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Gerd Horten

Concordia University - Portland, ghorten@cu-portland.edu

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Paper by Gerd Horten

ghorten@cu-portland.edu

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Radio and the Americanization of German Culture in the 1960s and 1970s

The purpose of this paper is to situate the development of German radio—more specifically West German radio here—in the context of the social and cultural changes in the Federal Republic in the 1960s and 1970s. The major themes and contexts which I will focus on are 1) the development of radio in West Germany in the postwar period; 2) the cultural changes of the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the mass media and consumer culture converged in very dynamic ways to radically alter the daily habits of West German society and 3) the influence of American pop culture in these developments, combined with the question of how this fits into the concept of the “Americanization” of European culture in the postwar period.

The main thrust of my discussion is to highlight how radio and radio programming both reflected and facilitated the rather dramatic cultural and social transformation of this era, whereby the period from the late 1950s through the mid-1960s deserves the greatest attention as the most critical years of this transition. Central in this respect for the purposes of this paper is what one might call the increasing “victory march by entertainment” in the face of official condemnation or, as one media historian put it in connection with German television, the “principle of consistent accommodation towards listener preferences.”¹ In terms of the late 1950s and, more importantly, the 1960s and 1970s this included the increasing influx of English-language music, namely British and American pop music, into German radio broadcasting. This dramatic transformation also brought forth the establishment of youth programs as inextricable and vastly popular aspects of radio broadcasting during the same decades, which led to a resurgence of radio listening in West Germany by the late 1960s and into the 1970s.

¹ Knut Hickethier, *Dispositiv Fernsehen, Programm und Programmstrukturen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*; in: Knut Hickethier (ed.), *Institution, Technik und Programm: Rahmenseite der Programmgeschichte des Fernsehens* (Geschichte des Fernsehens in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland Vol. 1) (München, 1993, 182.

I. The Development of Radio in West Germany in the Postwar Period

While much of West German society, especially in terms of its political and economic restructuring, adopted American models,² radio broadcasting interestingly enough ignored the American model of commercial broadcasting in favor of a public radio system consisting of regionally independent radio stations. While all of the occupation powers of West Germany left their respective marks on the newly established broadcasting stations, what brought them together and defined them was their united resolve to prevent another take-over of German broadcasting by the national government, like the one which had occurred during the Nazi rise to power. For this reason, and the fact that the Western allies could not agree on a unified broadcast system, the occupation powers decided on a federal system of regional radio stations. Each of these stations was collaboratively administered by a council of representatives appointed by the state governments as well as council which represented the major interest groups in a state (Land) or region, like churches, unions, chamber of commerce, etc. The size of the regional radio stations, as well as the mix of administrative oversight, varied depending on the preferences of the occupation power. The other aspect which united West German radio was that it was to cover three major areas: information, education, and entertainment.³

Yet those in charge of radio programming left little doubt of its primary mission: like German radio during the Weimar Republic, West German broadcasting in the postwar era was predominantly aimed at education and cultural uplift. As the new radio director of Radio Stuttgart (SDR), Erich Rossmann, announced in 1949, radio had to fulfill a great mission to educate the German people in political, cultural, ethical and economic affairs. In all broadcasts, whether serious or light, “the spirit of this educational mission must run like a red thread through all programs.” Or, as the newly appointed SDR program director, Peter Kehm, announced in 1952: “All those who view

² Detlef Junker, *Die USA und Deutschland im Zeitalter des Kalten Krieges, 1945-1968. Ein Handbuch.*

³ Konrad Dussel, *Deutsche Rundfunkgeschichte: Eine Einfuehrung* (Konstanz, 1999), 182ff. and Idem, *Hoerfunk in Deutschland: Politik, Program, Publikum, 1923-1960* (Berlin-Brandenburg, 2002), 319ff.

the main function of radio as supplying continuous sprinkling of music or background noise for daily life will be sorely disappointed.”⁴

