The USSR discourse: an analysis based on the complexity theory

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Abstract
[EN] This article is aimed at proposing a new kind of discourse analysis based on the Complexity Theory. Its method is founded on a systemic conception focused on the emerging and adaptable properties that compose it. The analysis was applied to a case study: the discourse of the political power in the Soviet Union from 1985 to 1991 based on the main topics that resulted from the reforms made by Mikhail Gorbachev. The sample analyzed includes the speeches given by the Soviet leader and other important leaders as well as the reports of the state controlled press agency Novosti. Maps and graphics were also made with software VenSim PLE. With these emerged a model that allowed us to see among apparent discursive contradictions an entire coherent structure. This enhanced the study and provided new epistemic clues to the theoretical development.

Keywords
[EN] Complex Analysis of Discourse, Complex Adaptative Systems, Complexity

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1. Introduction

The collapse of the USRR has been discussed from different historical approaches: from those purely political to those economically centered. However, the communicational approach has been the least used.
The rhetoric used during the process to dismantle this multinational country since the mid-1980s to the beginning of the 90^s offers evident clues about the role played by communication among the different sectors of that society. This is another reason to demand an analysis of the political discourse of that period. Nevertheless, is should not be an ordinary analysis.

The wide network of subjects and events present in this historical experience, as well as the apparent contradictions and unexpected results, warned us about the complexity of such study. Therefore, we must say that the classic Political Discourse and Critical Discourse Analyses were not the best modern tools to deal with such phenomena and make science.

Following the Complexity Paradigm with all its theories and basic principles allowed us to take the discourse to a qualitatively new level. Thus, with a Complex Analysis Discourse the discursive evolution of the collapse of the first socialist country of the world brought about new elements to the analysis of a story that still provokes heated debates in the academic and political circles.

However, in order to conduct this research we had to define a methodology that could be applied to all theoretical postulates. The so-called "Third Way", found between the induction and the hypothetical-deductive model, also demanded the use and integration of principles of the the agent-based simulation models (ABM) and the System Dynamics.

Thus, we created an intermediate model of the Discursive Situation, formed by the Soviet political power which was represented by the leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the state controlled press agency Novosti.

The discourse that emerged from the merger of both agents was just the object of this study that is temporarily focused between 1985 and 1991.

This discourse was named "USSR" and it was formed by five different thematic lines:

1.- V.I. Lenin: an assessment of the legacy and theoretical and practical work of this politician; references to his work and validation of specific views based on the opinion he had.

2.- October Socialist Revolution: an assessment of the role and transcendence of this event in the subsequent history of the country; its impact and its evolution after the changes that took place in 1985.

3.- Country-Nation: attitude towards the concept of country and nation in the formation of the multinational family of the Soviet peoples since the triumph of the Revolution in 1917 and the emergence of the USSR in 1922; evolution of the inter-ethnic relations.
4.- State Structure: evolution of the notions and fundamental principles in the conception of the State; assessment of the structures created since 1917 and the changes made since 1985.

5.- Socio-economic Formation: socialism as social regimen adopted since 1917; historical assessment and evolution of the concept since 1985.

What might make this study different was penetrating a discourse from its very own structure -seen as a complex adaptative system- and dismantling its internal dynamics as well as establishing the emergent processes that took place in it.

2. Method

This study is based on the Complex Analysis of Discourse as a method derived from the Complexity Paradigm, the Complex Systems Theory and the so called "Third Way" in methodology. They are going to be explained now but taking into account the case study.

In the last centuries, science has been guided by the principle of disjunction which is basically the segmentation of knowledge in different fields of studies or specialties. Our world, at least the Western, was built based on the increasing division of the so called "natural sciences" and "sciences of man". This brought about the exclusion of man himself from its own environment as well as his own alienation by dividing the branches of knowledge within his "own science" in such a way that it was impossible to see how connected they all were.

As a key argument in the urgent selection of this way of thinking David Byrne says:

"Chaos/complexity, because it is founded in recognition of the non-linear character of reality, is absolutely concerned with the implications of local context expressed in terms of time and space. Chaos/complexity, because it recognises the significance of emergent properties, asserts the emergent, distinctive and non-reducible character of the social" (Byrne, 1998: 47).

According to Marc and Picard (1992), if we analyze communication from this perspective we would understand it as a "group of elements interacting in such a way that the modification of one of them affects the relations among the other elements" (Rizo, 2011: 2). To be more precise, it is an open system of interactions that always falls within a specific context. And, due to this nature, it follows particular principles such as totality, circular causality and regulation.

Therefore, we think that the elements that characterize social complexity are those phenomena or systems composed by different social agents that interact with different resources in a non-lineal way. Their evolution is subject to the changes that take place in the original conditions.

These agents of interaction belong to different level and social sectors thus transversalizing their links. The results of such links are expressed by means of emergent properties where the adaptation and the self-eco-organization set the guideline of their evolution.

It is important to highlight that time is a key variable in complex systems because they are dynamic and evolutionary. That is why it is necessary to study the very own temporality of complex systems and the periodicity of their stability, development, change and phases of transition (Lozares, s/f).

According to Johnson and Burton (1994):

> "complex or non-lineal systems are characterized by having a non-periodical unstable behavior in non-lineal dynamic systems. The models of dynamic systems are characterized by using evolutive equations which allow describing the system in a moment in time as well as having tools to describe the system in a given moment of the future or the past. With the application of initial values to the equations it is possible to determine the evolution of the systems by increasing the values. This evolution is oriented to the long-term behavior and not to the mathematical solution of a specific moment of time" (quoted by Ponce, 2009: 54).

