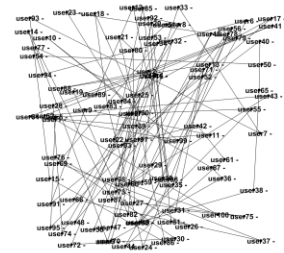


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Method and expected results

The four diagrams each display a representation of a network of the same actants. They show (1) the change of the connections over time and (2) the formation of new groups that result from the process of collective decision making via language.

Diagram 1 shows *Twitter* users and their interrelation at random



Democracy and Deliberation

- Western style democracies rely heavily on a free and unconstrained public for the development of individual opinion
- Formation of **anti-democratic sentiment** is a threat to democracy (Weimar Republic as a case in point)
- Democracies are under threat if social formations emerge that...
 - ...show **distribution of divergent opinion** in an extreme way
 - ... thus do not allow for functional deliberation
- **Deliberation** is defined as the practice of rational debate and competition of opinions as a means of developing critical and informed opinions

Language and Opinion

- A large degree of human knowledge is stored in propositional form, while its instantiation may vary depending on the speaker's perception
- Utterances rely on linguistic encoding of what was meant → every utterance requires a selection of linguistic elements
- Assumption: linguistic preference correlates with opinion and social belonging
- Collectives emerge around divergent use of linguistic elements framing similar phenomenological events

Emergent Collectives via Language

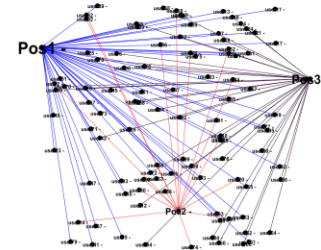
Decisions in Networks and Deliberation in Democratic Public

Networks and Decisions

- Decisions are conceptualized as collective processes rather than individual endeavours (as assumed by Rational Choice Theory)
- Influence on seemingly individual choices is dependent on actants' positions in social networks
- Linguistic elements used by individuals are the result of a more or less conscious decision making process regulated by the logic of the network
- Changes in network structures are observable in the change of use of linguistic material



4. Actors clustered according to opinion as emergent collectives with similar opinions



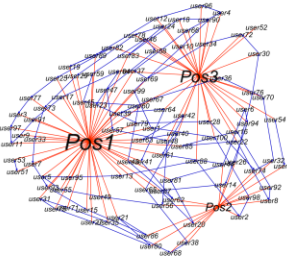
2. Actors deciding for discourse positions (Pos1, Pos2, Pos3)

Research Questions

1. How can social dynamics in collective formations be described on the basis of language analysis?
2. How does distribution of linguistic elements contribute to the formation of social collectives?
3. How can decisions for certain linguistic elements be defined as social phenomena and which methods of linguistics are adequate and promising?

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3. Re-Assembly of clusters of actors according to their positions (red) with original relations indicated (blue)