Entertainment was decidedly second on the minds of the program directors, even though they knew that the population continually asked for more “light entertainment.” Listeners consistently voted for programs that did not require attentive and respectful radio listening but instead were suited for relaxation and distraction after a long day in the factory or office. In a survey of the NWDR in 1955, for example, over seventy percent of all listeners expressed a preference for programs which demanded little or even minimal attentiveness on their part.⁵ Moreover, even though programs with serious cultural content dominated the early radio schedules, most listeners responded that their radio was most frequently used to accompany another activity, like eating dinner or entertaining guests. In another poll, most respondents listed radio listening as secondary activity even during serious radio plays, political information broadcasts or church services.⁶

Even by the late 1950s, after radio officials had already made significant concessions towards meeting the general appetite for more light entertainment programs, the average for these programs hovered around thirty of all broadcasts. At the Bavarian radio station (BR), for example, light entertainment, dance music and traditional folk music made up roughly one-third of the programming in 1956/57.⁷ At the Stuttgart station entertainment and serious culture were officially evenly divided during the main listening hours (8-10 p.m.) of an average week during the mid-1950s. Yet much of this music was considered “elevated entertainment” and included operettas as well as suites and overtures especially arranged by the radio orchestras. A show entitled, “Music For All: A Round-About of Popular Melodies,” presented a piece by Paganini, a romantic opera, several operettas as well as, later on in the evening, popular songs and melodies by

⁴ Quoted in Konrad Dussel, “Der Streit um das grosse U: Die Programmgestaltung des oeffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunks und der Einfluss der Publikumsinteressen, 1949-1989,” in: *Archiv fuer Sozialgeschichte* (1995), 35: 260-61.

⁵ Axel Schild, “Hegemon der haeuslichen Freizeit: Rundfunk in den 50er Jahren,” in: Axel Schild und Arnold Sywottek (eds.), *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft in den 50er Jahren* (Hamburg, 1993), 470.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 467.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 472.

the dance orchestra of Cologne.⁸ Instead of the requests for more “Bunte Abend” programs, then, what listeners heard was a fairly steady diet of culturally uplifting offerings throughout the late 1940s and most of the 1950s. Even when radio entertainment was a part of the menu for the evening, it usually aimed a notch or two above the assumed tastes of the general masses.

Over the course of the 20th century, survey after survey demonstrated that listeners’ preferences have remained fairly consistent: they preferred light entertainment, programs which entertain, amuse and distract. What varied, however, was the willingness of the radio officials to “stoop” down and accommodate those requests. Those in charge of West German radio stations in the immediate postwar period, as well as the Weimar Republic, were consistently recruited from the “Bildungsbuergertum” (educated bourgeoisie) who only slowly and grudgingly, and only in the face of public or competitive pressure, acquiesced.

There could, thus, be no doubt about the intention of the responsible people in charge of radio: its mission was education, uplift, and enlightenment in the broad sense. What is also apparent is that the limited willingness of program directors to meet popular demand with entertainment broadcasts diminished radio’s popularity even before television appeared as a serious rival. By 1960, 85 percent of all West German families owned at least one radio, yet the average daily listening had decreased from three hours through most of the period to two hours by the end of the decade.⁹ This was both a sign of the stale radio programming as well as the inception of TV as radio’s main competitor. Simply put, radio was in a crisis during the second half of the 1950s.

What is ironic when one looks at German radio in the 20th century in comparative perspective, is that both totalitarian regimes, both the National Socialist Reich as well as the Communist radio in East Germany, were more conciliatory towards the general audiences by providing them with a greater degree of the desired entertainment programs. The reasons for this, of course, often lay with their own specific difficulties at keeping the populace tied to the regime. In general, both the NS- and East German regimes moved towards more entertainment programs when their societies came under heavy

⁸ Konrad Dussel, *Hoerfunk in Deutschland*, 371-2.