For Holland, "A basic characteristic of the adaptable complex systems is that nobody is the best, there are many individuals with different tasks" (Holland, 1998: 283). Another typical quality is that they never stabilize and if they do they would die because they reproduce themselves due to the constant creation of new elements.

Therefore, with the theoretical elements we have exposed so far we have some clues that can help us to explain how we are going to do our discourse analysis. To summarize, these elements are: 1) the description of the construction of key arguments in the formalization of the significant moments of the discourse based on more basic ideas; 2) the explanation of the interconnection among the ideas that bring life to the discourse; 3) the search and revelation of those moments in which the discourse makes an argumentative turn –this made taking into account the internal and external contexts that may impact upon them-; 4) tracking the subliminal lines when giving value to the semantic burdens that gives the discourse its communicative-ideological power (also taking into account the burden of the political aspect).

From the adjustment of the previously established elements and the criticism made to the previous models (Piloto, 2014) emerges the Complex Analysis of Discourse as a method based on the Complexity Paradigm, the Theory of Complex Systems and the so-called "third way" in methodology. These will be explained in the coming section taking into account the case of study.

2.1.   Methodological Strategies

Modeling complex systems means, first of all, abstraction and making an intermediate or "abstract" model based on the real system. Then, the subsequent inferences are considered and later expressed in another "formal model". It is then when conclusions obtained are applied to the study object taking from reality.

The models upon which this research was based and inspired in order to make its own are the agent-based simulation models (ABM) and the System Dynamics.

Agent-based models are:

"a type of models of simulation whose main characteristics are the generation of emergent properties (non-deducible from the individual behavior of the actors), the local interaction with partial information by the intervening agents and the sensitivity of the original conditions" (Miceli; Guerrero; Quinteros; Díaz; Kristoff; Castro, s/f: 1).

In this theoretical line we can find a peculiarity: the determining role of the individual in social interactions. These authors justify this based on the non-lineal, simultaneous and discreet character of the models.

For Axell and Epstein (1996):

"the elements that form an ABM are: 1) the Agents themselves; they have internal conditions and rules of conduct. These internal conditions can be fixed or changing. Rules of conduct can referrer to the interaction between the Agents or between the Agents and the Environment, 2) the context which is the medium upon which Agents operate and with which they interact, 3) the rules that apply to the Agents among themselves, and the interaction of the Agents with the environment and the environment itself" (Miceli; Guerrero, Quinteros, Díaz; Kristoff; Castro, s/f: 9).

The basic purpose of the System Dynamics is to understand the structural causes that provoke the behavior of the system. This implies increasing the knowledge about the role of every element within itself and see how different actions carry out on the parts of the system stresses or reduces the behavior trends implied (Martin, 2004). In order to do this, we are going to use specific software such as Vensim PLE.

Therefore, we had to look for a sample wide enough to meet the demands previously explained.

2.1.2. Population and sample

Units of Analysis:

In traditional studies related to discourse analysis, usually, units of analysis are a group of texts published in the media subject to study. However, in this case, we don't follow the rule. According to our model, these are the elements we must include:

1985-1991		Novosti		Political Power USSR	National Context
	A	Documents related to the establishment of the agency and its role as a national media.	A	Constitution of the USSR and other documents related to its state formation.	- Magazine *Nuevos Tiempos* - *Estrella Roja* Newspaper
	V	Printed publications of the agency: STP, Sputnik, USSR.	V	Official statements, resolutions, interviews, statements and laws.	
	IN	- Legal framework of relations between APN and PP. - Foreign publications reproduced by the agency.	IN	- Legal framework of relations between APN and PP. - Foreign policy of the government.	
	F	V that are used because of PP.	F	V that are used because of APN.	
	FSR	Editorial and press releases of the agency.	FSR	Official statements, resolutions, interviews, statements and laws.	

LEGEND:
A: agents
V: variables
IN: interaction networks
F: feedback
FSR: flow and stocks relations

The population used to conduct this study is formed by the published articles of news agency Novosti between 1985 and 1991 in its magazines and other publications such as magazines *Socialista: Teoría y Práctica (STP), Sputnik* and *USSR*. Nonetheless, we only selected the speeches and complementary materials made by the Political Power which were completely reproduced in the special sections of the magazines that were devoted to this. We also used articles published by magazine *Tiempos Nuevos* and *Krasnaya Zviesda* newspaper.

Out of this population which is reduced to the period of reforms implemented by Mikhail Gorbachev, we chose the following sample:

1. Printed publications of the agency: *STP, Sputnik, USSR.*

1.1. From magazine *STP*: 50 articles, 21 comments, 4 editorials, 2 press releases, 9 news items, 43 interviews, 6 computer graphics and statistics, 10 political speeches, 2 reports, 1 resolution.

1.2. From magazine *USSR*: 67 articles, 54 comments, 40 editorials, 26 press releases, 26 news items, 5 computer graphics and statistics, 10 resolutions, 38 interviews, 38 speeches, 13 reports.

1.3. From magazine *Sputnik*: 11 articles, 14 comments, 3 editorials, 2 press releases, 5 news reports, 3 interviews, 1 speech.

This is a total of 504 documents. Out of them, 144 were used to make Maps of Semantic Networks.

