴⁶

From 1931 onward, the NATIONALIST concept gained prominence in public debate. Progressive media argued that to protect youth, right-wing student associations should be forbidden.¹⁴⁷ Their activities were described as terror since their violence affected everyone, irrespective of political opinions.¹⁴⁸ *Vorwärts* frequently reported on public disturbances caused by the *Hitlerjugend* [Hitler Youth], while insisting that the group was much smaller than it claimed to be. The journalist argued that it marched in circles to inflate its visibility.¹⁴⁹

Communist violence was also criticised. The left-wing *Vorwärts* denounced such violence but remarked that it was probably motivated by understandable socio-economic grievances rather than real political feelings. However, *Vorwärts* also reprinted sections of the communist newspaper “Rote Fahne” [Red Flag], which glorified the violence as an act of liberation.¹⁵⁰ The conservative press, when it spoke about communist activities, accused communist youth mobilisation of causing the high level of street violence. It detailed how 25 communists attacked 6 national-socialists and killed one in January 1932. They presented communists as cowards who outnumber and attacked the national-socialists, who were legally and peacefully distributing leaflets.¹⁵¹ By 1932 even Heinrich Mann, who was always in favour of youth,

¹⁴⁶ Politisches Rowdytum, in: *Germania*, 28.05.1930.

¹⁴⁷ Gegen die Verhetzung der Jugend, in: *VZ*, 30.04.1931.

¹⁴⁸ SA.-Terror geht weiter!, in: *Vorwärts*, 22.07.1932.

¹⁴⁹ Hitlerjugend marschiert im Kreis, in: *Vorwärts*, 06.10.1932 – the metaphor “going around in circles” points to the movement’s idleness.

¹⁵⁰ Mißbrauchte Jugend, in: *Vorwärts*, 11.03.1931.

¹⁵¹ Ein Sechzehnjähriger von Kommunisten ermordet, in: *DAZ*, 26.01.1932.

turned away from it. A reader's letter underlined that Mann began opposing youth because he opposed radicalism, which by 1932 youth had come to embody.¹⁵²

Localised Violence: The University

The violence that originated from universities contradicted assumptions about them being places of free learning, aimed at preparing the future intellectual elite. Universities played a particular role for projecting Weimar into its future, and anti-democratic student mobilisation therefore challenged contemporary narratives. Their confined spaces conditioned the interactions and made encounters between rival groups inevitable. Political violence could easily occur and there was fierce competition over the symbolic and physical occupation of space.

The symbolic occupation of space through songs was central in the early confrontations which did not yet include the intensive fights of the years to come. In 1929 the DAZ clearly condemned rallying right-wing students who sang national-socialist songs and searched for Jewish students to threaten.¹⁵³ At the same time, discussions within Vorwärts about whether or not political student groups should be forbidden, underline that by 1929 student mobilisation was already perceived as substantial threat to the established order. The student Wilhelm Fietgens summarised a cross-societal consensus which saw student groups as dangerous and undesirable, undermining the authority of the older generation, from professors, to bureaucrats, and the bourgeoisie.¹⁵⁴ Students faced trials for their mobilisation and the press criticised their vandalism and their insulting of representatives of the state as “Henkersknechte” [Hangman's assistant] and “Bluthunde” [Bloodhounds] as

¹⁵² Heraufsetzen des Wahlaters?, in: Die Weltbühne, 1932: 15, p. 568

¹⁵³ Krawalle in der Berliner Universität, in: DAZ, 13.11.1929.

¹⁵⁴ Warum politische Studentengruppen? , in: Vorwärts, 28.11.1929.

IRRESPONSIBLE.¹⁵⁵ Early confrontations were framed as “nuisances” and “rackets,” consolidating the picture of students as TROUBLE-MAKER.¹⁵⁶

An ongoing debate revolved around the need to reform the university, recognised by both adults and students.¹⁵⁷ By 1930, contemporaries discussed problems like “Raummangel” [scarcity of space] which obliged Germany to be a highly qualified nation without room for unskilled labour. Moreover, the conservative press lamented the proletarianisation of student bodies which in their view changed the mentality at universities, becoming egoistic and less concerned with the collective good. Otto Piper confirmed this argument when he maintained that radicalisation expressed the “Lebensschicksal” [fate of life] of the young generation (1932: 99).

The discursive rules increasingly had to integrate the expanding physical violence of students. By the fall of 1930, Nazi-induced violence required regular police interventions, which even *Vorwärts*, normally critical of the police, supported.¹⁵⁸ Remembrance days were symbolically important and rival political groups aimed at demarcating their territory. During the 1930 Landmark festivities in November, students in Königsberg pulled out black-white-red flags and insulted the police called in by the university’s Chancellor. Once the situation had calmed down, students demanded that the Chancellor excused himself since they considered the police presence a violation of their freedom of expression.¹⁵⁹

The Prussian cultural minister Adolf Grimme accused students of causing the high degree of violence in Weimar. He was also concerned about its impact on universities and warned that

¹⁵⁵ Neun Studenten vor dem Richter, in: *Vorwärts*, 11.01.1930.

¹⁵⁶ Studentenunfug in Thüringen, in: *Vorwärts*, 16.07.1930.

¹⁵⁷ Das Problem der Hochschulreform, in: *DAZ*, 01.03.1930.

¹⁵⁸ Der Nazikrawall in der Universität, in: *Vorwärts*, 13.11.1930.

¹⁵⁹ Universität unter Terror, in: *Vorwärts*, 22.11.1930.

academic freedom could only be maintained if a climate of tolerance returned to the university.¹⁶⁰

No state can overextend the sympathy for young people to such an extreme, that it lets these dark things continue calmly. Henceforth the state will intervene with all means against these attempts to ruin the academic life and to undermine the freedom of research. If required also with the police, which is not going to be stopped by the so called 'extra-territoriality' of the university which in reality is non-existent.

Mobilisation by rival groups within the confined space of the university rapidly escalated. Whenever communist or national-socialist students staged a demonstration to symbolically and physically occupy space, a counter demonstration attempted to regain the "lost" space. Police presence often increased violence and vandalism, forcing the closure of universities.¹⁶¹ Vorwärts urged students to embrace an academic spirit, underlining that antagonisms amongst students precluded intellectual debate and drowned the entire country in political terror. Naturally, Vorwärts accused right-wing groups of having violence as their sole aim: "One does not even grant the enemy a right to discuss. He is beaten up not out of despair but because of conviction."¹⁶² Over time the symbolic violence turned physical. A flag put up by Nazi supporters in January 1932 led to fights between opposing groups,¹⁶³ as did the chanting of political hymns.¹⁶⁴

By 1932, in an attempt to limit violent confrontations, the government introduced a new disciplinary law to replace old regulations which seemed inadequate. It gave greater authority to rectors for punishment, which the conservative press saw as necessitated by troubled

¹⁶⁰ Politik und Schule, in: Vorwärts, 18.03.1931.

¹⁶¹ Die Berliner Universität geschlossen, in: DAZ, 30.06.1931.

¹⁶² Man mache den Studenten klar..., in: Vorwärts, 30.07.1931.

¹⁶³ Neue Studentenkrawalle, in: Vorwärts, 19.01.1932; Universität geschlossen, in: Vorwärts, 23.01.1932.

¹⁶⁴ Songs included "Deutschland erwache" or the "Horst-Wessel-Lied": Berliner Universität wieder geschlossen, in: DAZ, 05.02.1932.

times.¹⁶⁵ But violence at Weimar's universities did not diminish and the rules of the discursive formation became more tightly connected around a VIOLENT and NEGATIVE young generation. DAZ emphasised internal divisions amongst youth.¹⁶⁶ Violence eventually spread beyond communists and national-socialists and even Catholic and republican youth got involved.¹⁶⁷ In an article in *Deutsche Rundschau* in 1932, Piper stressed the gravity of the university situation and traced the political radicalisation that was taking place during the interwar period (1932: 98).

Youth, Crime, and Punishment

Another language game revolved around links between the young generation and the criminal world. The debate was structured along two different sets of rules. One emphasised that youth was itself responsible for what it was doing and therefore a cause for the escalation of violence; another emphasised that criminal youth were also victims of wider circumstances and expressed wider disintegrative tendencies across society.

As a victim youth was usually excused of its behaviour, not dissimilar to the preceding discursive formation. *Vorwärts* highlighted that youth was unemployed and that theft was an excusable option to acquire something to eat.¹⁶⁸ The progressive media was even careful in judging “*Verbrecherbanden*” [criminal gangs]. Justus Erhardt, a state employee, put the talk about dangerous gangs into perspective by highlighting that they had always existed and their current form was linked to phenomena like urbanisation, indicating the need for a time of

¹⁶⁵ Das neue Studenten-Disziplinarrecht, in: DAZ, 03.03.1932.

¹⁶⁶ Die Berliner Universität geschlossen, in: DAZ, 01.07.1932.

¹⁶⁷ Kath. Jungmänner von Nazis überfallen, in: *Germania*, 04.11.1932; for Nazi disturbances of a *Reichsbanner* commemoration: Neue Studentenkrawalle, in: *Vorwärts*, 10.02.1933.

¹⁶⁸ Vier jugendliche Räuber, in: *Vorwärts*, 31.03.1931.

transition. In the anonymous city, gangs allowed young people to develop a feeling of belonging and to compensate for disintegrating family structures.¹⁶⁹

In contrast to this victimisation language game, conservative media tended to hold youth responsible for its acts and accused it of driving public violence. Those who had jobs and earned enough to survive but were also “Kleinverbrecher” were condemned as causing harm to those who had even less. This youth was seen as gross, cheeky, or irresponsible.¹⁷⁰ They often acted in groups, which made their activities seem cowardly.¹⁷¹ Even worse were those young people whom Germania described as INCAPABLE, whose tricks failed to work on the old generation.¹⁷² In the extreme, these young people were the “hyenas of the world city,” their acts unscrupulous, violent and fearless, without any proportionality.¹⁷³

Whatever their opinion of the responsibility of young people was, this view of youth was also prominent amongst politicians. The SPD member Kurt Löwenstein emphasised that Weimar had fallen into the hands of its fearless youth and demanded decisive actions instead of words. For Löwenstein, the violent dynamics were linked to the failure of the government to control the young generation and to educate it politically.¹⁷⁴

These discursive rules about youth constructed an image of a threatening and violent generation, in contrast with those ideas of youth which focussed on its potential for getting out of the current state of crisis. In the THREAT formation it was the older generation which was understood as representing the response to Weimar’s challenges. Rather self-reflexively, one author opposed himself to the prevailing “Jugendwahn” and underlined that the older

¹⁶⁹ Jugendliche Verbrecherbanden?, in: VZ, 21.05.1931.

¹⁷⁰ Haltlose Jugend, in: Germania, 15.01.1930; Jugendliche Räuber vor Gericht, in: VZ, 23.12.1929.

¹⁷¹ Neun Jugendliche als Einbrecher, in: Germania, 19.08.1930.

¹⁷² Jugend von heute, in: Germania, 03.07.1930.

¹⁷³ Hyänen der Weltstadt, in: Vorwärts, 15.03.1931.

¹⁷⁴ Jugend, Schule und Politik, in: Vorwärts, 25.02.1932.

generation would prevail because of its “geistige Eigenschaften” [mental qualities] that will endure in the political struggle, its lack of vigour compensated for with experience.¹⁷⁵

YOUTH AND THE BREAKDOWN OF AN UNCONSOLIDATED DEMOCRACY

Looking at the collapse of the Weimar Republic through the lens of youth challenges the established narratives of the episode. Scholars have pointed to the importance of youth mobilisation in the process of breakdown but by focussing exclusively on radical left- or right-wing extremism, they tended to neglect those young people who mobilised in defence of democracy. However, as this chapter argued, such pro-democratic mobilisation was internally contradictory and too dispersed to effectively stabilise the Weimar Republic. In particular, during the early phase of the episode the ideals expressed by democratic movements did not match the reality of day-to-day politics. By considering a democratic regime, albeit one lacking popular support, the Weimar episode adds variation to the two cases already studied. Even with its lack of support, the democratic regime nevertheless importantly conditioned the scope of political mobilisation and the discourse about youth.

1. Discursive heterogeneity and democratic disintegration

A striking diversity and openness characterised the Weimarian discourse about youth until the very end of the Republic. Right up to February 1933, contemporaries engaged in debates which projected Weimar into a democratic future when they discussed youth. The regime breakdown was abrupt and no interpretation of youth could turn hegemonic before the *Machtergreifung* [Seizure of Power]. The question thus arises as to how Weimar's collapse occurred under these conditions of diversity. The argument developed in this chapter is that

¹⁷⁵ Alter+Training+Erfahrung=Jugendelan, in: VZ, 25.12.1930.

the individual discursive formations were internally extremely diverse – a deconstruction of the discourse networks underlined that a myriad of competing positions existed within each formation, which effectively cancelled out some of the anti-extremist voices and gave them little visibility in a fragmented public sphere.

Conflicting interpretations about youth and its political mobilisation existed alongside one another and the struggle over the meaning of youth was particularly fierce, involving every political faction. This chapter therefore demands an understanding of national-socialism not only from its results, as prevailing in current scholarship, but from the climate in which it originated.

2. Heterogeneity and independence of youth mobilisation

Unlike in the authoritarian cases, youth mobilisation did not only increase and diversify with the outbreak and rapid amplification of the crisis. Under democratic conditions, youth can mobilise freely and is not in need of an external example and/or visible leadership splits to see purpose in mobilisation. The government and other democratic parties persistently tried to mobilise youth, but their efforts remained unsuccessful. The failure to deliver on a variety of political issues – not just economic ones – alienated youth, and democratic parties lacked the financial means and symbolic strength to bind young people to them.

The analysis of political youth mobilisation also suggests a different periodisation for the failure of Weimar's democratic interlude. Parts of youth mobilised to support a form of parliamentary democracy until the very end of the episode. These groups initially formulated idealistic conceptualisations of democracy but gradually began to moderate their ideals by 1931 in the hope of tempering extremist mobilisation by supporting the Weimar Republic.

3. Youth and adults

During the critical final phase of the Weimar Republic, youth mobilisation did not expand to other age cohorts but remained within the social limits of youth. However, youth mobilisation could become so powerful and visible in the public sphere because adult civil society did not oppose it. On the contrary, news coverage of activities by competing political factions legitimised their undertakings. Once the radical national-socialists were in political power and supported their violent youth, the previous balance of power was significantly distorted, as it restricted the spaces for youth mobilisation by other factions.

As in the Soviet Union, the breakdown of the democratic Weimar Republic saw an intense mobilisation of youth in opposition to the regime. At the same time, the discourse about youth was highly decentralised and contradictory. Youth mobilisation was relevant for the political course, particularly since adults did not oppose the radical demands voiced by young people. The next chapter will investigate the political significance of youth for the crisis in democratic France around 1968.

FRANCE AROUND 1968:

CONSOLIDATING A DEMOCRATIC REGIME

As a regime with popular approval, the French episode adds a further layer of variation to the comparative setting and thereby serves an important purpose in the overall research design. It expands the reach of the guiding hypotheses and the processes at work in the individual cases, and increases external validity of the observations. With regard to three guiding hypotheses, I develop the following points: (1) A decentralised discourse about youth unfolded in democratic France around 1968. In post-war France, unlike in the three other cases, the democratically elected leadership did not attempt to consolidate its power by framing youth as a vanguard. To the contrary, the leadership opposed youth and discredited its mobilisation. Around 1968, the mobilisation of young people briefly disrupted the discursive order that shaped how youth was understood in France. Discourse about youth returned to its previous structure following the presidential elections in June 1969 which ended the crisis. (2) Government-directed youth mobilisation remained insignificant for regime consolidation. The democratic regime sought legitimacy based on broad popular support and thereby delegitimised youth opposition. (3) Youth mobilisation briefly expanded to other social groups. However, this expansion eventually failed to bring the political regime to a collapse. Indeed, the spread of mobilisation to workers changed the movement's agenda. Responding to the protests, the French regime incorporated some of the demands (Tarrow 2012: 148) and evolved into a new kind of democracy.

In July, 1968 Maurice Couve de Murville became interim Prime Minister to respond to the mobilisation around 1968. *Participation* became a leitmotif in two spheres. First, as a response to student unrest, the *Loi Edgar Faure* liberalised a university system dominated by professors and granted some autonomy to universities concerning teaching methods, diplomas, and interdisciplinary training.¹ Second, the *Loi du 27 décembre 1968* included rising salaries and increased freedom for trade unions.

In June 1969, voters elected Georges Pompidou as President and Jacques Chaban-Delmas became Prime Minister. This ended the tradition of hierarchical Gaullism centred on an uncontested leader, but fell short of turning France into a federal country. Chaban-Delmas developed his project of *nouvelle société* [New Society], emphasising social dialogue, freedom of expression, and increased participation. Though the UD-V^e conservative core perceived this project as too progressive, it influenced social and political thought.²

The changes following “May 68” did not take place within the political-institutional complex. However, after 1968 French society underwent a profound transformation. France developed from a country which was “narrow, familial, and old-fashioned, to one where all was possible, from sexual freedom, feminism, visible minorities, to frenzied individualism” (Garrigues 2008a: 22). This was a cultural revolution which affected material conditions, family organisation, and the personal freedoms of most people in society: “Life became more varied and enjoyable” (Marwick 1998: 802-3).

Debates in newspapers capture the structure of the discourse about youth which has a transnational perspective. The international setting, including but not limited to the Vietnam War, framed this episode. Garrigues points to the international dimension, but he restricts it to

¹ However, autonomy remained limited concerning financial matters and centralised degree structure.

² It prepared in particular thinking about *decentralisation* (Cohen 2008: 14).

the “révolte universitaire” [university rebellion] (2008b: 18). However, youth contestation abroad did more than inspire French students to take to the streets. Given the success of youth mobilisation abroad, journalists and intellectuals were able, by placing French youth in this transnational *Erfahrungsraum*, to make a government overthrow appear conceivable during May-June 1968. I argue that contemporaries placed domestic youth mobilisation in the context of external examples. Young people felt empowered and legitimised when they imagined that events abroad could be replicated back home. This external factor broadened the horizons of possibilities and encouraged mobilisation against the discredited older generation of political leaders.

A new generation of French historians advocates a turn to contemporary sources, responding to the accumulation of interpretational layers that have gradually downplayed the events’ dynamics (Bantigny 2013: 216). Although interpretational layers also affect such “histoire événementielle,” [event history] contemporary sources provide a unique way for reading history forwards, instead of deducing causality backwards. Contingency and contradictions characterised contemporary experiences of “May 68”, but these have been neglected in the struggles over the event’s legacy.

My reading challenges the spatial borders of a nationally framed French 1968 and I claim that there is no “French May”. International embeddedness was a decisive component of this highly complex and heterogeneous crisis and such embeddedness pervaded the *Zeitgeist* of French youth mobilisation. Furthermore, I argue that interpreting “May 68” from the perspective of contemporaries places the events in the context of the long-term emancipation of young people after the Second World War. This chapter draws on excellent contributions by academics and witnesses, only some of which can be integrated in the analysis. I will not retrace the story of the mobilisation in detail, as it has been told aptly elsewhere, but instead I will step back and focus on the discursive structure about youth that characterised the episode.

THE GLOBAL CONTESTATION OF POWER STRUCTURES

There has been no shortage of attention paid to the events of “May 68”. “May 68” undoubtedly filled *the* picture of youth rebellion, a “global revolt” (Gassert and Klimke 2009). Even in 1970, Touchard and Bénétou counted not less than 120 books on the topic (1970: 504). Every decennial brings a spate of commemorative publications (Gildea 2009). But several authors, including the French historian Gobbie, have recently noted the pernicious reduction of “1968” to a Parisian student May and the legacy it left in contemporary France (2008).

The meaning of “1968” depends on the periodisation. For Le Beguec, the crisis stretched from 24 May (the rejection of the referendum project) to 30 May (de Gaulle’s return from exile) (2000) which leads to an elite- and Paris-centred narrative. On the other end, Mendras situates “May 68” in a series of post-war socio-demographic, economic, and cultural transformations in France – a “second French revolution” from 1965–84 (1994 [1988]). Somewhat similarly, Sirinelli puts the emphasis on 1945–69, with the baby-boom generation driving societal changes (2003). In either perspective, the French “May” formed part of a long-term development which Marwick subsumes under a Western “cultural revolution” extending from 1958–74 (1998). Zancarini-Fournel recently emphasised the need to liberate “May 68” from its spatial and chronological constraints, without downgrading mobilisation to cultural contestation (2008: 12).

Stopping his analysis in June 1968, Seidman claims that the events had no long-term impact and never challenged the government (2004). Contemporary eyes read their present in a different light. In the words of Fields: “During the last two weeks of May 1968, it looked as though the Gaullist regime had little chance of surviving the revolt begun by students at Nanterre” (1970: 337). This conveys the contemporary consensus about the intensity of the

French crisis. De Gaulle emphasised the severity of the crisis: “France is threatened by dictatorship. One side wants to oblige her to resign to a power which would be imposed because of national despair, the power which would of course be the one of the victor, thus of totalitarian communism.”³ Beyond its rhetorical function of uniting supporters by emphasising the strength of opponents, this statement illustrates the crisis mood which caused a massive capital flight in May–June 1968 (Schaufelbuehl 2014).

The French regime crisis centred less on the political institutions than on the rejection of de Gaulle. During the 1960s youth criticised this mythical liberator, who was no longer the undisputed hero of the nation (Hazareesingh 2012: 170). The presidential elections of December 1965, in which opposition candidate François Mitterrand achieved a remarkable 45% in the second round, conveyed this questioning. Though de Gaulle won, he was forced to campaign – a humiliation compared to previous elections. In the legislative elections of March 1967 the majority *UD-V^e* almost lost control over the parliament, demonstrating the General’s declining support. These results demarcated the end of the “sacred union” behind de Gaulle, which until 1962 had allowed him to shift the balance of power in the 1958 Constitution in his favour. He ruled by special decrees, used direct democracy, and created a parallel government in the form of a large private office (Berstein 1993: 58-64).

On 22 March 1968, a group of radical students occupied an administrative building in Nanterre to hold a meeting to discuss class discrimination and the role of the political bureaucracy in French society. This group was later known as *le Mouvement du 22 Mars* [Movement of 22 March]. The occupation was followed by more than a month of conflict at universities across the country, which led to the closure of the university at Nanterre by Pierre Grapin on 2 May, sparking demonstrations at the Sorbonne in the centre of Paris the day after.

³ De Gaulle rencontre Massu à Baden-Baden, in: *Le Monde*, 01.06.1968.

Jean-Marie Roche, director of the Sorbonne, ordered the clearance of the courtyard and students negotiated a peaceful way out. However, they were expected to show their identity cards to the police waiting outside the building. The situation got out of control when students opposed the police, violence escalated, and the police imposed order late in the night by using sticks and tear gas and arresting almost 600 individuals. As the fights in the Latin Quarter gripped the country, students went on the streets and built barricades across France. Workers joined the demonstrations in large number starting around 11-12 May, following the “First Night of the Barricades”. Afterwards, more than a million people marched through Paris to protest the unprecedented degree of violence by the French state. Prime Minister George Pompidou responded by releasing student detainees and reopening the Sorbonne on 13 May.

Pompidou’s concessions, however, failed to calm the situation. Until 20 May, strikes grew and the government seemed close to collapse. Between six and eight million people were on strike (Adam 1970: 118); the country was paralysed. But de Gaulle, conscious of the backing he had from the military, dissolved the National Assembly and called new elections for 23 and 30 June, elections which would end up confirming the governing majority. By June, most workers had returned to work, though students and youth in general continued mobilising and demanding political, social, and educational reforms.