⁹ Schild, “Hegemon der haeuslichen Freizeit,” 465.

stress on other “fronts”: in the NS-period, this was most pronounced after 1942, when the tide of war turned against Germany and its allies; in the case of East Germany, it was most noticeable when it very fell behind in the competition with West Germany or otherwise wanted to suit its citizens back into the warm embrace of the state.

In West Germany, it was the late 1950s and early to mid-1960s which proved to become a key period of significant changes in terms of radio broadcasting. The impetus came not from external pressures, but rather through the internal transformations brought about by the shifting media landscape. The most dramatic outcome in terms of radio programming was that program directors increasingly were willing to meet the listeners half –way, and that the mission of radio broadcasting shifted away from education and cultural uplift towards satisfying the preferences and desires of most radio listeners: this meant giving in to their tastes and providing them with the entertainment and service programs they had asked for all along.

What were the developments which brought about the challenges to traditional West German radio and fairly quickly and irreversibly tipped the balance towards a new understanding of the mission and primary purpose of radio—one that favored entertainment and service over education and enlightenment? Several transformations came together to radically alter everyday life in the Federal Republic in the late 1950s and early 1960s:

1. Change of radio technology and radio usages: UKW, transistor radio, car radio
2. Rise and rapid dissemination of television in the 1960s, especially also new program ZDF
3. Emergence of an autonomous youth culture strongly influenced by American popular culture which had access to music through alternative routes like commercial radio (RTL) or purchase of albums—singles and LPs

Similar changes like these had changed the American and British broadcasting systems several years earlier. Yet the respective changes had been implemented more gradually in these countries which meant that the transition was more gradual and far less dramatic as in Germany.

II. Radical Change of West German Mass Media and Culture

The first major impetus for change consisted of the changes in radio technology itself, most of which originated in the 1950s but didn't come to full fore until the early 1960s. The development of the FM bandwidth (Ultrakurzwelle—UKW), for example, was available by the early 1950s when most West German stations used this technology to establish second programs in addition to their main offering. But reception was poor throughout much of the 1950s and not until 1960 did the vast majority of radio owners have sets capable of FM-reception (80%). Even in the late 1950s, therefore, listening to the second programs was only about one-fourth to one-fifth that of the first program. Significantly, too, it was these second programs which increasingly carried entertainment music and were designed as a contrast to the more culturally-oriented main programming. Their rise in the 1960s added to the rise of more entertainment programs during that decade.¹⁰

The second trend in radio technology pointed towards increased miniaturization of radio sets and mobility in terms of radio listening. The position of the radio as family entertainment media was passé by the early 1960s. Again, the trends started in the 1950s and forever changed the place of radio in West German daily life in the 1960s. As early as 1953 the industry produced 127,000 portable radios as well as 112,000 car radios, which equaled about 8 percent of total production that year. But it wasn't until late in that same decade when portable radios captured a significant portion of the market for families who owned two sets: in 1958, it was only 3 percent of all West German families. By 1961, in contrast, more than half of produced radios were portable ones, and more than one-third of West German families owned one.¹¹

The significance of this development cannot be stressed enough: family members—and especially younger members of the family--were now increasingly listening separately, no longer tied to the same program and able to pursue their own diverging tastes. This facilitated one of the major trends in terms of radio programming

¹⁰ Dussel, *Hoerfunk in Deutschland*, 320-31.

¹¹ Schild, "Hegemon der haeuslichen Freizeit," 462-63.

and listening in the 1960s, which consisted of a segmentation of the market and the development of more targeted programs for specific audiences, especially youth programming. The establishment of a third programming strand in all stations in the 1960s and 1970s was a clear and practical expression of this dynamic.