2. Political Power
2.1. Official statements, resolutions, interviews and speeches: 151 documents. Out of them, 38 were used to make the Maps of Semantic Networks. These numbers were already included in the first item.

3. National Context

3.1 From magazine *Tiempos Nuevos*: 35 articles published between 1985 and 1990.

3.2. From *Krasnaya Zviezda* newspaper: 2 articles

It is important to keep in mind that our Global Sample (what is included in the table) is basically part of the primary levels of analysis. Nonetheless, as we advanced in our research process we decided to select an "intentional sample" of those materials we realized were useful for our study. Consequently, our final sample is 541 materials.

2.1.3. Data Collection Instruments

Once we finished our preliminary analysis of the state of the art related to the topic of our study, we made a selection of the materials, documents, which could actually help us to obtain data and select the sample. However, the selection of these materials depended on the accessibility to the documents of those years in Cuba. This was a very hard process because they were not easily found in Cuba. Nonetheless, we were able to locate several magazines, pamphlets and publications of press agency Novosti and others that referred to it.

Once we located the materials, we selected those that were consistent with topics and themes defined in our research problem, apart from the fact that they had to match with the most significant

historical periods of the reform years and the subsequent collapse of the USRR as a multinational state.

This intended selection of the sample, which is not based on any statistical formula, is consequent with the particular method we chose. What matters to Complexity in this case of study are the divergent points and the periods of critical moments. This is the reason why we decided to see what had been published in the media, what had been said by the government, what were the episodes of the historical periods we classified as transcendental (and maybe significant) in the development of the discourse.

2.1.4. Procedure

According to the method of the Complex Discourse Analysis the steps we followed were the following:

1) Identification of the semantic networks and their representation by means of software Vensim in the causal, level and flow diagrams. 2) Creation of a diagram of inversed modelling. 3) Contrasting both elements and correcting the doubt zones. 4) Designing the map of discourse evolution. 5) Identification of bifurcation points. 6) Description of the role played by each agent and the components they have at their service as well as that of external agents (in and outside the system). 7) Description of the structure. 8) Evaluation of the metacontext. 9) Narration of the evolution of the discourse.

In order to follow each and every one of the steps, we made a Guide of Levels of Analysis of the Study:
- First Level: reading the documents included in the global sample. Identifying the topics discussed. Filtering the best documents with the purpose of using them in the next levels. Identifying other indispensable documents.
- Second Level: limited compilation based on the filter of Level 1. Making a critical reading. Creating the Maps of Semantic Networks in Vensim Ple software. Highlighting the most important topics and relating them. Identifying key concepts and ideas and their role in order to find the discursive logic. Obtaining the Causes Tree and Uses Tree graphics by means of the graphs made of the most significant vertexes in Vensim. This option is included in the software.
- Third Level: Making the Map titled "Thematic Logic of the USSR Discourse" in Vensim Ple by combining the key concepts obtained in the Second Level. This is made by delimiting the thematic field in the five thematic lines explained in the Introduction as well as their respective chronological representation. Describing logic based on the results of the previous step.
- Fourth Level: Creating the Formal Model as conclusion of the data and analyzes made. Applying the Model to the USSR Discourse System. Reaching to theoretical and practical conclusions.

3. Results

According to the Formal Model obtained in the intermediate phase of the quoted research (Piloto, 2014) the next step was to apply it to the historical case of study we chose. We adapted the information obtained by means of the graphics made by Vensim Ple software to each and every one of the steps proposed in the methodology. Of all them, we showed two of the most significant ones in terms of direct results:

Implementation of the Formal Model to the case of study (first result):
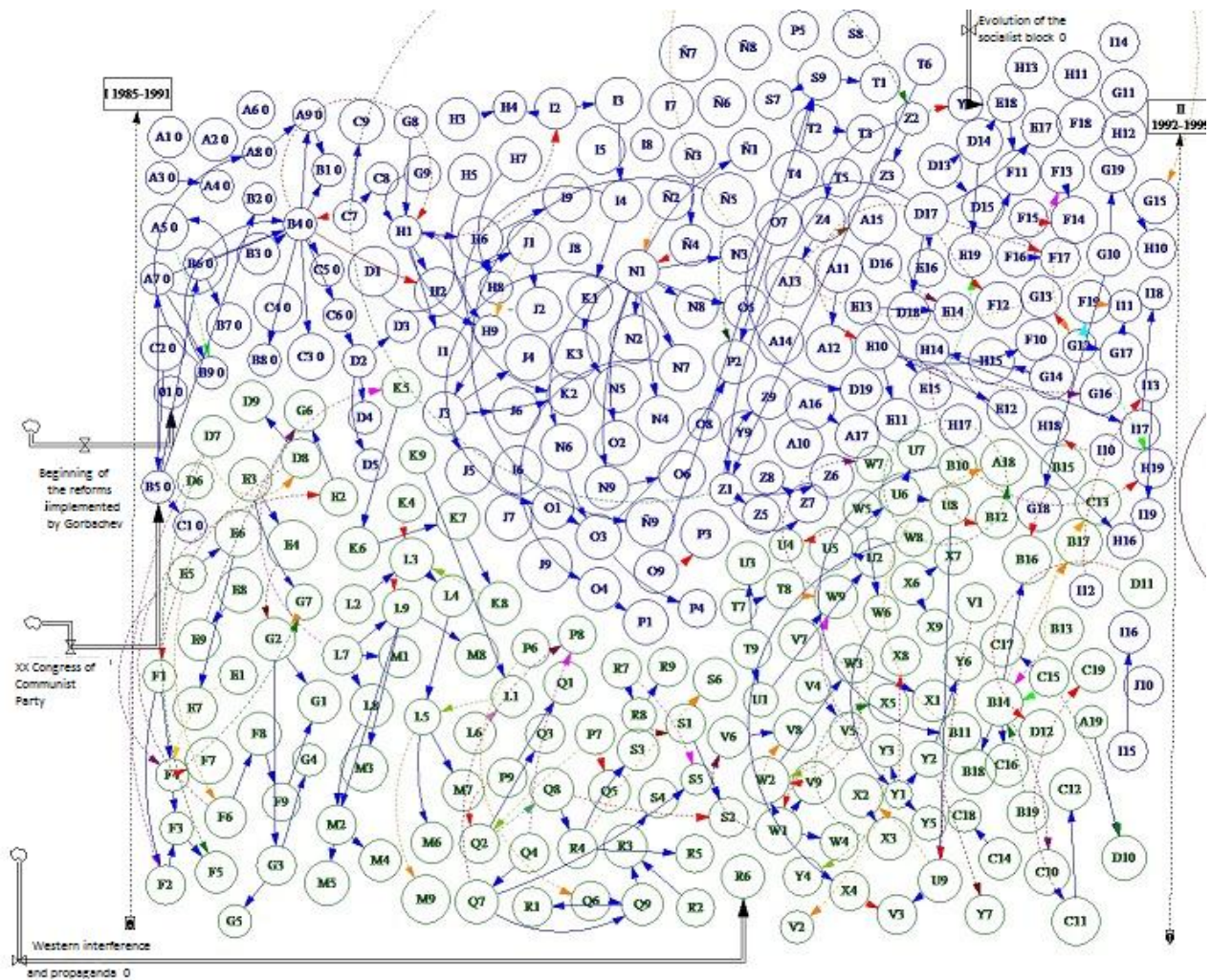
Each circle represents segments gotten from maps of semantic networks made when we dealt with each document of the selected sample. The arrows show the relations among themselves as well as their characteristics and properties. However, after a process of synthesis the graphic was reduced to the following version:
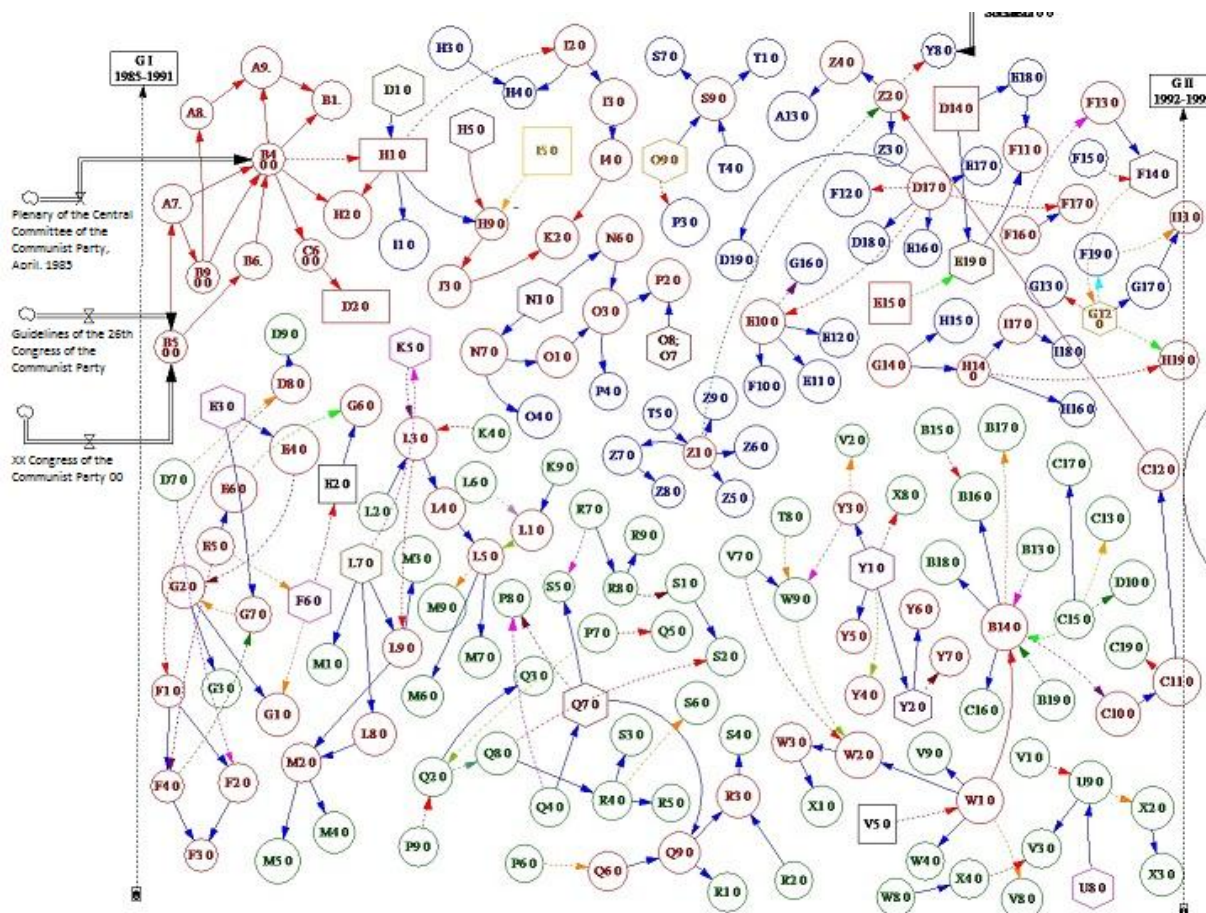
In order to explain how the model works, we chose one of the lines included in the graphic (especially one line that is formed by Bifurcation Points) and made the following exercise:

In sequence F16 (difficulties in Perestroika) –F13 (people's skepticism and distrust) – F14 (society needs clear political references) – G12 (anticipate the 28th Congress of the CPSU) – H19 (statements against separatism) – I11 (legal mechanisms for the separation of the Union) we can see that the difficulties of the Perestroika brought about skepticism and distrust among the people who, at the same time, needs clear political references; therefore, the XXVIII Congress of the CPSU was anticipated. In line with these, statements against the separatist movements are made and, at the same time, some advocated for the approval of legal mechanisms for the legitimate separation of those republics who wanted it.

This looks like a very clear sequence but, when we began to asked ourselves what elements held, backed and validated each and every one of the segments, what prevented the line from going to other points, from what Banks of Ideas it was feeding itself and which one was it benefiting, we realized that the analysis was rich and provided significant elements.

In a descriptive way, we were able to see in the Model that F16 could have gone to F17 instead of going to F13. However, it did not because it was based on D17 (second phase of the Political

Reforms). What could this mean? The answer is that the reforms were not in their way to success. Failure was the predominant factor. At the systemic level, this brought about a thematic and argumentative change in the discourse. Then we saw that F14 had to act as a Corrector in order to rescue the thematic flow. Afterwards, it passed the signal to G12 which acted as a Transformer which developed into four elements but only three of them led to the final points of this sequence. It was interesting to see how G13 (planned and market economy) evolved and how the arguments coming from F14 were used to pay attention to a more critical situation (the possible collapse of the USSR) and how, in the end, it received an ambiguous answer. We also noticed that I11 had a larger backup (F19 and G17 highlighted it). Extra-discoursively, all this is understood as a victory of the centrifugal forces that dismantled the USSR at the end of 1991.

Based on the logic of the analysis made the following step was to study the basic structures that composed the system.

In the period between 1985 and 1991 there were three significant moments: the beginning of the reforms implemented by Gorbachev until the end of 1987; the lack of progress and crisis in the country; and the beginning of the direct process to dismantle the political and socioeconomic systems. In each of these moments, the Discourse presented its own distinctive peculiarities as well as its consequent adaptation to the structures that composed it in view of the new situations in which it was taking place.

The first period was distinguished by the presence of the Bank of Ideas, the Driving Forces and the Transformers. We highlighted them because they were the structures with the most outstanding particularities in this period. They helped us to understand that during the evolution of the Discourse the fundamental strategy for its reproduction and conservation (considering the autopoietic sense) was based on the "planting" of key concepts that would later be stored in the Bank of Ideas to be taken out (by means of the Driving Forces) in other moments to validate or justify new arguments by the Agents present in the Discursive Situation. At the same time, this task was complemented with the use of Transformers who "updated" the basic units taking into account the moment of the Generation in which they were "collected" so that they could fulfill their new task successively. In short, this sort of discoursive recycling proved to be successful because the most significant concepts and ideas that in the first period of this segment, 1985, were used to highlight the support and improvement of the Soviet Political System were used in the final period (1890) to justify their own denial and thus begin the consequent dismantling.

The components with which the Discourse Situation equipped the structure of the Discourse made it an adaptative system with emergent properties that led to its constant reproduction even after the occurrence of changes in the context in which it evolved. The collapse of the USSR did not put an end to these studies. On the contrary, each rethorical and structural element created during the Soviet period was used to create and validate new forms of power and of communication that emerged after 1991.

The reflective potentiality that emerged with the arrival of Gorvachev to Power created the necessary base to implement the changes that took place several years later. Intentionally or not, the communicative structures that emerged from this Discourse failed to relate to the country and the

system as it was conceived and brought about a "new Russia" that emerged from the collapse of the USSR.

4. Discussion and conclussions

The political discourse of the Power from 1985 to 1987 assumed that society was at the beginning of a long lasting phase of the developed socialism. This showed that there was not only an unreal assessment of the society but a formal continuation of the discourse of the previous leaders. Even when Gorvachev was determined to change what was necessary to change in the country he knew it was not wise to avoid the inherited rethoric.

Nonetheless, not much time had passed when he said that "We must implement profound transformations in the economy and in the whole system of social relations; we must provide the Soviets a higher quality of life" (Gorvachev, 1984). And he added that in order to do this the active participation of the masses was necessary. He also advocated for a greater interrelation among the members of the system.

This last element is quite important. For those people with a higher democratic awareness and those authentic militants of socialism those words were an inspiration and a reinforcement of the classical (and hackneyed) "Go Forward to Communism" slogan. For those who followed him on the other side of the Iron Curtain they meant the first gentle breeze of thaw of the opposite system. Everyone interpreted differently. Gorvachev himself (as we will see) changed his approach, even after the collapse of the USSR; left his office as President as a protest, but the following year he claimed that everything had been necessary and, more recently, in his 82th birthday, he said he was "ready to be a President again and rebirth the USSR".

