

Introduction



The message to the Bavarian president was clear: juvenile delinquency is a major problem in Munich. During his visit to the Bavarian capital in spring 1947 local officials again emphasized their concerns regarding the devastating state of the young: wandering and homeless youth, unwilling to work, and an explosion of sexually transmitted diseases, namely amongst female youth, threatened Munich's recovery.¹ In June 1946 the mayor of Munich had already stressed the need to make juvenile delinquency a priority.² Extensive media coverage had also called attention to the fact that "unorganized and unsupervised youth is a problem that cannot be overlooked."³ Major local newspapers like *Der Münchner Merkur* had even inaugurated a segment primarily dedicated to the problem of youth by November 1946.⁴ For adult contemporaries, a supposedly widespread delinquent youth remained a major problem within Munich and allegedly endangered the city's recovery and future.

My study challenges such pervasive constructions or representations of youth as delinquent, and indicates that those in power repeatedly created these threatening images of young people according to their needs. Such an interpretation builds mainly on Michel Foucault's discussion regarding the benefits of illegality, a framework that is in the center of this volume. As Foucault noted in *Discipline and Punish* several decades ago, "the establishment of a delinquency ... has in fact a number of advantages."⁵ When taking such benefits into consideration, it is easily apparent how constructions of youth as delinquent provided postwar authorities with options to control society. First, constructing delinquency, and with that a deviant Other, helped mark norms or standards for a society trying to regain stability and normality. If black-marketeering youngsters are deviant, then hard-working adults must be the desired norm. Second, the existence of juvenile deviancy legitimized the being of certain institutions. In fact, shortly after World War II the Youth Welfare Office in Munich pointed to the

state of the young to justify and legitimize its quick denazification, re-creation, and overall efforts in disciplining youth. Finally, to physically and symbolically wrestle with such marked ills of society as embodied by juvenile delinquents ultimately increased the power and influence of various institutions. After all, if an institution is successful in dealing with threats to society during times of confusion, then it will gain more legitimacy and authority from those trying to return to normality. Most contemporaries defined such normality as the rule of law, a communal effort to rebuild and recover, and the eventual resurgence of a healthy German national identity.⁶ Supervising juvenile delinquency provided the leeway and justification for those in power to expand various mechanisms of social control, which, overall, limited the freedoms not only of the young but also of broader groups in postwar society.

Age plays only a minor role when analyzing postwar constructions of youth. Historically, scholars have understood youth as the phase between childhood and adulthood.⁷ Yet postwar representations of youth as delinquent or deviant, I believe, need to be understood more as a broad idea or fluid state. This reading is in line with scholarship seeing youth as a construct only partially connected to age;⁸ it also builds on a larger awareness regarding representations of youth as hope and threat.⁹ My study solemnly focuses on images of youth as delinquent given its prominence in Munich at the time. I am also not interested in generational cohorts or subcultures. Instead, my discussion concentrates on images or constructs of juvenile delinquency in Munich as a way to access larger conversations.

Such an analysis needs to acknowledge gendered dynamics once describing constructs of male and female youth. Given long-standing terminology, a potential lack of sources, and an underlying bias, male youth continues to dominate many studies. Young females, on the other hand, have been largely ignored. This silence has indeed limited discussions around gendered dynamics, frameworks, and stereotypes, leaving the experiences of young females largely uncovered. *Coming of Age* acknowledges complex dynamics between male and female youth and also exposes that for young females gender and sexuality, *plus* age, mattered. Notions of respectability, traditional gender mores, and sexuality are indeed “all important yet unmentionable” when analyzing female youth, as demonstrated by several scholars.¹⁰ Male youngsters, on the other hand, had comparatively more freedoms, a situation apparent once putting constructs of male and female youth in conversation with each other. Mechanisms of control eventually take shape, as Michel Foucault highlighted in a different context, “through useful and

public discourses,"¹¹ a dynamic apparent in numerous circumstances and beyond Nazi Germany.¹²

With such discussions in mind I ultimately argue that the misery of the young in the postwar period became a microcosm or communication channel for larger conversations. Put differently, youth became the discursive space for discussions about postwar society, future objectives, and contemporary threats. The destitution of youth signified the hardship of society, while allusions to youth could also embody the hope for a quick recovery and a bright future. In fact, talking about youth was not only a way to discuss the young but also became a strategy to revisit, reframe, and rewrite history. In this sense, understanding youth as a construction carrying social meanings is helpful when trying to decipher postwar conversations and norms.