This previous discussion naturally flows towards highlighting the significance of the rise of television since it was the TV which replaced the radio as the family entertainment medium par excellence in the 1960s. In West Germany, television was introduced to the public at large in late 1952, but remained unaffordable for most families in the 1950s. In 1954, just under half of West Germans responded in a survey that they had seen a TV show, usually in a restaurant. In 1956, ownership of television in private home passed the 100,000 mark. By 1957, seven percent of German households had registered a TV set; this number increased to 25 percent in 1960. As Axel Schild remarks in his discussion on the introduction of television in Germany, one could almost speak of three-class society in West Germany in terms of the populations access to electronic media in 1960: 25 percent owned a TV set and had access to FM radio; close to 60 percent had no TV set, but owned a radio which allowed them FM reception; and just under 20 percent of Germans neither owned a TV set nor had access to FM radio, because their radio sets were outdated.¹² (Ausbau der Fernsehdichte in den 60er Jahren)

Television's impact on radio was most directly felt by radio through two developments in the early 1960s: the loss of primetime (7-10 pm) to television and the stronger trend towards entertainment in TV programming. The latter trend was certainly not a wholesale abandonment of broadcasting's cultural mission, but nevertheless a noticeable shift from radio's overall tendencies.

Not surprisingly, when giving a chance, West Germans early on expressed their preference for more entertainment programming in the emerging television programs, consistent with their responses to similar radio polls. In 1955, for example, over 60 percent of those interested in buying a TV set expressed their hope that television programs would broadcast entertainment programs. As a rationale people added statements like: "We don't get out much during the week and one needs a bit distraction,"

¹² Axel Schild, "Der Beginn des Fernsehzeitalters: Ein neues Medium setzt sich durch," in: Schild und Sywottek, *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau*, 477-482.

or “We go out rarely, so we want to make ourselves comfortable at home.” The most popular TV programs in the late 1950s were quiz- and game shows hosted by German TV stars, but modeled after American series, as well as TV movies. American TV series like “Texas-Rangers,” “Fury,” and “Corky” were also introduced in the afternoon programming on German television in the late 1950s, yet they ran a decided second in terms of listener preference after German entertainment programs.¹³

This trend towards increased entertainment programming was given an additional push with the introduction of the second TV station in West Germany in 1963 (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen—ZDF). For viewers, this meant not only that they now had an alternative to the first program (ARD), which had run as a monopoly up this point, but the ZDF also operated under decidedly different financial terms. Unlike the first television program, which was supported almost exclusively through monthly fees paid by the viewers, the ZDF received only 30 percent of its operational budget from viewers’ fees and was asked to rely on advertising revenue for the majority of its budget. From the get-go, then, this TV station had to keep its eye fastened more steadily on the viewers and their respective preferences. The first director of the ZDF, Karl Holzamer, drew the necessary consequences when he took over his job in 1963: “The steady flow of programming has to be entertainment in which everything else can be either embedded or emphasized.”¹⁴

This competition within the new medium, particularly its concomitant increase of entertainment programming, already exerted considerable pressure on radio programming to follow suit. As if this was not enough, this was further intensified by one additional trend which merged several new developments into one and had a direct impact on radio: the development of an autonomous youth culture in the late 1950s. Young Germans learned to satisfy their musical hunger without radio programs tailored to them: through purchase of singles, LPs and tape recorders, on the one hand, and by listening to

¹³ Ibid., 482-3 and 491. For an extensive discussion on the beginning of quiz and game shows, see Gerd Hallenberger, “Vom Quiz zur Game Show: Geschichte und Entwicklung der Wettbewerbsspiele des bundesrepublikanischen Fernsehens,” in: Hans Dieter Erlinger und Hans-Friedrich Foltin (eds.), *Unterhaltung, Werbund und Zielgruppenprogramme* (Geschichte des Fernsehens in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Vol. IV) (Muenchen, 1994).

¹⁴ Knut Hieckethier, *Geschichte des deutschen Fernsehens* (Stuttgart und Weimar, 1998), 142-161 and 215-17; the direct quote is on p. 216.

commercial radio stations outside of Germany, particularly RTL, as well as the British and American Armed Forces Networks, BFN and AFN.