In his first year in office as General Secretary, Mickail S. Gorvachev, justified his discourse criticizing the "obsolete elements of the production relations" that jeopardized the national development, but he neither mentioned nor devoted time to discuss them in detail. And in this early stage he warned that "increasing the rhythm of development and the efficiency of the economy depend only on the development of the monetary-mercatile relations" (Ibídem).

However, he also warned that paying attention only to this monetary-mercantile character would mean neglecting other aspects of socialism such as planning. Still, he pointed out the advantages of such "risk" based on the experiences of the countries of the socialist community. Therefore, he thought it was appropriate to widen the concepts more used in the country in the social sciences in order to have theoretical answers to the new demands. All this was always accompanied by the usual pro-leninist rethoric even though Lenin's work was sometimes simplified or misinterpreted.

Gorvachev also said that the quality of life as well as the role of the country in the international arena could only be increased by means of an intensive economy with a techno-scientific modern base. These were his initial guidelines. This is the origin of the concept of Acceleration that, for him, was the solution to the problems and the implementation of solutions.

APN Agency, as forseeable, complemented every argument of the leader with its journalistic work. It made constant reference to Marxism-Leninism and reflected a lot on how useful it was to deal with the present and the future, how to improve the developed socialist society in order to get to communism. It echoed stability but at the same time stated that the people wanted more.

In addition, it not only backed the Party's strategy but highlighted its role in society as well as its legitimacy and support. Yet, through interviews, it questioned all these but not in a way that would raise doubts. It explained and defended the Soviet democracy and exemplified its implementation.

After the April Plenum, 1985, moment in which the General Secretary made his program official before the political leadership and received its "unanimous" support, there was a quantitative and qualitative increase of the works published regarding reflections and statements related to this event. Gorvachev provoked a polemic that had been vetoed before. For instance, it was recognized that "from time to time" there were anti-Soviet and antisocial demostrations (Afanasiev, 1985).

However, when talking about economic-related issues things were different. When they talked about enterprises they talked about their restructure and the implementation of much modern techniques, but nothing else. The goals set were long-term although adopted as medium-term objectives.They said the economy was the basis of social development and, therefore, it had to be developed. Yet, the existing problems were never discussed deeply and it was always done with a traditional and old approach.

So, the essence of Gorvachev's development program was: "I believe we need to intensify our efforts in three aspects: 1) promoting a scientific-technical revolution and make a more effective and rapid use of its advances in the national economy and life in society; 2) improving the economic mechanism and the entire system of economic management and other domains of our society; 3) increasing the academic level and professional qualification of the workers". We saw how the reforms (or "non-reforms" as some of the experts we interviewed defined them) shaped these principles.

The first two years of Gorvachev's administration focused on the economic reform and they rejoiced at the positive results of the economic experiments while recognizing, at the same time, the complexed characteristics of the social system they were living in as well as the emergence of new problems.

The setback took place when they stopped talking about collective development to talk about individual development: "The supreme goal of socialism is to bring about the individual's comprehensive development, to satisfy the increasing material and spiritual demands of the workers" (Guber, 1985). It must be highlighted that this was, actually, one of the most severe criticisms the system received from its Western adversaries. Thus, from this moment on this political discourse adopted the arguments of its adversaries as its own. But, with what purpose: to legitimize itself or to gain the support of the West? To lead people to believe that all that they fought and lived for was no longer worthy? Everybody can make their own conclusions. Based on the amount of information used, we do not think it's ethical, responsible or serious to make a categorical judgment. Other arguments emerged as Gorvachev's administration consolidated in power.

If at first the word used by the Gorvachev's administration was Acceleration, as time passed by Restructuring was introduced *(Perestroika* in Russian) and it became dominant.

> "The economic mechanism was delayed and it became an obstacle for progress. A situation in which certain changes in planning and direction are not enough has emerged. A profound and comprehensive restructuration is necessary" (Guber, 1985).

However, they were still talking about an alleged crisis and claimed it was the enemy's argument.

It was interesting to see how the agency had to explain the implementation of measures arguing that this had been done before and were in correspondence with the guidelines of the Soviet leadership. It is as in times of peace people would see nothing and in times of reforms they all get scared and see everything different. Paranoia seized everybody.

We could argue that this was the romantic phase of Gorvachev's administration as the political leader of the nation. All his ideas seemed fair and appropriate, full of populism and loyal to Lenin's principles. All his arguments seemed irrefutable and modesty and bragging were mixed-up. All it would take for the country to overcome its problems was that people did what he said they had to do. He presented himself as the continuator of the Party's guidelines although, at the same time, he was the valiant hero not afraid of dealing with problems. Therefore, he would say what the problems were; he would criticize them and deal with them.

In year 1986 all the discourse energy was focused on the most important political event, which is the XXVII Congress of the CPSU. "We are living the first days of the new year, year 1986. We could say that this is going to be an important year, a year of change in the history of the Soviet state, the year of the XXVII Congress of the CPSU" (Gorvachev, 1986). Once in the Congress, he said:

> "The Central Committee of the CPSU and the Politburo have defined the most important Guidelines for restructuring the economic mechanism: 1) to make the centralized direction of the economy more efficient; 2) to resolutely extend the limits of autonomy of associations and companies; in order to do this, the authentic financial self-management will be implemented; 3) to implement the economic method of direction in all the levels of the national economy; 4) to provide the management with modern structures taking into account the trends towards concentration, specialization and cooperation in production; 5) to democratize management in all its aspects, to increase the role of the labor force and to strengthen the control from the bottom-up" (Gorvachev, 1986a: 15).