In order to access these conversations I emphasize the importance of representations of youth at a particular juncture in Modern German history, generally defined as the immediate postwar period. In Munich this timeframe arguably began in 1942 with the first aerial bombing targeting the Bavarian capital in August of that year.¹³ Whereas a conception of war had been present in different forms on Munich's streets and households beforehand, this event made the city's landscape and topography a real place of war. It thus set the stage for subsequent disorder, destruction, and disillusionment cutting across an only imaginative *Stunde Null* or zero hour.¹⁴ My analysis concludes in 1973. Then local authorities had finally let go of using protests and *the student* to their advantage. Throughout this time period I trace six images of male and female youth in particular and analyze the re-creation, continuation, and alteration of the moral fabric emerging within post-World War II Munich: *the delinquent boy* and *the sexually deviant girl* appeared in the immediate postwar period, or crisis years¹⁵ (1942–1949), and supposedly challenged the rebuilding process. During the time of economic recovery of the miracle years (1949–1962),¹⁶ so-called *Halbstarke* semistrong male rowdies and the newly emerging female *teenager* stepped into the limelight to question traditional norms, gender mores, and overall productivity. The Schwabing riots in 1962 then triggered the rise of the protest years in Munich (1962–1973), defined by *the student* and *the Gammler*, the latter a bumming around youngster hanging out primarily in the bohemian quarter of Schwabing. At that time, to follow historian Konrad Jarausch, *the student* was the most antagonistic image of youth.¹⁷ All of these images of youth have subsisted within the historical record and have a complex history. *Jugendliche Verwahrlosung* or juvenile delinquency amongst male and female youth, for instance, has been described in numerous contexts within

German history prior to World War II. Historian Detlev Peukert most notably engaged with *Halbstarke* working-class youth in Imperial Germany and the Weimar Republic;¹⁸ other scholarship centered on “wild youth” in urban environments during the depression and National Socialism.¹⁹ Constructs of youth as delinquent are thus present in unstable times, making them an excellent avenue for accessing particular conversations tied to the re-creation of societal norms, morals, structures, and institutions.

Reactions to such images of youth repeatedly brought Munich into a state of panic. As captured most notably by cultural theorist Stanley Cohen, societies can slip into hysteria or paranoia once circumstances or groups of people “become defined as a threat to societal values.”²⁰ Cohen focused on the mods and rockers phenomenon in Britain in the 1960s to capture the creation of deviancy and the moral outrage nourished by the media. His framework showed how this panic emerged, and helped describe the exaggerated nature of juvenile delinquency. Fellow cultural theorist Stuart Hall traced such panics and episodes, and ultimately exposed state responses in more detail.²¹ My analysis builds on these accounts by illustrating the constructed nature and overall benefits of these moral panics.²² The inevitably complex process of constructing and controlling youth was not a conspiracy of authorities. It was rather a product of historical precedent, contemporary exigencies, conflicting motives of diverse actors, and the genuinely new circumstances of postwar Germany and the world in which it existed. As noted above, authorities have been constructing youth as deviant in the past.²³ Periods of actual and perceived instability for adult authorities, including war and postwar environments, often provided the context for such conversations. Those constructing and eventually controlling youth, described by scholars like Anthony Platt in similar contexts as “child-savers,”²⁴ then work under different premises, reaching from a genuine concern for the well-being of youth to more ambiguous motivations and mere self-interest. In Munich, such groups included local institutions, the U.S. Military Government, specific individuals, and many others hoping to secure their power. All of them formed a rather surprising coalition fighting against a perceived threat to society.

My proposed arguments and findings are in conversation with a complex scholarship that has come a long way, and has increasingly moved away from focusing on generations or age cohorts.²⁵ Such generational frameworks help capture larger trends, yet continue to build on random markers and age ranges, male protagonists, and upper-class sources. The work of scholars like Philippe Ariès, John Gillis, and