Against the background of the “economic miracle” and the rapidly rising living standard in West Germany in the 1950s, an autonomous youth culture came off age in the late 1950s. This youth culture found its models especially in American popular culture and purposefully adopted those heroes and artifacts which had produced the most uproar in the United States as well and which provided them with the most effective means to set themselves apart from the stale and routine adult world: Elvis (“the pelvis”) Presley, rock’n’roll, free-style dancing, Marlon Brando (*The Wild One*), James Dean (*Rebel Without a Cause*) and much more. The vanguard of this youth movement, which came from the German working classes, was quickly derided as rowdies and hooligans (“Halbstarke”). Unfaced, indeed emboldened, by public condemnation, they adopted American-style fashion into their repertoire as well: blue jeans and big-plaid jackets, cowboy boots and a Texas necktie, Elvis hairdo—all in all, symbols of a cool and relaxed look, feel and life-style.¹⁵

What provided this new youth movement with recognition was not just its distinct and increasingly self-confident demeanor. Many West German youth by the late 1950s also had the means to pay for their preferences and quickly attracted the attention of the market place. Kaspar Maase estimates that many 14-19 year-old West German youth, especially those from the working class employed at vocational jobs, roughly had between DM 20-140 disposable income--increasing with age. They used this money to “stage” their new lifestyles in public places like pubs, swimming pools, cinemas, cafés and other popular hangouts.¹⁶

Most significant in terms of radio programming, however, were the musical preferences of this youth movement and their ability to satisfy their tastes--without mainstream German radio if necessary, or through alternative radio listening. To be sure, more and more of them owned their own radio sets: in 1960, more than one-third (37%)

¹⁵ For two excellent analyses on this youth movement in Germany, see Kasper Maase, *BRAVO Amerika: Erkundungen zur Jugendkultur der Bundesrepublik der fuenfziger Jahre* (Hamburg, 1992), esp. Chapter 5: “Ungeduldige Kinder der neuen Zeit—Jugendliche zwischen Restauration und Rock’n’Roll;” and Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2000), esp. Chapter 2: “The Wild Ones: The 1956 Youth Riots and German Masculinity.”

¹⁶ Maase, *BRAVO Amerika*, 75-77.

of males between 17 and 20 owned a portable radio; for females in the same age group the numbers were slightly lower (26%). In the same age brackets, 27 percent of all young males and 14 percent of all young females owned their own record player. Beyond that, 40 percent of all German youth between 14 and 19 years of age owned record albums, which assumes that they had access to a record player either in their homes or at friends' houses. Hand-in-hand with this went the increase of jukeboxes especially in teenage hangouts, which increased from 12,000 in 1957 to 50,000 by 1960.¹⁷

What must have been equally unnerving to radio officials was the fact that Germans listened to commercial radio stations like RTL as well as BFN and AFN in increasing numbers and that most of these listeners were young people. Radio Luxemburg got its start in the summer of 1957 and attracted listeners especially with its afternoon program which consisted mainly of popular music, interrupted by casual conversation and advertising. By the summer of 1958, 5 percent of all Germans were already listening to RTL. Two years after it went on the air, 10 percent of Germans listened to the station daily, and 25-30 percent tuned in to RTL on occasion. What makes these numbers even more significant is that the station could only be received in the western regions of Germany in the late 1950s. AFN and BFN were also regional alternatives to German radio and increased their numbers of German listeners throughout the 1950s.¹⁸

These trends towards youth-dominated record sales as well as the alternative radio listening especially by youth audiences only accelerated in the 1960s, as Konrad Dussel has convincingly demonstrated. A public poll in 1966 confirmed that every other West German family owned a record player; in homes with teenagers between 14 to 19 year old, the number increased dramatically to 88 percent. Along similar lines, customers under 25 year of age purchased 88 percent of all records in 1969. Finally, when the West German radio station (WDR) commissioned a radio listening study in 1970, its results must have been rather disheartening. While the radios within its radius of reception were tuned to either one of two programs the majority of time, among young people—those

¹⁷ Ibid., 78.