One of the contradictions that emerged later in the implementation of these projects - evident both in the discourse as well as in the praxis- was the fact that they admitted these tasks needed a long period of time although at the same time they insisted in their inmediate compliance which is something that would impact the intended results.

The new direction of the Kremlin the people had to follow was to practice criticism and self-criticism both at work and in a society in general in a responsible way. This took place in a moment in which

it was highlighted that "with the exception of restructuring we simply have no other way, we can not go back and there is no place to go to" (CPSU, 1987). This is part of the "all or nothing" philosophy (we have to be the absolute heroes, the second place is not enough for us, we are the heroes or we kill ourselves). This kind of argument would provide the discourse with lack of initiative and immobilism.

With regards to the Soviet democracy and the cadres' policy of the Party, we noticed that the discourse was aimed at making them stronger and to increasingly include all sectors of the population in the reforms and promote the best ones.

Once Gorvachev felt strong in power an increase in criticism took place. He felt confident in his proposals and he devoted time to think about the implementation of his strategy. He received the support of the media of the entire country where weekly *Nuevos Tiempos* began a "competition" to see who was going to make the most daring commentary, who was going to present the best arguments and who could be more critical than the others. APN agency did the same thing. However, it was not until the final years of Perestroika that we can say criticisms were "hard". Still, the prevailing tendency in the published works was hesitancy and ambiguity and we could find some conservative ones whereas others were conciliatory or attacked everything very openly. The strategy of this official agency was to hide behind the published interviews and the comments made individually. Consequently, its official stance was never clear.

> "An entire new system of weakening factors of the economic instruments of power emerged (…) The causes of this blockade lie in the weakness of the socialist democracy and its institutions, in the stagnant political and theoretical ideas which are usually detached from reality, in the conservative management mechanism" (Gorvachev, 1987: 2).

From this moment on, the prevailing topics were the demands related to mistakes. At first, as we noted, the idea was to improve socialist democracy but this quote marked the beginning of the process of deslegitimation by means of the "fair" recognition of the mistakes made in the past; a past which, at first, they said had been glorious and were proud of.

> "Comrades, how was it possible to have many leadership posts –at the municipal, city, regional, republic and even national level- occupied during decades by people that did not do their job, unreliable and undisciplined people?" (Ibídem).

Questions like this led to others such as the following ones: What were we doing that everything went wrong? Why did we not see it coming? Who is to be blame for all these? Was our entire history a lie? By wondering all these, Gorvachev got several results: 1) he was the hero that brought all this to light; 2) he planted a time bomb in people's minds against their own system and history; 3) he spread among the people emotional panic and disillusionment with their own history and future. This was a strategy used by the Power that was assimilated and improved by APN.

By the end of 1987, the word used the most was adjective "radical". By then, the reforms were clearly stangnated and nobody dared to deny that the country was in a total crisis: "In order to

normalize the market we need to implement a comprehensive program of radical measures" (Gorvachev, 1987a).

The most important political event of the Soviet Union in 1988 was the XIX National Conference of the Party, that is, the most important meeting celebrated by the communists since 1941. This evidenced the impact of the changes that were taking place in that nation. The discourse anticipated the events a lot and that is why they needed the meeting to debate and reach an agreement with regards to the reforms they wanted to implement.

An element we were able to notice when we studied the discourse of this period was the increase in the use of the phrase "more democracy" instead of "more socialism" with the purpose of validating the reforms of the perestroika even when they claimed that more democracy meant more socialism. Why? Because this is what they needed to validate themselves in the eyes of the enemy and the opposition, an ambiguous solution to please both parts, a flirtation caused by fear, insecurity and the non-openly stated dissatisfaction. All this discoursive process can be understood as a gradual persuasion in which the final argument is made step by step and not suddenly due to fear and not to lose ground for the sake of appearances.

This Conference was the equivalent to the "democratic opening" in its rethoric. They approved the increasing and more incisive confrontations that took place during the plenary and in the streets. Terms such as "confrontation" and "divided groups" were openly present in the discussions. "The Conference was unprecedented due to the openness and frankness of the debates related to the democratization of the political life of the USSR" (APN, 1988: 2).

The leaders of the first years after the triumph of the revolution came under strong criticism on the national media. APN talked about the refusal to use history manuals for educational puporses in the schools because it was considered "amoral". However, without new texts to replace these manuals highschool children did not take exams about this subject. They were only subjected to an "interview about historical topics" (Sputnik, 1988: 8-9). This showed how deep the change was in the ideological community of the Soviet people.

The discourse we studied had nothing to do with that the non-official circles were no longer afraid to express. Gorvachev presented himself as a good referee that tolerated and accepted new styles. But, it was obvios that by this time he had already lost all the initiative.

APN hesitated all the time over publishing what it published and was always loyal to the government even when pretending to be critical. Out of 32 articles published by the agency this year, only 7 were reports about the historical events of the Revolution whereas 22 talked about perestroika and democratization. Out of these 22, only two of them ("A qué Komsomol renunciamos" by Alexandr Afanaiev and "Opiniones de los sovietólogos" by a group of authors) expressed defiant comments regarding the quidelines proposed by the Power.

