

## American Rock with a European Twist: The Institutionalization of Rock'n'Roll in France, West Germany, Greece, and Italy (20th Century)<sup>1a</sup>

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**Resumen:** Este artículo evalúa las prácticas desarrolladas en Francia, Italia, Grecia y Alemania para adaptar la música *rock'n'roll* y acercarla más a sus propios estilos de música y normas sociales, como se escucha en los primeros intentos de las respectivas industrias de música en crear sus propias versiones de él. El trabajo aborda estas prácticas, como instancias en los contextos francés, alemán, griego e italiano, de institucionalizar el *rock'n'roll* de acuerdo con sus propias posiciones frente a Estados Unidos, sus situaciones históricas y políticas y su pasado y presente cultural y musical.

**Palabras clave:** *Rock'n'roll, Europe, Guerra Fría, institucionalización, industria de música.*

### American Rock with a European Twist: The Institutionalization of Rock'n'Roll in France, West Germany, Greece, and Italy (20th Century)

**Abstract:** This paper assesses the practices developed in France, Italy, Greece, and Germany in order to accommodate *rock'n'roll* music and bring it closer to their own music styles and societal norms, as these are heard in the initial attempts of their music industries to create their own versions of it. The paper deals with these practices as instances of the French, German, Greek and Italian contexts to institutionalize *rock'n'roll* according to their positions regarding the USA, their historical and political situations, and their cultural and musical past and present.

**Keywords:** *Rock'n'roll, Europe, Cold War, institutionalization, music industries.*

### O rock americano com um toque europeu: a institucionalização do rock and roll na França, Alemanha Ocidental, Grécia e Itália (século XX)

**Resumo:** Este artigo avalia as práticas desenvolvidas na França, Alemanha, Grécia e Itália para adaptar o *rock and roll* e aproximá-lo mais a seus próprios estilos de música e normas sociais, como se escuta nas primeiras tentativas das respectivas indústrias musicais em criar suas próprias versões dele. O trabalho aborda essas práticas como instâncias nos contextos francês, alemão, grego e italiano, de institucionalizar o *rock and roll* de acordo com suas próprias posições diante dos Estados Unidos, suas situações históricas e políticas, seu passado e presente cultural e musical.

**Palavras-chave:** *rock and roll, Europa, Guerra Fria, institucionalização, indústria de música.*

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## Introduction

The years following World War II saw most European countries in ruins, occupied in efforts to rebuild themselves economically, socially, and culturally. At the same time the two postwar superpowers, the USA and the USSR, were already engaged in the division of Europe into new political spheres of influence and control. As neither of the superpowers and their collaborating countries could afford financially or emotionally to engage in another armed conflict, the European scene became the world's most stable area and remained so for several decades to come. The Cold War that resulted from such processes first crystalized in 1948 and was characterized by a degree of stability in the European context that contrasted strongly with the upheavals in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa during the ensuing period of decolonization.<sup>1</sup> This historical period was also characterized by technological, social, and financial developments that allowed for the wide dissemination of cultural products, particularly from the USA. This, in combination with the dominance, both informal and formal, of US culture together with US aid programmes for countries in what became the "American" sphere of influence (Marshall Plan) contributed notably to the popular culture of various European countries; music was important in these terms. The internationalization of the US musical styles of the time, mainly rock'n'roll, is a clear indicator of this. To look at the treatment of rock'n'roll in these contexts during the early years of its appearance can initiate discussions concerning their historical, political, economic, technological, and musical situations, situations that also affected the transformation of their popular musical forms into ones that would become both national and international at the same time.

This paper attempts to trace said process by comparing the situation in four European countries —France, Italy, Greece, and Germany (both East and West) and discussing the treatment of rock'n'roll within their borders according to their post-war social and historical status, as well as in regard to the position of each regarding the USA. The main criterion for choosing to focus on these particular countries has been the recognition that in order for a comparative study of this kind to produce findings that will be as illuminating as possible, it should most beneficially be applied to contexts of similar social and cultural situations. This will allow one to focus on the specific issue under consideration (for our purposes, rock'n'roll music in relation to US dominance during the post-war period) and not be diverted by factors that could complicate the study. In other words, to be able to pinpoint the similarities that these countries share in their post-war circumstances only serves to make the differences among them more obvious with respect to their treatment of rock'n'roll music. France, Italy, Greece, and West Germany share the common denominator of falling within the American sphere of influence during the period discussed here: they had easy and unrestricted access to American cultural products and had to maintain good relations with the USA due to their economic dependence on it. East Germany is used here as a reference point for the Eastern bloc and as a major indicator of how different political and social circumstances affect musical processes. As will be seen in what follows, despite the nationality and cultural background

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1 Peter Calvocoressi, *World Politics since 1945* (Essex: Pearson Education Ltd., 2009 [1968]), 3-4.

it shares with West Germany, rock'n'roll had a distinctly different process of development in East Germany due to reasons that are entirely extra-musical.

The practices each country developed in order to accommodate this new musical idiom, as heard in the attempts of their music industries to create their own versions of rock'n'roll, can reveal the efforts of the French, Italian, German, and Greek contexts to *institutionalize* rock'n'roll by concealing its national roots to the largest possible extent. The institutionalization of rock'n'roll music is seen in the conscious efforts of the mainstream and official cultural industries of each of these countries to create new versions of rock'n'roll that could be accepted as suitable for their national contexts. The songs created through these processes of institutionalization can initiate discussions that shed further light on the ways in which the positions of these countries regarding the USA, their cultural and musical past and present, and their historical and political circumstances affected the eventual development of their popular music to a large extent.

For this study I have relied mainly on secondary sources and employed a comparative assessment of the existing literature on the popular music of France, Germany, Greece, and Italy in an effort to theorize the forces at play that prompted the institutionalization of rock'n'roll in these four countries.<sup>2</sup> The existing literature regarding the popular music of each country concerned here is satisfactorily extensive, either in English, or in the original language. A significant guide has been the music itself, which was constantly taken into consideration in cross-reference with the literature. The vast majority of the songs produced in France, Germany, Greece, and Italy during the period discussed here are accessible in their original recorded form, on websites like YouTube.