¹⁸ Schild, "Hegemon der haeuslichen Unterhaltung," 469-70.

between 14 and 29—RTL had already expanded its reach to half of the listeners by the late 1960s.¹⁹

III. New Approaches to German Radio Programming

How did those in charge of German radio stations respond to these changes and challenges? In the late 1950s, when the contours of the described media revolution first began to emerge, station directors responded very differently. At the Bavarian (BR) and the Southwest (SWF) radio stations, recognition of the monumental changes which were afoot sunk in rather slowly. When the Bavarian station introduced a new youth program called “Teenager-Party” in 1959, for example, teenagers greeted it enthusiastically and tuned in consistently. Yet the officials in charge ended the broadcast after several months because of its “low cultural level.” A listener request program of the same year at the Southern German radio (SDR) station pointed in the same direction. The program was entitled, “Music creates a good mood.” It consisted of listeners sending in their request for a specific musical numbers. Comparisons between request and actual numbers played show that while the broadcasters honored two-thirds of the requests for popular hits, listeners also quite literally got more than they asked for in terms of traditional German folk music (3 times as much as requested) and operetta (50% more than requested). Much of German programming continued to focus on “what the listener should like,” as the director of the Northwest German radio (NWDR), Adolf Grimme, once put it, rather than actual listener preferences.²⁰

Yet the realization of the imminent sea change ahead dawned to many radio officials at the same time when many broadcasters tried to hold fast to the cultural and educational mission of radio programs. As early as 1957, for example, the program director at the SDR—with an eye on the changes in Great Britain a few years prior—outlined radio’s future in a visionary memorandum entitled, “TV and the Future of Radio”. Peter Kehm, the author of the lengthy memo, pointed out some of the expected changes: radio was going to lose its primetime hours to television; broadcasters had to give up on the idea of offering one program which served the whole population;

¹⁹ Konrad Dussel, “Der Siegeszug der englischsprachigen Popmusik: Wi sich die Radioprogramme veraenderten,” Paper, 9 and 13.

²⁰ Schild, “Hegemon der haeuslichen Unterhaltung,” 475 and Dussel, “Der Streit um das Grosse U,” 264-5.

concretely, he suggested that the SDR should offer two contrasting programs, with one aiming largely at high culture and education, while the other was geared increasingly towards popular entertainment programs. These changes were initiated at the station in the late 1950s and continued in the early 1960s with significant changes to the program format of the entertainment programming, which after 1962 interspersed reports and information into afternoon programs dominated by popular music.²¹

At other stations it took considerably longer before program directors were willing to engage the changing realities. At the Southwest radio station (SWF), for example, significant program changes were only instituted after the radio director of many years retired in 1965. Then, the change was immediate and fairly radical. Beginning in January of 1967, SWF offered listeners a completely revamped programming approach: the first program was dominated by popular music, short reports and information. The second program, in contrast, was designed for minority programming, including symphony and opera, but also jazz.²²

Part and parcel of this transformation of West German radio programming in the mid-1960s, as Konrad Dussel has highlighted, was the large-scale entry of English-language music into German popular culture. Dussel situates the key change in terms of the dominance of English-language pop music fairly specifically in the years 1964/65. If one looks at the charts of a popular German youth magazine, *Bravo*, this sudden shift becomes apparent. In 1963, the German top-twenty list featured 19 German-language titles and only one English-language one: Elvis Presley's "Devil in Disguise" placed as number eleven. In 1964, nine out of twenty were already English-language texts: while the two frontrunners were still German songs, they were followed by five Beatles hits. By 1965, there were only six German hits in the running, whereby English-language songs (especially by the Beatles and Rolling Stones) now were in the majority. 1968 was the low point for German hits, as only two remained among the top twenty, while British bands as well as American imports (especially by the Bee Gees) completed their conquest of the West German charts.²³

²¹ Dussel, "Der Streit um das grosse U," 266-67.