In March 1969, de Gaulle stressed that the crisis was over.⁴ However, such utterances do not express a narrowing of contemporaries’ *Erwartungshorizonte* but expose strategies to unite voters. The unrest damaged de Gaulle’s legitimacy; he wanted a public expression of his support and initiated a referendum on regional reforms in April 1969. Hardly any citizen worried about or even understood the content of the reforms; the real question was whether or not France supported the General. When the reforms were rejected by 52.4% of the voters, de

⁴ www.fresques.ina.fr/de-gaulle/impression/fiche-media/Gaulle00151/discours-du-11-mars-1969.html [01.02.2015].

Gaulle took it as a manifestation of popular disapproval and stepped down. Briefly the future looked uncertain again. But the June 1969 presidential elections diminished *Erwartungshorizonte* when the right achieved a landslide victory and no left-wing candidate even made it to the second round. Georges Pompidou's presidency symbolised a return to normality.

Social theory debates characterised the 1960s. Left-leaning positions, non-dogmatic and interpretive, stood in good stead in history and the social sciences. Structuralist interpretations deconstructed linear explanations and categories of societal development and guided the reading of politics. New editions of Marx's early writings led to a rebirth of his thought, notwithstanding the discredited reality of Eastern European communism. Academic and public interest in Marxism went hand-in-hand. The humanist Marxist was ductile and seemingly made sense of the dehumanising industrial society and the repressive tolerance of post-industrial Western Europe (Judt 2005: 398-407).

Herbert Marcuse, the Weimar-era intellectual who ended up in Southern California, combined several strands of thought. In "One Dimensional Man" (1964) and "Eros and Civilisation" (1956) he criticised Soviet communism and the ever-expanding consumer society, responsible for the alienation of youth.⁵ Guy Debord's *Situationist International* emphasised that the cultural estrangement in contemporary civilisation lead to existential passivity. Trotskyist groups around Claude Lefort and Cornelius Castoriadis took a critical perspective on Soviet realities and at the same time developed Marxism in the journal "Socialisme ou Barbarie" [Socialism or Barbarism] (Gilcher-Holtey 1995: 47-80). Beyond intellectual differences, a trust in the force of youth united different currents.

⁵ Marcuse's idea were widely perceived in France (Garrigues 2008a: 18).

French intellectuals can be appreciated for their uniqueness but operated in an international community increasingly captivated by left-wing thoughts. Journals like *Arguments* were published in multiple languages and the *New Left* emerged in this context. Youth rejected post-war Western societies and found alternative heroes from Hồ Chí Minh and Che Guevara, to Mao's "Cultural Revolution". Opposition to the Vietnam War unified the continent and became conflated with admiration for anti-colonial forces in North Africa, black mobilisation in the US, and peasant guerrillas across Central America and Asia. The French media understood youth, rather than the proletariat, as the carrier of mobilisation.

Debates over the significance of this episode have a long and controversial history, particularly in France. Interpretations are still divided between the right's reading of "1968" as *les évènements* [the events] and the left's *la mobilisation* [the mobilisation]. Former President Sarkozy recently complained: "May 68 imposed upon us an intellectual and moral relativism" (2007). During the 2013 anti-gay marriage mobilisation, right-wing movements appropriated the symbol "1968," claiming that "we are living a May 1968 the other way around".⁶ Such revisions underline the present day relevance of "May 1968" in France which overshadows readings of the historical moment.

A WANDERING AND REJUVENATED FRANCE

After the summer of 1944, youth was ubiquitous in public. Its status after the liberation expressed a national longing to move beyond the occupation. Giroud's "La nouvelle vague" [The new wave] captured the hopes and powers that contemporaries of the 1950s projected

⁶ La Manif pour tous, Mai 68 de la droite?, in: Le Figaro, 18.04.2013, similarly the vice-president of the National Assembly, Marc le Fur: « Tout est réuni pour que nous vivions un mai 1968 à l'envers... » in: Un Mai 68 à l'envers, in: Le Figaro, 19.04.2013. Such parallelism was prominent in the conservative Catholic press: Un Mai 68 à l'envers, in: La Croix, 02.04.2013; L'humeur des jours, in: La Croix, 27.04.2013.

onto youth for cultural renewal (1958). Youth symbolised French cultural reconstruction, a way to end the war, characterised as much by “betrayal and treachery as [...] by heroism and sacrifice” (Jobs 2007: 5). “Youth” made it possible to deliberate France’s future and repress issues of adult responsibility for the past.

Notwithstanding this symbolic importance, youth remained politically silent across Europe in the post-war years (Gillis 1974: 185-91). The mismatch between discursive importance and political absence only changed in “the West,” according to Frei, around 1968 (2008). However, not merely Western youth awoke. Ebbinghaus points to the significance of 1968 for Eastern Europe (2008), Apor and Mark highlight the importance of this generational label for elite youth in Hungary (2011: 100).

The mobilisation in 1968 could not have taken place without the Algerian War as Bantigny shows (2007). The colonial conflict politicised young people and furthered their emancipation. The student union *UNEF* gained in political influence, increased its organisational structures and formulated its anti-Gaullist position (Fields 1970). This war shaped the significance France attached to revolts against oppressive regimes across the globe. In November 1965, after the war, the ruling *UNR-UDT* united pro-Gaullist youth in the *Union des jeunes pour le progrès (UJP)* [Union of Youth for Progress], which aimed to raise a generation in support of de Gaulle and Gaullism.⁷ But by 1967 its first leader, Robert Grossmann, had already made a generational break with the mother-party. The adult party expected the UJP to throw its youthful vigour behind de Gaulle, but youth stated that it could imagine Gaullism without de Gaulle (Audigier 2005: 65-76). Those young in 1967 had no personal memories of the resistance hero of 1940, and little sympathy for the protagonist of May 1958, the Algiers putsch, and the founding of the Fifth Republic.

⁷ *UNR-UDT* stands for *L'Union pour la nouvelle République-Union démocratique du travail* [Union for the New Republic-Democratic Union of Labor].

Judt describes the changes in the French educational system (2005: 391-8). Student numbers expanded from 200,000 in 1960 to 500,000 in 1968. On its own, this increase might not have been a problem but given inadequate governmental policies it turned into a cause for mobilisation. Faced with overcrowded universities, the political leadership created new ones in remote suburbs.⁸ In addition, the 1960s witnessed increasing anxieties about the career prospects of youth given a general economic decline and rising youth unemployment.⁹ This anxiety mirrored an imbalance between students' chosen specialisations in the humanities and social sciences with the needs of the economic system. Pedagogical approaches within a conservative and hierarchical educational system alienated students and pupils.

THE DISCURSIVE CONTEXTS OF YOUTH MOBILISATION

Following the Second World War, the state redesigned the French media landscape. Outlets accused of collaboration were closed down and only 28 of the 206 pre-war daily newspapers continued (Guillauma 1988: 19). Politicians hoped that state monitoring might counter-balance undesirable market effects, such as individual owners gaining too much influence. Throughout the 1960s, the press was a prime national symbol and shaped the perception of French politics. Circulation of newspapers spiked in 1968 and people relied on the press to make sense of what they overheard about the events around them (Bellanger 1969: 205-6). Most newspapers initially expressed criticism of the government (including *Le Figaro*), but became more divided during the crisis and its aftermath. The selected papers were the most widely read and cover both ends of the ideological spectrum.

⁸ E.g. Nanterre or Toulouse-Le Mirail, both resembling isolated "ghettos" (Berstein 1993: 213).

⁹ Unemployment rates for those under 24 were at times as high as 39% (Bantigny 2008: 529).

		Genre	
		Quality	Mass Media
Attitude	Conservative	La Croix	Le Figaro
	Progressive	Le Monde	L'Humanité

Table 6.1: France: Newspapers

- *La Croix*: Catholic newspaper founded 1883, initially anti-Republican; more progressive after 1944 and offered in-depth analysis. Sold most of its copies by subscriptions to assure its independence (Pitette 2011).
- *Le Figaro*: oldest remaining French daily newspaper. It attracted the country's conservative political and cultural spectrum (Blandin 2010).
- *Le Monde*: paper "de référence," appealed to a politically mixed public, though its editorial line was centre-left. Created after the liberation and critical towards de Gaulle's domestic politics; extensively discussed "May 68" (Éveno 2004).
- *L'Humanité*: founded in 1904, the paper followed the line of the Communist party (PCF) with a pro-Soviet stance during the Cold War. Its circulation dropped with the PCF's decline in the 1980s (Chambaz 2004, Ranger 1986).

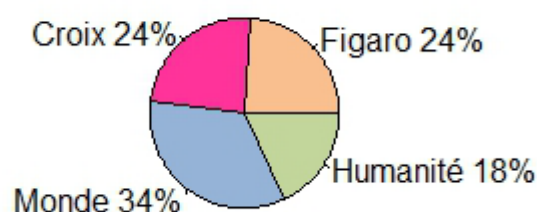


Figure 6.1: France: Newspaper Breakdown

It would be interesting to include the regional press, which became a counter-weight to the Parisian newspapers after 1944 (notably Ouest-France) but the selected newspapers capture the desired discursive variation. The dominance of *Le Monde* (Figure 6.1) reflects its status in French media, as well as its sheer length compared, for example, to the much shorter

L'Humanité. In total, I identified 1,863 relevant articles in the episode and coded a total of 387, attributing more than 7,000 codes (Table 6.2).

Corpus Overview		Time Period	
Total Population	1.863	01.03.1968	Start
Theoretical Sample	373	30.06.1969	End
Effective Sample	387		
Number of Codings	7.168		

Table 6.2: France: Corpus

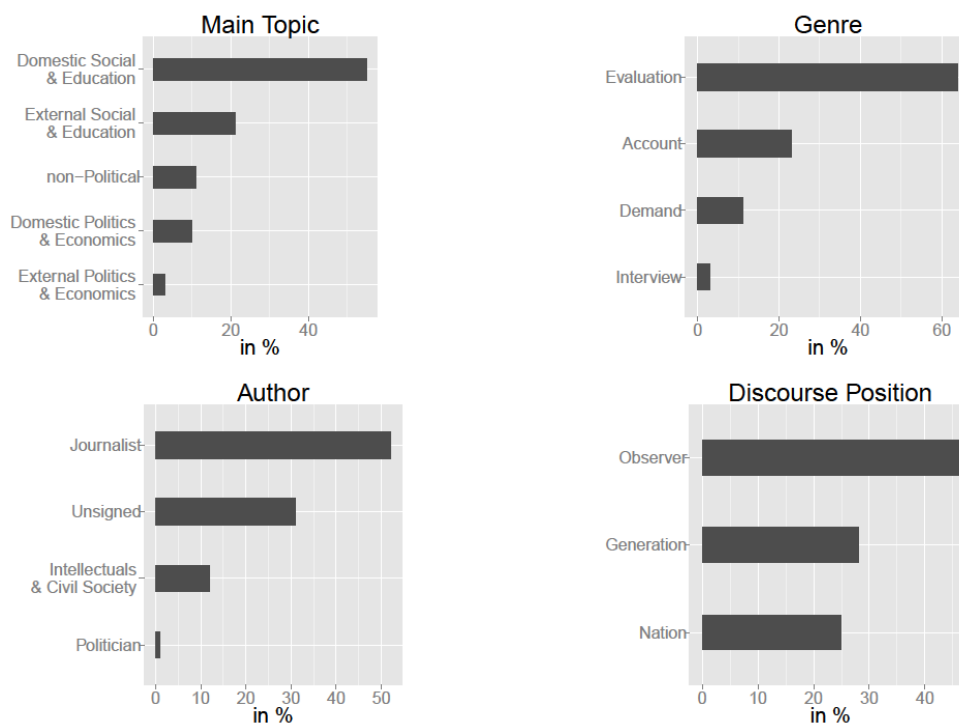


Figure 6.2: France: Corpus Structure

What topics structured debates about youth? Who were the authors? What genre was used to make sense of youth? Before exploring the composition of the discursive structures in detail, some remarks on those structural elements are helpful to apprehend the corpus (Figure 6.2). Discussions about youth focused almost exclusively on educational topics, whether domestic or external. Non-political or political-economic topics were significantly less important. The authors were primarily journalists. It is plausible to assume that journalists also wrote most of the unsigned articles, but it was (and still is) conventional not to sign every article.

Intellectuals and representatives of civil society also intervened in the public sphere. This category includes academics who usually intervened as *hommes de lettres* speaking for a specific political cause rather than defending scientific positions.

Most authors assumed the observer discourse positions. They reported about events in a non-partisan way, following the post-war journalistic code of conduct. However, the frequency of generational discursive positions, primarily taken by adults, illustrates the episode's atmosphere. When authors assumed the national discourse position they frequently constructed an image of a France united in times of crisis. The national discourse position was particularly prominent when authors contrasted events abroad with those "back home". Evaluations are the dominant genre which is a surprise given the prominence of the observer discourse position. These authors tried to objectively observe youth but their descriptions of disobedience or even violence nevertheless conveyed judgements about what they observed.

It would have been quite a surprise if the political mobilisation of youth in May 1968 had not affected the frequency of articles about youth (Figure 6.3). But the frequency also highlights that youth remained present in the public sphere beyond this emblematic month, although speaking about youth declined relative to pre-May 1968. The figure expresses the peak leading to May, and youth persisted afterwards as a signifier in a France which had become accustomed to post-war stability but looked for new orientations which youth seemed to provide.

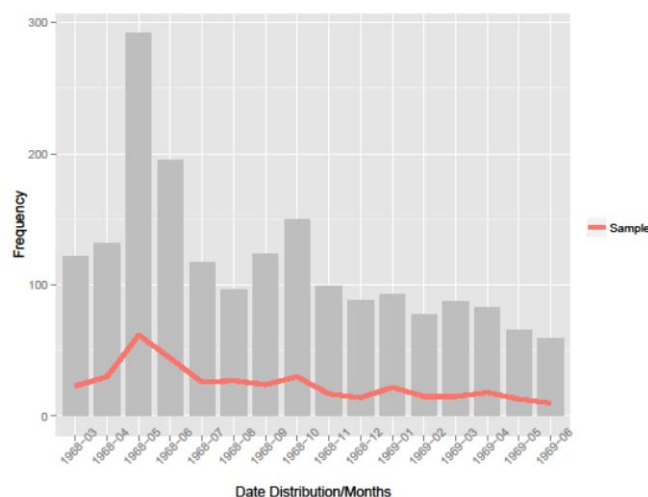


Figure 6.3: France: Corpus Article Frequency

Discursive Formations: Briefly Shaking a Stable Order

Modularity detection splits the discourse network into three discursive formations of roughly similar size (Figure 6.5).¹⁰ The formations point to the competing interpretations contemporaries made of youth activism. The visualisation emphasises the distinctiveness and the similarities of each discursive formation (Figure 6.4).

In the green part of the network, contemporary sources reiterated a common interpretation of youth which centred on youth-activism abroad, the idea that youth was *AUTONOMOUS*, and involved in *TRANSNATIONAL CONTESTATION* of oppressive regimes worldwide. The concept *IMAGINATION*, part of this formation, captures the importance of international events and expresses the constructed solidarities and connections between youth mobilisation in and outside of France. This finding is surprising in light of the literature which stresses the idiosyncratic nature of the French events by concentrating on Parisian students.¹¹

Discussing youth abroad refined the discursive rules of the idealistic youth image, which overlaps with the orange discursive formation *FRANCE & FUTURE*. These two

¹⁰ The introduction provides a detailed methodological discussion. The modularity score is 0.2090.

¹¹ For a critical historiographical overview (Gildea 2009, Jackson 2010).

formations share a POSITIVE view on youth. The orange formation also portrays a PRECIOUS and UNITED youth, important for the French future while also appreciating that youth might be IN-NEED of adult guidance to flourish.

Lastly, the DISORIENTED discursive formation, coloured in red, reiterates the idea of youth as an independent actor which lost orientation in the current crisis, sometimes considered as a THREAT or TROUBLE-MAKER. At its most positive the formation treats youth as NEUTRAL and INDIFFERENT.

A number of bridging concepts structure the discourse and link the discursive formations, thereby assuring that the discourse about youth as a whole remains consistent. Graphically, nodes which are placed on the border between discursive formations fulfil this function. The most important bridging concepts are the temporal codes, rarely anchored within a single formation. Unsurprisingly, the PRESENT stands out as one of the most central concepts, and it is especially revealing when combined with other temporal codes. During a youth-driven questioning of the societal basis, is the PRESENT placed in RUPTURE or in CONTINUITY with PAST and the FUTURE?

The orange FRANCE & FUTURE discursive formation emphasises CONTINUITY with previous youth and its discursive rules induce authors to project the country into the FUTURE when discussing the meaning of youth mobilisation. Conversely, the awakening and contestation of youth abroad was seen as a RUPTURE, just like the faction of French youth considered DISORIENTED. The rules of the latter two formations express the newness of their present times and emphasise the changes symbolised by youth mobilisation.

Discussions about youth abroad, TRANSNATIONAL CONTESTATION, and the domestic idea of a renewal through youth, FRANCE & FUTURE, shared almost all of the available positive social attributes. The authors who relied on their discursive rules endowed youth with

a special mission for improving the course of things. The visualisation underlines this by placing the positive attributes at the opposite end of the formation from the negative social attributes.

There are striking differences between newspapers. The conservative mass-media *Le Figaro* perceived neither PAST nor PRESENT in a positive light and both seem in RUPTURE from one another. It had a slightly positive understanding of the FUTURE when speaking about those young people that it could place in CONTINUITY with the PRESENT. *La Croix*, the other conservative paper, expressed a generally optimistic view of present conditions. It linked its positive views first and foremost with the renewal it observed in the Church and the involvement of Catholic youth leaders.¹²

¹² La jeunesse, force de contestation, in: *La Croix*, 19.03.1968; « Nous refusons d'être sages », in: *La Croix*, 17.05.1968.

Figure 6.4: France: Discourse Network

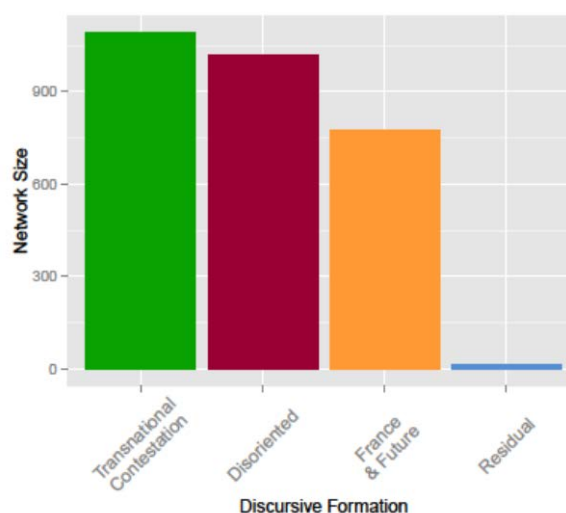


Figure 6.5: France: Size of Modularity Classes

The progressive newspapers display a more clearly positive perspective on all three temporal layers. L'Humanité, the militant communist paper, concentrated on communist activities,

which it framed as beneficial for society and eventually leading to the liberation of workers through the helping hands of idealistic youth. Within this Marxist reading of PAST, PRESENT, and FUTURE, history unfolded linearly. This shaped the way the paper referred to youth mobilisations.¹³ The centre-left *Le Monde* also made predominantly positive evaluations related to the FUTURE. The paper developed these expectations by reducing complex and contradictory constellations in the PRESENT to a narrative of improvement of current deficiencies. The FUTURE was thus in CONTINUITY with the PRESENT. In April 1968 *Le Monde* noted, for instance, an alleged desire of rural youth to be involved in decisions affecting the structural development of “all levels of rural life,” glossing over the fact that many young people simply wanted to leave rural areas.¹⁴

Another central component of the discourse network is the relationship between youth and its constituent other, the older generations. Was youth understood as AUTONOMOUS or as IN-NEED of them, and what evaluations did authors make in framing youth? Overall, the idea of AUTONOMOUS youth dominated the discourse and contemporaries primarily saw the activities of this independent youth in a positive light. The 1960s were characterised by an emancipation of youth in multiple spheres and the discourse reflected this development by confirming a picture of youth which was again independent of the older generation.¹⁵ Those few utterances which echoed an image of youth IN-NEED were also sceptical when evaluating youth. Examples include dismissive comments about the dependence of Soviet youth on the Komsomol which in 1968 was led by the 40-year-old Evgenii Tyazhel'nikov, an “unknown provincial leader”.¹⁶ Such rules also underpinned non-political topics which

¹³ Aspirations des étudiants et objectifs de la classe ouvrière, in: *L'Humanité*, 15.05.1968.

¹⁴ Les foyers ruraux: les jeunes souhaitent être davantage associés aux décisions, in: *Le Monde*, 13.04.1968.

¹⁵ C'est la jeunesse qui fera l'Europe, in: *Le Figaro*, 25.03.1968; Le vainqueur, la jeunesse, in: *La Croix*, 18.01.1969.

¹⁶ Le nouveau “patron” des Komsomols est un sibérien inconnu, in: *Le Figaro*, 13.06.1968.

framed youth as being imprudent¹⁷ or pointed to the challenges for young people to get a job.¹⁸

The discursive rules of individual newspapers can be further distinguished. The ideological flavour of the newspapers mattered for how their readers were to perceive youth and referred to the demands of different publics in France. The conservative *Le Figaro* disapproved of AUTONOMOUS youth activity and predominantly evaluated this as NEGATIVE or NEUTRAL, emphasising the incoherencies of current youth activism.¹⁹ *L'Humanité* did the opposite and understood independent youth in an exclusively POSITIVE light. For this communist paper, youth was inextricably linked with democracy and represented the most promising way to overcome the “old capitalist world”.²⁰ In *La Croix* and *Le Monde*, POSITIVE evaluations of AUTONOMOUS youth activism prevailed, though each paper focused on different kinds of youth groups. The progressive *Le Monde* spoke about youth fighting oppressive regimes around the world or bringing France forward,²¹ whereas *La Croix* spoke primarily about Catholic youth groups.²²

The temporal distribution of each formation reveals the dynamics within the discourse (Figure 6.6). Conforming to the temporal distribution of the corpus, all discursive formations are skewed to the right. But the extent to which the formations centred on the emblematic month of May 1968 differs. The TRANSNATIONAL CONTESTATION most clearly revolved around May, with an earlier mean and a smaller standard deviation than the other formations. This May-centeredness will be addressed in the following section, as it might contradict

¹⁷ Trois jeunes alpinistes font une chute mortelle, in: *Le Figaro*, 27.07.1968.

¹⁸ Stages de “préformation” pour les jeunes quittant l’école sans diplôme, in: *L'Humanité*, 20.09.1968.

¹⁹ Contradictions, in: *Le Figaro*, 09.05.1968.

²⁰ Jeunesse et démocratie, in: *L'Humanité*, 22.03.1968.

²¹ L’agitation universitaire en France et à l’étranger, in: *Le Monde*, 29.06.1968.

²² La JEC et l’expression publique des jeunes scolaires, in: *La Croix*, 06.04.1968.

expectations derived from the youth-mobilisation abroad which pre- and post-dated French events.

The discursive formation about a DISORIENTED youth was distributed similarly. Though the use of these discursive rules peaked in May, the standard deviation underlines that the formation remained prominent across the entire episode. The counter-interpretation FRANCE & FUTURE also remained prominent throughout the episode. On the level of discourse the persistence of these formations points to a dichotomised conflict about the meaning of youth in French society.

The meaning of youth was highly complex in this period. Scholarship has tended to concentrate on Parisian student actions, leading to significant selection-bias and neglecting how much the discursive context gave meaning to the youth-ignited events.