## 1. Rock'n'roll and moral panics

France, Italy, and West Germany enjoyed an obvious industrial and economic recovery during the early years of rock'n'roll's reception (1955-1962). Greece had experienced a slower economic recovery due to a civil war (1946-1949), and also due to having industrialized at a later stage than the rest of the countries under consideration. In East Germany material living standards had risen, but due to the centralized economy, society was not so consumer-oriented. All of these countries appeared to have remained conservative societies, especially in comparison to the USA. However, this apparent conservatism can be seen as the result of the position in which they found themselves after WWII, a period of important changes in which the USA played a crucial role. More specifically, the post-war years marked a period when these European countries were making efforts to recover from the destruction caused by the war, and to redefine their national identities. Recognition of the USA as the dominant superpower in the world, and these countries' economic dependence on it, was considered an obstacle to the kind of ideas and aspirations that underpinned the national reconstruction processes that were taking place during these years. These European countries now more than ever before had been brought to the point of having to engage with the mass-produced, mass-mediated, and mass-promoted products of the US cultural industry. They had no choice but to recognize their economic

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2 For the possible pitfalls entailed in such comparative studies, see Richard A. Peterson, "Problems in comparative research: The example of omnivorousness," *Poetics* 33 (2005): 257-282. DOI: dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2005.10.002.

dependence on the USA, something emphasized by technological developments that allowed for the rapid export and distribution of US cultural products, and reinforced by the presence of US soldiers stationed in these countries (except for East Germany).

In reaction to what was often considered an invasion by “American” mass culture, the representatives of official European culture often stressed Europe’s historical affinities with higher intellectual and cultural ideals, in attempts both to reclaim their superiority in the face of US power in the world during this period, and also to express the incompatibility of its mass culture with the seriousness of European high culture. Such conservatism is therefore of an ambiguous nature here: it does not have to do with any backwardness on the part of the European countries in contrast with a more liberal American society. Instead, it can be argued that the apparent conservatism of these European countries is the result of the difficult position of having to allow the existence of US cultural idioms in their countries, even though they considered the basic principles of its entire culture (i.e., “mass culture”) incompatible with their own national cultural ideals —the ideals on which they were largely relying for the redefinition of their cultural identities.

In light of the above, it should come as no surprise that these European societies responded with hostility when faced with the highly enthusiastic reception of US mass culture among their local youth cultures. It is highly relevant here that the rise of the image of the “teenager” so characteristic of this period revealed a new social group in these countries, one with disposable income and with a strong tendency to reject the established culture of their parents and to embrace US cultural imports in general, and rock’n’roll in particular. In this respect, all four of the European countries discussed here found themselves helpless in their efforts to defend their sense of national identity from what they saw as a threat from the commercialized nature of US popular culture, which they regarded as inferior and trivial. The response to that threat was not subtle in character, and in all of the countries discussed here clear opposition towards rock’n’roll (and other US cultural products) was expressed by adult society through the use of terms like “degenerate,” and viewed as being part of a larger process of “Americanization.” The moral panic to which all this led can be seen as having two broad aspects: first, the association of rock’n’roll with violence (manifested in the “delinquent” activities of members of subcultures, most notably acting in gangs); and second, the association of the sensual, “primitive” physicality of rock’n’roll (most evident in the syncopated rhythm of the music and the dance styles associated with rock’n’roll) with the disruption of socially accepted gender norms and roles.

None of these countries, in their efforts to redefine their nationhood, could easily accept as compatible with their national character a musical idiom that generates violence, or that subverts what is considered acceptable social behaviour in terms of gender norms. Rock’n’roll was certainly not unique as a type of music that created these kinds of reactions (consider for example jazz, big band, blues, and boogie woogie). Nonetheless, rock’n’roll was particularly effective in these terms as a musical idiom that had a mass appeal, manifested during a time of social, economic, and technological developments that allowed it to have a hitherto unprecedented impact on teenagers’ lives. Bearing this in mind, it is justifiable that during this time of cultural reconstruction, rock’n’roll came to be seen as a “threat” in France, Germany (both West and East), Greece, and Italy.

It has been specifically stressed that US imports were inevitable, not only because the USA had become the country that provided these countries with financial and military support during the post-WWII years, but because they fell within its sphere of influence during the ensuing Cold War

years as well. The fact that East Germany is the exception here, having established a youth-protection law shortly before rock'n'roll made its appearance that banned US imports and the existence and consumption of anything "American-influenced" within its borders,<sup>3</sup> only helps to demonstrate how even popular culture is subject to international politics. The prevention of such cultural penetration, however, was not achievable at that time since people were able to travel to both sides of the divided Berlin before the Berlin Wall was built in August 1961, so the influx of American goods that West Berlin experienced with the Allied occupation and its open market was not restricted to West Germany alone: East German youth visiting West Berlin were likewise exposed to American movies, music, and fashion.<sup>4</sup>

Thus France, West Germany, Greece, and Italy (and, for different reasons, East Germany) had no way of avoiding the existence of cultural idioms like rock'n'roll within their borders. But the fact that moral panics were aroused among the older generation indicates that these countries were not ready to applaud such things and that their teenage population's fascination with them was largely unwelcome and had to be accounted for. As Pells puts it:

"The issue, therefore, was whether those on the receiving end of America's mass culture could diminish its magnetism, especially for young audiences who had grown up on American movies, rock music, comic books, and television shows, and who seemed permanently alienated from Europe's older, higher art forms. This then would be a cultural battle not only between Europe and America, but between intellectuals and commoners, parents and children, inside Europe itself."<sup>5</sup>

Pells' words serve to remind us of the further implications of the existence of US culture in Europe during the years of rock'n'roll's reception. This was still a time when European views of the USA were at the very least paradoxical and even contradictory, based on the one hand on a desire to emulate, a wish to become like the USA and live the "American dream," while on the other hand being characterized by resentment and considering US culture something to avoid, as something morally and intellectually inferior. But we should now move beyond what might at first sight appear to be purely ideological differences between these European countries and the USA in order to better grasp the underlying complexities of this contradictory relationship, which I suggest has its basis in the unequal character of the political and economic power relations involved. A closer look at the politico-economic relationships between the USA and West and East Germany, Greece, Italy and France will better inform the attitudes of these countries towards American popular culture in general, and rock'n'roll in particular.

## 2. It's not about the music

The political relationship of these countries to the USA is reflected in the ways in which its cultural products were received. One way of understanding the complexities of rock'n'roll consumption in these terms is to look at the case of West Germany: West Germany appears to have been more

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3 Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 67.

4 Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels*, 208.