Pierre Bourdieu, on the other hand, originally paved the way when discussing youth beyond the restrictive category of age.²⁶ As cultural historian Richard Ivan Jobs wrote more recently when discussing youth in post–World War II France, “youth served as a common denominator that crossed boundaries of class, gender, race, and region.”²⁷ Germanist Jaimey Fisher takes it a step further and describes youth as a discursive space, an opening to deal with the Nazi past.²⁸ Although Jobs and Fisher both touch on efforts to regulate behaviors of youth, their discussions of concise mechanisms of control remain limited given their overall emphases. Similar trends are apparent when surveying the historiography focusing on youth in the 1950s and 1960s, although some discussions take on youth culture, Americanization, and protests.²⁹ Kaspar Maase and Uta Poiger most notably engaged with such conversations yet again limit themselves to descriptive discussions of youth culture within Cold War environments.³⁰ A widespread reliance on high culture due to a broader geographical focus further speaks to the need for sensible and manageable local case studies that trace images of young people within their local, daily, historical, and topographical contexts. Cultural and social historian Jennifer Evans moved towards this approach in her recent publication *Life Among the Ruins* (2011), utilizing cityscapes as a way to analyze such conversations. *Coming of Age* follows in these footsteps, now with the objective to gather empirical evidence for tracing connections between constructing and controlling youth in Munich.

The city of Munich is an excellent microcosm for achieving these objectives. Located on the elevated plains of Southern Bavaria, this metropolis has always been among the largest urban spaces within the region. Like Berlin, it became an important cultural and industrial center during industrialization; unlike Berlin, it did not have a special status during the Cold War, thus making a focus on youth in this space all the more interesting.³¹ Munich dealt with traditional fears of urban environments and modernity, especially because inhabitants of agrarian, conservative, and deeply Catholic backgrounds and mindsets surround the city. This location and environment along with other cultural, regional, and economic factors arguably limited the public display of sex and sexuality in interwar Munich, unlike in a more open-minded and liberal Berlin. As the site of Adolf Hitler’s failed Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, and with the first Nazi concentration camp Dachau nearby, the former capital of the Nazi movement continues to carry a difficult past. The Americans eventually occupied Munich in April 1945. Soon the city became a vibrant cultural hub and important economic center—along with Frankfurt am Main and Stuttgart—that kept

its political composition as a social democratic beacon within a heavily conservative Bavarian state. Until the currency reform in 1948 and the ensuing economic miracle, however, Munich struggled economically given the widespread destruction and refugee crisis. An increased Americanization visible in the rise of popular youth culture and postwar prosperity demonstrated how times increasingly changed thereafter. As early as 1962 Munich then experienced the first supposed student protests, as protestors rioted in the city's bohemian Schwabing district. Six years later Munich mourned the death of a student and a journalist during the protests of 1968. For these reasons the Bavarian capital offers an abundance of materials for historians working on youth, while also being a sensible and manageable case study for mapping local variations and tracing larger postwar trends, all while keeping youth's relations to topography and cityscape in mind.

The historical record offers countless ways to trace, analyze, and discuss images of youth. As historian John Gillis put it, scholars must "capture the voices and faces of the young, as well as those of the adults who claim to speak in their name."³² The latter is of key importance for my approach because I examine social constructions of youth. After all, to scrutinize the historical record based on the construction of deviant behaviors at a specific juncture in history is in the center of *Coming of Age*. I consulted traditional materials in archives throughout Munich, including governmental documents and newspapers. I also relied on popular culture—music, movies, youth magazines—oral histories, city spaces, and other materials. The actual young did increasingly participate in the construction of youth, an aspect that becomes apparent in this study. After all, as noted by one scholar, "'Youth' is not constructed or otherwise acted upon through the pure subjection and passivity of young people: they have clearly participated in the processes of differentiation, and their creation of youth cultures speaks to their ongoing negotiations with the multiplicity of their social identities."³³ Shortly after World War II, local authorities and larger dynamics extremely restricted the power of young people, and only as the new Germany came of age did the voices of young people assist with more force in the configuration of discourses.

Since I present a social microhistory my methodology or use of sources favors a bottom-up approach. As visible in the use of evidence, I move beyond the voices of the powerful. Instead, this analysis places itself within the larger tradition of a history of everyday life (*Alltagsgeschichte*) as I focus on images of youth and the silenced voices of the young. This approach falls in line with an emphasis on those traditionally left behind, to align with the framework laid out by historian