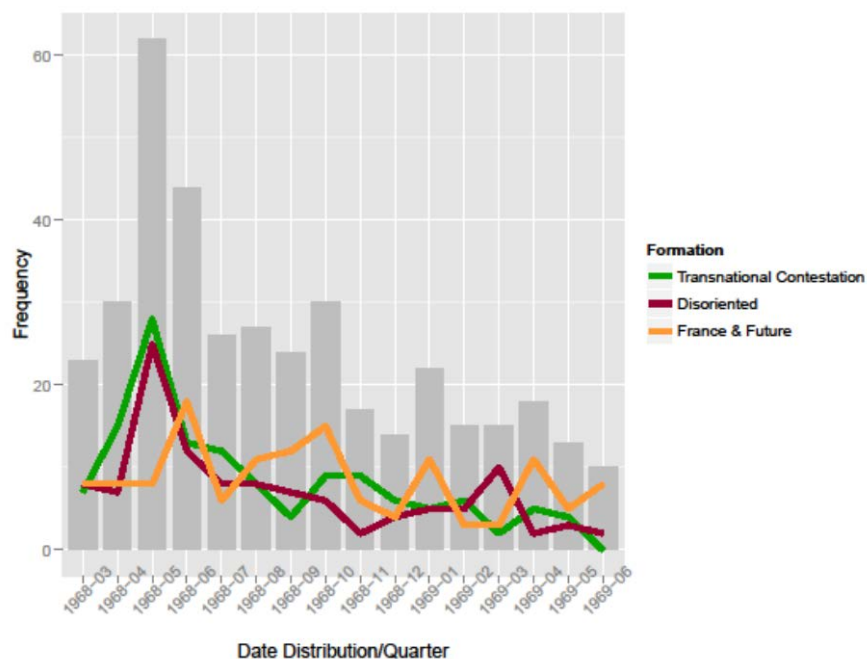


Figure 6.6: France: Frequency per Modularity Class

A GLOBAL REVOLUTION: TRANSNATIONAL SPACES OF CONTESTATION

In the beginning of “May 68,” there was America (Frei 2008: 31). Though the African-American Civil Rights Movement had no generational agenda, its demands inspired the “Free Speech Movement” at Berkeley in 1964–65, which would in turn be taken up by emerging counter-cultures in Europe and Japan. However, the slightly counterintuitive mobilising influence that students in the “Third World” had on youth in industrialised countries has only recently come to researchers’ attention.²³ The TRANSNATIONAL CONTESTATION discursive formation indicates that resistance to established power-structures dominated the 1960s, as Jousselin argued for youth mobilisation in Africa, America, and Asia (1968). The code IMAGINATION, with a comparatively high betweenness centrality, captures the transnational component (Figure 6.7). Before French youth took the streets, the media had been directing its attention to the worldwide questioning of the older generation. The discursive formation peaks around May 1968, when media portrayed French youth on the same page as mobilised youth in Bolivia, Senegal, Mexico, and beyond.

This section shows that the French youth discourse around 1968 reflected global diffusion. This argument is important in light of the state of the scholarship. Renowned historians like Sirinelli still provide idiosyncratic case studies which narrow the period down to events in Paris (2008). Comparative studies, like the edited volume by Gotto et. al. (2012) or Gassert and Klimke (2009), remain binational and neglect mutual dependencies. This narrow perspective finds its origins in early academic writings. Already Touchard and Bénéton ignored the international embeddedness of the crisis (1970).

²³ Slobodian illustrates the important circulations of human rights ideals from the “Third World” for mobilisation in Western Germany (2012).

Contemporaries, however, perceived the mobilisation of youth within an explicitly transnational context. This seemed plausible given comparable demographic situations across the globe, an emerging young generation with distinct cultural practices in “East and West,” and disappointed expectations of renewal after 1944–5 (Horn 2007: 23–42). Analysing the US and Germany, Klimke illustrates how young activists and politicians integrated the global dimension of the unrest into their political calculations (2010).

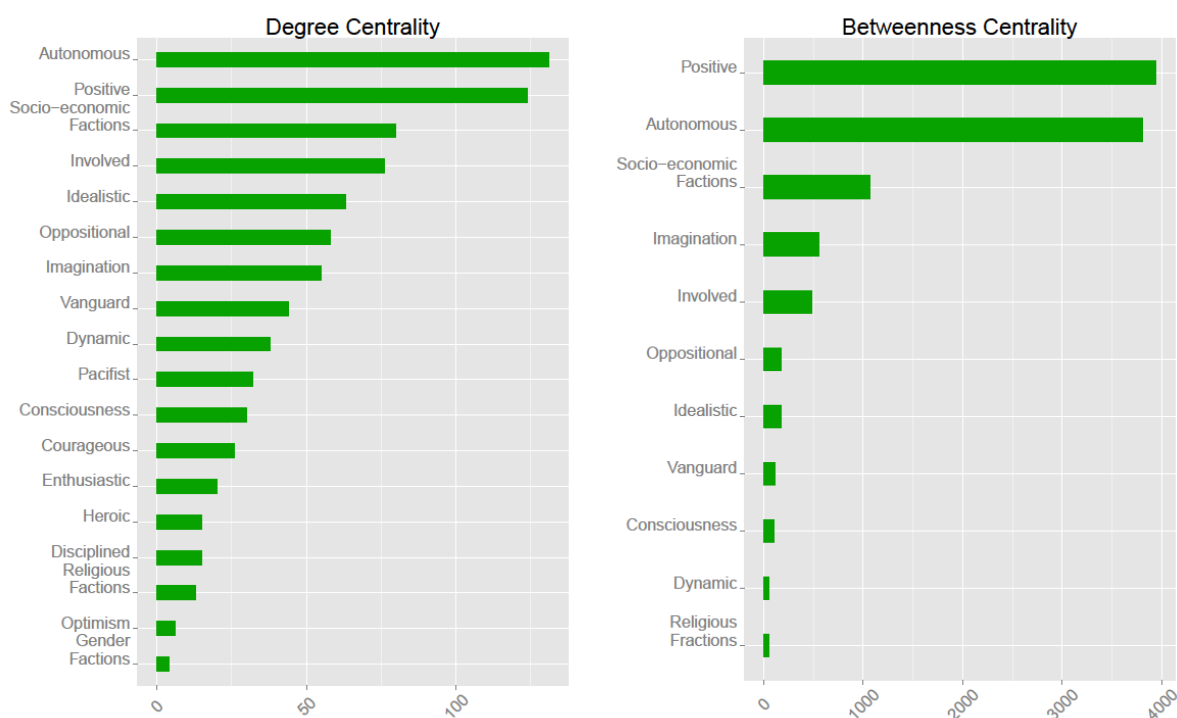


Figure 6.7: TRANSNATIONAL CONTESTATION: Centralities

All four newspapers referred to the transnational context, developing discursive rules with a POSITIVE view of youth which acted autonomously from and frequently in OPPOSITION to the discredited adult generation (Figure 6.8). The graphical representation of the discourse network highlights that these two concepts hold the network together. The rules of this discursive formation also emphasise that youth was not homogenous. Authors underlined socio-economic differences and saw protests being carried by students or young workers rather than a unified collective “youth”. Such interpretations disputed the existence of *la jeunesse* and stressed the social complexity of *les jeunes*.

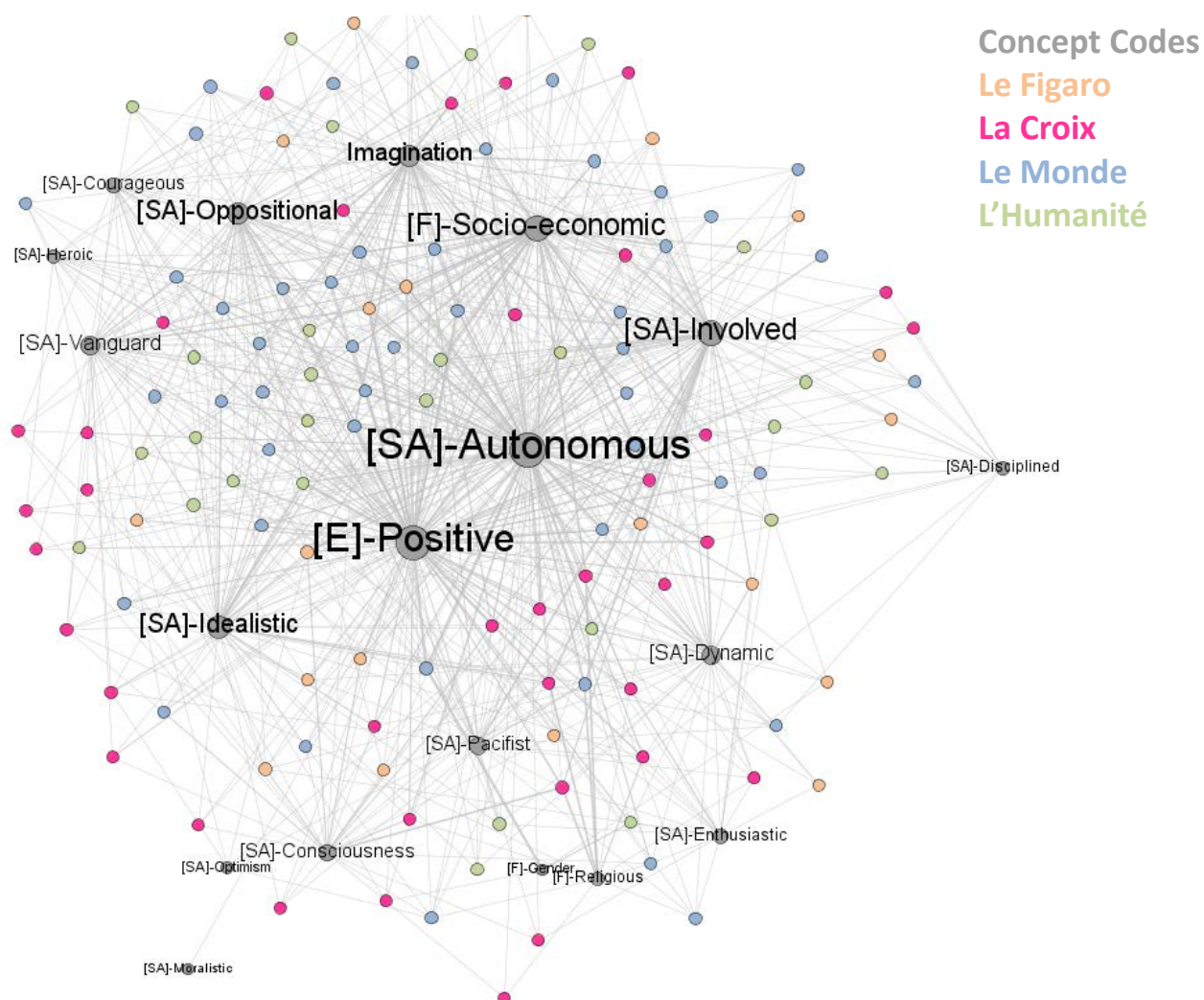


Figure 6.8: TRANSNATIONAL CONTESTATION: Discourse Network

Prelude: A World in Rebellion

Media trans-nationalised youth by granting ample attention to its mobilisation around the world. This practice influenced discursive rules about youth. Youth, at times students, was described as liberating societies from both capitalism and illegitimate authoritarian rulers. The utterances of this formation drew a continuum between contestation abroad and in France and thereby empowered youth. The political practice of youth referred to events abroad, such entanglements seemed therefore intuitively convincing. For instance, following a new American attack in Vietnam in March 1968, a group of Nanterre-based students detonated plastic explosives in front of the US embassy. The detention of one student during the

following demonstrations increased solidarity amongst hitherto dispersed student associations, notably the *UNEF* and *les enragés* (Gilcher-Holtey 1995: 134-5).

The international setting of youth-driven change included more than just political issues. The young generation also embodied the new cultural and technological world. In March 1968, *Le Figaro* marvelled about the first computers in the US.²⁴ The journalist described youth as IDEALISTIC and CAPABLE, decisive for bringing technological change forward without opposing the old generation. He wondered about students teaching professors and admired the students' freedom. Prior to French youth mobilisation, *Le Figaro* underlined the ability of youth to responsibly use their freedom and expressed the consensus of an ACCELERATED present in the 1960s.

This is merely one illustration of the language game about the diverse changes that accumulated during the episode. Media framed these changes as globally co-occurring, placing youth on the forefront of a borderless cultural revolution.²⁵ In political terms, the simultaneity relied on the seemingly synchronised political contestations in various countries. In March 1968 *Le Monde* devoted one of countless international overviews to the “anger of youth”.²⁶ At that time France was still calm, famously described with “ennui” [boredom] by Pierre Viansson-Ponté.²⁷ The discursive rules about French youth included envy about what happened abroad. Liberal interpretations of the youth rebellion dominated and constructed a common space of experience between East and West. From “Warsaw to Cambridge,” youth was said to rebel for similarly good reasons.

²⁴ L'étonnante aventure de 3.700 étudiants et d'un gros cerveau électronique, in: *Le Figaro*, 09.03.1968.

²⁵ Berkley en guerre, in: *Le Monde*, 09.03.1969.

²⁶ La colère des étudiants, in: *Le Monde*, 17-03.1968.

²⁷ Quand la France s'ennuie..., in: *Le Monde*, 15.03.1968.

Shared youthful idealism and disappointments with the reality of the reforms implemented by adults since the war drove the contestation. An “inspirational spirit” united youth, notwithstanding variation in methods, slogans, and extent of the protests. Given this unification, *Le Monde* underlined that British student activism should not be dismissed just because it opposed “our [Western] system,” but celebrated like the courage of Polish students which opposed another system. Liberals argued that Eastern European mobilisation might inspire the West. Of course, through March this remained hypothetical given the pervasive sense of “ennui”.²⁸

But French mobilisation quickly caught up. In the height of the crisis in May, journalists constructed an even more encompassing contextual space stretching from Beijing to Belgrade and Mexico. Ideas of youth-led social progress spread and legitimised French mobilisation. Chinese students, for instance, were said to support French students. *Le Monde* enthusiastically de-bordered the French contestation by echoing Chinese slogans, writing “Long Live the Righteous Fight of French Workers and Students” or “Long Live the Parisian Revolutionary Traditions!” across posters of Mao Zedong and Lin Biao. Media integrated the support for French mobilisation from abroad and *Le Monde* strengthened this link by stressing similarities between Chinese and French revolutionary thinking.²⁹

By the end of May 1968 the French media increasingly focused on the violence of the events. The initial enthusiasm about international youth-led contestation diminished. The conservative *La Croix* spoke about “agitation étudiante” [student unrest], changing the meaning of transnational contestation. The violence of “agitations” was unacceptable no

²⁸ Cf. FN [26].

²⁹ L'étranger et la crise de l'université, in: *Le Monde*, 23.05.1968; Like its French counterpart, Chinese media used the contestations in Asia, Africa, and Latin-America to make sense of what it observed in France. This claim was well anchored in popular culture with Jean-Luc Godard's 1967 film “*La Chinoise*”. A loose adaptation of Dostoyevsky's “*The Possessed*” covering the French *New Left* and the historical context of its emergence, notably the Russian Revolution 1917, US militarism, and the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

matter the goals.³⁰ After a month of violent eruptions in France, speaking about youth had evolved and began to include youth as causing trouble alongside its vanguard role.

Contemporaries maintained that uncertainty co-occurred globally and agreed that tomorrow's world would fundamentally differ from today's. Such interpretational stances embedded France in a global *Erwartungshorizont*. Youth expressed that the old generation no longer controlled the world. In December 1968, when France had returned to "ennui," the conservative *Le Figaro* described the "agitation estudiantine" as a global "fire," spreading from one urban centre to another: San Francisco, Rome, Madrid, Mexico, Alexandria, Delhi, and beyond. The uncontrollable and expanding danger of fire gave a darker meaning to youth mobilisation – in stark contrast to earlier enthusiasm about the "inspirational spirit" of youth.³¹

For the Catholic *La Croix*, the transnational church was one key actor for youth contestation. During a meeting at Taizé in the summer of 1968, the most significant ecumenical centre in the world, youth from across the world discussed the relationship between violence and advanced industrial societies.³² A journalist described youth as INVOLVED, demonstrating CONSCIOUSNESS about contemporary issues, and fully aware of differences amongst its various demands. At the same time, he underlined the potential of youth to overcome its divides and cooperate with the church.

Mobilising Against Oppressive Regimes Both East and West

The Eastern European space of contestation was particularly relevant. By March, Polish students had already gone to the barricades to oppose communism. Such discussions

³⁰ L'agitation étudiante fait tache d'huile à l'étranger, in: *La Croix*, 31.05.1968.

³¹ L'agitation estudiantine dans le monde, in: *Le Figaro*, 02.12.1968.

³² Taizé. Pas de frontières pour les jeunes, in: *La Croix*, 03.08.1968.

strengthened the discursive rules of a COURAGEOUS and IDEALISTIC young generation that would not shy away from being imprisoned for defending its ideals. *Le Monde* legitimised the activities of Polish youth by emphasising the intelligentsia's support.³³ The Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 reunited opposition to the government. Following the new party line Moscow had imposed by the end of the year, the media spoke about cross-generational and nation-wide contestation thanks to VANGUARD students who carried the protests to Bohemia and Moravia.³⁴ In April 1969, *La Croix* again reiterated the image of an INVOLVED new generation of Czech youth demanding respect for human rights;³⁵ comparable to its Spanish peers who accused the government of failing to respect human rights. Youth commemorated the 20th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights in December 1968, emphasising the declaration's inherent "European-ness".³⁶

These interpretations associated foreign youth's opposition to authoritarianism with the experience of French youth. The media emphasised the interwoven-ness of the events abroad and at home, constructing a European frame of mobilisation. However, youth contestation was not restricted to industrialised countries. The meaning of youth also referred to the "Third World" – a term coined by Alfred Sauvy in 1952 in reference to the Third Estate during the French Revolution. The "Third World" was unaligned with communist or capitalist countries, similar to the Third Estate which opposed priests and nobles.³⁷ Sauvy, alongside Frantz Fanon's "Wretched of the Earth" (1961), created imagined solidarities amongst mobilised youth. Sartre's preface lent intellectual credibility to Fanon's book about the violent

³³ Les étudiants polonais poursuivent la grève des cours, in: *Le Monde*, 17.03.1968.

³⁴ Les intellectuels tchécoslovaques veulent, eux aussi, exprimer leur opposition à la nouvelle ligne politique, *Le Figaro*, 23.11.1968; Similarly, writers began to back-up Yugoslav youth mobilisation which fundamentally questioned the country's political, cultural, and social consensus, encouraging comparisons with 1948, the year that Yugoslavia broke with Stalin: *Yugoslavie: Les écrivains et les manifestations estudiantines*, in: *Le Monde*, 29.06.1968.

³⁵ Que pensent les étudiants tchèques?, in: *La Croix*, 11.04.1969.

³⁶ Madrid: Les étudiants en grève, in: *L'Humanité*, 12.12.1968.

³⁷ Trois Mondes, une planète, in: *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 14.08.1952.

foundations of colonial structures and it was widely translated prior to 1968. The anticipated collapse of the illegitimate imperialist orders worldwide became its key message.

The focus on the imperialist present shifted the perspective away from the rejections of the fascist PAST.³⁸ Jean-Paul Dollé, born 1939, helped construct the “Third World” as a revolutionary resource for French youth through his journal “Révolution. Afrique. Amérique Latine. Asie.”. Mobilisation across Latin America was the most prominently discussed, and by April 1968 reports about confrontations between youth and the police in Brazil credited youth with moral superiority and blamed violence on the police. Youth opposition expressed CONSCIOUSNESS and contrasted with illegitimate governmental power.³⁹ French youth integrated this interpretation in its own mobilisation.

Outside-in: Youth and Cross-Generational Protest

In April 1968 the discursive rules needed to integrate the contrast between omnipresent youth mobilisation abroad and the dormant French youth. Speaking about youth abroad pre-structured the emerging discursive rules about French youth, including the idea that youth resistance bridged different social strata. Vigna explores such encounters between workers and students and accentuates the importance of the legacy of the 1936 factory occupations (2007). The communist L’Humanité framed early mobilisation of students in April 1968 using similar discursive rules. It underlined that despite different social backgrounds, those students with high moral standards were involved with the workers, making events in France similar to those abroad.⁴⁰ But the social divide between middle-class students and workers should not be underestimated. By June 1968 Le Monde underlined the emancipatory effects

³⁸ The dissatisfaction with the fascist legacies was obviously also important for mobilisations e.g. in Germany Cinquante mille personnes ont manifesté à Bonn sans incident, in: Le Monde, 15.05.1968; or Italy: Rome: Les étudiants dressent de nouvelles barricades, in: La Croix, 22.06.1968.

³⁹ Bataille rangé entre étudiants et policiers à Rio-de-Janeiro, in: Le Monde, 03.04.1968.

⁴⁰ La faculté de Nanterre a repris ses cours, in: L’Humanité, 02.04.1968.

of mobilisation as women got involved.⁴¹ But even in progressive statements, conventional ideals about gender shone through – women were allegedly less able to endure high stress levels and physical pain, effectively discrediting their capacity to be involved in the events.

Youth and worker unrest synchronised following the first “Night of the Barricades”. Media coverage turned the night of 10-11 May into a critical event. Those interpretations led to cross-class solidarity and the perception of shared causes between youth and workers, mirroring the cross-generational solidarity believed to exist abroad. The conservative *Le Figaro* described the demonstrations as a “human river” – evoking life and movement.⁴² The slogan “Étudiants au service des travailleurs” [Students at the service of workers] united opposition to the Gaullist government but the paper also described how awkwardly the student leaders Jacques Sauvageot and Daniel Cohn-Bendit appealed to the workers given their dress and language. Nevertheless, the diversity of demonstrators legitimised the opposition:

There are girls in miniskirts, workers with caps, bourgeois, high school pupils, concierges, clergyman, engineers, bearded anarchists, small paper ‘red dog roses’ from May in the buttonhole and high up on black flags. For some, the flag is red; for others, a white or yellow placard, a calico, a poster, or a simple newspaper.

Protests gradually spread across the country and peaked again between 22 and 24 May, the second “Night of the Barricades”.⁴³ The second night saw increased violence between demonstrators and the police. The famous “Nous sommes tous des juifs allemands” [We are all German Jews] captured one of the movement’s motivations, namely Cohn-Bendit’s prohibition to enter France. Demonstrations quickly got out of control, and their aim to occupy the Hôtel de Ville reminded commentators of the Paris Communes of 1794 and 1871.

⁴¹ Les jeunes filles aussi..., in: *Le Monde*, 28.06.1968.

⁴² Un véritable fleuve humain a traversé Paris, in: *Le Figaro*, 15.05.1968.

⁴³ Les moins de 20ans en tête de la grève, in: *Le Figaro*, 18.05.1968.

The Catholic press reported with disgust about the police violence, opposed by HEROIC young people. The CRS [*Compagnies Republicaines de Sécurité*, National Police] were said to *matraquer* even injured demonstrators. The use of *matraquer* testifies to the importance of the Algerian War. It is based on an Arab word frequent in Northern Africa, for a stick the Bedouins use to ride camels, which gained prominence in France during the Algerian War as shorthand for “beating up” someone.⁴⁴

The tone diverged following this second wave of violence. Although Le Figaro reiterated the generally positive picture about youth, it pointed to the influence of violent subgroups, similar to the changed coverage about youth abroad.⁴⁵ Over time coverage about Brazilian youth opposition became more nuanced. Le Monde emphasised its violence and confirmed the presence of the extremist groups warned about by President Arthur da Costa e Silva.⁴⁶ This reading also changed the understanding of the French mobilisation, calling it an *émeute* [riot]. Le Figaro questioned the cross-societal dimension, underlining opposition between the demonstrators and the rest of the population. Although the gawkers, “the same type of people that stick together like blue flies around the injured after a car accident,” were hardly preferred, the extremist youth was even more repulsive. Nevertheless, students explained their contestations to people walking through the Latin Quarter and voiced their ideals about public space and the importance of public deliberation of political decisions.⁴⁷ The discursive rules about youth mobilisation became more complex.

French and Latin American student mobilisation was mutually interwoven. Latin American youth was attentive to European events, understanding itself as their precursors. Mobilisation

⁴⁴ La violence est partout, in: La Croix, 26.05.1968.