5 Richard H. Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 234.

receptive towards rock'n'roll than the others due to its close political alliance with the USA that allowed for the easy importation and wide consumption of American culture. Despite the heated opposition and the reservations of the West German adult community and authorities in relation to it, West Germany had to be diplomatic in its response to rock'n'roll and other US cultural products, due to the reality of its position in terms of international politics and the Cold War. Therefore, though seen as threatening, American cultural products, including rock'n'roll, eventually became "de-demonized" due to their national origin. Indeed, as Poiger argues, even though West German authorities had made efforts to contain US influences during the first half of the 1950s, imports of this kind clearly could not be totally prohibited; instead, by the second half of the decade US popular culture and imports started to be used as a Cold War weapon, mainly after pressure from US government officials.<sup>6</sup>

In the second half of the 1950s, the consumption of popular culture was considered depoliticized by West German authorities, mainly in reaction to the kind of totalitarian restrictions placed on it within the Eastern Bloc countries (particularly in East Germany), and popular culture assumed a new political role as a result.<sup>7</sup> As Poiger puts it: "West German cold war liberals made cultural consumption compatible with a new German identity that they located beyond fascism and totalitarianism, indeed beyond all ideologies."<sup>8</sup> In this way, rock'n'roll became aligned with a new idea of Germanness that was above ideologies, favored consumerism, did not come into conflict with US ideas (initially, at least), and positioned West German society in opposition to their Cold War opponents, in particular with respect to East Germany.

The situation in West Germany was in stark contrast to the situation on the other side of the wall. Indeed, in East Germany teenagers were considered to oppose the state simply by being fans of rock'n'roll. Rock'n'roll in the East therefore became increasingly politicized, in contrast to its de-politicization in West Germany. To cite Poiger again: "in May 1957, the Politburo announced a ban on student travel to West Germany and NATO countries. Restrictive measures against rock'n'roll and jazz music and fans followed. In such a context, cultural consumption could not be depoliticized."<sup>9</sup> By opposing this music because of its US origin, East German authorities automatically turned their teenagers who were drawn to this new musical fad into outcasts and rebels, giving their consumption a heavily political significance. This is further informed by the "agenda" underlying what was regarded as the acceptable cultural orientation that East Germany should follow in pursuit of its construction of a national identity. As Goodboy, Tate, and Wallace suggest, in East Germany the communist SED<sup>10</sup> (created in 1946), "now sought to impose Soviet-style socialist principles on every aspect of a culture which had set out to evolve its own distinctively German identity."<sup>11</sup> They go on to argue that, as a cultural attitude in the GDR, there was an explicit

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6 Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels*, 68-69.

7 Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels*, 208.

8 Uta G. Poiger, "American Music, Cold War Liberalism, and German Identities," in *Transactions, Transgression, Transformations: American Culture in Western Europe and Japan*, eds., Heide Fehrenbach and Uta G. Poiger (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000), 135.

9 Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels*, 130.

10 Socialist Unity Party of Germany.

11 Axel Goodboy, Dennis Tate and Ian Wallace, "The Failed Socialist Experiment: Culture in the GDR," in *German Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, ed., Rob Burns (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 153.

hostility to everything which was modern or from the USA (hence the ban on rock'n'roll upon its initial appearance in the GDR).<sup>12</sup> Maas and Reszel write:

“[I]t was the era of the ‘cold war’ and East German politicians were in search of a socialist national culture, one which could articulate an *antifaschistische-demokratische Erneuerung* (anti-fascist-democratic renewal). In this climate Western influences had to be rejected [...]”<sup>13</sup>

However, this kind of responses to rock'n'roll were encountered not only in Germany, at the “centre” of the Cold War, although it has to be admitted that it was there that they were at their most intense. In Greece, the authorities had shown considerable tolerance for rock'n'roll during the first two years of its existence in the country. However, after the intensification of US involvement in Greek politics and its destructive effects (felt most strongly as the 1950s were coming to an end), the Greek stance towards the US changed.<sup>14</sup> It was at this point that social attitudes towards cultural idioms like rock'n'roll also changed, becoming increasingly hostile. Even in those countries where one would assume a more straightforward relationship with the USA, things were again surrounded by further complications. Here it is worth mentioning Britain as well, the main US ally during these years, which is often seen as absorbing US culture and promoting it unquestionably (the fact that the two countries form the “Anglo-American” cultural centre that dominates international cultural developments only helps to intensify such assumptions). However, as is also supported by Strinati,<sup>15</sup> Chambers,<sup>16</sup> Wicke,<sup>17</sup> and Cloonan,<sup>18</sup> despite the fact that the British market was open to the consumption of American cultural products, it seems they were considered no less threatening for Britain than for the other countries under consideration here; British society considered these idioms elements of triviality, commercialism, and a threat to their national culture.

The combination of Britain's alliance with and dependence on the USA did not allow for direct opposition to the cultural and economic dominance of the latter. Britain therefore remained not only the main importer of US goods but also the main exporter of US cultural products to the rest of Europe. France, on the other hand, as Crothers notes, had historically been closely aligned with the United States in world politics, and, despite the fact that tension often underlies their relations, they share common goals of “democracy, human rights, and capitalism;” and, although their relations are not always amicable, the “relationship endures for social, political, economic, and ideological reasons.”<sup>19</sup> However, France has always had a clear-cut attitude towards US culture and has never been subtle in its efforts to eliminate its influence in favour of elevating its own national

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12 Axel Goodboy, Dennis Tate and Ian Wallace, “The Failed Socialist Experiment,” 153.

13 Georg Maas and Hartmut Reszel, “Whatever Happened to...: The Decline and Renaissance of Rock in the Former GDR,” *Popular Music* 17: 3 (1998), 267. DOI: dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0261143000008540.

14 Christina Politi, “Europe in the Cold War: American intervention in Greece 1946-1964,” 13. *SAIS Bologna Paper* June 2011, 1-18. Emphasis in the original.

15 Dominic Strinati, “The Taste of America: Americanization and Popular Culture in Britain,” in *Come on Down? Popular Media Culture in Post-War Britain*, eds., Dominic Strinati and Stephen Wagg (London: Routledge, 1992), 57.

16 Iain Chambers, *Urban Rhythms: Pop Music and Popular Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 3.

17 Peter Wicke, *Rock Music: Culture, Aesthetics and Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 57.

18 Martin Cloonan, *Banned! Censorship of Popular Music in Britain: 1962-92* (Aldershot: Arena, 1996), 13.

19 Lane Crothers, *Globalization and American Popular Culture* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2010 [2007]), 170.

culture. Finally Italy, while also keen to protect its national cultural identity, was more passive and vulnerable to US cultural influences in comparison to France.

Hence, US influence in each of these countries was evident in cultural, economic, and political terms. As has been discussed above, their adult community and established cultures frequently disapproved of the powerful cultural influence of the USA in general, and more particularly, of rock'n'roll. The new youth culture, however, saw US popular culture as an escape from the parochial culture of their parents, and in this sense rock'n'roll was seen as a revolutionary new idiom. Whether these positions are manifestations of Americanism or anti-Americanism, imperialism or democratic modernization, they do not alter the fact that rock'n'roll made an explosive contribution to the popular music scenes in each of these countries starting from the time of its initial reception.

