Emotion and Musicreception as indicators of change within societies.

Germany and England from the 1950s to the 1970s

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The general goal of this project is to analyze the relations between conservative and rebellious music cultures, focused on popular music from the 1950s to the 1970s. To achieve this, it will examine how these seemingly dichotomically juxtaposed groups influence and interact with each other, resulting in a remarkable change in music styles due to a process of diversification. Within this area of conflict, a change in the relations between audience, musicians, public opinion and mass media becomes visible, which - as I presume - develops analogue to the social and political changes of the sample period. Music builds communities, forms in- and out-groups, constructs and structures reality and identity.

This project will also explain the phenomenon that it is not only relevant who listens to a specific song, it may be just as relevant when this person listens to it. What starts as revolutionary music - whether with or without explicit political message - ends up fully established within the - imagined - cultural mainstream through a process of cultural liberalization as well as the fledgling of the recipients, who take their music along on their personal way into the establishment. The emotional bond with their music - which is crucial to music's trait of generating communities and identities - remains with the recipient during this process, even though the specific quality of the emotion connected with the music, which is often established during childhood and adolescence, develops according to the social background changes of the recipient over time. These long term emotions emphasize the importance of music for the lifestyle of the recipient.

This process of increasing cultural transfer, alternating identity constructions and growing commercialization is not a one dimensional story of success, but a complex diversification of cultural topics. The web of relations concealed behind these topics causes a partially competing, partially amplifying and partially destructive form of interaction for various protagonists - such as established and rebellious audiences, established and modern musicians and the mass media, which interchange their positions within this area of public conflict, that also tend to change over time. This Process expresses itself in a constant struggle for power over the public opinion, affirming, challenging or destroying existing structures of hierarchy. Music, and the emotions connected to it, becomes an indicator for a much broader conflict within the society.

Even though the general focus of this project is on German music culture, its perspective will be extended by a comparison to British music culture. On the one hand it will provide this project with the opportunity of the analysis of structural parallels and differences between the two countries, but on the other hand will enable it to point out cultural transfer between Great Britain and Germany in both directions, which cannot be overrated.