⁴⁵ Cf. FN [30].

⁴⁶ Brésil: manifestations antigouvernementales à Brasilia, Recife, Bahia et Porto-Alegre, in: Le Monde, 02.07.1968.

⁴⁷ Au quartier latin après l'émeute, in: Le Figaro, 27.05.1968.

practices diffused: Latin American students imported the French tradition of erecting barricades and *Le Monde* admired the politicisation of Latin American universities since the end of the First World War and the importance of the Church in the region's renewal. Young priests spread liberation theology and inspired young people to believe in revolutionary change.⁴⁸ French youth also expressed its solidarity with Latin America. In October 1968, following the killing of 40 young Mexican demonstrators by the military and police, French students demonstrated in support of their Mexican peers.⁴⁹

Involved Christians: Ecclesiastic “68”?

The Church is mostly absent in treatments of 1968. If included at all, it is understood as a victim of the societal transformations and as an artefact of the past which failed to modernise after the war (Clifford and Townson 2011: 529). However, during the 1960s various Catholic youth movements such as the *JEC* [Catholic student youth] emancipated themselves from the episcopate and drew inspirations from the renewal they observed in the Latin American Church. Catholic youth also adopted a Marxist reading of its political present and mobilised for more equal societies. The transnational imaginary was critical to this ecclesiastic “68,” which portrayed youth as *PACIFIST* and moral *CONSCIOUSNESS*. Barrau underlined that by 1965 the *JEC* had increased in independence and seriously challenged a conservative Church (1998: 29). The Second Vatican Council, 1962–5, was a pivotal step towards a more progressive Catholic Church.

La Croix extensively engaged with *JEC* activities in the realm of education, describing *INVOLVED* and *DYNAMIC* young people and underlining their impact amongst students.

⁴⁸ La ‘contestation universitaire’ en Amérique latine, in: *Le Monde*, 09.06.1968. The Theologian Paul Blanquart says that he was inspired by the Colombian radical priest Camilo Torres, killed in 1966 as a guerilla (Clifford and Townson 2011: 540).

⁴⁹ Manifestations d’étudiants hier à Paris, in: *L’Humanité*, 04.10.1968.

Around 50,000 young people were said to read the *JEC*'s publications, containing for instance ideals about the student-teacher relationship.⁵⁰ The *JEC* and *JECF*'s (the female branch) leaders, Jean-Paul Ciret and Claire Ival, articulated visions about evaluating students beyond marks. More generally, *La Croix* portrayed Catholic youth as conscious of its importance and motivated to participate in designing the country's FUTURE.⁵¹

During the most intense moments of mobilisation, *La Croix* gave space to Jean-Paul Ciret to unite the dispersed Catholics. He seriously questioned adult authority and wondered whether adults stood behind the society they offered to youth: "Are you really satisfied with your civilisation based on profit, human exploitation and the marginalisation of the weakest?" Beyond blaming adults, Ciret criticised the lethargy of youth and called for its awakening, suggesting that the Church might potentially advance societal debates in line with Christian values: "Churches ought to be transformed from places of silence to places of exchange."⁵²

After the first "Night of the Barricades," different Catholic youth movements publically joined and associated a spiritual dimension with youth resistance. Clifford showed that these Catholic activists had remarkably diverse socio-economic and regional origins (2011: 531). Catholics condemned the government's brutality and "cathos de gauche" [left-wing Catholics] consolidated their position (Barrau 1998: 40). The ecclesiastic "May 68" included bishops who debated with youth, which amounted to a questioning of the hierarchical Church structures which prevented youth from acting to transform the Church. Progressive voices in the Church demanded consideration of the power relations between clerics and laypersons, just as the state was asked to reconsider the relations between governors and governed.

⁵⁰ La JEC et l'expression publique des jeunes scolaires, in: *La Croix*, 06.04.1968.

⁵¹ Torches, danses et trompettes. La fête pascale des pionniers, in: *La Croix*, 16.04.1968.

⁵² Cf. FN [12].

Mobilisation around 1968 was not limited to students. On 13 May the *JOC* [Catholic worker youth] and the *JOCF* (its female branch) called for participation in the general strikes between 22 and 30 May. Both movements welcomed the contestations as collectively encouraging people to question societal structures. Through the events, participants gained new identities and became part of a larger collective. The *JOC* enthusiastically understood the mobilisation as expressing a desire to extend democratic freedoms. The slogan of the 22 May demonstration, “Make a New Society,” affirmed an anti-Gaullist message and added an evangelical dimension to the rejection of authority.⁵³

La Croix confirmed, not without delight, that Christians participated in the street and the lecture theatres. Amongst the leaders of the student union *UNEF* were a number of affirmed Catholics; one member of the *Action catholique universitaire* [Catholic University Movement] stated: “The Christian students, just like the others, welcomed the movement with great hopes. They entered the events without any reservations or malaise.” Obviously, La Croix rejected violence and these Catholic students underlined their efforts to limit it whenever possible by speaking to those who misbehaved.⁵⁴ The progressive *Le Monde* also granted space to this interpretation. Father Jean Danielou developed a long argument about youth and Christianity according to which the mobilisation of May and June 1968 exposed fundamental tensions: “It is against the platitudes of the boredom of a world disinfected by the sciences that youth revolted.” However, Danielou argued, the alternative philosophies of Marx, Freud, Sartre, and Marcuse, only offered rejection without answers, unlike the Church.⁵⁵

⁵³ La jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne, in: *La Croix*, 21.05.1968.

⁵⁴ Les étudiants chrétiens dans la rue et les ‘amphis’, in: *La Croix*, 31.05.1968.

⁵⁵ La révolte des jeunes, in: *Le Monde*, 26.11.1968.

TRANSNATIONAL CONTESTATION constitutes the largest discursive formation surrounding 1968. Its rules initially referred to mobilised youth abroad, resisting authoritarian regimes. These interpretations suggested an understanding of a DECISIVE and POSITIVE youth, which in turn influenced the self-understanding of French youth. The discursive structures empowered young people who saw that their peers abroad challenged governmental authority and thereby felt legitimised to similarly question authoritarian structures in France. However, the moral superiority of the early mobilisation vanished with the increasing violence of youth involvement in France which also changed the understanding of youth abroad.

LA MOBILISATION: THE FRENCH FUTURE

Mais l'échec de l'illusion politique ne doit pas faire oublier la signification profonde du mouvement : il visait d'abord une civilisation et en second lieu un régime qui en incarne et en aggrave les défauts.

But the failure of the political illusion should not lead to forgetting the profound significance of the movement: it aimed first at a civilisation and second at a regime which incarnates and increases its faults.⁵⁶

In the summer of 1968 Jean-Marie Domenach, editor of *Esprit*, concluded that the movement had failed, which he put in perspective: “Its political failure does not question its central inspiration: the attack on a repressive and absurd society. [...] It was aimed less at a regime than at what pretended to be a civilisation.” The failure of political utopia nevertheless valued the movement’s profound cultural significance, as captured by the opening quote.

The discursive rules of the idealistic TRANSNATIONAL CONTESTATION, with its emphasis on youth activities abroad, overlaps with French youth engagement in the FRANCE & FUTURE formation, which the discourse network illustrates (Figure 6.4). Both formations

⁵⁶ Domenach, “Mai 68” in: *Esprit* 6-7, June-July 1968, pp. 961-69.

include utterances which refer to an unambiguously POSITIVE, INVOLVED and DECISIVE youth for the unfolding mobilisation. But the FRANCE & FUTURE discursive formation was specific insofar as it portrayed youth as UNITED and linked that image with visions about a country's tomorrow. The discursive formation was less centred on "May 68" (Figure 6.6), but on youth who exposed a general civilisational disquiet. The utterances in this discursive formation highlighted youth's antipathy towards a society in civilisational crisis.

This discursive formation draws attention to an aspect of "May 68" which has remained peripheral. Bantigny argued that the politicised time around 1968 centred on the present without developing clear visions for the future (2013: 218). However, reading contemporary newspapers suggests something different: commentators perceived youth contestation as having clear goals for the FUTURE and containing competing forms of social utopia.

This language game is particularly popular in L'Humanité (21%) compared to the overall sample. The communist newspaper's discursive rules resembled those that characterised the SOVIET-LENINIST discursive formation which fell apart during perestroika and contained a vision about social progress through youth.⁵⁷ On the level of concepts, the aggregation of the individual utterances suggests that within public discourse youth was perceived as being IN-NEED of adult guidance. Too precious to be left alone, youth needed care and would be DECISIVE for the country's FUTURE. The discourse network highlights this tension through the codes which reveal the hopes projected onto youth while reminding us of the uncertainty inherent in it.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 4.

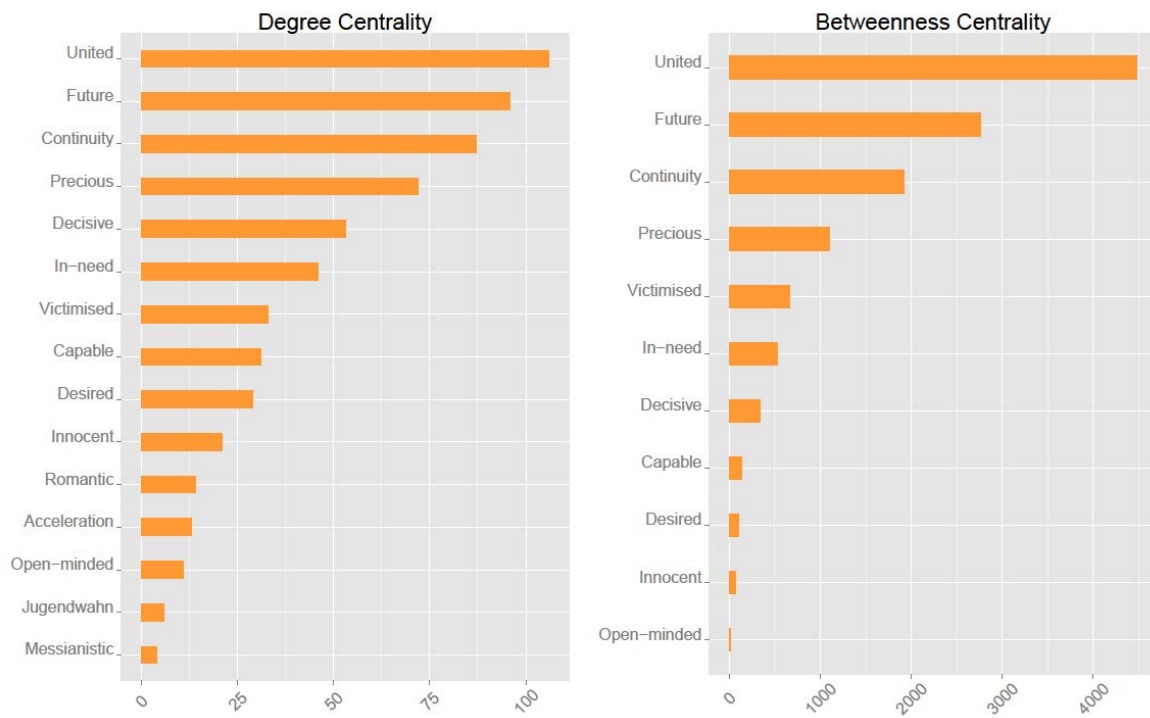


Figure 6.9: FRANCE & FUTURE: Centralities

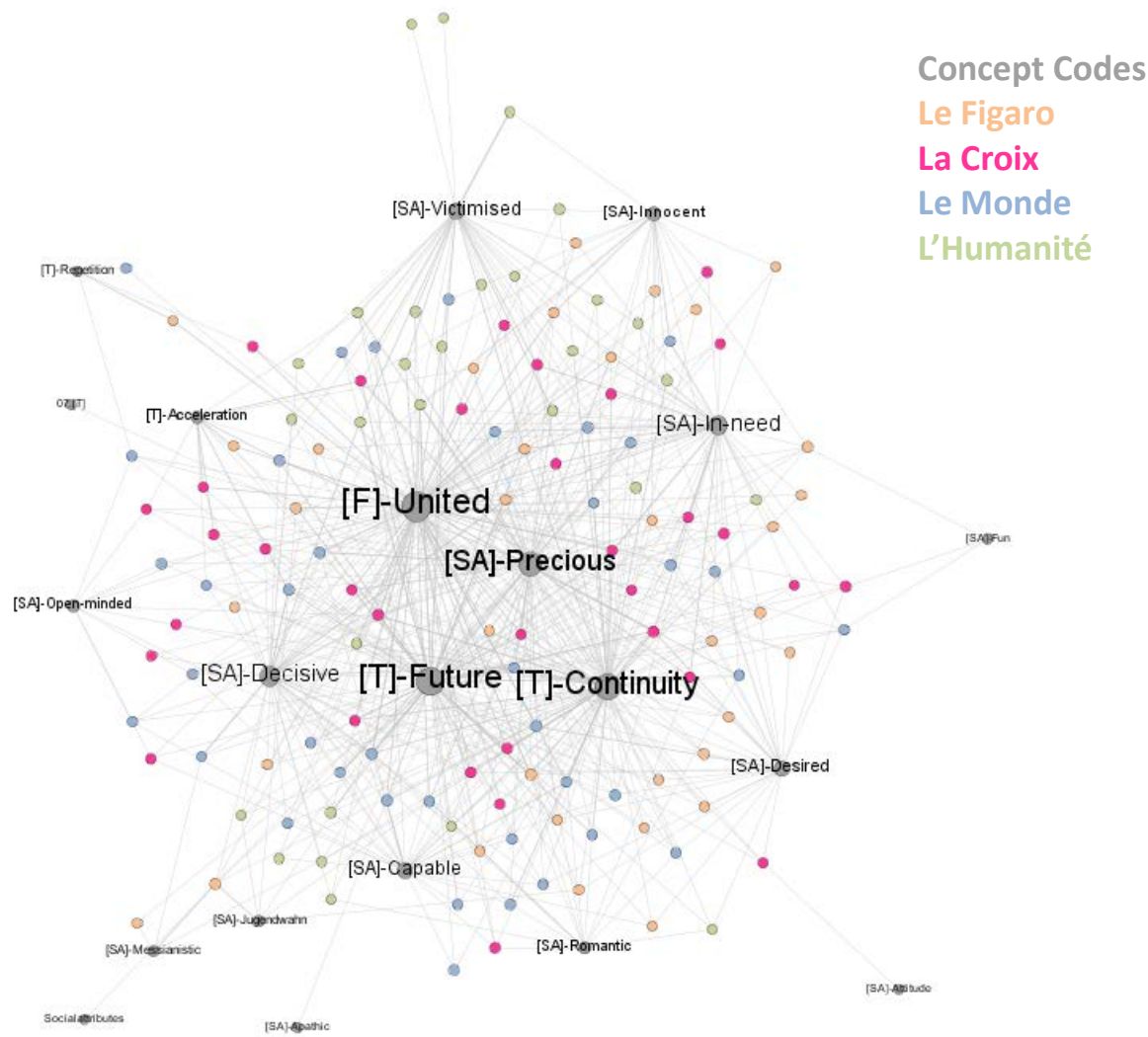


Figure 6.10: FRANCE & FUTURE: Discourse Network

Intellectuals: The Future through Present Past

Intellectuals quickly occupied key discursive positions to interpret French youth in relation to the country's FUTURE. Edgar Morin suggested that "la mobilisation" symbolised the ultimate socio-political emancipation of youth as students replaced the established intelligentsia and guided the masses of young people. According to Morin, this turned "May 68" into "some sort of socio-juvenile 1789," seemingly united around Marxism (1968: 26-7). Along similar lines, Alfred Sauvy emphasised the importance of youth to the societal "wake-up call": "living matter always wins over what is dead" (1970: 10-11).

A fascination with youth across ideological camps testified to the desire to overcome traditional societal structures. In April 1968, Father Georges Richard-Molard wrote in *Le Figaro* that youth embodied societal CONSCIOUSNESS, framing it as ROMANTIC symbol of the possibility of changing the FUTURE by acting now. The Church should therefore start a constructive engagement with youth.⁵⁸ His utterances were made forceful by his use of generational language which united past experiences and future expectations, as argued in the introduction. In his understanding, UNITED youth was DECISIVE for the FUTURE and CAPABLE of shaping it.

In May, Morin referred to the youth mobilisation as a generational uprising. His interpretation established continuity with the 1789 Commune which he reinterpreted as another generational uprising that triggered an overdue contestation of national power structures. Other commentators took up this diachronic continuity, agreeing that the "revolutionary explosion" accelerated the modernisation of universities. Morin expected the university reforms to transform society, since student mobilisation exposed to the rest of society "the feeling, the consciousness of the radical inadequacy of adult civilisation, the disaster of the techno-

⁵⁸ Les chemins d'une nouvelle jeunesse, in: *Le Figaro*, 22.04.1968.

bureaucratic work life, ritualised narrow-minded bourgeoisie in private; leprosy, the deficiency and human misery of rich societies.”⁵⁹ Morin added:

Marx said of the French Revolution that she was classical, i.e. she presented clearly and completely the characteristics of all bourgeois revolutions to follow. The student commune of Paris might become classical for future mutations of the Occident.

The synchronisation of different layers of France’s crises sustained joint student and worker actions beyond May. The sociologist Jules Monnerot rejected the notion of a “missed encounter” between students and workers and used historical references to illustrate the importance of youth for inspiring adult movements. In June, Monnerot claimed that contestation over universities might bring down Gaullism, comparing the university crisis to the financial disorder in France in 1789 and the military situation in Russia in 1917. Such continuities amplified the meaning of youth contestation. Moreover, modernity relied on mobility, and tensions in the university therefore indicated a profound mismatch in societal organisation. Beliefs in the fluidity of social class were questioned by the university reality.⁶⁰

Jean Quehenno, member of the *Académie Française*, also noted that the influence of youth reached beyond its peers. But he warned about the collective “youth,” which reminded him of fascism. Although youth currently revealed a fundamental moral-civilisational crisis, he warned that a society ought not to follow youth blindly. Rather, old people should accept their age and look with satisfaction at their achievements. However, Quehenno was aware of current generational tensions and drew a parallel with what Tocqueville had written about King Louis-Philippe, whose self-centredness destroyed his own power. Similarly, youth

⁵⁹ La Commune étudiante, in: *Le Monde*, 21.05.1968.

⁶⁰ De la révolte étudiante à la grève générale, in: *Le Monde*, 08.06.1968.

reminded the old generations of their self-centredness and focus on standardised consumption and production.⁶¹

The sociologist Maurice Duverger also referred to the historical importance of youth. Students had been politically involved since the Middle Ages, PRECIOUS for the overall societal order and morally significant. For instance, in Bordeaux in 1938-39 youth held a seminar series devoted to the rise of European fascism at a point when, according to Duverger, critical reflections about this phenomenon lacked in France. His utterances followed the discursive rules of the FRANCE & FUTURE formation. He underlined that students needed guidance and help for their political involvement which would shape the future. Youth was said to completely ignore the constraints of political and economic systems, which fit with the sociologist's emphasis on critical analysis.⁶²

Radical students demanded fundamental changes in social organisation. Intellectuals understood the mobilisation through the demands formulated by the young people occupying the Sorbonne and other universities. Intellectual interpretations placed the mobilised students in historical context, but in so doing effectively limited the immediacy of real youth on the streets.

Is It Easy to Be Young? Challenges for Youth

The prominent journalist Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber saw “la mobilisation” as symbolising a generation across Europe that had grown up as a passive victim of its time and not as an historical agent (1968: 31). The late 1960s saw considerable challenges for youth, beyond the educational realm. L'Humanité realised that youth was systematically excluded from the economic world and threatened by unemployment. The newspaper described youth as

⁶¹ Jeunesse, in: Le Figaro, 18.06.1968.

⁶² La politique dans l'université, in: Le Monde, 14.08.1968.

motivated to work but always the first to be fired once economic difficulties arose.⁶³ The conservative *Le Figaro* also stressed this aspect in April 1968 and drew dark conclusions from a youth unemployment rate of 25%: “It risks contributing to all other frustrations and revolts in the near future, increasing dramatically the number of antisocial people. We failed to foresee the increase of this new wave, a dramatic lack of foresight.” The newspaper stressed the societal importance of youth and opened its pages to “the new generations who are the future of the country”.⁶⁴

Unemployment grew disproportionally amongst youth (Ferrand 1968: 34). Although the number of unemployed people (estimated at 100,000 in early January 1968) was low compared to today’s standards (Polonceau 1969: 5), youth unemployment fundamentally worried the French public. *La Croix* underlined its impact by presenting a selection of individual stories which highlighted that those with manual skills were in particularly precarious situations. Young people became superfluous in the economic process, VICTIMS of changes like economic concentration that also hindered their social maturation.⁶⁵

The mobilisation of youth and workers therefore represented an important second strand of the contestations around 1968. Across the country, from Bilancourt (Renault), Nanterre (Citroën), or Grenevilliers (Thomson-Houston), young workers mobilised alongside adults, advocating, amongst other things, alternatives to the outdated structures of the large unions (Vigna 2007: 49). The crisis shattered established social identities which might have opposed youth and workers. Overcoming socio-economic divides was an explicit part of the mobilisation of 1968 and especially flourished outside of Paris (Lange 1992).

⁶³ A Villeurbanne des jeunes chômeurs nous disent, in: *L’Humanité*, 04.03.1968.

⁶⁴ 120.000 jeunes sans travail... pourquoi?, in: *Le Figaro*, 02.04.1968.

⁶⁵ Les jeunes face au chômage, in: *La Croix*, 31.10.1968.

Debates about youth were fundamentally politicised. Journalists, politicians, and young people made “youth” a distinct group that deserved specific treatment. Such utterances existed prior to the youth mobilisation and solidified afterwards. Over time the discourse considered the university in particular as a space to modernise and democratise. L’Humanité criticised the university for representing an inverted picture of society with merely 10% of students from working-class origin. Those in power had realised this long ago and tried to isolate the university from politics to marginalise the students’ ethical spirit.⁶⁶

Youth as Normal after la Mobilisation

After the mobilisation was over, the meaning of youth had evolved to include a set of discursive rules portraying it as UNITED and CAPABLE. Reports about a number of CRS-led leisure clubs that had existed since 1958 exemplified this. Youth and the forces of order could peacefully engage in dialogue even when discussing “May 68”.⁶⁷ Such descriptions contributed to making “May 68” part of the past. Interpretations temporally distanced the events from the present, turning them into memory (Feindt et al. 2014). Inevitably, mobilisation affected how people reasoned about youth, and the discursive rules reveal the aim to create continuity with the youth known prior to 1968 – framing the mobilisation of “68” as an exception to youth as normal.⁶⁸

Sporadic mobilisations continued beyond May. Even Jacques Moren, deputy of the conservative UDR, described the later mobilisations as expressing how CAPABLE and IDEALISTIC youth was. He praised the students’ noble aims and emphasised their responsibility to participate in political decision making since their critical minds permitted

⁶⁶ Pour une université démocratique et moderne, in: L’Humanité, 20.06.1968.

⁶⁷ Quand les jeunes « dialoguent » sur les plages avec les C.R.S., in: Le Monde, 13.09.1968.

⁶⁸ See for instance for the example of sports: Ignace Heinrich apprend chaque année à près de quatre-vingts jeunes athlètes le « dépassement de soi-même », in: Le Monde, 15.09.1968.

pertinent analysis of consumer society's shortcomings. However, he also noted: "You students resemble an army which once it had conquered a territory retreats from it because it figured out that the natural conditions are not completely satisfactory."⁶⁹ Students fell short of what society required.

Within this discursive formation contemporaries agreed that "May 68" accelerated France's transformation and made youth its VANGUARD. Youth in public underlined that youth set the pace of a new France. In June, La Croix affirmed that every negotiation within the university had society-wide relevance as political decisions were no longer confined to an institutional black box: "From now on the country must criticise its present and orient its future according to the consciousness [*lucidité*] and participation of the largest number of citizens."⁷⁰ Involvement needed to be cross-societal and it was therefore urgent to teach youth the capacity for critical political engagement.