### 3. Let the music play

As we have already argued, the manifestations of moral panic that resulted from a faulty interpretation of teenage engagement with rock'n'roll went hand in hand with the fact that it was almost impossible for these countries to forbid its importation —France, Italy, Greece and West Germany were all economically and physically dependent on the USA, whereas East Germany, due to its proximity, could not completely isolate itself from its West German counterpart and consequently could not avoid the influence of the US. Indeed, rock'n'roll had already made a notable impact in these countries, and, though it was still treated as a dangerous but passing “fad” by the older generation at the time, an active involvement with it is evident in all the countries in question, albeit this first happened mainly in terms of consumption. Indeed, more similarities than differences are to be noted concerning the reception of rock'n'roll during the period of its initial appearance in these countries (which immediately precedes the process of its institutionalization). Teenagers' fascination with rock'n'roll and the dancing associated with it went hand in hand with the inability of most local youth to relate fully to the “meaning” of the lyrics due to the language barrier. However, the music, the dancing and the fashions that characterized rock'n'roll culture were enthusiastically embraced. Nonetheless, despite rock'n'roll's strong appeal to youth during the early years of its reception in these countries, it remained an imported idiom, and required more than mere enthusiasm for the music and the fashions associated with it to become incorporated into the popular musical forms of the host countries, even though it is fair to say that the process of “blending” appears to have already begun.

The societies of the countries in question, however keen they were to preserve their national cultural esteem, were at the same time being increasingly modernized, and were rapidly becoming much more consumer-oriented —in this sense, the potential profitability of rock'n'roll could not easily pass unnoticed. Bearing this in mind, the early involvement of European record industries with rock'n'roll should not come as a surprise. The record industries of France, West Germany, and Italy had begun releasing rock'n'roll from the moment of its appearance within their borders. Their first rock'n'roll record releases were anodyne imitations of rock'n'roll, mostly covers of hits from the USA, usually characterized by the use of lyrics in their indigenous languages. Examples of this are: “Nouvelle Vague” (Richard Anthony, 1959) in France, “Hafenrock” (Peter Kraus, 1958) in West Germany, and “Splish Splash” (1958, Mina) in Italy.<sup>20</sup> The substitution of English lyrics

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20 Covers of the Coasters' “Three Cool Cats,” Elvis' “Jailhouse Rock” and Bobby Darin's “Splish Splash” respectively.

with lyrics in the indigenous languages is an action that exemplifies the attempts of these European music industries to employ their local languages in order to make the rock'n'roll songs they released sound French, German, or Italian, and thus further turn their teenagers' attention from the American originals to their own local rock'n'roll releases.<sup>21</sup>

In the process of doing so, they adapted their first rock'n'rollers to the US model and replicated the US idiom in order to make their local productions attractive to the local youth culture. The first rock'n'rollers were manufactured in such ways as to resemble US performers to the greatest possible extent (Richard Anthony, Danye Gerard and Anny Cordy in France, Peter Kraus and Ted Herold in West Germany, and Adriano Celentano, Little Tony and Mina in Italy, etc.). This is emphasized by the fact that among the rock'n'roll performers who emerged during the early years of rock'n'roll's reception in these countries there was always one figure who was promoted as the "local Elvis"; France had Johnny Hallyday, Italy had Adriano Celentano, and West Germany had Peter Kraus.<sup>22</sup> One might interpret this as the use of a successful reference point of US rock'n'roll —Elvis being the major rock'n'roll star at the time— to create an equivalent in each country, and thus make the audience turn to local manifestations of rock'n'roll culture. In combination with the release of covers of successful US rock'n'roll songs with the use of lyrics in the indigenous languages, the manufacturing and promotion of "local Elvises" exhibits the initial attempts of the local music industries and broadcasting systems to "domesticate" rock'n'roll, the efforts to bring it home. These attempts were, nevertheless, more "instinctive" and less "calculated" during the early years of its reception.

Just as "instinctive" was the response to rock'n'roll foregrounded by the release of parodies like the Boris Vian-Henri Salvador collaborations in France with "Rock and Rollmops" and "Va t'faire cuire un oeuf, man," and Renato Carosone's "Tu vuò fà l'Americano" in Italy. These parodies make use of rock'n'roll and its appeal to the youth culture in a humorous way and in this respect, I suggest, they turn rock'n'roll towards satire, or even ridicule. In their use of humour they juxtapose elements of rock'n'roll with elements that relate to their indigenous culture both musically and in terms of sense of humour. In this sense, the threatening aspects of rock'n'roll are in fact downplayed by being shown to be unable to co-exist with national cultural idioms of humour and irony without being shown to be trivial. However, the fact that most of the practitioners of such parodies are not themselves representatives of the youth culture cannot avoid the impression of a somewhat patronizing cultural condescension whereby the triviality attributed to this music simply ends up supporting the attitude of the official establishment culture. My reading of these humorous approaches to rock'n'roll complements my discussion in the previous paragraph of issues regarding the first rock'n'roll releases by the music industries of these European countries, and points to another manifestation of the initial "instinctive" attempts to domesticate rock'n'roll, which was by "taming" it. By depriving it of the ability to be considered dangerous and threatening, they simultaneously downplayed what was seen as the genuine rebelliousness of young rock'n'roll fans, and, thus, the music's ability to provoke real feelings of anxiety and unease among adults.

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21 While in France the language of the lyrics was changed immediately and remained French throughout, Italy was late in realising that the potential of the Italian language was more significant than English when it came to Italian rock'n'roll production and released covers in English for the several years after the reception of rock'n'roll. West Germany, on the other hand, released rock'n'roll in the German language immediately, although it later went on, as we shall see, to switch the language of the lyrics to English.

22 Stephen Gundle, "Adriano Celentano and the Origins of Rock and Roll in Italy," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 11: 3 (2006): 370. DOI: dx.doi.org/10.1080/13545710600806870.

There is little or no evidence of early local production of rock'n'roll records either in Greece or East Germany, in the former case because its record industry was slow in adopting the new trends, and in the latter case because of the restrictions imposed by the authoritarian political regime at the time. Nevertheless, as we shall see later, the East German state did also begin to attempt to domesticate the music. These attempts, which were more “calculated” than “instinctive” due to the nature of the regime, coincided with the more “calculated” attempts at domestication that France, West Germany, Greece, and Italy would now start to employ in order to accommodate the idiom. This was an institutionally based process —involving the music industry, broadcasting systems, the state, and the press— and this is why I have used the term “institutionalization” to identify it. This is essentially a never-ending process that is still visible today in the mainstream of the music industry, but which can be said to have had its first major manifestation during the years following the initial reception of rock'n'roll, and which played a crucial role in the further development of the rock idiom in each of the four countries considered. As shall be seen later, the French, German, Greek, and Italian “rock-influenced” music of the institutionalization phase allowed for the development of national rock'n'roll styles which, while concealing the elements of rock'n'roll that were considered the most transgressive and incompatible with the culture of each country, at the same time retained the modern, rebellious character that rock'n'roll appeared to have in order to exploit its commercial potential.