²² Dussel, *Deutsche Rundfunkgeschichte*, 210-11.

²³ Dussel, "Der Siegeszug der englischsprachigen Popmusik," 4-5.

Even if radio programs did not immediately follow suit in terms of the dominance of English-language titles, there was little doubt that these changes affected radio programs in significant ways. One of the best examples of this is a new program introduced at the SWF in 1970, when another set of key positions were vacated because of retirements. Young, new broadcasters and DJs revamped part of the programming into a dynamic, youth-oriented set of afternoon broadcasts and called it “Pop Shop.” This three-hour program included one hour dedicated solely to new imports mainly from GB and the USA, “Top! – Pop! – Beat!,” as well as a one-hour listener request broadcast. Those in charge of the shows publicly prided themselves of not playing German hits, which they (and their listeners) considered *schmaltzy*. This new approach to radio broadcasting eventually led to the creation of SWF 3, which not only targeted youth audiences but, between service bulletins and news and short informative reports, definitely played to its tastes which had become increasingly mainstream.²⁴

These and similar changes over the coming years revitalized West German radio rather dramatically, especially in the 1970s. While television had surpassed radio in terms of average viewing/listening by 1964 (TV 1:58 hours; radio 1:11 hours) and expanded its edge even further by 1970 (TV 2:10 hours; radio 1:11 hours), radio made a comeback of sorts in the 1970s. By 1974 radio had made up significant ground compared to television (TV 2:11 hours; radio 1:52 hours) and actually surpassed its rival in terms of average listening time by 1980 (TV 2:08 hours; radio 2:14 hours). The most important development of this resuscitation was the development of third programs similar to SWF 3 by all major German radio stations, which entailed recapturing the youth audience with large doses of popular, often English-language pop music.²⁵

As this very brief overview points out, then, the primary purpose of German radio Programming underwent a dramatic transformation in the 1960s and continuing into the 1970s. Spurred by the changing media landscape as well as competitive pressure, radio increasingly disavowed its original mission of education and cultural uplift. Now the focus of attention became to attract as many listeners as possible for as long as possible to public radio stations. For this reason, radio programs began playing to the tastes of mass

²⁴ Ibid., 14-18.

²⁵ Dussel, *Deutsche Rundfunkgeschichte*, 216-18

audiences and often youthful mass audiences, which meant that English-language rock 'n' roll, pop and beat increasingly ruled the airwaves in the 1960s and 1970s. The new concept for successful radio programs assumed that radio was an accompanying medium, playing modern popular music (preferably in the original) during two-thirds of the program. This new-style radio format assumed little demand for in-depth reporting on the part of the listeners except for news and short informational reports which might of general interest or useful for daily life.²⁶

IV. Radio and the Americanization of German Culture

This finally leads to the question of how this transformation of radio in the 1960s and 1970s was related to the discussion of the Americanization of German culture. This specific example is particularly well suited to expose the flaws of what has become the quagmire of the Americanization debate. One of the central weaknesses of the concept is that it is rather murky and inexact. Because observers as well as scholars alike often use the Americanization concept to refer to very different, though possible related development. The three most frequently mentioned in studies are modernization, westernization and Americanization.

- Anselm Doering-Manteuffel: distinction between westernization and Americanization
- Kaspar Maase: notion of "Informalisierung" of German society and development of a "zivilen Habitus"—self-expression and democratization through adaptation of American culture and style
- Winfried Fluck: notion of "Enthierarchisierung" of the German social class system through Americanization; "Wir amerikanisieren uns selbst!"

General emphasis: 1. emancipatory impact of American culture

2. creolization (R. Kroes) or creation of hybrid, transnational cultures (I. Schneider):
US as "Selbstbedienungsladen"
3. internal dynamic of media and consumption development once societies develop or industrialize/modernize.

²⁶ Dussel, *Hoerfunk in Deutschland*, 402.