The civilisational wake-up call sounded by youth was not restricted to France but interlinked with the TRANSNATIONAL CONTESTATION. The media understood that youth in Africa, similar to its French peers, hold the key to enduring societal transformation. Deficient educational systems, remote from the lived reality of young people, amounted to a national threat and left young people disoriented.⁷¹ But utterances about "déracinement des jeunes" [uprootedness of youth] carried with them a colonial discourse suggesting that "Black Africa" failed to take care of itself and required the help of the French mainland. La Croix, for instance, observed that ENERGETIC French youth were frequently involved in humanitarian aid and teaching Africans basic literacy skills that would be fundamental for their FUTURE.⁷²

⁶⁹ Entre les mains des étudiants, in: Le Monde, 08.01.1969.

⁷⁰ Être étudiant et lycéen en 1969, in: La Croix, 14.06.1969.

⁷¹ Enseignement et coopération en Afrique francophone, in: Le Figaro, 09.01.1969.

⁷² Les jeunes à l'heure du tiers-monde, in: La Croix, 26.01.1969.

LES ÉVÈNEMENTS: A DISORIENTED GENERATION

Mais une question est restée dans l'ombre: comment une jeunesse surtout préoccupée de rythme de disques et de chansons, est-elle devenue subitement aussi « sérieuses » dans son action politique ?

But one questions remained obscure: how did a youth, which was primarily interested in the rhythm of its discs and songs, suddenly become so “serious” in its political activity?⁷³

A third discursive formation opposes the preceding ones (Figure 6.4). The opening utterance captures the idea that mobilisation of youth appeared contradictory: how can it be that a self-centred, leisure-oriented youth suddenly developed a political consciousness? This puzzled the commentator, and his interpretation of “les évènements” reduced them to a generational disquiet.

The DISORIENTED discursive formation contradicts Gildea’s argument that: “It was not until the twentieth anniversary of the events of 1968 that those involved in it were first described by activists, social scientists and historians as a generation” (2011: 32). A contemporary conservative interpretation used the generational label to downplay the political significance of “les évènements,” understanding them as pointless or even violent and criminal. Prominent intellectuals advanced this interpretation, particularly in the conservative press. Their statements were important since they limited the discursive possibilities by their interpretations in central outlets at an early stage.

During the early days of the mobilisation, the communist L’Humanité captured the state of a DISORIENTED youth in CRISIS. The paper argued that youth had been constrained to watch society going further and further in undesirable directions. In the words of 17-year-old

⁷³ Comment les “yé-yé” se sont-ils mués en révolutionnaires?, in: La Croix, 23.06.1968.

Monique: “All I can say is that the society is rotten and that this ought to change.” The paper explored her story in detail, her despair culminating in drug use to forget reality.⁷⁴

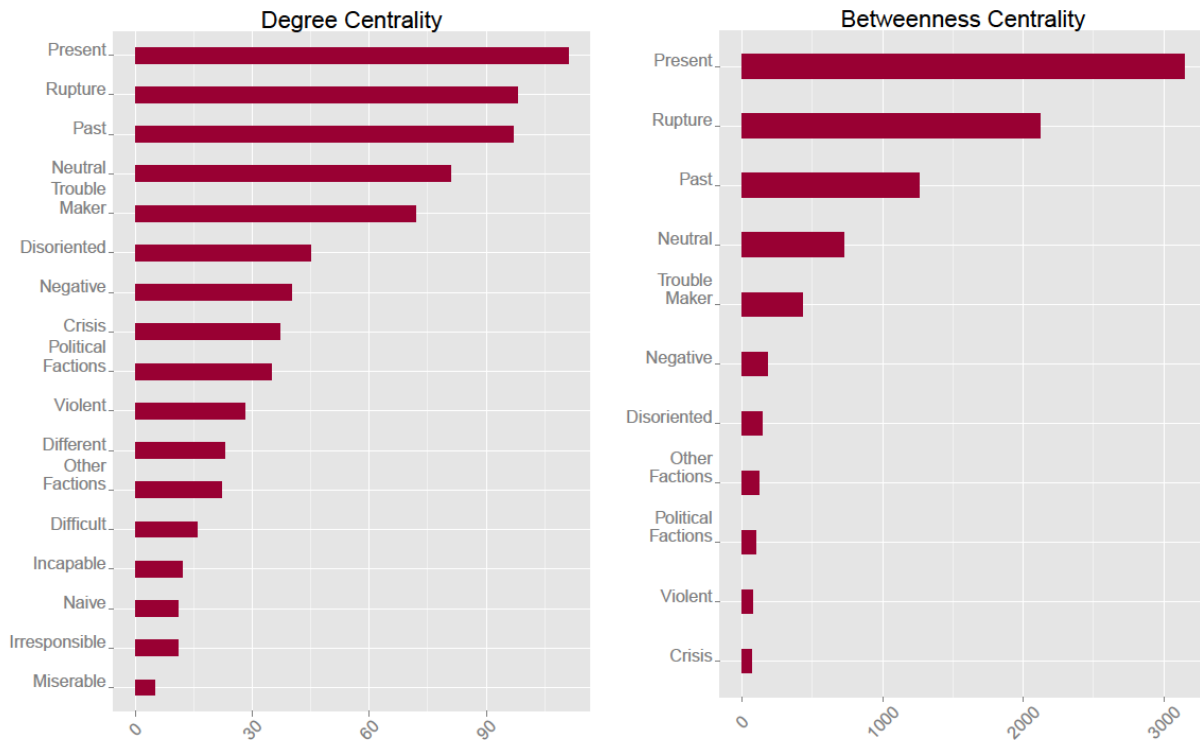


Figure 6.11: DISORIENTED: Centralities

Beyond this VICTIM image, the discursive formation captures another set of rules. These refer to the rise in political consciousness which contrasted with previous perceptions of youth as disaffected. The discursive rules thereby create a temporal relation of RUPTURE with the PAST. The transformation from “yé-yé” (a pop music style which emerged in the early 1960s inspired by Anglo-Saxon elements) to revolution embodied this discontinuity. The speed of the transformation left contemporaries puzzled. Youth hardly participated in the March 1967 elections: politics seemed complicated, boring, and reserved for adults. However, once politics became enacted on the streets, youth woke up. The journalist Yves de Gentil-Baichis

⁷⁴ Jeunes qui êtes-vous?, in: L’Humanité, 10.05.1969.

therefore argued that even popular music actually expressed a political refusal of the adult world.⁷⁵

Commentators condemned most VIOLENT actions by young people and discredited DISORIENTED youth. Some media argued that youth mobilisation lacked real content and that little attention should be paid beyond understanding it as generational revolt originating in the educational system. Such paternalistic interpretations gained in prominence and played into the hands of the political leadership who tried to maintain legitimacy without striving for dominance in discourses about youth.

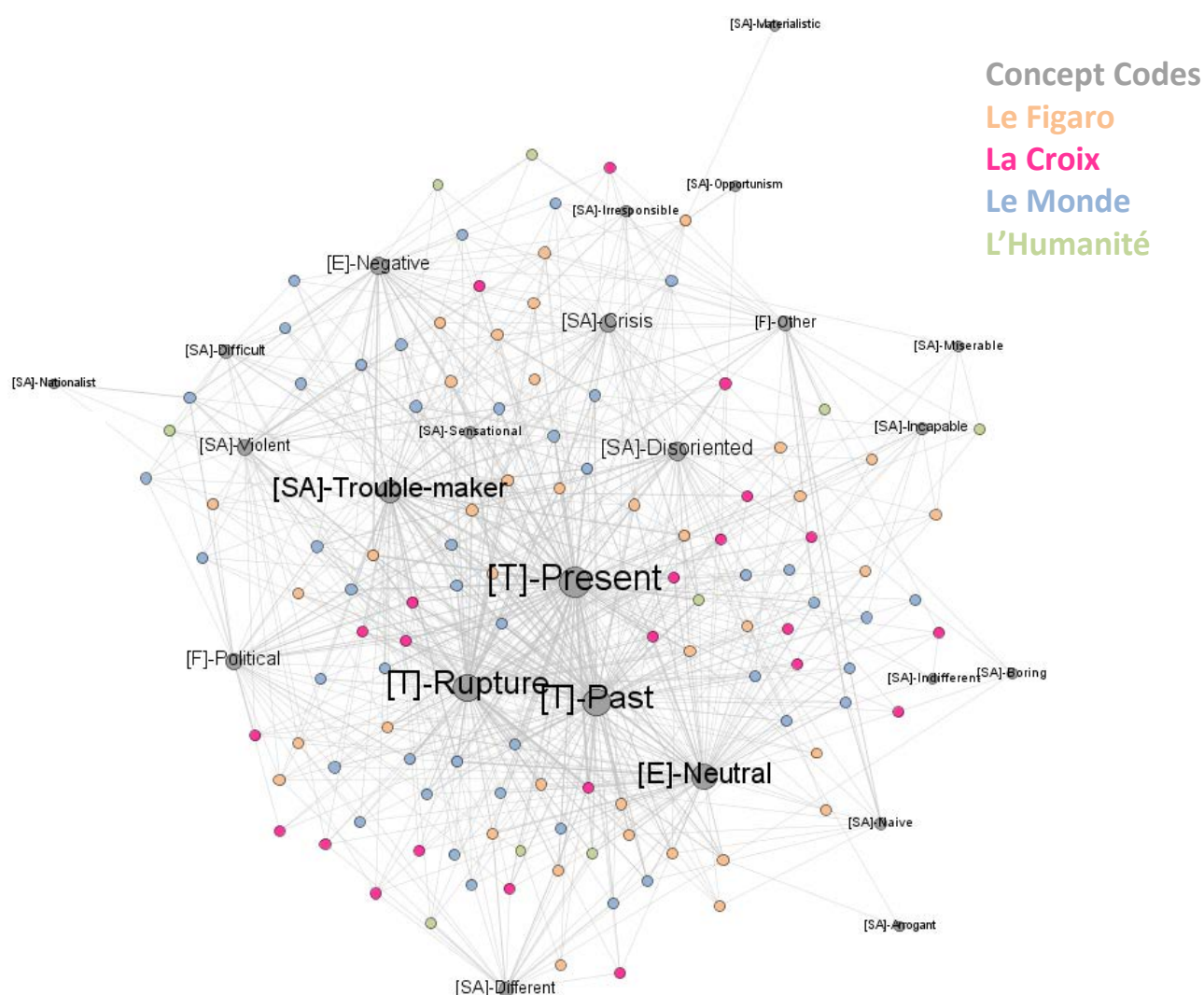


Figure 6.12: DISORIENTED: Discourse Network

⁷⁵ The new music was inaccessible to adults and therefore had socio-political significance, cf. FN [73].

Old Wine in New Bottles: Rebels Without a Cause

One of the founding fathers of biological politics, Roger Masters, compared the young revolutionaries to young monkeys to underline the rebellion's biological origins (1969). Though this looks like an extreme interpretation, contemporary debates integrated psychoanalytical interpretations of the movement as a rebellion against the father. André Stéphane, a pseudonym for two psychoanalysts, discussed the Oedipus complex (1969), reducing "68" to a simple rejection of every form of authority: "The aim was not to overthrow the father but rather to entirely abolish the symbol of the father, that is to say fatherhood, filiation, the family, and its by-products" (1969: 34).⁷⁶ Moreover: "The revolutionary uses his Oedipal dynamic for a social end but the protester abuses this social context to get rid of his own family conflict" (1969: 293). Such interpretations made reference to the festive atmosphere and collective excitement in the streets that busted established social limits.⁷⁷

The student demonstrations diffused from suburban Nanterre to the French capital and across the country. On 8 May, *Le Figaro* reported that 6 to 7,000 students marched across Paris, seen as an expression of the impossibility of negotiating with DISORIENTED students. The journalist quoted de Gaulle:

The government does not permit, and will never permit, demands, no matter their legitimacy, to be imposed by street violence. Are these demands legitimate? It is even more difficult to answer this question since one does not know, in reality, what these demands are about.

Discussions in the media during the early phase highlighted an AUTONOMOUS youth, though its mobilisation contradicted democratic practices: "In civilised countries bulldozers only intervene in a preliminary phase." Youth mattered for agenda-setting but was not allowed to

⁷⁶ Mendel had similar ideas of the micro foundations of generational conflict (1968).

⁷⁷ For an overview (Besançon 1968).

participate in political deliberations.⁷⁸ Le Monde criticised juvenile violence and the youth who came dressed to fight. By calling the mobilisation of 30,000 youths “The Long March,” Le Monde drew on a globalised *Erfahrungsraum*.⁷⁹ Although the newspaper dismissed the French mobilisation, the reference to the events which began Mao’s rise to power implicitly endowed youth with the capacity to transform society.

But conservative voices emphasised that youth contestation hardly ever led to enduring change which remained as ephemeral as youth itself. Nevertheless, the extreme outbursts that define transitory phases were captivating. The DISORIENTED youth attracted many gawkers wondering around the Latin Quarter but the normality with which Le Figaro described the encounters on the street further captured the triviality of juvenile action: the Latin Quarter was like a war zone at night but harmonious and full of strollers the next day. The selection of young people that the paper presented furthered this dismissive picture: two hippies who “smoke their pipe, with a cross on their chest, and daisies in their hair” described the situation by saying: “This is all absurd. In any case, we couldn’t care less about it. Tomorrow we are off to Ibiza.”⁸⁰

On 24 May, after the second “Night of the Barricades,” Le Figaro became more critical. Journalists complained about “les enragés,” the extreme faction of students, and accused them of pulling peaceful students into violence.⁸¹ This was particularly unacceptable because police could have been killed in the hail of stones. Students were downgraded to “provocateurs” without any legitimate political stake. Some authors made distinctions and underlined that the escalation was down to particular individuals rather than ordinary students:

⁷⁸ Hier soir à Paris: nouvelle marche de 6.000 à 7.000 manifestants, in: Le Figaro, 09.05.1968.

⁷⁹ Une « longue marche » de trente mille jeunes à Paris mardi soir, in: Le Monde, 09.05.1968.

⁸⁰ Après le drame, temps de réflexions pour les étudiants... et les badauds, in: Le Figaro, 13.05.1968.

⁸¹ Some voices within the conservative UJP demanded for a violent response to these demonstrations (Audigier 2005: 94-5).

Tonight's demonstrations in the Latin Quarter were launched by specialised groups which used tactics of closed war, formed in 'small parcels', reinforcing the weaknesses and overflowing the flanks of the police via rapid incursions and calculated retreats. These 'guerrillas,' not all of which were part of the student milieu, use the passions unleashed by the apprentice witches to carry through their mission of destruction.

In reactions to the "Night of the Barricades," Le Monde published a number of letters which dismissed "les événements" as ordinary generational contestation. Authors agreed that there was a "trench which grew hollow between some youth and the old". Joseph Rey-Herme, who had once been a student, argued that "students should accept that they do not hold the keys to the problems they are trying to solve" and acknowledge their dependence on adults. Similarly, Robert Miron d'Aussy, also a former student, accused the students of misusing their liberty by restricting the liberty of others, like those who could not work because students paralysed economic life. Youth behaviour was described as IRRESPONSIBLE, causing damage to people who could not rely on their parents' chequebook.⁸²

Tribouillerie: *The unrest as a Generational Uprising*

The question of whether "May 68" created political generations or whether a previously existing generation made "the events" has occupied French academia for some time (Bertaux et al. 1988). Numerous contemporary interventions interpreted "les événements" as a generational issue, as an expression of a society which seemed "malade de la paix" [ill from peace].⁸³ The "tribouillerie"⁸⁴ was one such perspective and conveyed a conservative interpretation which did not give much credibility and justification to the young generation's actions.

⁸² Réponses à un étudiant, in: Le Monde, 15.08.1968.

⁸³ "Une société malade de la paix" is the title of Fontaine's first chapter (1969).

⁸⁴ Old French from the verb "triboler" meaning "excited" or "moved": Contradictions, in: Le Figaro, 09.05.1968.

On 9 May Le Figaro's editor emphasised that the current unrest was confined to students, a fraction of the young generation, and therefore there was no cause for concern, particularly since students had no coherent vision of what they actually wanted. He dismissed the unrest as unjustified "révolte des étudiants" [student revolt] and framed it as contradictory in two ways. The first was that "groupuscules," a tiny minority of students, attempted to change the highly organised and structured political sphere in an unorganised manner from a remote campus. The second was that students demanded total freedom while at the same time requesting guarantees for a successful professional career following studies which lacked economic relevance. In a paternalistic fashion the editor stated: "Everyone was young. The majority of those who read us or who write to us were students."⁸⁵

For André François-Poncet, member of the *Académie Française*, the "rebellious youth" destroyed all chances of dialogue following the dramatic "Night of the Barricades". He expressed understanding of their frustration and agreed that Nanterre's isolation was a grave mistake, but he maintained that the violence of student activism did not advance discussions: "The violence, so characteristic of our time of moral regression, is itself terribly contagious."⁸⁶ Such utterances prepared generational interpretations. The writer Charles Flory saw "May 68" as indicating the failure of generational transmission: young people lacked respect for institutions and the authorities they embody. For Flory, generational struggles make every PAST and FUTURE society, but violence made the current juvenile rising different. Flory related the violence not only to the two "Nights of the Barricades" but also to the rejection of parental authority. Violent street groups, as per Flory, won control over and

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Jeunesse rebelle, in: Le Figaro, 13.05.1968.

confused youth. Advertising was also part of the threat as it made it impossible for youth to judge what was good and bad.⁸⁷

At the height of “les évènements,” Aron pondered the violence of youth engagement. He stressed that youth had threatened established orders throughout history and thereby questioned that youth was morally superior. He warned that youth always wanted to have the last word, without considering the effects of its actions. Aron illustrated this danger of youth by drawing a parallel to Weimar Germany. His understanding of the Weimar experience emphasised that youth acted against the established democracy and accelerated the rise of fascism.⁸⁸ In his view, the mobilised students of 1968 were reminiscent of German youth in the 1930s, and he noted that the young Germans in the 1930s also “were said to necessarily be right because they represented the truth”. Moreover, according to Aron, there was no moral grounding for contemporary mobilisation – the students shared a bourgeois background and embodied the bourgeois order against which they rebelled:

These students, queasy in the ‘university factory’, lost in the middle of the solitary crowd, resemble the workers in the first factories at the beginning of the 19th century. The workers destroyed the machines; the students shatter symbolically the tools of their work and enslavement, their tables and chairs.⁸⁹

Conservative commentators historically contextualised the insignificance of “les évènements”. Aron underlined that conservatives, for instance Alexandre August Ledru-Rollin and François Arago, incited the February 1848 revolution but eventually oppressed the workers’ uprising in June 1848 and then fell back on Louis Napoléon as a guarantee of

⁸⁷ La rupture entre générations, in: La Croix, 29.06.1968.

⁸⁸ Réflexions d’un universitaire, in: Le Figaro, 15.05.1968.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

stability. Aron saw similarities in 1968 when conservatives occupied revolutionary themes whenever successful and used them as legitimising slogans.⁹⁰

A week later in August 1968 Aron described May as an “accès de fièvre” [crisis of fever] and a tragic-comic outpouring:

But even the sexual liberation does not lead to a satisfaction of desire. The society, to draw on Marcuse, remains oppressive, or to speak with the words of Konrad Lorenz, man, the aggressive animal, needs to express his aggression. The sociological explanation highlights alternation; the individual is apparently reduced to being a private person, without belonging to a religious or political community. But all of a sudden, the isolated became passionate about comfort and prosperity. Crisis of fever with clear objectives leading to political or social upheaval; crisis of fever without clear objectives, and this is the case now. For lack of a model that satisfies our aspirations, the crises of fever have an essentially negative character, nihilist or destructive.

He further emphasised the French people’s desire for violence and excitement:

The French suffer under a too rigid system and a too authoritarian hierarchy. Why are they in rapture over periods when everything is overthrown? In these crisis periods, when the system is prostrate, they have an illusion of fraternity – they feel that fraternity – equality – they live it – and afterwards, they restore the hierarchical yoke in which they imprisoned themselves. Since 1789 the French retrospectively magnify their revolutions, immense parties during which they enjoy everything from which they were excluded in ordinary times and feel they are fulfilling their aspirations, dreaming while awake.⁹¹

Aron’s conservative interpretation consolidated. In September 1968 he argued that teaching should not follow the instincts and desires of students but ought to be defined and dictated from above.⁹² Youth simply did not know what it had to learn.

⁹⁰ La “révolution” de 1968. Victoire dans la défaite, in: Le Figaro, 06.08.1968.

⁹¹ La révolution introuvable, in: Le Figaro, 12.08.1968.

⁹² Pouvoir étudiant et congestion, in: Le Figaro, 20.09.1968.

A Mere Crisis of the Educational System

Problems within the university system were a core theme around 1968. Le Monde presented contestation as a nuisance by granting space to Pierre Grappin, the rector of Nanterre, who closed the university, affected by “a real war psychosis,” in early May.⁹³ Le Monde found no justification for student behaviour and shaped discursive rules portraying youth as out of control. On 6 May, the police were brought in to stop rioting students and le Monde lamented about a new type of student who lacked the moral superiority of previous generations. The article admitted police violence but without judging it.⁹⁴ Responding to this overexcitement, a retroactive amnesty for students was declared on 22 May, just before the second “Night of the Barricades”. Le Figaro spoke in a paternalistic way about juvenile excesses which the older generation now decided to excuse, pressuring students to refrain from further violence.⁹⁵ Though the warning was clear, it was eventually ineffective.

On 24 May 1968, after nearly three weeks of nationwide violent confrontations, de Gaulle claimed that “les évènements” were limited to the university. Those opposed to the demands of “May 68” welcomed this reading, which prevented further socio-political questions.⁹⁶ Universities failed in their transition to modernity and contemporary academics like the sociologist Boudon analysed this failure in detail. He agreed that the inability to deal with a tripling of the student population over 10 years explained the unrest. In comparative terms, France’s relatively high student/teacher ratio and the failure of a significant number of students, particularly those in the humanities, to obtain degrees (1969: 739-42).

⁹³ Suspendus par le doyen, in: Le Monde, 04.05.1968.

⁹⁴ Les manifestations de lundi, in: Le Monde, 07.05.1968.

⁹⁵ Amnistie des étudiants, in: Le Figaro, 22.05.1968.

⁹⁶ www.fresques.ina.fr/de-gaulle/fiche-media/Gaullle00142/allocution-du-24-mai-1968.html [01.02.2015].

Raymond Aron mocked “the revolution that could be found nowhere”. He accused French students of living in “semi-delinquent communities” and mobilising to compensate for the “loneliness they ordinarily live in”.⁹⁷ Since there was no preliminary selection, only a minority of students eventually obtained the kinds of jobs they had sought: “The exams turned into verdicts of the future social position of each individual.”⁹⁸

The university had many problems: over-centralisation, uniformity, hierarchical structures and an absence of individual autonomy. Crozier, the French sociologist, lamented that the university was immune to any changes in teaching methods which would question the authority of those holding power. For Crozier, the university was therefore worryingly similar to a massive bureaucratic institution (1968). Profoundly inadequate, the bourgeois university system propagated a culture “from the heirs, for the heirs” – an interpretation which reiterated Bourdieu’s prominent work prior to 1968 where he displayed how students from well-off classes made a university career and marginalised peers (1964). Bourdieu consolidated previously dispersed criticism and provided a lens through which to read the present. This interpretation received official legitimisation over time as others drew on it. Edgar Faure, minister of education, frequently reiterated Bourdieuan themes like exclusion through exams.

Who Pulls the Strings Behind the Scenes?

Another conservative reading discredited “les évènements” as driven by totalitarian states. This view was confined to the tumultuous days themselves and failed to persist. However, this language game indicated the level of uncertainty characteristic of the historical moment. The spectre of communism passed through France in the form of student rebellions; the nationalist writer François Duprat, for instance accused East Germany of penetrating the country (1968).