#### 4. Bringing the music home

For the music industries, the official broadcasting systems, and the cultural elites of France, West Germany, Greece, and Italy, the fact that rock'n'roll had already undergone a process of institutionalization (the product of the domestication of a grassroots idiom that was perceived as “transgressive” and was gaining popularity among the youth market) in its place of origin, the USA, before reaching their countries seemed to be of minimum relevance. On its arrival in the countries under consideration here it was still perceived by European adults and enjoyed by the youth as a rebellious cultural idiom —not least because of its origins in the USA. Thus, in order to be accepted, it called for further domestication: one that was more “calculated” than the efforts we have seen taking place in the period of its initial reception. Nevertheless, the process and extent of institutionalization varies in each context according to the particular situations that make it possible and that differ from country to country: the availability of technology and the economic situation that makes its ownership possible, the functioning of the broadcasting system, state regulations concerning broadcasts, and the agents of institutionalization (important figures like radio disc jockeys, television show presenters, rock'n'roll stars) who work systematically towards reaching a wide teenage audience.

However, in order to be able to make a comparison between the institutionalization processes of these European countries in regards to rock'n'roll, it must be acknowledged that all of them had developed a framework that *allowed* for the institutionalization to take place. Indeed, the institutionalization of rock'n'roll in the way that is going to be described here would not have been possible if the countries had not developed the technology, music industry, media, and broadcasting systems required to be able to support the production and diffusion of a locally produced musical idiom. This development had already begun in the immediate post-war years and was well under way during the early years of the reception of rock'n'roll, resulting in technological

and mass communication developments in national contexts that would have ever-increasing influence on the course of rock'n'roll in each of these countries, not least in the process of its institutionalization. The institutionalization of rock'n'roll in each of these countries should therefore be read as an extension of these technological and media developments that occurred during the "reception years" (roughly 1956 to 1962). Furthermore, the emergence of the "teenager" and the rise of consumerism that characterized the years of rock'n'roll's reception are to be seen as tightly connected with the technological advancements that allowed for the production, distribution and consumption of rock'n'roll in France, West Germany, Greece, and Italy.

Seen in these terms, it can be argued that it was the combination of these two phenomena that prepared the ground for the more organized and "calculated" treatment of rock'n'roll and led to more idiosyncratic (albeit commercialized) indigenous versions of the idiom in each of these countries. The significance of "institutionalization" lies in the fact that it resulted in songs from each country that are evidence of their first attempts at creating national versions of rock-influenced popular music, even if these were not yet what could be called spontaneous creations of the rock'n'roll youth audiences themselves. The versions of rock'n'roll that resulted from the active engagement of the French, German, Greek, and Italian music industries aligned with what was considered appropriate for the popular music of these countries, and were designed to be compatible with their already existent popular music styles that pre-dated the appearance of the new musical idiom. This is not to deny that this process converted rock'n'roll into a pop idiom, and in turn sparked the first arguments over what was soon to become the subsequent distinction between "pop triviality" and "rock authenticity" that were to characterize rock culture for a long period of its heyday.

"Pop," as Young puts it, "is the culture of imperial socialisation, of institutionalised religion, consensus and commerce."<sup>23</sup> This view very accurately describes the transformation of rock'n'roll during this phase in each of the countries under consideration, and which is not to be seen as restricted solely to the activities of the recording industry and the music business itself. Institutionalization should rather be seen as extending beyond the limits of music into efforts to create a wider rock'n'roll "culture," supported and promoted by a multitude of agents and institutions like radio, television, the press, and even the nation state. This process provided the cultural framework within which this new, transformed version of rock'n'roll would find its "home" in each of these countries. It must be remembered, nevertheless, that this process did not start happening at a single moment in time, but that in most cases it became evident during the first years of rock'n'roll's reception. Radio and TV shows with rock'n'roll at their core began to be broadcast in several of these countries during the late 1950s (e.g., "Salut les copains" in France in 1959); rock'n'roll started being covered in the teenage press (*Bravo* in West Germany in 1956, *Pantheon* and *Fantazio* in Greece in 1961);<sup>24</sup> rock'n'roll entered the mainstream culture through cinema (in Italy with films like *I ragazzi del juke-box* (1959), *Urlatori alla sbarra* (1959) and *I teddy boys della canzone* (1960)), and in Greece with *Tria paidia voliotika* (1957) and *I thia apo to Chicago* (1957).<sup>25</sup>

The institutionalization of rock'n'roll in Italy was further strengthened by the inclusion of rock'n'roll songs in the San Remo Festival in 1961, with similar renditions of the song "24 000 baci"

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23 Rob Young, *Electric Eden: Unearthing Britain's Visionary Music* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011), 181.

24 Nikos Mpozinis, *Rock pagkosmiotita kai Elliniki Topikotita: I koinoniki istoria tou rock stis chores katagogis tou kai stin Ellada* (Athens: Nefeli Publications, 2008), 202.

25 Stephen Gundle, "Adriano Celentano," 375.

by Celentano and Little Tony which won second prize.<sup>26</sup> East Germany, as was to be expected, left no space for such cultural endeavours, although the state's introduction of the *Lipsi* dance (a fast dance for couples that was to counter the appeal of rock'n'roll dance styles that featured couples dancing apart) could be interpreted as something like a rather clumsy and unsuccessful attempt at the domestication of rock'n'roll. Seen in these terms, rock'n'roll was already being explored during the period of its reception in ways that would accommodate both teenagers' demands and the cultural industries' commercial interests: teenagers were enjoying a musical culture borrowed from another context, but one which was at the same time something specifically their own — keeping adult society at arm's length— while the music industry was making money from a new fad that was very profitably combined with the new consumer power of the youth culture.

The difference between the accommodation that happened in the early years of rock'n'roll's appearance and the one discussed here lies in the fact that the process of institutionalization is now taking place in a more “calculated” way and on a much larger scale. It is also a broader phenomenon, since simultaneous efforts are being made in all the countries considered here to convert rock'n'roll into “family entertainment”. In what follows I will discuss institutionalization in terms of music in order to highlight how the social and political tensions in France, Greece, Germany(s) and Italy explored in the first sections of this paper were projected onto rock'n'roll music itself. Indeed, the sound of the music is the main indicator that the institutionalization discussed here took place in an active way. As we are to see, the “institutionalized” styles of rock'n'roll produced by the music industries of these countries have a co-opted, watered-down character, “distanced” from the original rock'n'roll style, in that what were perceived as its roughest characteristics (most notably the African-American musical elements) are now concealed as far as possible.