Alf Lüdtke several decades ago. As he put it, *Alltagsgeschichte* concentrates on “the life and survival of those who have remained largely anonymous in history.”³⁴ More recently, historians have built on this approach and kept it alive. As illustrated in that context, historians of *Alltagsgeschichte* “dwell on historical actors’ stories, told in the language of everyday life, while nonetheless subjecting their myths (and our own analysis as well) to critical scrutiny, attempting to disclose their contradictions and to identify their human consequences. These acts of criticism and translation ‘respect’ everyday life in all its contradictions by recounting stories and incidents, yet we criticize and translate these stories patiently not only in order to understand but also to undermine them.”³⁵ *Coming of Age* follows this tradition because it highlights the stories of the disenfranchised; plus, my study investigates and expose dynamics surrounding constructions of youth in everyday Munich. “The model of subaltern studies, with its emphasis on writing history from the margins of power, of trying to hear the voices unrecorded by mainstream histories,”³⁶ also helps make sense of the sources. The voices of the actual young, male and female, play a key role in my attempt to illustrate life on street corners, in bars, and other supposedly deviant spaces. My focus on a specific urban space, neighborhoods, or the topography at large allows me to shed light onto daily experiences and demonstrates how such helped frame constructs of youth—a different perspective compared to more recent studies trying to take on whole nation-states.³⁷ Such an emphasis also exposes lingering stereotypes of youth—defined along simplistic binaries as hope and threat—as I ask about the benefits of such constructs, frameworks, or discourses.³⁸ In effect I read documents along and against the grain in an attempt to expose underlying debates and broader objectives and build on the moralized language apparent in the sources and question its validity and benefits. As a result, this monograph is less interested in simply describing youth but more so in asking *how* and *why* certain descriptions, representations, and images of youth have been useful. Answering this question, I contend, tells us much about dynamics between constructing and controlling youth, everyday life, and the coming of age of Munich as one space with a young West German democracy.

To focus on the postwar period as a way to expose these dynamics is sensible given the surprising limitations of scholarship tied to youth for that time period and broader transformations within Munich’s history. Whereas the Nazi era has seen extensive research, the crisis years have experienced little discussion beyond political and occasional economic histories. Apart from a couple of local case studies focusing on youth,³⁹

most research highlights the 1950s and beyond, apparent in the silences within a more recent overview.⁴⁰ Such an emphasis devalues continuations and previous discussions surrounding youth; it also aligns the importance of young people primarily with a rise of popular culture and protest movements. In contrast, I believe that the exposure of hidden continuities apparent in daily life within seemingly distinct periods allows scholars to see such underlining currents. For example, the crisis years in Munich began with the first aerial bombings in 1942 and not with the end of World War II. Throughout this period mechanisms of social control against youth remained very much intact. Whereas this aspect underlines larger continuities between Nazi rule and postwar setups, it also allows for comparative discussions with the situation across the inner-German border. In fact, traditional mechanisms of social control in place against youth during Nazi rule lingered well into the postwar period; they were also in many instances not fundamentally different from mechanisms in place in East Germany.⁴¹ In that way, the coming of age of a postwar society, as it played out on the streets of Munich, ultimately provides an excellent physical and metaphorical space for tracing social constructions of youth and opens up future possibilities for more fully exposing potential similarities regarding mechanisms of control against youth. In Munich, at least, circumstances changed slowly and the city did not move toward a more open society until the early 1970s. Finally, this coming of age epoch marks a fundamental shift within the city's history, apparent once focusing on images of youth. Confusion increased throughout the final years of World War II as destruction set in; soon authorities pushed for reconstruction, and hoped for a quick return to normality. Once the situation stabilized towards the end of the 1940s, protecting and defending such normality—increasingly defined along prosperity, stability, and traditional values—became the key objective of adult authorities. My focus on discussions surrounding youth brings these trends to the forefront, in a time when Munich and West Germany as a whole slowly transitioned into adulthood.

Distinctions between social constructs and the actual young are grounded in the original language, documents, and discussions. The terms *youth* or *the young* (*die Jugend*) refers to youth as a social construct; the actual young are described as exactly that, or simply as youngsters (*Jugendliche*), male (*Jungen*) or female (*Mädchen*). Specific constructions of youth like *the delinquent boy* are rooted in a German original, in this case, *der verwahrloste Junge*. Such vocabulary appeared repeatedly in that exact jargon in the historical record and contemporary discussions, and thereby helped me in identifying certain