⁹⁷ Cf. FN [91].

⁹⁸ De la révolte étudiante à la grève générale, in: Le Monde, 08.06.1968.

The strength and impressive violence of “rebellious youth” astonished André François-Poncet and he suspected other forces at work in the background.⁹⁹ A journalist in *Le Figaro* wondered who provided the technicians and the money, since the skills for this sophisticated violence and the capacity to plan it could hardly have been acquired at Nanterre. The journalist mentioned photocopies of the Latin Quarter that had been distributed, showing those spots where police were stationed and suggesting ideal locations for barricades. Youth used pneumatic hammers to get the paving stones out and knew how to make Molotov cocktails from the petrol of overturned cars. For this journalist, these techniques were clearly not learnt while reading for sociology at Nanterre.¹⁰⁰

A side-effect of such interpretations was that they suggested homogeneity amongst “extremist” groups by putting them all into the category of threat. However, such analyses were clearly contradicted by the tensions between groups. Jean Bertolino’s “Les Trublions” illustrated this heterogeneity to contemporaries (1968).¹⁰¹ He emphasised the competing ideologies of various groups and *La Croix* enthusiastically welcomed his analysis for its depth.¹⁰²

The conservative press furthered antagonisms and accused Trotskyist groups of driving the public violence and of having trained in street fighting under foreign influence: “And we are confident that we can affirm that grenades from foreign countries reached, through indirect means, the hands of ‘pro-Chinese’ factions”. Such interpretations added to an image of youth as a THREAT and a TROUBLE MAKER and affected by pernicious foreign influences. The

⁹⁹ Cf. FN [36].

¹⁰⁰ Qui a fourni aux étudiants les techniciens et l’argent?, in: *Le Figaro*, 13.05.1968.

¹⁰¹ Anatole France jokingly created the term “Troublion” during the Dreyfus affair at the end of the 19th century, referring to disturbing people causing consciously disorder.

¹⁰² Les trublions, in: *La Croix*, 22.02.1969.

entire youth rebellion was dismissed as a “nightmare of a play [*spectacle*],”¹⁰³ a metaphor that suggests events were following a script already written in the background.

Youth After les Évènements

After the summer of 1968, media gradually shifted the discursive rules towards criminal youth activities and historicised the mobilisation as being of the past. By doing so, contemporaries reduced the horizon of possibilities: by discussing the significance of “les évènements” they defined their end, demarcated them as “les évènements de mai-juin 68”. This discursive formation reflects the speed at which competing interpretations reduced the meaning of the mobilisation into questions about its legacy; according to Servan-Schreiber “les évènements” had no tomorrow (1968: 1).

Discursive rules about youth centred on ordinary youth and young “malfaiteurs” [criminals] which the police quickly arrested.¹⁰⁴ Early 1969 the police forbade a meeting by the *Comité d'action lycéen* in the Latin Quarter, which led to violence when the students violated the ban and vandalised the rector’s office. Even the progressive *Le Monde* described this youth as a TROUBLE MAKER, although noting that it represented an isolated minority.¹⁰⁵

The DISORIENTED discursive formation recalls an interpretation of youth which we encountered in the other cases. Young people beyond social control represented a cause for anxiety and evoked fears about the future development of the country. Youth did not disappear in the aftermath of “May 68”. Mobilisation of extreme right-wing movements such as *Occident* persisted (Fields 1970: 341) and were understood as juvenile vandalism without

¹⁰³ Nouvelle nuit d'émeute au quartier Latin, in: *Le Figaro*, 24.05.1968.

¹⁰⁴ Une bande de jeunes malfaiteurs démantelée par la police, in: *Le Figaro*, 14.01.1969.

¹⁰⁵ Quartier Latin: La police fait évacuer le rectorat occupé pendant deux heures, in: *Le Monde*, 25.01.1969.

political meaning.¹⁰⁶ Media condemned such mobilisation or claimed that it merely concerned a small minority of isolated young people.

YOUTH IN A DEMOCRATISING MOMENT

With youth's involvement, the French crisis around 1968 reached its full extent. The fact that workers joined in destabilised the government within weeks, as de Gaulle was unable to respond to the demands formulated by the protesters. Mobilisation had occurred across the globe, but elsewhere youth was in rebellion against authoritarian regimes. The political leadership therefore saw no grounds for learning from the events unfolding abroad, although media treated them as relevant to French youth. The international embeddedness discursively empowered youth once the success of youth abroad made a government overthrow appear plausible. This gave legitimacy to French youth as a vanguard of social and political change. However, the reality of the mobilisation, including the extent of its violence, gradually delegitimised youth mobilisation and in the democratic setting its demands began to appear less convincing for a majority of citizens.

The governing majority was confirmed during the June 1968 legislative elections, following a campaign "in defence of the Republic" in the words of Pompidou. However, the crisis had damaged the relationship between Pompidou and de Gaulle, and the former was replaced by Maurice Couve de Murville that July. Despite a victory, these elections left a series of conflicts, notably between the political promises made in May 1968 and the political reality after the legislative elections (Bon 1970: 206). In September, de Gaulle announced a referendum on regional reforms to be held in April 1969 in order to clarify the situation.

¹⁰⁶ Le mouvement ouvrier provoque de violents incidents dans plusieurs lycées parisiens, in: *Le Monde*, 27.10.1968.

Unlike in the other cases, youth mobilisation in France developed without significant interventions by those in political power. Youth mobilisation was extremely diverse, without a clear cleavage structure. No political actor simply embraced the mobilisation of young people, not even the Communist party which one might have expected to do so given the prevailing youth discourse in the Soviet Union. The French discourse is contradictory, and a variety of positions about what mobilisation signified could be voiced.

1. Non-hegemonic discursive structures

The dynamics of the discursive structures that I identified emphasise that there was no clear centre in the discourse about youth during the episode. The network could be divided into three formations, but as the detailed analysis of utterances has shown, the individual formations were themselves contradictory and diverse, characterised by many overlaps. Indeed, the different newspapers share in the different discursive formations and the image of youth which emerges from it is therefore a complex and contradictory one.

The discursive confrontations that underpinned contemporary interpretations persisted afterwards. The cleavage that emerged from the contemporary newspaper sources mirrors present day debates and the meaning descendants have associated with “May 68”. Early interventions in public discourse importantly limit what is “expressible” about a crisis like “May 68”. The crisis broke the established discourse apart and allowed for alternative utterances to change the discursive rules about youth. With the unfolding of the crisis, the horizon of possibility narrowed down again which gradually excluded some interpretations of the youth mobilisation. The result persisted well beyond the historical moment itself.

2. Youth mobilisation and democratic regime stability

Following the Second World War, youth became more visible in French public life. This visibility was contradictory, however, and cultural projections of the mythical capacities of youth went along with a more sophisticated juvenile penal code and fears about juvenile delinquency (Bailleau 2002: 404-8). This contradictory imaginary of youth can also be encountered when contemporaries interpreted the youth mobilisation. Enthusiasm about the potential of youth challenging authoritarian regimes across the globe existed side by side with questioning the very legitimacy of youth mobilisation at home. Unlike in the other episodes, where the regimes lacked popular support, these doubts about the moral superiority of youth allowed the political regime to consolidate in conscious opposition to youth. Media did not question the legitimacy of the Gaullist leadership because it opposed youth but rather understood its critical engagement with young people's mobilisation as a sign of its strength.

3. Borders

Contemporaries placed the French "68" in a transnational context, and only the specific conditions of this context empowered French youth mobilisation. The meaning of youth abroad predisposed the public to expect youth mobilisation at home – similar to the diffusion of the "Orange Revolution" in the contemporary Russian Federation. In the aftermath of the events around 1968, intellectuals, journalists, and politicians began to narrow this context down and emphasised specificities *à la française*. Over time, this self-centredness turned into a convenient academic and public consensus and it is only recently that the spatial borders of the events have been reconsidered through *histoire croisée* [entangled history]. Periodisation was also contested, with early commentators engaged in a struggle between conservatives trying to limit 1968 by interpreting it as being of the past, and liberals maintaining 1968's influence and relevance beyond the emblematic months of May and June.

4. An accelerated present, multiple pasts, and the openness of tomorrow

One characteristic of “68” was the extent to which public discourse also made sense of the movement by placing it in continuity with French history. This interpretational stance was itself often part of conservative views, an attempt to delimit the events. The historical contextualisation plausibly “nationalised” the youth mobilisation in reference to well-known moments in French historical consciousness. Depending on their political orientation, commentators drew primarily on 19th century French history, knowledge of which the language games took for granted.

The time around 1968 was characterised by the sense of an accelerated present which might fundamentally differ from the world of tomorrow. In the context of youth-driven change worldwide, the democratic political setting made it possible for very diffuse visions of the future to appear credible to contemporaries.

Responding to the crisis in France around 1968, the democratic political leadership made little effort to dominate the discourse about youth or to mobilise young people in its favour. As youth mobilisation developed, the regime sought legitimacy through the democratic institutions which had brought it to power in the first place. The final chapter will systematically aggregate the findings derived from the individual episodes.

PART III: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

YOUTH AND CRISIS:

DISCOURSE AND MOBILISATION ACROSS SPACE AND TIME

Theories of regime change have increasingly highlighted the importance of strategic interactions between elites and masses for understanding the processes leading to such change (Haggard and Kaufman 2012: 497). However, the processes underlying these interactions remain poorly understood. In particular, key studies on regime change have paid little attention to the mobilisation of the masses. Bermeo points out that “the role of popular organizations in the transition process remains a subject of some confusion” (1997: 305). To fill this void, Della Porta recently turned to studying the relevance of social movements for democratisation focusing on Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 and the Middle East and North Africa in 2011 (2014). My study expands this line of inquiry by focussing not only on moments of democratisation but also on moments of democratic backsliding or increasing authoritarianism. Moreover, I concentrate on the characteristics of those who mobilise “as youth” and the discursive conditions of which they are part.

My case studies explore the extent to which regime stability in moments of crisis is conditional upon youth mobilisation, discourse about youth, and the expansion of youth protest to general mobilisation. I began the analysis with a study of youth mobilisation in the contemporary Russian Federation, which allowed me to identify the processes behind regime consolidation, notably dominating discourses about youth, political mobilisation of young people, and isolating opposition youth. Drawing on these insights, I then examined three other

episodes to provide variation in the institutional setting, the historical context, and the outcome of the regime crisis.

In this chapter I systematically compare the four episodes and aggregate the findings to investigate the external validity of the processes derived from the study of the Russian Federation. This cross-case comparison abstracts from individual country-level findings, and the aggregated level makes it possible to investigate differences and commonalities in the cases analysed. In doing so, I derive three main findings that confirm and extend the research hypotheses.

First, under conditions of crisis, regimes which lack democratic popular support increase their public legitimacy by trying to dominate discourses about youth. Success (or failure) in dominating discourses about youth contributes to (or impedes) regime consolidation.

In late Weimar Germany, the Soviet Union during perestroika, and contemporary Russia, an intense discursive struggle between different political factions underpinned the meaning of youth. Political elites tried to influence how their people understood youth, with the aim of legitimising their political system in the eyes of the public. In these three cases, leaders compensated for the lack of visible alternative popular sources of support by appropriating the meaning of youth. Successful appropriation helped regime consolidation; failed appropriation expressed the regime's lack of legitimacy and impeded regime consolidation.

The situation differed in democratic France around 1968. The political leadership made no substantial attempts to dominate discourse about youth. On the contrary, the political elites consciously opposed youth and delegitimised what they saw as a purely juvenile expression of discontent, a generational rebellion. In democratic settings, alternative sources of legitimisation are both required and available to political elites.

Second, under conditions of crisis, a political regime which lacks democratic popular support can consolidate its power by organising political support from youth. Successful mobilisation of pro-regime youth stabilises a political regime, while the flourishing of oppositional youth mobilisation contributes to a regime's decline.

In the three cases with tenuous support for the political system, political elites invested significant resources in mobilising pro-regime youth. In contemporary Russia, the successful deployment of youth organisations publically legitimised a political regime which at the beginning of the episode had been afraid of losing popular backing. Pro-Kremlin youth mobilisation made the regime popular and discredited opposition to the leadership's course. In the two cases that led to a breakdown, the Weimar Republic and the Soviet Union, similar attempts were unsuccessful and conveyed to the population that the regime had lost legitimacy. Oppositional youth mobilisation gained control over the streets and the readiness of youth to mobilise in the face of physical risks turned them into a key component of regime breakdown. France around 1968, however, clearly shows that regimes based on popular support need not engage in co-opting youth mobilisation in order to defeat opposition and consolidate their power.

The mobilisation of youth is entwined with the discursive setting. Successful pro-regime youth mobilisation in Russia led to a centralised discursive setting, whereas the diffuse and contradictory mobilisations in the two cases of breakdown were interlinked with heterogeneous and multifaceted discourses about youth.

Third, under conditions of crisis, if youth mobilisation does not expand to other social groups it fails to challenge the existing regime. Regimes therefore try to contain youth mobilisation by reducing it to a generational revolt.

In all four cases oppositional youth mobilisation alone was not enough to bring down a political regime. The two cases of consolidation, France around 1968 and contemporary Russia, both went through moments of instability due to oppositional youth mobilisation. However, mobilisation stayed confined to youth itself. The short moments of cross-generational mobilisation were too weak relative to the strength of the incumbents and failed to bring the contestation to a persistently wider societal level. On the other hand, those cases that experienced regime breakdown, the Weimar Republic and the Soviet Union, saw prominent political involvement of oppositional youth, whose strength derived from the lack of opposition (in Weimar) or support from adults (during perestroika).

This work is the first comparative study to employ the method of discourse network analysis. This method provides fertile ground for comparison, as the qualitative content analysis and the network structures translate the otherwise idiosyncratic and case-specific findings to the level of abstraction required for comparative research. The method developed here is inherently intertwined with the theoretical assumptions about discourse, particularly that meaning is created through repeated interaction and use of shared symbols.

This concluding chapter is divided into three parts, each of which returns to the main components of the causal process which a study on youth unveils. First, I distinguish differences and similarities of youth mobilisation across crises in different types of political-institutional regimes. Second, I investigate the evolution over time and space of youth and generation, the guiding concepts of this thesis, to determine how the meaning of these concepts changed over the 20th century. Third, I explore the contemporary meanings of these four episodes, with a focus on the temporality of crisis.

YOUTH MOBILISATION AND POLITICAL STABILITY

The interplay between domestic and external factors sustains the contingency that characterises crises. When the older generation has been delegitimised, an external example of political change can, if perceived as relevant, amplify interpretations of present times as being crises. Actors integrate this interplay in their interpretations of their present times as being crises. Adopting the label crisis under these circumstances points to the disjuncture between *Erfahrungsraum* [space of experience] and *Erwartungshorizont* [horizon of expectation], as elaborated in the introduction. Crises, in other words, are moments when past conditions are no longer considered pertinent to anticipate future developments.

The perceived disjuncture between *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont* is the point of departure for each episode. Each crisis is composed of multiple overlapping components, contradicting homogenising narratives about the experience of crisis. The present becomes a time of crisis when politicians, journalists, writers, and ordinary citizens understand their present as being one. If we, as academics, want the term “crisis” to capture a historical social reality, then only events which contemporaries interpret as a crisis, can qualify as such.

My work on Russia’s authoritarian consolidation between 2005 and 2011 suggested three hypotheses, which I explored in a case distant in time (“perestroika”), time and space (“Weimar”), and a substantially different regime setting (“France 68”). This comparative setting systematically added variation to explore the external validity of the hypotheses generated by the Russian case (Slater and Ziblatt 2013).

In the following sections, I qualify the uniqueness and similarities of the cases, engage with the hypotheses, and initiate a dialogue with the established literature on social movements. I follow the order of the thesis, starting with the Russia case and then adding variation.

Authoritarian Regimes

The Russian episode from 2005–2011 qualifies as a crisis of authoritarian legitimacy. By 2005 the stability of President Putin's regime, which began with his first presidential term in 2000, seemed fragile to both Russians and outside political commentators. This development caught researchers and others by surprise. Looking at the period of 1992–2004, Way called Russia a closed autocracy based on the increased capacity of the incumbent and the weakness of the opposition (2005: 242-44). The period from 2005–2011 was decisive, as it opened the possibility for alternative national trajectories whose outcome was not apparent in 2005. Across the post-communist space, the "Colour Revolutions" challenged the legitimacy of the autocratic style of leadership employed in Russia. These "revolutions" expressed citizens' demands for greater opportunities to meaningfully participate. Levitsky and Way link the difficulty to maintain stable authoritarian leadership to the changed international constellation in the aftermath of the Cold War (2010: 17-20).

The "Colour Revolutions" brought about regime change in several post-communist countries, such as Ukraine and Georgia, but failed to change regimes in Armenia, Belarus, or Kyrgyzstan (Way 2008). In Russia, the crisis caused by the "Colour Revolutions" also failed to have any democratising effect. On the contrary, the country's leadership was itself able to employ the weapons of modular youth mobilisation for strengthening its rule over the country (Beissinger 2007). Over the episode analysed the political leadership gradually contained the crisis of 2005 and managed to achieve a very stable position by the end of 2011. It helped the political elite that Russia's crisis remained largely restricted to the political realm: Putin stabilised the ethno-national situation, seemed to have calmed the situation in Chechnya (Russell 2011), and assumed control over the economy (Goldman 2008), notwithstanding the structural deficits uncovered by the economic crisis of 2008 (Aslund et al. 2010).

This outcome should not induce a tautological and fatalistic reading of the Russian situation. In 2005, the *Erwartungshorizonte* of political elites and civil society in the Russian Federation had widened because of constitutionally-grounded expectations that Putin would not be allowed to be president beyond 2008. This situation created hopes for modernisation in Russia which Medvedev himself was nurturing by 2008 (Krawatzek and Kefferpütz 2010). From 2005 onwards, youth opposition expressed its discontent with the leadership of the older generation and demanded it be replaced. The Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” provided a possible blueprint for how to overthrow the delegitimised older generation, those in political, economic, and bureaucratic power. Even conservative Russian media believed in the possibility of such an overthrow in Russia at the time. The international climate of youth-driven change decisively translated this internal situation into an effective political threat for Putin, who knew about the power of diffusion of youth revolutions (Bunce and Wolchik 2006). However, the idea of a delegitimised older generation was flexible and could also be employed by those supporting Putin. They simply shifted the target for delegitimation. For pro-Kremlin youth, the generation of “democrats” was delegitimised as “defeatists” and held accountable for having driven Russia into the chaos of the 1990s.

The analysis of the Russian episode generated the research hypotheses. The consolidation of the political regime included its successful domination of discourses about youth. During the episode, pro-Kremlin youth movements began shaping a new discourse about Russian youth that effectively marginalised competing interpretations. Beyond this discursive dimension, moreover, the consolidation of Russia’s political power included the mobilisation of youth. The two aspects go hand-in-hand; large-scale physical mobilisation was intimately entwined with the renewed sense of youth’s importance. The counter-discourses of a liberal, Western democratic youth opposition, as well as of violent fascist youth, remained at the margins of Russia’s public. But beyond the dominant pro-Kremlin understanding of youth, the chapter

explored the heterogeneity of its mobilisation. The small voices of “oppositional” youth were at times very audible and remain critical to understand the virulence of the Russian discourse about youth between 2005 and 2011. Lastly, the third hypothesis suggested that the failure of oppositional youth mobilisation to expand to other social groups, which would have been a necessary condition for successfully increasing pressure on the regime and potentially creating the conditions for effective changes.

The research considered the perestroika episode next: roughly the same geographical space at an earlier moment in time. In 1985, Gorbachev’s arrival in power manifested tensions amongst the political leadership (Hyland 1991), splits which were also thought to exist amongst elites in the contemporary Russian episode. However, the Soviet crisis quickly escalated, driven by the disaster at Chernobyl and revelations about embarrassing social problems ranging from homelessness and infant mortality to housing issues, among other things (Karklins 1994: 41). Reformers around Gorbachev and Alexander Yakovlev opposed conservatives like Nikolai Ryzhkov, Yegor Ligachev, and Lev Zaikov, creating disunity amongst the elites to (Brown 1996). Compared with contemporary Russia, the multi-sectorial crisis of the Soviet system was of greater magnitude and was amplified by the reformed media.

Youth engagement increased the visibility of the systemic crisis. The Soviet Union’s inability to unite its youth highlighted a more general inability to deliver on its promises as widely discussed in the public and the cultural realm. Despite Gorbachev’s attempts to maintain the sense of young people becoming involved with the Komsomol, the older generation increasingly lost the authority to guide youth. Contestation, therefore, initially followed a generational pattern. Young people expressed their disregard for the old leadership and the old society in general. Beyond this domestic dimension, my definition of crisis highlights the importance of an external precedent for the widening of *Erwartungshorizonte*. The

perestroika chapter highlighted that late Soviet youth was powerfully attracted to the imagined political-economic conditions in the West. The obsession of young people with acquiring Western cultural goods and debates about new youth styles in the press captured this fascination. The 1988 visit to the USSR by US President Reagan encouraged belief in the superiority of the West, while the disastrous war in Afghanistan contributed to delegitimising the Soviet system. Across Central Europe, the dream of building socialism no longer seemed convincing, providing a highly relevant external example of vocal opposition throughout the 1980s (Kenney 2002).

The breakdown of the Soviet political regime included its inability to dominate discourses about youth. First, the prevailing Soviet-Leninist discursive formation became gradually incompatible with the social reality of young people. *Neformaly* successfully challenged the old discourse about youth, and youth longing for democracy ultimately rendered the lacking legitimacy of the Soviet leadership visible. Second, the crumbling Soviet regime also failed to mobilise youth in its defence. Despite attempts to rejuvenate the Komsomol and to reform the political system, young people no longer found meaning through participating in the state-run organisation. The discursive dimension and the political mobilisation were intimately entwined. The new discursive rules about youth as inspired by democratic ideas were pervasive and became omnipresent because they seemed to account for the new practices amongst young people. Third, over the course of perestroika, youth mobilisation eventually broadened to include other groups. Merger with the nascent adult civil society around charismatic leaders like Sakharov and organisations such as *Memorial* gave strength to the youth-ignited contestation from 1988 onwards.

The paired comparison allows us to understand the relevance of youth both in moments of authoritarian breakdown and stabilisation. These two cases reveal original insights for the existing social movement literature, which has traditionally focussed on variation amongst

democracies (Kriesi et al. 1995) or the process of democratisation (Tarrow 2012). The conventional wisdom is that democratisation allows social movements to flourish (Tilly and Wood 2010: 125-31) which can be qualified on the basis of the comparison of these two cases.

Moments of authoritarian regime crisis with leadership splits and the possibility of reform have effects similar to democratisation. When social movements can question the unity of the political leadership, mobilisation expands as long as the authoritarian regime does not consolidate and curtail the possibility of free assembly. Jasper has argued that the term “political opportunity structure” blurs an important conceptual distinction, namely between short-run opportunities and long-run structures (2012: 11). The analysis of the two cases reinforces the need for this distinction. Decisions by political elites did not immediately change the authoritarian institutional structure, but they nevertheless created the impression of short-run opportunities which sustained mobilisation. External precedent was critical to bring about youth mobilisation, as it made the future of the authoritarian leadership appear contingent on a new kind of public approval. Along with a delegitimised older generation, this diffusion widened the horizons of possibilities and triggered new thinking about political change at home.

The structural constraints imposed by authoritarian leadership on political mobilisation can be cancelled out if activists no longer feel restricted by those constraints. Once the political elites disagree on their political mission, they also fail to credibly maintain their monopoly of coercion. It is therefore important not to reify such constraints on mobilisation: these are never exogenous to actors’ assessments of their credibility.