One of the common “strategies” the record industries these European countries applied in these terms was an attempt to align the sound of US rock'n'roll to their indigenous popular music styles. For example, in the process of domesticating rock'n'roll the French record industry applied its dominant production methods to emphasize, as Warne puts it, the “melodic, narrative, and structural aspects of the song,” while downplaying “the rhythmic or discordant elements of rock'n'roll.”<sup>27</sup> With the use of such techniques, the French recording industry managed to bring the new pop songs closer to features that were more characteristic of the *chanson française*.<sup>28</sup> This kind of “domestication” of rock'n'roll took place not only in terms of musical aspects, but also in terms of the contents of the lyrics as well. One popular idea presented in the lyrics of these kinds of songs is that of honest romance between young couples. Warne interprets this politically, and maintains that this emphasized honest romantic love “as forming a well-spring of the republican order.”<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, new dance crazes related to rock'n'roll, e.g., the twist, were promoted in order to attract wider audiences and to emphasize further the appeal of this music to people of all ages. This in turn, as Warne observes, resulted in the use of rock'n'roll music at social events like weddings or the *bal populaire*, which served to legitimize it further.<sup>30</sup> Looseley writes: “[t]hus eviscerated,

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26 Stephen Gundle, “Adriano Celentano,” 376.

27 Chris Warne, “Music, Youth and Moral Panics in France, 1960 to Present,” *Historia Actual Online* 11 (2006): 53.

28 Chris Warne, “Music, Youth,” 53.

29 Chris Warne, “Music, Youth,” 53.

30 Chris Warne, “Music, Youth,” 53.

rock'n'roll could be safely transmitted to a wider youth constituency as a consumer style. French pop was born, known as *le yéyé*.<sup>31</sup> *Le yéyé*, named after the English word “yeah” that is so often repeated in rock'n'roll songs, is the musical style that would be promoted as the music of the culture of *copains*, a culture widely popularized through the magazine *Salut les Copains* that embodied the “philosophy” of the institutionalized, rock-influenced culture of France.<sup>32</sup> For this reason, it needed to be a musical style with sounds that would not sound too rough, threatening, and/or rebellious, the characteristics of rock'n'roll that were often attributed to its African-American origins.

According to Drott, the new *yéyé* product emphasized its distance from the African-American elements of rock'n'roll with an obvious turn towards the *variétés*: as far as instrumentation is concerned, although electric guitars and drums remained, they were used within an instrumental context that was more polished, and less rough.<sup>33</sup> It is widely acknowledged that most *yéyé* songs were products manufactured by the record companies, who provided the performers with lyrics and music written by others. Gillian Hills' “Zou bisou bisou” (1962), Sylvie Vartan's “Si je chante” (1964), France Gall's “Laisse tomber les filles” (1964), Claude Françoise's “Belles! Belles! Belles” (1962), Chantal Goya's “C'est bien Bernard” (1964), Sheila's “L'école est finie” (1963) and Hallyday's “Les bras en croix” (1963) are indicative of this aspect of the *yéyé* style. However, there were also exceptions, like Françoise Hardy, who appears to have written many of her own songs, such as “Tous les garçons et les filles” (1962), but despite the fact that she wrote this song herself, it is nonetheless perfectly aligned with the musical character of the *yéyé* pop sounds.

In West Germany rock'n'roll also went through a process of “cleaning up” what was considered its essentially “primitive” character, and an attempt was made to bring it closer to the *Schlager* song tradition by associating it as much possible with the “good boy/good girl” image (something very evident in the manufactured personas of Peter Kraus and Conny Froboess, the most popular figures in these terms). Examples of songs from the period are Peter Kraus's “Sweetie” (1962) and Ted Herold's “Sag' mir bitte die Wahrheit” (1964), and Conny Froboess' “Junge, mach Musik” (1961). At the same time, however, West German rock'n'roll of this period was perceived as largely unsatisfactory by its youth audiences, as Poiger explains:

“The attempts to tame rock'n'roll had limited success. Many young Germans perceived the German rock'n'roll songs as soft imitations and preferred the American originals, which often were versions whose lyrics and rhythms had already been tamed for a white audience. And fashion makers were hardly able or willing to prevent girls from wearing Peter Kraus vests along with James Dean jackets. Finally, even with their tamed German version of rock, Froboess and Kraus introduced American words such as ‘baby,’ ‘sexy,’ and ‘love’ into the German vocabulary.”<sup>34</sup>

Poiger's comment here is important, since it particularly touches upon the issue of language choice in rock song lyrics, something that is of particular significance for the development of West

31 David Looseley, “In From the Margins: *Chanson*, Pop and Cultural Legitimacy,” in *Popular Music in France from Chanson to Techno: Culture, Identity and Society*, eds., Hugh Dauncey and Steve Cannon (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), 27.

32 Chris Tinker, “Shaping Youth in *Salut les Copains*,” *Modern and Contemporary France* 15: 3 (2007): 295.

33 Eric Drott, *Music and the Elusive Revolution: Cultural Politics and Political Culture in France, 1968-1981* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 104.

34 Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels*, 193.

German rock music, as it is also, indeed, significant for the other countries in this study. On the other side of the Berlin Wall we also witness the first efforts of the East German state at the institutionalization of rock'n'roll during this stage. Frank Schöbel, who subsequently became one of the most important pop singers in East Germany, released the hully-gully single "Looky-Looky" in 1964 under the state record company label Amiga, as well as the album *Party Twist* the same year. His songs, all in the German language, were obviously watered down, tamed, and heavily influenced by the *Schlager* tradition, much more than was the case with the kind of rock'n'roll produced in West Germany during this same period. However, I have not been able to find documentation that would indicate that any other rock'n'roll-related material was released in East Germany during this phase. Given their limited numbers and their "harmless" character, these songs could not easily serve as a substitute, given the East German audience's real fascination with rock'n'roll, and East German fans consequently continued to listen to the music broadcast by West German radio stations.