The first one stated:

> "We lived in a time we thought was heroic and, all of the sudden, we find out that it was not heroic but tragic (…) There are some people who still believe that the internal democracy claimed by the Congress is nothing but a stratagem" (Afanasiev et all, 1988: 83).

In the second one, which was an interview to an American economist, it was said:

> "The first and most serious problem you have is that people have no incentives, no interest in doing their job well and with quality." (…) "Your second problem is the lack of economic freedom for the producer. His job must be assessed by the consumers and not by his boss or an organization" (Various Authors, 1988: 40).

If in 1988 they advocated for "more democracy", in 1989 "democratization" was the word quoted the most. It was not only the end but the mean to it. Since they had already agreed on what was useful and appropriate in the model they were implementing, evasive statements were no longer necessary. It was a turning point for, from this moment on, they dismantled the political system and established a completely capitalist "market". They felt confident because they had already convinced everybody that democracy was what really mattered. They were not going to be ashamed. There was going to be no guilt at all.

Consequently, they focused on shaping a socialist democracy. Law became the most important thing and they needed coercive measures to make that society work. They broke the agreement upon which that society had been founded in 1917. Its old values meant nothing already. Morality was substituted by law.

The political event of that year was the first Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, held from May 25 to June 9, 1989 in Moscow.

> "Its main objective was to elect by means of democratic mechanisms the Soviet Supreme of the USSR and its president, to validate or reject the designation of the top leaders of the State and the Government and to discuss the Government's next tasks" (C.A., 1989: 17-19).

It was in this event that the concept of "New Thinking" was promoted. According to the Soviet minister of foreign affairs, Eduard Shevardnadze, it was:

> "a set of criteria about the world, the time and themselves that were the result of a deep reflection about the meaning of life and the political tasks demanded by the new realities civilization face" (Shevardnadze, 1990: 22).

It was a form of validation of the process of changes considering the consequences to be faced when standing aside human civilization which was, precisely, in a process of reform and goodwill between complete opposites: capitalism and socialism.

> "March 15, 1990, will go down in the history of the Soviet state as the day in which the political power changed. A key, historical, unforgettable and relevant date for the fate of the country…Other epithets will be used by historians, political scientists and experts in general.

And they will be right. On March 15 assumed office the first President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics elected in the the III Congress (extraordinary) of Pepole's Deputies of the USSR" (Shalaieva, 1990: 30).

In his inaugural ceremony, Mikhail Gorbachev said:

"I solemnly swear to loyaly serve the peoples of our country, I swear allegiance to the Constitution of the USSR, to act as guarantor of our citizens' rights and freedoms and conscientiously fulfill my duties as president of the USSR" (Ibidem).

This was Gorvachev's last democratic effort to do his best while in power. By this moment, the power was already weakening and its soon collapse was evident. Perestroika had divided society in two sides: its followers and detractors and both sides had their own extremist groups. Despite Gorvachev's effort to control a country that was going downhill he did not succeed and his discourse reflected it in the following way:

"The 'Democractic Platform of the CPSU', another programmatic document passed by the First National Conferences of Clubs and Organizations of the CPSU held in Moscow on January 20-21, 1990, (…) reconizes the need to creat a pluriparty system in which the CPSU will no longer be the vanguard but a parliamentary party with the same rights of the other political parties. (…) It is time to recognize that the parliament can no longer work properly without an opposition" (Ibidem).

As seen in this last excerpt published in an opinion column in *STP* magazine, owned by APN, the confrontation went from normative rethoric to demanding things in the political battlefield. In view of this atmosphere of confusion, the agency decided to publish interviews, comments, articles signed by authors, but it never showed its official opinion regarding political sides. And it was the logical thing to do because it was already difficult to determine who was running the country and whom the future belonged to. It belonged to this "power" that had to be taken into account when establishing its editorial policy.

According to Vitali Vorotnikov, "year 1990 would be the year of the Soviets' uncertainty and confusion" (Vorotnikov, 1995: 355). On July 2 of that year began in Moscow the XXVIII Congress of the CPSU. This was the forum where the leadership of the Soviet people lost its credibility and legitimacy since the foundation of the country in 1922. The political discourse became a chaos of voices carrying out for their own interests. Gorvachev's voice was hardly heard and his political adversaries took the lead.

APN, as has been previously pointed out, mostly published opinions thus gathering as many opinions as possible. Out of the 25 articles of the sample belonging to year 1990, 18 were interviews. Most of the headlines were questions or quotes. A clear fragmentation of the political discourse was evident in all these documents.

In short, based on the maps of semantic networks, we concluded that the evolution of the political discourse studied showed the following sequence: we are ok but we can do better; we need a process

of Acceleration; we have more problems than we thought, we need a process of Restructuration; we have done things wrong, let us punish the guilty ones; let us rectify the situation, more openness and democracy; we are in a crisis, we have done everything wrong, more reforms; the crisis goes deeper, let us Radicalize the changes; the crisis is very hard, our measures are not working; the crisis goes on, let us change the approach; let us adopt market oriented measures, we have no choice; we are impatient, we want improvements NOW; erything we did before was a mistake; capitalism is the solution.

Due to the short period of time in which this process took place (only six years) the changes in the discourse were sudden and, occasionally, seemed conflicting. However, this research was able to identify within the internal structure of the discourse the mechanisms and basic properties of its evolution. And this is actually the importance of the Complex Discourse Analysis. It rules out the primacy of the subjectified interpretations of researchers and promotes the systemic approach.

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