Democratic Regimes

To increase variation, my project next considered the last years of the Weimar Republic, which qualifies as an unconsolidated democracy during the episode analysed. Weimar's multidimensional crisis from 1929 to 1933 did not only concern the political leadership, as in the Russian case, but the legitimacy of a failing political system in the midst of a profound national, economic, and social crisis, as in the perestroika case.

Similar to the perestroika case, contemporaries in the Weimar Republic understood their present time as being one of a crisis. The crisis interpretation which contemporaries suggested would become dominant in scholarship about Weimar. However, this labelling went along with a gross simplification which retrospectively enclosed interpretations of the Weimar episode within the knowledge of the subsequent fascist regime. Contrary to this teleological approach, the case study proved that youth mobilisation expressed awareness of the contingency of the present, a present which included hopes for improvement of the political system.

The delegitimisation of the old generation symbolised the multidimensional crisis of the Weimar Republic. The failure of political elites to deliver in economic or social terms, not to mention their inability to unite the fragmented German state, fed into popular discontent. National elites disagreed about how to best respond to these challenges. These visible splits amongst the leadership encouraged youth mobilisation, which seemed to be the only way for youth to be heard by those in power.

The role of the second component of crisis suggested throughout the thesis, the external dimension was nuanced. In the democratic setting of the Weimar Republic, the external dimension did not qualify as a critical element for mobilisation. Within the democratic setting, mobilisation was not hindered and therefore did not require an external precedent to

widen the *Erwartungshorizonte* of contemporary actors. Nevertheless, the external dimension influenced the meaning of youth mobilisation and what youth considered to be possible. German youth defended German ideals abroad, particularly in those regions which Germany surrendered after the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. Rejection of the treaty constituted a prominent reference point for youth mobilisation. Youth wanted to overcome this embarrassment and the shame “of its fathers”. Right-wing groups in particular drew inspiration from the Mussolini regime in Italy, which had pursued nationalist policies since 1922. Right-wing youth movements and the conservative press saw Italy as an example for uniting its nation, overcoming the war legacy (*vittoria mutilata*), and dealing with youth. This external example was not essential for bringing youth onto the streets, unlike in the two authoritarian cases, but it influenced what youth mobilisation signified in democratic Weimar.

The case of Weimar increases the validity of the three hypotheses. First, the inability of the regime to control discourse about youth. In the democratic setting, discourses about youth were very heterogeneous and the opposing factions within the Weimarian elite mobilised significant resources to bind youth and convince it of the importance of democracy. However, the numerous competing political fractions and the diversity of youth mobilisation sustained a decentralised public youth discourse which became univocal with the rise of the NSDAP and the prominent use of the symbol youth under fascism (Payne 2004: 264). Second, the political regime failed to mobilise youth as an expression of its popular support. This demonstrated the public disapproval of the Weimar system and is linked with the first hypothesis. The case study illustrates that competing political groups engaged publically, which undermined the stability of the Weimarian democratic political order. Even those groups that supported democracy failed to strengthen its Weimarian form. Finally, adult civil society did not hinder radical youth mobilisation; on the contrary, adults joined the contestation of youth and

amplified the protests. Since adults did not oppose youth contestation, it became legitimised and appeared as a credible voice for civil society in general.

The first three cases provide us with a novel perspective on the democratic character of social movements: indeed, the diversity of youth mobilisation, notably of the Weimar Republic, emphasises that social movements not only engaged in favour of democratisation but also against it. Della Porta emphasises: “Collective mobilization has frequently produced destabilization of authoritarian regimes, but it has also led to an intensification of repression or the collapse of weak democratic regimes, particularly when social movements do not keep to democratic conceptions” (2014: 13).

The hypotheses derived from the Russian episode are confirmed by those cases where the leadership itself lacked popular support. But how widely applicable are these findings? The episode of “May 68” in France took place in the context of an established democracy which consolidated in the aftermath of the crisis. This case therefore adds important variation in the formal structures which determine to a large extent the possibility to access and act on the state (Kriesi et al. 1995: 27).

The French crisis is distinct from the three other episodes as France experienced neither a systemic nor a multidimensional crisis but rather one of political leadership. While this is reminiscent of the contemporary Russian case, the French legitimacy crisis centred on the personality of de Gaulle rather than the practice of authoritarian leadership. The French crisis was narrower in that sense, but it was also broader in another. The mobilisation of “May 68” expressed a profound civilisational crisis that was not limited to Western societies and their rejection of capitalism. The breadth of the contestation made it difficult for youth mobilisation to define a clear target and identify what would qualify as success.

Scholarly literature has downplayed the dynamics of the events of “68” by engaging in contradictory discussions about their supposed impacts on France (and beyond). However, a study of contemporary sources stresses as how contingent contemporaries experienced their present. Numerous options seemed feasible and the futures of France fundamentally open by May-June 1968. Interventions by the political leadership at the time testify to this as they tried to close down these *Erwartungshorizonte*.

The old political leadership had represented “Free France” during the Second World War and solved the Algerian crisis, and it derived its legitimacy from this past. Around 1968, youth was less convinced by this legitimising myth, and the widely discussed failures of the educational system constituted a catalyst for mobilisation. Corresponding to the theoretical understanding of crisis, the French case also underlined the importance of the external dimension. Youth contestation abroad decisively influenced the meaning of French youth, encouraged it to express itself, and prepared the end of the public silence of youth which had characterised the immediate post-war period. Similar to Weimar, however, the external precedent was no necessary condition to overcome structural constraints given the democratic setting.

The analysis emphasises that the consolidation of a democratic regime does not rely on its dominance of discourse about youth. The first hypothesis therefore does not apply to cases of democratic consolidation. Legitimising the democratic setting neither relied on an appropriation of the discourse about youth, nor on political mobilisation of young people. The second hypothesis can therefore also be rejected in democracies. The political elites, unlike in the three other cases, opposed youth mobilisation and hardly tried to legitimise political power by symbolically occupying the meaning of youth or by mobilising young people. Rather, political elites looked for alternative sources of power and tried to ground their legitimacy in broader popular support. De Gaulle’s *UDR* obtained a landslide victory in the

legislative elections at the end of June 1968. However, in the following months, the public legitimacy of de Gaulle still seemed brittle and the country's leader sought to strengthen his popular legitimacy through a referendum. Having lost the referendum, de Gaulle stepped down, but the conservatives remained in power afterwards. The third hypothesis can be confirmed, however, since youth mobilisation only briefly expanded to other social groups, and when it did, their demands began to target socio-economic rather than political aspects.

Considering the structure of political mobilisation, comparative analysis underlines that a heterogeneous political involvement characterised the two democracies, irrespective of their differences in internal stability and popular grounding. The democratic setting leaves numerous opportunities for people to engage politically, and mobilisation does not need to centre primarily on the rejection of the status quo in order to be audible. In multiparty regimes, youth mobilisation can find a diverse set of allies and get involved for competing goals. The Weimarian and the French systems were therefore similar in the conditions they left for people to engage publically.

Authoritarian regimes, however, are structured differently. The prevailing line of conflict is the positioning towards the regime – mobilisation is divided between rejecting or cooperating with the regime. The contemporary Russian case clearly illustrated this. Rank and file internalised the leadership's dichotomising discourse, “‘ours’ and ‘not-ours,’” and re-enacted it in their mobilisation. This structure prevented a plural public sphere from emerging as the positioning towards the dominant regime absorbed mobilisation. The initial perestroika phase also conformed to that binary structure. It was only once the capacity and willingness of the authoritarian state to uphold constraints had eroded that a plural public sphere could emerge with very different objectives of youth mobilisation, not exclusively centred on a positioning towards the regime.

THE FINE LINE BETWEEN YOUTH AND GENERATION

Youth is an ever-changing and multifaceted social category. The semantic flexibility of youth relates to its persistently changing social composition. We are young only for a very short period of our life. At the same time, youth as a social group is constantly present in society. Across the time period studied it was never a new term. The historical context is therefore imprinted on the struggles over its meaning. Every interpretation of youth and its political mobilisation refers to competing past interpretations to give meaning to the present and the future. The youth of today are the adults of tomorrow. The introduction developed this assumption: the idea that youth compounds competing images about a country's past and future trajectory. The following sections provide a narrative of the meanings of youth during four moments of crisis across Europe during the last century.

To understand the meaning of contemporary usages of "generation," I add Koselleck's theories of historical time to generational analysis. I argue that generations are not a function of chronological time, like the passing of 20 years, but are intertwined with socially determined tempi. This significantly changes our understanding of generations and enables researchers to overcome a simplifying assumption that has dominated scholarship, in which generations are derived exclusively from foundational experiences in the past. However, the use of "generation" not only conveys a distinct and unified *Erfahrungsraum* but also a collective *Erwartungshorizont*. Its use in social and political language is particularly persuasive if it can account for the past and be programmatic for the future.

In the following section, I shall enquire when, for what purpose, and which actors used the label generation as an ordering device and to explore the crossing from youth to generation.

Youth as an independent phase of life materialised during industrialisation in the 19th century and an expanding educational system which led to distinct youth organisations across Europe.

Youth movements such as the British or the French Scouts emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, and in 1924 the Bolsheviks established the Komsomol with the hope of assuring youthful loyalty (Neumann 2012: 274). Age-relations changed, notably in the Weimar Republic, and at the *fin-de-siècle*, German youth were emancipated as societal group and began formulating their interests distinct from those of adults. The emerging youth movements were initially led by adults but still created spaces for young people outside of parental control. In the aftermath of the First World War, the diversity of youth made it a fiercely discussed social symbol relating societies to the war experience and possible futures.

The tension between youth as sacrificing heroes or suffering victims was at the core of the meaning of youth in the late Weimar Republic. This tension underpinned four distinct discursive formations about youth. First, most prominently, contemporaries understood youth as embodying competing democratic ideals. Second, contemporaries projected onto youth an idealised democratic future for the Weimar Republic, particularly in conservative media. Third, the progressive media emphasised that youth was a threat to the political system while speaking about communist and fascist youth movements. Fourth, the suffering of youth under the numerous failures of the Weimar Republic was a theme in the discourse about youth.

Discourse about youth in Weimar was decentralised, conflictual, and contradictory, and the competing formations persisted throughout the episode. Moreover, each discursive formation referred to a myriad of youth movements (Deubel 1930). This fragmentation made each set of discursive rules applicable to various socio-political circumstances. Negotiating the meaning of youth was a matter for public debate, a fact illustrated by the numerous interventions by citizens and intellectuals alike. Competing factions fiercely attempted to occupy the meaning of youth and an association with youth was critical for political actors. The dominant

discourse emphasised that youth was morally superior to adults and also that it was innocent, which amplified its political relevance.¹

The few historical references in the discourse about youth conveyed the relative newness of the category during the interwar period. The contemporary *Erfahrungsraum* had a short time-span and centred on the First World War and those youth movements which emerged in Germany around the *fin de siècle*. From 1929 onwards, young people got involved, unlike the politically absent *Jugendbewegung*. But such cultural youth groups expressed the distinctness of youth throughout the interwar period and underpinned the flourishing of generational theories. The young generation turned into a proverbial reference point to capture the disastrous legacies of the First World War. At the same time, the young generation, understood as the “new” generation, captured hopes for renewal and overcoming this past.

Over time, the generational label has become intimately linked with the Weimar episode as many scholars have used the category to understand the dynamics of the breakdown of democracy. Using the label in this way has tended to oversimplify the experience of contemporaries and inscribed the generational label into the triumph of German fascism. However, the term generation opened up competing *Erwartungshorizonte* and did not merely project Germany into the dark future of fascism.

Following the hopes projected onto youth during the interwar period and the experience of the Second World War, youth disappeared by and large from the political sphere. Its absence as an explicit political actor coincided with its symbolic presence as a cultural group during the 1950s, captured by Marlon Brando, James Dean, or Elvis Presley. Some youth remained a threat to public order, whether as “Halbstarke” or “juvenile delinquents,” their practice was

¹ Junge Autoren, in: *Die Weltbühne*, 1929:27, p. 17

sometimes understood as social protest (Kurme 2006: 25). In France, Germany, and beyond, the disastrous war years were linked with the adult generation of the 1960s. Those young after the war embodied a new generation and a cultural rupture from the war experience (Jobs 2007). But despite the desire to see youth as a source of renewal, the public in France and Germany were reluctant to endow youth with moral superiority around 1968 because of what youth in Weimar had come to mean.²

Around 1968 the discourse around youth stabilised in two opposing interpretations. Both were moderate compared to the ideas that had circulated during the interwar period. On the one hand, contemporaries understood youth as responsible for the national and international future; on the other hand, they lamented about the disoriented youth in the present. The largest discursive formation referred to *la jeunesse*, the abstract social category youth, onto which competing visions were projected; the second one revolved around *les jeunes*, the actual young people out on the streets. This cleavage sustained the meaning of youth in the post-war years, enshrined in different parts of the public.

During “1968,” a third discursive formation intervened into this bipolar discourse, capturing the staggering behaviour of youth abroad. This represented a discursive eruption which shifted how France could understand its own youth. The discussion about youth abroad shaped new ideas about the political power of *jeunes*. Before French youth mobilised, the dynamism of youth abroad was contrasted with the apathy of French youth. Youth mobilisation in other countries reconstituted the *Erfahrungsraum* and allowed a new discursive formation about youth to emerge.

The intense mobilisation in the months of May and June 1968 created uncertainty which further diversified the discourse. Importantly, early interventions into this discourse

² Bantigny analyses this ambivalent academic and public youth discourse of the 1950s in France (2007).

conditioned how youth could later be understood, well beyond the episode itself. The importance of intellectuals for shaping what youth came to mean was unique to the French case given their frequent and prominent interventions in central outlets throughout the episode.

While the international dimension changed what could be said about youth in France around 1968, contemporaries of the Weimar Republic understood its youth primarily within national boundaries. This is not to say that the transnational element was absent during the interwar period but it did not have the same visibility. Youth around 1968 was international and appeared borderless. Journalists united international youth as having had analogous experiences across the globe. French youth movements integrated these ideas of similarity and formulated expectations for the future which included youth abroad.

Contemporaries of 1968 established boundaries between youth and students. While this expresses the awareness for differences in lifestyle, the boundary also reflects the delegitimised “youth” which contemporaries linked with the experience of Weimar. Indeed, youth as a social category was associated with the rise of fascism and therefore had lost the moral superiority of the interwar period, which did not make a clear distinction between students and youth. Distinguishing between ordinary youth and students allowed more refined argumentation about the meaning of “1968”. Students advanced intellectually justified and sophisticated criticism of both authoritarian state structures and decaying Western societies addled by industrial capitalism. Compared with the interwar period, youth expressed less utopian visions after the Second World War. The absence of a political fight over the meaning of youth and its mobilisation potential also reflected this discrediting. Unlike in the Weimar Republic, the political leadership in France consciously opposed youth and attempted to limit its influence.

The experiences which shared in a meaning of youth became diachronically more complex. During “1968,” intellectuals, youth, and journalists mobilised an extraordinarily diverse set of historical references to frame the current unrest in continuity or discontinuity with French history. This interpretive shift, the historicisation of events, was part of the episode itself. Over time, those interpretations effectively nationalised the originally international interpretation of the youth mobilisation and embedded it firmly in a French revolutionary narrative concentrating on the long 19th century.³ During “1968,” intellectuals reinterpreted past events as “youth events”. Conservatives mobilised historical references to discredit the current youth mobilisation. They emphasised the inherent dangers of revolutionary moments, the likelihood of monarchical restoration, and counter-revolutionary currents, which would revert any beneficial consequences of the youth mobilisation.

Journalists, intellectuals, and politicians used the generational label frequently. This interpretive stance communicated two competing ideas. Conservatives mobilised the generational label to downplay the importance of the event. A generational uprising was part of the natural succession of history and therefore no reason for worry. Such interpretations conveyed the experience of generational revolts during the 19th century and reduced those events to “mere” generational problems. These interpretations also shortened the duration of “May 68” by anticipating its natural end, given that the young generation would outgrow its status as young. Liberals, however, employed the generational label to value the mobilisation and put it in continuity with heroic moments of national awakening which had liberated and advanced French society. Over time, scholarship and descendants have employed the generational paradigm and contributed to a homogenising narrative of “May 1968” which downplayed conflict related to gender, religion or social class (Bracke 2012: 639).

³ The absence of references to French youth during the interwar period is staggering and expresses the consensus imposed by de Gaulle to forget the Vichy era as something external to French Republican traditions and to be silent about the contradictory developments of youth movements during the interwar period.

Over time, scholars and activists made “May 68” a national French event, and it is only now being transnationalised again. But nationally framed interpretations have travelled across time and space. For understanding the youth awakening during perestroika, Soviet media drew on the “French May” and saw continuities with its own “student uprising” in the 1980s. Such interpretations could only emerge in the Soviet discourse during *glasnost*, when the meaning of youth shifted from the earlier emphasis on its heroic contribution to the construction of socialism. Even in Soviet times, however, a counter-discourse existed which suggested that youth might potentially threaten the construction of socialism. But this understanding always emphasised that only a small fraction of young people deviated from – and anyway would eventually be reabsorbed into – Soviet society.

With Gorbachev’s reforms, the disintegration of the established and largely univocal public youth discourse accelerated. The changes gave way to a new discursive formation which integrated Western youth elements, such as the “student riots,” but also rediscovered earlier non-conformist behaviour by Soviet youth, such as the *stilyagi*. Politicians and conservative media tried to maintain the vanishing Soviet-Leninist youth interpretation, upholding the obligation of each young generation to contribute to the construction of socialism. Politicians endowed youth with autonomy and suggested, with reference to older generations of youth, that it was inherently motivated to engage in perestroika and construct socialism.

The Soviet-Leninist discourse failed to account for the emerging social complexity of political youth engagement, particularly from 1987 onwards. The initially marginal discursive formation about deviant youth transformed during *glasnost* and integrated the idea of youth as a threat to the established order. Whereas the meaning of youth during Soviet times constituted a distinct counter-voice to youth in the West, the visible adoration by Soviet youth of the imagined Western youth hollowed out this dichotomy.

Soviet youth discourse made no distinction between students and youth. This distinction reveals itself as a Western narrative that emerged during “1968” but is unsuited to account for the social reality in the USSR. Contemporary Soviet language referred to *molodezh*’, the social category of youth, to refer to young people, irrespective of their socio-economic characteristic.

Given the prominence of youth in Soviet ideology, the intensity of the fight about the meaning of youth comes as no surprise. The political leadership tried to be associated with youth. Unlike in the West, youth was not discredited as a social category as the experience of the interwar period was different in Soviet public discourse. Soviet ideology preserved the experience of the Great Patriotic War to sustain the public’s belief in the heroic role of youth for defending the nation. Beyond the war, a variety of historical Soviet references were mobilised to put current youth in continuity with past youth.

Whereas youth expressed a past reaching back to the October Revolution, the future that could be expressed through youth became increasingly short-term. With the gradual breakdown of the Communist system, contemporaries had to refrain from projecting themselves into a future through youth, as was done during the abrupt breakdown of the Weimar Republic. For liberal voices the oppositional *neformaly* stood for a potential democratic Western future for the country, but with the reality of the transition turning increasingly complex and eventually violent, such anticipations of future developments through youth tended to disappear.

Generational interpretations of perestroika have largely vanished. Gorbachev tried to employ the label generation with the aim of expressing an *Erwartungshorizont* for contemporaries. Some Western journalists and academics joined in this early enthusiasm (Simis 1985).

However, the reality of the transition quickly undermined these expectations and eventually marginalised the generational label in the public and academic understanding of perestroika.

In 2005 through 2011, Russian politicians and youth employed the generational label for understanding their present. Generations united *Erfahrungsräume* by linking contemporary youth in 2005 with the heroic Soviet youth that liberated Europe from fascism. This generational interpretation allowed a unified rejection of the 1990 transition period. The expectation was that the recent shameful past could be overcome thanks to the involvement of young people, which permitted the imagination of a shared Russian future. Such projections compensated for deficiencies in the present, such as the inadequate educational system or economic difficulties of young people.

The contemporary Russian discourse has updated patterns of the heroic Soviet youth discourse. The dominant discourse about youth established that youth is perpetually new. The fact that youth of the past is currently old was ignored in order to construct a narrative of youth-led societal progress across Soviet history up to the Russian present and beyond. As part of this interpretation, youth had become indispensable for maintaining Russian glory, since the young generation functioned as a bulwark against fascists: a clear rupture with the disregard of youth during the transition period of the 1990s.

The political elite employed the generational label during the very first mobilisation of pro-Kremlin youth. They did so to assure recognition of the rupture with the neglect of the 1990s that this event expressed. Pro-Kremlin mobilisation contributed to a new public discourse about youth which had become dominant by 2008. In the aftermath of the Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” in 2004 substantial political attention was directed towards controlling the already diversified meanings of youth. However, this diversification remained limited to the small liberal public in Russia and never gained a significant level of prominence country-

wide. With the generational label, the dominant discursive formation elaborates a distinct Russian future. Thanks to the energy of youth, it was anticipated that present problems would be overcome and that Russia would find its unique way to national grandeur and a righteous place in the international system.

Nevertheless, beyond the heroic pro-Kremlin youth discourse, the diversity of discourse captured the contradictions of youth at the beginning of the 21st century. Youth had turned into a fragmented category, and even in Russia a multitude of youth styles can be encountered. As long as these are not political, everything is permissible: Russian cities feature punks, bikers, and Emo. The state-controlled press understood the few young people that have become involved and opposed the almighty presidential power since 2005 as simply causing trouble and lacking legitimacy. Only liberal newspapers suggested a benevolent interpretation of such activities.

This chronological overview of the case studies shows the profound shift of the category youth over the 20th and at the beginning of the 21st century. Youth as a socio-political category emerged in the interwar period, its meaning consolidated after 1945, and during perestroika the established Soviet structure of meaning became increasingly pressured by the arrival of alternative youth ideas. In the post-communist era, this led to a fascinating amalgamate where “youth” turned into a blend of ideas about the diverse youth in contemporary Western societies alongside attempts to update Soviet ideas about youth.

The study underlined that youth is a particularly relevant category during moments of crisis when societies are reordering their system of orientation. The four crises analysed in this thesis are moments of particular contradiction and instability, which is captured in the fluid semantics of the term youth. This work refines the conceptualisation of youth, which is

important for theoretical innovation. The comparative perspective encourages abstraction from the fine-grained evidence provided in the case studies and points to wider conclusions.

TEMPORALITIES OF CRISES

The introduction postulates that a particular temporal relationship with the past and future characterises moments of crisis. When a society believes that its political system is about to shatter, the relationship with the future fundamentally changes and the past is seen differently. Changed temporal relations constitute historical moments of crisis and are inextricably linked with language. Only that which can be expressed and put in temporal relation to the past and future can acquire public relevance. The analysis of contemporary language is therefore crucial if we want to understand the perception and significance of crisis. The method of discourse network analysis developed in this thesis permits the systematic unravelling of these insights to draw cross-case conclusions.

Crisis are moments of heightened contingency which reconstitute the relationship between past and future. As per Koselleck, in anthropological terms (1985 [1979]: 353-58), crises transform the relationship between experience, *Erfahrungsraum*, and expectation, *Erwartungshorizont*. Contemporaries update past experiences, especially “past crises,” and realise that their *Erfahrungsraum* is incongruent with their changed *Erwartungshorizont*. The end of the crisis is defined through the re-synchronisation of experience and expectation.

Tensions in the dynamic relationship between *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont* make for a present which contemporaries perceive as transitory. The present times of a crisis are characterised by a unique recomposition of social time as experienced by individuals. Adam defines social time as an “ordering principle, social tool for co-ordination, and regulation, as a symbol for the conceptual organisation of natural and social events,” (1990) a product primarily of interpretation rather than reading the clock. Activists and politicians endow a

historical moment with its unique temporal characteristic. Interpretations of the times of crisis matter politically: different anticipations of the longevity of elite splits, for instance, lead to different oppositional strategies.