In Greece, on the other hand, the "institutionalization" of rock'n'roll was centred on its commercial potential. This came after the gradual appearance of more Greek bands who became increasingly competent musically speaking, gaining visibility with their audience and eventually with the industry. Between the years 1963 and 1966 these bands were covering songs of their favourite foreign rock bands. Their own creative attempts were largely confined to these songs and to others that were direct imitations of them; it is furthermore important to note at this point that the songs they recorded during this phase almost exclusively featured lyrics in the English language.<sup>35</sup> Their band names were also in English in order to sound more "modern" and "contemporary." In 1964 some of the first attempts were made towards the creation of "original" songs; the music faithfully followed the international character of rock'n'roll, mostly under the guidance of music business representatives, journalists, and music producers. The Forminx became particularly influential at this time, and their version of "Jeronimo Yanka"<sup>36</sup> (1965) and "Il Peperone" (1965) were very popular with the Greek audience.<sup>37</sup>

The "institutionalized" Greek rock'n'roll of this period, unlike that in most of the countries under consideration here, did not emphasize Greek musical elements: on the contrary, it was very "un-Greek," and placed all its emphasis on replicating not only American and British rock music, but French and Italian hybrids as well. To cite some examples: "Get away from me" by Adams Boys (1965), "Julie" by Blue Birds (1965), "O.K. Charm" by the Charms (1965), "Hello Beethoven" by the Girls (1966), "Friends" by the Idols (1966), "Special 65 Yanka" by the Juniors (1965), "The Yupee Ya Ya Song" by Zoe and the Minis (1966), "Do I Love You" by the Play Boys, "She's Cool" by Loubogg (1966), etc. However, as I suggested earlier, although this specific approach to the institutionalization of rock'n'roll presents obstacles to the emergence of a more idiosyncratic version of Greek rock'n'roll, it nevertheless helped the music to become more acceptable within Greece itself. The flip side of the coin was that, through their promotion of the foreign character of rock'n'roll in order to attract wider youth audiences for the institutionalized version of Greek rock'n'roll, accompanied as it was with the use of English lyrics, the entrepreneurs of the time

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35 Manolis Ntaloukas, *Elliniko Rock: Istoría tis Neanikis Koultouras apo ti Genia tou Chaous mechri to thanato tou Pavlou Sidiropoulou (1945-1990)* (Athens: Agkyra, 2006), 165.

36 "Yanka" was a Finnish folk dance.

37 Manolis Ntaloukas, *Elliniko Rock*, 163 and 165.

prompted the fashion-conscious Greek youth culture to dismiss their “Greek-ness,” which they saw as a disadvantage during the period discussed, (due to disillusionment with their recent history, as well as with the conservative traditionalism generally promoted by the official culture).

In Italy the situation was different: the Italian rock’n’roll of the period, as well as its practitioners who were called *urlatori*, was censored at the level of studio production: as Gundle puts it, it was “watered down” into a more acceptable music genre; as had happened in the USA, there was an effort to “marginalize the rougher, more unconventional elements.”<sup>38</sup> According to Minganti, in most cases the grain of the sound, the rhythm, and the cultural potential of the songs were altered. As an example of this Minganti presents the 1962 Italian version of Neil Sedaka’s “The King of Clowns,” named “Il Re dei Pagliacci,” which was “unblackened” and “Italianised.”<sup>39</sup> Overall, according to Minganti, the content of the lyrics was gentler and the male performers did not appear as menacing (Giorgio Gaber, Adriano Celentano, Peppino Di Capri) in the Italian version of rock’n’roll, while the females were more transgressive (Mina, Brunetta, Patty Pravo); the “rock stars” appeared as impersonations of the good boy/good girl image.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, as Tarli points out, the “institutionalization” of rock’n’roll played on the boundaries of what could be considered more “rebellious” in the musical expression: more specifically, he mentions how the *urlatori* appeared to be decent, while at the same time they could talk in their songs about relationships in ways that were more real and spontaneous than what Italian popular music had known until then, as well as what was presented by mainstream popular music practitioners of other kinds of popular music in Italy in that same period.<sup>41</sup> Key figures of the 1960s in these terms were Gianni Morandi who, like Presley, had done military service, and Rita Pavone, an androgynous, “gianburrasca” (kid menace), virginal in contrast to the image of French and British lolitas, as Minganti describes her.<sup>42</sup>

The sound of the institutionalized version of Italian rock’n’roll is evident in Mina’s “Stessa spiaggia stesso mare” (1963) and “Renato” (1962), Adriano Celentano’s “Peppermint Twist” (1962) and “Serafino Campanaro” (1963), Peppino di Capri’s “Speedy Gonzales” (1962), Little Tony’s “Il Ragazzo Col Ciuffo” (1962), Gianni Morandi’s “Fatti mandare dalla mamma” (1962), and Rita Pavone’s “Viva la papa col pomodoro” (1965). Fiori argues that the Italian rock songs representative of this period, when not cover versions, were “often an involuntary parody, which used the mechanism of disassociation without managing to make it dynamic and plausible.”<sup>43</sup> In this sense, the Italian version of rock’n’roll produced during the institutionalization period by trying to maintain its affinities with at least some elements of rock’n’roll while at the same time concealing its more subversive character in favour of an Italianized approach that evoked the influence of light opera singing and the lyricism of the melodrama, produced mostly unconvincing musical results.

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38 Stephen Gundle, “Adriano Celentano,” 377-78.

39 Franco Minganti, “Rock’n’Roll in Italy: Was It True Americanization?,” in *Cultural Transmissions and Receptions: American Mass Culture in Europe*, eds., Rob Kroes, Robert W. Rydell and Doeko F.J. Bosscher (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1993), 143.

40 Franco Minganti, “Rock’n’Roll in Italy,” 145.

41 Tiziano Tarli, *Beat Italiano. Dai capelloni a “Bandiera Gialla”* (Roma: Alberto Castelvechchi, 2005), 23.

42 Franco Minganti, “Rock’n’Roll in Italy,” 145.

43 Umberto Fiori and Michael Burgoyne, “Rock Music and Politics in Italy,” *Popular Music 4: Performers and Audiences* (1984): 272.

Minganti summarizes the situation as follows: Italian rock'n'roll covers were “xeroxed” onto white American rock'n'roll, which had already been “cleansed” in the USA, something that would lead to the disappearance of the African-American heritage of rock'n'roll in Italy.<sup>44</sup>

However accurate Minganti's estimation of the situation in Italy, which can also be applied in varying degrees to the institutionalization process in the music industries of the other countries under consideration here, I suggest that his claim that the music of this period in Italy entirely deprived rock'n'roll of the major characteristics of its African-American originals may be considered an overstatement. While African-American elements were undoubtedly downplayed, I would argue that the overall sound of these songs still retains clear vestiges of its origins in “American” rock'n'roll. However, such statements cannot easily be supported with musicological evidence, mainly due to the ways in which rock'n'roll was *received* in these European countries: that is to say, the way indigenous audiences *perceived* the musical styles that came from the USA. The fact of the matter is that there was not always a clear idea of what rock'n'roll actually was in musical terms, something that was directly relevant to the extent of institutionalization itself, namely the kinds of information concerning rock'n'roll that were promoted by music journalists and the media in general.