images of youth. I provide literal translations while I leave the original term in place if its use is in line with a broader scholarly consensus; I also mark constructs or images of youth in italics throughout the text to make it easier for the reader.⁴² Gender dynamics embedded within semantics are worth mentioning as well, especially given that male and female identities matured in conversation with each other. In Munich, *the delinquent boy* steps into the limelight along with his female counterpart, the well-researched *sexually deviant girl*, also known as *Veronika Dankeschön* or *Fräulein*. *The Halbstarke* finds his match in *the teenager* during the 1950s, as both are defined in the context of an emerging youth culture and increased Americanization. Such dynamics are apparent for *the student* and *the Gammeler* as well, although both constructions pay comparably less attention to still prevalent traditional gender norms. This characteristic is visible in the language because the male student (*der Student*) becomes a broader phrase, which, at times, also works as an umbrella term accommodating young female protestors. Such semantics already underscore the importance of gender mores when determining contemporary conceptions of normality. Clear distinctions also underscore that this is neither a history of a specific generation, nor age cohort or young people; it is also not a subcultural history of those who identified as *Halbstarke* in an attempt to resist existing societal norms. Although such elements informed discussions and alerted me again and again to specific images of youth, neither of these approaches captures the main point of this analysis: a variety of powerful adult contemporaries constructed youth as deviant in order to have reasons to control the young and society.

I organized this book along three main parts, each section tracing, defining, and characterizing overriding constructs of youth before indicating how those representations became tools of social control. Part I sketches the rise of *the delinquent boy* and *the sexually deviant girl* in the so-called crisis years (1942–1949). Here I outline how contemporaries constructed delinquency as homelessness, black marketeering, an apolitical mindset, and sexual deviancy due to fraternization. Not surprisingly, by spring 1946 local U.S. and German authorities began actively targeting youth, a process that reached its climax in a large-scale raid in October 1947. Part II then focuses on the miracle years (1949–1962). During these long 1950s the return to normality defined as economic stability shifted constructions of youth only slightly. *The Halbstarke* semistrong male rowdy and *the teenager* embodied a threat against established values and norms. Americanization of German high culture supposedly ignited a wasteful lifestyle and a rebellious character while so-called teenager clubs moved young girls into unsuper-

vised and thus dangerous spaces. Local authorities together with an increasingly powerful commercial sector symbolically wrestled with such constructs, and based on that, I assert, these groups were able to establish an apolitical young consumer that was of little danger for existing norms. Part III then introduces *the student* and *the Gammeler* during the protest years (1962–1973), both constructs emerging in the public sphere in Munich as early as 1962. In this section I demonstrate how open clashes with law enforcement outlined a shift because the increasing power of young people now more actively helped in reshaping existing representations of youth. Authorities, on the other hand, needed to come up with more subtle ways to control youth, an aspect apparent in the rise of undercover missions and the use of spatial planning. In the conclusion I ultimately highlight larger consequences of my analysis; I also comment on the continuing power of constructing youth as a threat in Munich and beyond, thereby demonstrating that talking about youth is still more than simply discussing young people.

Notes

1. “Verwehrloste Großstadtjugend—ein Problem unserer Zeit,” *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 31 May 1947.
2. Sozialpädagogische Sammlung Archiv Munich (SozipädAM), Mayor Karl Scharnagl (15 June 1946). See also: Mayor Karl Scharnagl (*Appell an die Münchner Schuljugend, bei der Schutträumung zu helfen; April 11, 1946*), quoted in Richard Bauer, *Ruinen-Jahre: Bilder aus dem zerstörten München 1945–1949* (Munich, 1983), 33.
3. “Bayerische Probleme: Jugend—Ernährung—Export,” *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 13 September 1946.
4. “Die Jungen,” *Der Münchner Merkur*, November 15, 1946–March 18, 1947.
5. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2d ed, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1995), 278.
6. Stefan Berger, *The Search for Normality: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Germany since 1800* (New York, 1997); Hanna Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968* (Princeton, 2001). See also: Jürgen Link, *Versuch über den Normalismus: Wie Normalität produziert wird*, 3r ed. (Göttingen, 2006).
7. See, for instance: Gill Jones, *Youth* (Malden, 2007).
8. See, for example: Mark Ruff, *The Wayward Flock: Catholic Youth in Post-war Germany, 1945–1965* (Chapel Hill, 2005); Richard Ivan Jobs, *Riding the New Wave: Youth and the Rejuvenation of France after the Second World War* (Stanford, 2007); Jaimey Fisher, *Disciplining Germany: Youth, Reeducation, and Reconstruction After the Second World War* (Detroit, 2007); Susan Whitney, *Mobilizing Youth: Communists and Catholics in Interwar*