Present Times of Crises: Multiplying Possibilities

The comparative setting permits a detailed exploration of the different present times of crises and the multiplication of possibilities that makes for a crisis. The changes in temporal dynamics are of political relevance. Grzymala-Busse (2011) argued that a specification of temporality can improve our understanding of political decisions, sequences, and inherent processes. She complains that political scientists have neglected the causal power of time. My work develops this emerging strand of the literature on the political importance of time and attempts to improve our analytic understanding of it. Grzymala-Busse develops four categories to analyse present time: duration, tempo, acceleration, and timing. I follow her classification and embed it in the work of Koselleck to refine the tempi of crisis.

Duration is a category which researchers inscribe into their objects of study. Conventionally, political scientists neglect to problematise the implications of the interpretive act of delimiting the length of their episodes, unlike those historians who, ideally, show greater sensitivity to the impact of selecting temporal references points (Koselleck 1985 [1979]: 139-4, Osterhammel 2006). Periodisation favours certain causal processes and excludes others – a focus on shorter episodes tends to attribute greater causal weight to elite competition (Plokhy 2014) or protest (Tilly 2008), whereas longer periods favour structural explanations, such as Keep's work on the collapse of the Soviet Union with a focus on social change, declining economic growth, or the expansion of the educational system (1995). In an attempt to systematise periodisation, Liebermann suggested four indicators to guide the process: the origin and change of institutions, external shock, and rival causes (2001: 1019). His

categorisation provides a better grip on the often unspecified practice of periodisation, though it remains open to ambiguity. Moreover, the historical institutional approach also risks reifying temporal categories. Indeed, this procedure neglects the importance of time as a category of experience which can never be external to actors' interpretations. Beyond historical institutionalism, the duration of episodes is also usually less clear-cut than Liebermann implies. For contemporaries, events are fragmented and periods are only very rarely plainly distinct from one another.

The duration of the crises as determined by researchers therefore conditions the possible explanations of the observed outcomes. This limitation must be acknowledged and requires that analysis of an episode includes systematic attention to the causal factors originating before the episode. Those factors can be detected by carefully including historical literature about the cases. Ideally, the periodisation offered in this work should conform to the bundles of interpretations suggested by those who lived the historical moments, since the turning points are identified by engaging with the sources themselves. In my interpretation of the historical material I therefore looked for a critical mass of agreement on contingency and the possibility for change – to trace empirically the disjuncture between *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont* that is characteristic of crisis.

This research strategy identified four episodes of varying length. The two authoritarian crises each lasted for about seven years, while the final crisis of the Weimar Republic did not last longer than three and a half years, and the French episode lasted only a year. Contemporaries experienced the moments of crisis in the two authoritarian cases as significantly longer than the moments of crises in democratic regimes. This suggests a number of things. First, *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont* in these authoritarian regimes were in disjuncture for a longer period of time. During perestroika, the gradual decline of the communist ideology which became public knowledge with *glasnost* created an imbalance which youth exposed

through political mobilisation. In contemporary Russia, declining belief in the longevity of the authoritarian leadership in the aftermath of the “Colour Revolutions” expressed the imbalance. In both cases, contemporaries expected the regimes they lived in to differ from the regimes they were going to live in. The perestroika episode ended when the Soviet regime crumbled; the Russian episode ended with the consolidation of the regime. In consolidated democracies, contemporaries perceived their political systems as enduring and only believed in the likelihood of fundamental political change for brief moments. The case of the Weimar Republic is a mixed case as its leadership lacked public support. The French episode is striking, however, as the disjuncture between *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont* and the consequent belief in the possibility of overthrowing the democratic order was extremely brief.

Grzymala-Busse advances tempo and acceleration of change as adjacent temporal categories. However, acceleration is potentially too narrow and instead I suggest concentrating on rhythm, which includes acceleration, deceleration, and repetition. Changes in the temporal rhythm of social and political change are important markers for break-points; such discontinuities are, therefore, linked with periodisation (Abbott 2001: 250-52). Tempo and rhythm are important causal mechanisms: the impression of rapid change leads to diverse coalitions and considerably more heterogeneity than slow processes with the possibility of consultation and concerted agenda setting. Youth perceived the episodes of the perestroika during 1986–88, Weimar during the final years, and France around 1968 as accelerated presents. Diverse and contradictory political youth mobilisation expresses the anticipation of rapid change. Similarly, anticipation of acceleration characterised the early phase of the contemporary Russian episode which, until 2008, led to a contradictory and heterogeneous youth mobilisation. Deceleration followed at the end of 2008 when it became increasingly clear that despite Medvedev’s presidency, Putin remained highly influential as Prime

Minister. Youth mobilisation became less diverse and important from 2009 onwards. By the end of the episode in 2011, the prospect of change appears highly unlikely: a static present. The perception of time and tempo conditions the possibility of change or consolidation as it affects alliances and strategies.

The last temporal category which matters for our understanding of these episodes is timing. First on the macro level, what was the *Zeitgeist* of the crisis, its international context, the intellectual setting? These are exogenous sources of inspiration for contemporaries. Second, it must be determined when an event occurred in a sequence of related events. The sequence conditions the success of mobilisation, making the difference between early risers and late adopters (McAdam 1995).

All four episodes can only be understood within their specific temporal context. The contemporary Russian case sits at the end of a wave from 1996 to 2005 which challenged competitive authoritarian regimes, particularly in the post-communist region (Bunce and Wolchik 2010). Some citizens expressed doubts about the legitimacy of authoritarian rule, doubts which received ample attention in the press as a number of post-communist authoritarian regimes crumbled. Russian opposition mobilised at a late point in this wave. The country's leadership had carefully observed the events unfolding in its geographical near abroad and drew lessons from them. The timing of the Russian episode is therefore a critical element, as the experiences drawn on by youth and the political elite created competing *Erwartungshorizonte*. Whereas oppositional youth projected the Ukrainian *Erfahrungsraum* into the future, political elites interpreted this experience as a threatening expectation that could and should be prevented.

The breakdown of the USSR also formed part of the relevant experiences that accompanied increased attention to youth mobilisation in contemporary Russia (Krawatzek 2015). With

glasnost', contemporaries of the last Soviet years knew of mobilisation against communist rule in Eastern Europe and gradually expressed that they no longer believed in the building of a future socialist society. Across Latin America and some Asian countries, democratisation had been occurring since 1974 (Huntington 1991). This experience gained ground in the contemporary Soviet *Erwartungshorizont*, marginalising the heroic memories of the construction of socialism. Through Soviet times, political cadres had preserved these memories as *Erfahrungsraum*, but *glasnost*' made it possible to such narratives and spread ideas about democracy, which was perceived as being on the march across the globe.

International youth mobilisation throughout the 1960s shaped the context of the French mobilisation around 1968. From Africa and Latin America, to the US and Asia, youth seemed to be on the forefront against authoritarian regimes and imperialist wars. The mobilisation of French youth occurred significantly later than in most other countries and contemporaries could draw on a complex *Erfahrungsraum* to make sense of the outburst of youth mobilisation. In addition to the international experience of youth mobilisation, French youth mobilisation was shaped by the Algerian War and the contradictory experience of the Second World War, situated between betrayal and resistance. Though starting after a delay, French youth mobilisation quickly caught up in magnitude. Situated towards the end of the wave of global youth unrest, it came to an end as quickly as it had begun.

The context of the interwar period characterised the final years of the Weimar Republic. Those who were young between 1929 and 1933 grew up with experience of the Golden Twenties, economic growth, and cultural flourishing, which shaped their *Erfahrungsraum*. When the reality of the economic and political crisis hit the country, experience and expectations were in stark mismatch. Italy, where Mussolini rose to power in 1922, was a reference point to make the two congruent. Critically, nationalist thinking and confrontational

ideology dominated the period, which youth reiterated and deepened in its political mobilisation.

Updating Pasts and Changing Futures in Crises

Crises are so significant because they fundamentally affect the present. People redefine their interests and see the world in a new way. However, crises are relevant beyond the present since they reconstitute the relationship between past and future, experience and expectation. Crises are therefore relevant both for what they are made of and for what they leave behind. In relation to the past, youth has a special role because it usually has no personal experience of the past to which it is exposed and which it is expected to revitalise. People living through crises anticipate the events becoming reference points in the future. After crises, people and politicians refer back to those events to understand their presents as no longer contingent.⁴

By 2005, the emerging Russian crisis quickly incorporated a revival of a glorified Soviet past. While this revival began dominating any references to the past, it also required that oppositional movements engage with this selectively constructed Soviet past. Even by mocking these new interpretations, opposition youth furthered their visibility. The pro-Kremlin movements constructed continuity with heroic youth's past contributions to defending and building Soviet society. Members of *Nashi* endowed the movement's activities with an historic mission and an obligation to honour those who had once been young. Such practices made the youth of the past as equal to the youth of the present, effectively avoiding a discourse about diverging generational interests in times of scarce resources. Youth was told to see those who were old in Russia by 2005 as those who were young during the Soviet past.

⁴ Touraine's recent book "After the Crisis" illustrates this attempt to delimit the crisis period and understand the present after crisis (2010).

The Great Patriotic War dominated the turn to the past (Wood 2011): a staggering illustration of the leadership's inability to offer a viable response to present difficulties. Pulling the *Erfahrungsraum* into the present compensates for shortcomings in contemporary Russia. This shift can endow youth with a heroic historical success. Other elements compose the *Erfahrungsraum*, notably the omnipresence of internal enemies which both historically and again after 2005 were accused of being agents of external enemies. This idea emerged during the 1930s and became widespread through promotion by the leadership and popular culture, notably film (Shcherbenok 2009). By 2005, the public gradually rediscovered the omnipresence of internal enemies through the mobilisation of radical youth groups such as Dugin's *ESM*. Liberal youth movements, however, tried to put themselves in continuity with the "French May," an *Erfahrungsraum* which hardly resonated in Russia, although some Western media tried to place hopes on this youth.

The political leadership not only turned to the past to distract from the present but also sought salvation in the future. Putin and Surkov portrayed a future that was attainable through youth involvement and would allow Russia to once again assume the international status to which it was entitled. This nationalist vision became ever more enshrined after the "2008 problem," Putin's constitutionally prohibited third presidential term, had been resolved by selecting Medvedev as interim president. During 2005, however, the *Erwartungshorizont* still reflected the hopes which had been created by the successful overthrow of Ukraine's government following fraudulent elections. Russia's youth hoped that the 2008 elections might lead to a similar outcome.⁵

During the crisis, a clear discontinuity with the perestroika years was established. Pro-Kremlin youth understood the downfall of the Soviet Union as a symbol of defeat and of the

⁵ "Putina" zakidali pomidorami, in: Gazeta, 21.06.2005.

arrival of anti-Russian liberalism and democracy, contrary to its peers during perestroika engaged in those *neformaly* who idolised the West. The future that perestroika created therefore differs significantly from how the *neformaly* featured in this thesis experienced their present. Contemporaries in the last Soviet years expected their “future present” to be one of new cultural freedoms and the liberation of Soviet society from the oppressive one-party rule. Every *Erwartungshorizont* is dynamic, however, and conditioned by the respective presents in which it is anchored.

The *Erfahrungsraum* during perestroika revolved primarily around experiences of Soviet times. Youth movements, journalists, and politicians integrated these experiences in contradictory ways, which points to the political tensions of the episode. Political elites around Gorbachev tried to uphold Soviet glory and attempted to show how perestroika and *glasnost* continued the October Revolution of 1917 and the values for which the Soviet people had fought ever since. Gorbachev integrated the Great Patriotic War, post-war reconstruction, and the large-scale economic projects in the Far East into his reform programme. On the leadership level, however, the progress of his reforms led to increasing scepticism about the extent to which Gorbachev remained loyal to Soviet ideology.

Those young people involved in *neformaly* also questioned the heroic interpretations of the past suggested by the leadership. Youth left the Komsomol, because its historical foundation myth was no longer convincing, and through participation in groups like *Memorial* some young people critically engaged with the Soviet past. Moreover, youth rediscovered the heritage of a Russian pre-Soviet past and mobilised for the preservation of buildings from the 19th century. At the height of youth mobilisation in 1988, leaders of *neformaly* drew on a transnational *Erfahrungsraum* which media had begun to provide and put themselves in continuity with Western youth mobilisation of “68”.

Both of the preceding case studies indicated that the French “May 68” turned into a borderless and de-temporalised symbol of youth resistance. Contemporaries of the 1960s anticipated this “future present” and quickly historicised their own present, and by doing so they shaped the reception of youth mobilisation. Importantly, during 1968 this interpretive stance established discontinuity and put an early end to the period of youth mobilisation. But the future that the French crisis created is remarkably enduring. It has been updated and institutionalised in a rhythm of 10-year anniversary writings about “68” and has been used as a reference point for almost every significant public mobilisation in France, most recently the mobilisation against gay marriage in 2013.

Activists projected into the future their awareness of the openness of their present during the peak of youth mobilisation. Even as the events were unfolding, they argued that “68” would shape the meaning of every future youth mobilisation. The possibility of manifold interpretations sustained this development, allowing for claims that “1968” would be as paradigmatic for youth mobilisation as “1789” was for revolutions in general.

The *Erfahrungsraum* of the Second World War restricted how contemporaries understood youth. The post-war climate discouraged the construction of future utopia based on youth, which was no longer morally superior to other social groups. Contemporaries were aware of the shift this signified from the understanding of earlier youth mobilisation. The past experiences that “68” updated were of impressive diachronic depth. Intellectuals and youth reinterpreted the main events of French history as having been youth-led and pulled a variety of historical references into their present. Youth of “May 68” was in continuity with youth of the past, which was understood as a vanguard for societal progress through reinterpretations of the French Revolution, the Commune, and the uprisings of workers during the 19th century. References to the past are comparatively more frequent in the French case than in the others.

Journalists understood youth mobilisation abroad as being a clear rupture with past youth. The awakening of youth abroad was incorporated into the French *Erfahrungsraum* which thereby universalised French history. This interpretive move united all youth in a universal *Erwartungshorizont* but replaced youth abroad with French youth as the paradigmatic actor.

Simultaneously, sceptical voices referred to the *Erfahrungsraum* of the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the fatal involvement of youth at that moment in time. These were warnings against societal beliefs in the moral superiority of youth. Weimar's "present past" entangled the French and German cases and underpinned criticism of youth mobilisation. But the "future present" of the Weimar episode could hardly have been anticipated by contemporaries of the 1930s. Scholars, politicians, and journalists later reduced Weimar's youth to having prepared fascism, but this hardly corresponds to how contemporaries lived their present times.

Until the 1933 takeover by the Nazis, diverse and competing *Erwartungshorizonte* for the country's future characterised the crisis of the Weimar Republic. The chapter on Weimar highlighted that youth involvement was as much promise as it was tragedy.⁶ The crisis of the Weimar Republic updated only a very limited *Erfahrungsraum*. The First World War became the main historical reference point that turned into an all-absorbing event for making sense of youth during the 1930s. The experience of youth during the First World War came to play two functions. First, it established continuity: youth suffered during the war and it still suffered more than 10 years later. Unlike in contemporary Russia, however, this continuity of youth underpinned narratives of generational confrontation. The actions and failures of those who were young during the First World War were portrayed as the cause of the misery of those who were young during the 1930s. Since the youth of the First World War had now

⁶ For the reception of Nazi past in demonstrations of the 1960s (Pfeifer 2006: 198).

grown up to hold positions of power, the reference to past youth delegitimised the older generation of the 1930s. Second, conservative youth groups interpreted the experience of the war in a heroic light. Concentrating on the individual soldier and his selfless sacrifice for the German nation, they used the youth of the war to endow contemporary youth with a heroic mission to pursue and conclude the fight of its fathers.

Whereas these two interpretations emphasised continuity, the case study also points to contemporary voices that tried to move forward by underlining the discontinuity expressed by youth. In this respect, youth symbolised a new generation which could overcome the horrors of the First World War and open up a new future beyond national competition. Liberals like Thomas Mann prominently expressed this *Erwartungshorizont*, but this interpretation remained marginal.

The university realm offered a more diachronic *Erfahrungsraum*. The 75th anniversary of Heinrich Heine's death in 1931 encouraged Ludwig Marcuse to retrace the political history of the university at the beginning of the 19th century. He emphasised the hopes associated with students during Heine's youth: in 1819 youth was "schwarzrotgold" [sic] ["blackredgold"] and the centre of progressive ideas. Looking at more recent events in 1931 obliged Marcuse to make a nuanced assessment and to point to the potential dangers of youth radicalism.⁷

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND AVENUES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This thesis has analysed the differing dynamics of regime change on a spectrum from authoritarian to democratic consolidation. The four case studies systematically examine the

⁷ Heine an deutschen Universitäten, in: *Die Weltbühne*, 1931:6, p. 206-12.

discourse about youth and the political mobilisation of youth in crisis. The central empirical finding is that a political regime which lacks popular democratic support tries to compensate for this shortcoming by discursively and politically appropriating youth in moments of crisis.

The conceptual contribution of this thesis lies in the rethinking of the key terms guiding this research by analysing their historical evolution across space and time. The interrelated concepts of youth and generation play crucial roles during crises as their meanings are temporally flexible. Both ideas can therefore potentially provide legitimacy through references to past and future. Moreover, I refine the meaning of crisis suggested by contemporaries of the four cases and draw comparative insights on the characteristics of crises. In particular I elaborate upon the extent to which a crisis expresses a sense of heightened political and societal contingency and the temporal dynamics of different crises.

The methodological contribution the thesis makes – beyond the four-case comparison – is a new multi-level approach to analysing discourse and explored the value of this method in three different linguistic contexts. This method sheds new light on each empirical case individually and facilitates the abstraction required for a more systematic cross-case comparison. Moreover, this method is a transparent way of conducting discourse analysis and contributes to the growing interest in the analysis of text as a key source for political science. Like every method, this one is not without its shortcomings. The selection of sources and the quality of the coding limits what can be explained and might potentially bias the findings if not done carefully. This demands that researchers reflect on their choices and be aware of the distortions they might bring into the research. Causal links between discourse and mobilisation are not always easy to establish and highlighting the connections between the two remains challenging. I addressed potential problems by extensively engaging with secondary literature to contextualise my patterns. In future research one could broaden the primary material used for the individual cases.

My thesis also makes an empirical contribution to the understanding of each case by systematically exploring rich primary material. First, for the episode of the contemporary Russian Federation, the changing discourse about youth represents a stark contrast to the period before 2005. The endowment of youth with a unique role for the country's future and past is an integral part of the authoritarian consolidation under Putin. Second, the political role of youth during the breakdown of the Soviet Union has so far been largely ignored. Elite-centred approaches tend to neglect that changes at the top not only affected but were conditional upon developments amongst the citizenry. The public mobilisation of young people predated the significant reforms by Gorbachev. The contrast between old expectations about youth and its present refusal of the Soviet order exposed to citizens the fading legitimacy of the Soviet order. Third, the perspective on youth for the breakdown of the Weimar Republic draws a more complex picture than that offered by prevailing scholarship whose focus on anti-regime youth has neglected democratic youth movements. For contemporaries, the future of the Weimar Republic was a matter of open controversy and did not revolve exclusively around a fear of fascism. Fourth, the French case shows the importance of international embeddedness to account for the meaning of youth around 1968. This is in line with most recent scholarship, which has tried to break the French case out of the methodological nationalism in which the case has been enclosed.

This research could be extended by enlarging the comparative setting and systematically adding new sources to the cases. First, it would be rewarding to explore in more detail regimes located in the "grey zone". It became clear over the course of this work that political regimes which cannot rely on public support for the institutional setting engage in a symbolic and organisational struggle around the meaning of youth. It would therefore be useful to explore crises in defective democracies and liberalising authoritarian regimes such as Georgia following the "Rose Revolution" of 2003 or the countries of the "Arab Spring". Second,

broadening the empirical basis of this research and going beyond the sampled newspaper articles would be valuable. In particular, a systematic consideration of political speeches looks like a promising avenue for understanding in detail the political struggle over the appropriation of youth.

As this thesis demonstrates, youth has played a unique role for society across space and time. During crises, the moments which matter most for society, the symbol of youth is the object of at times virulent confrontations, and the political mobilisation of youth is a grave concern even for established regimes. In 2014, when Chinese youth took the streets of Hong Kong during the “Umbrella Revolution,” the potentially destabilising function of youth again came to the fore. But even in democratic Europe, the symbol of youth is continually relevant. The media frequently refers to youth to endow the current economic crisis with intense emotion. Young people in Greece, Spain, and Portugal – Europe’s lost generation – are portrayed as a threat to Europe’s future and questions narratives about the progress achieved through political integration over the last few decades. The symbolic and political importance of youth for politics will persist over the next decades; exploring the many meanings of youth therefore remains an important task for social scientists.

APPENDIX: CODING SCHEME

+ not mutually exclusive

mutually exclusive

Definition

Social Attributes (+)

in-need	Relationship youth / non-youth	
Autonomous	Relationship youth / non-youth	
apathic	heroic	open-minded
capable	idealistic	opportunism
consciousness	incapable	oppositional
courageous	indifferent	optimism
crisis	innocent	pacifist
decisive	involved	precious
desired	irresponsible	romantic
different	materialistic	sensational
difficult	messianic	trouble maker
disciplined	miserable	vanguard
dynamic	moralistic	victimised
economic aspects	naïve	violent
enthusiastic	nationalist	

Factions (#)

gender	religious
socio-economic	united
political	other

Evaluations (#)

Positive

Neutral

Negative

Tempi (#)

Layers

Past	Present	Future
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Rhythms

Repetition	Rupture
Continuity	Acceleration

APPENDIX: COMPARING DISCURSIVE STRUCTURES

The following paragraphs provide a very brief characterisation of the different discursive structures identified in each episode. It gives the reader a condensed taste of the discursive differences and similarities without attempting to be an exhaustive description.

The Russian Federation after the Colour Revolutions

In clear opposition to the meaning of youth during the post-Soviet transition years, the new PRO-KREMLIN discursive formation gradually gained in dominance in Russia from 2005 onwards. It became the largest formation, opposed by an understanding of youth as politically in opposition, DISCORDANT with the regime, or VIOLENT and irresponsible. The latter two formations include youth behaviour considered being “extremist” by the centralised media. At the beginning of the episode oppositional youth mobilisation could occasionally challenge the uniform media but the discursive formation faded over time.

The Soviet Union during Perestroika

Youth gathering outside of the Komsomol occupied the Soviet media during *glasnost*'. The VICTIM & THREAT discursive formation gained in prominence from 1986 onwards, in particular in progressive media, and replaced an earlier idea of a SOVIET-LENINIST youth. The latter had dominated official Soviet discourse about youth throughout history with an emphasis on the contribution of youth to the construction of socialism under the guidance of the party. Acknowledging the independence which became evident through youth behaviour in public, communist media shifted towards speaking about AUTONOMOUS youth, which maintained that youth remained committed to constructing socialism but did so voluntarily.

The Weimar Republic and Roads not Taken

Weimar's youth discourse was very diverse which persisted throughout the episode. The four formations about youth occupied an approximately similar size in the overall discourse. The PRO-DEMOCRACY and YOUTH & FUTURE formation were closely linked and expressed democratic hopes and the capacity of the country to overcome the current crisis through youth. Youth as VICTIM referred to the consequences of the economic crisis on the lives of innocent young people whereas THREAT underlined the rupture which current youth represented to past youth and that youth was a danger to the established order.

France around 1968

Around 1968 French discourse about youth was structured around youth as DISORIENTED and youth as representing the FUTURE OF FRANCE. Youth mobilisation abroad reshaped this structure and changed what youth meant for the French public. The TRANSNATIONAL CONTESTATION of youth captured the opposition of youth to oppressive regimes worldwide and the international similarities changed fundamentally how progressive voices in France thought about French youth. For those conservatives who rejected the youth mobilisation, the violence of mobilisation abroad amplified ideas of youth as a threat and being in crisis.

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