In countries such as Italy and Greece, for example, the unavailability of first-hand musical information on rock and the inadequacy of the local media to provide audiences with relevant information had resulted in a situation where *all* popular music styles imported from the USA were perceived as rock'n'roll and were surrounded by the same connotations and associations as rock'n'roll: they were consequently *treated as* rock'n'roll (see, for example, the “unblackening” of Neil Sedaka's “The King of Clowns” for the Italian market, as mentioned above). I suggest here that audience perceptions, understanding, and knowledge during the period of reception are of great significance in relation to the ways in which rock'n'roll developed in each country, even though they might seem to defy musical detail and retrospective musical labels.

Because of the music industry's involvement in the process, the institutionalization of rock music exploded into the creation of a range of “national” imitative rock'n'roll styles that were little more than commercial attempts to engage and manipulate the indigenous teenage audiences of these countries. The resulting musical styles were pop music by definition. This was a time when the making of rock music was taken up and exploited by record companies and managers who, even though they might not have been youthful themselves, would nevertheless have an important influence on how rock music developed. As we have seen, the music industries and broadcasting systems in France, Germany, Greece, and Italy were now fully grown, technologically equipped and organized, so the infrastructure for the institutionalization of rock'n'roll was firmly in place. It must be remembered that the process of institutionalization did not take place only in musical terms: in each of the countries we have looked at, media and cultural entrepreneurs promoted a rock'n'roll-inspired culture that was tamed and aligned with the “moral” standards of their respective countries.

Rebellious and sensual elements that had caused moral panics among the adult generation during the previous phase had now been either toned down or eliminated. In a similar vein, the “institutionalization” of the music manifested itself in each context in efforts to tame the rougher elements of the music, minimize its African-American character, and blend rock'n'roll with elements that were more characteristic of the popular music forms of the countries in question: *chanson* elements in France,

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44 Franco Minganti, “Rock'n'Roll in Italy,” 145.

melodramatic lyricism in Italy, and *Schlager* in the two Germanys. Greece alone did not follow this line, since in order to take advantage of Greek audiences' fascination with foreign fashion, the Greek "institutionalizers" of rock maintained their version of it as a tame semblance of foreign music, largely by concealing specifically Greek elements (including language) altogether.

In any case, the institutionalization and continuous commercialization of rock'n'roll, facilitated both by its incorporation into the mainstream music industry and, consequently, by its seeming cultural legitimization, led to the creation of indigenous rock idioms that in most contexts eventually proved to be unsatisfactory for young audiences in the five countries under consideration. I suggest that the reason for this can be traced to the fact that these rock versions were products of the music industry and of show business instead of the direct result of developments in rock'n'roll from the French, German, Greek, and Italian youth cultures themselves, and as such, could not last long or be seen as idioms that could be taken further to become "authentic" eventually. Nonetheless, this is not to deny that the institutionalized rock'n'roll promoted by the local music industries did in fact reach wide youth audiences, who in turn enjoyed and danced to this music.

On the contrary, the majority of audiences were embracing these rock'n'roll versions—but the same way they had embraced rock'n'roll at the time of its original reception: as consumers of a musical fad. However, my position is that this musical treatment, regardless of its "inauthentic" approach and the "musically unchallenging" results it produces, managed to gain greater visibility and acceptance for rock'n'roll in each of these countries and revealed a rock'n'roll style that was acceptable to their official cultures. In fact, the elements of rock'n'roll that were retained and the elements of national popular music that were added and emphasized in its production in each of the countries are important indicators of this. These new indigenous versions of rock'n'roll are also important because they ended up disappointing the young audiences who would eventually turn away from these rock'n'roll hybrids in active quests for more "authentic" idioms. On these grounds, I consider the institutionalization of rock'n'roll that took place during the period discussed here to be very important, since it influenced—with both its negative and positive contributions to indigenous rock'n'roll—the rock culture that would soon emerge in each of these national contexts.

## Conclusion

This paper has traced the development of indigenous versions of rock'n'roll that emerged in France, West and East Germany, Greece, and Italy in the years following its initial reception and the establishment of its popularity as more than a mere music fad. As we have seen, through the process of institutionalization, the mainstream cultural networks (music industries, broadcasting networks, the press, cinemas, etc.) of these countries tried to produce indigenous versions of rock'n'roll in terms of musical style, image, and behavior that were considered to be acceptable and in line with their national social and moral standards at the time. In doing so, they created anodyne versions of rock'n'roll that drew heavily on their national popular music forms (the exception being the Greek rock style at that time, which avoided Greek-ness in all respects), and promoted good boy and good girl images. At the same time, however, the new institutionalized versions managed to conserve enough of the transgressive character of early rock'n'roll to maintain its elements of "rebellion" that were believed to be the reason for its appeal to the indigenous youth cultures.

The paper has attempted to highlight how the standards of music and behavior that were considered "acceptable" for each country considered here depended to a great degree on the historical,

political, and social situations of the time. Special emphasis has been given to the fact that due to its origins in the USA, rock'n'roll was considered trivial and transgressive and highly incompatible with the cultural standards of Europe which were rooted in high culture. This, as we have seen, had more to do with European efforts to preserve their sense of ideological superiority vis-à-vis a country that had become dominant and on which they were now financially and even politically dependent. Further evidence that the institutionalization discussed here was taking place in ideological rather than in purely cultural terms is the fact that, particularly in countries like Italy and Greece that lacked first-hand information about music, every musical style that originated in the USA appeared in need of watering down, even if the sound was tame and not transgressive at all (Neil Sedaka's and Paul Anka's songs are good examples of this). Most Europeans at that time actually considered every US popular music style to be "rock'n'roll," regardless of the actual sound, and based their views of its incompatibility with their cultural standards (i.e., the triviality of the US mass culture in comparison with European ideals of high culture) on assumptions concerning the violent, sexual, and "primitive" character of rock'n'roll.

As we have seen, prohibiting the importation of such cultural idioms was simply not an option for France, West Germany, Italy or Greece due to their political position with respect to the USA in this particular period of history. At the same time, the situation of East Germany points in the opposite direction to show that the government's unsuccessful attempts to ban this kind of cultural idioms only served to politicize them to a high degree, eventually transforming teenage consumers into rebels and outcasts. Nevertheless, recognition of the inevitability of US cultural influence led the East German state to attempt to institutionalize it in accordance with their own national standards, and the resulting transformation of rock'n'roll was again solely related to the East German position regarding the USA.

Nonetheless, it is not only political history that can affect these kinds of cultural relationships. The technological developments that took place during and after WWII facilitated the rapid internationalization of rock'n'roll, as well as other cultural idioms from the USA.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, the rapid industrialization of the countries considered here and the way they followed these technological developments closely (not least of all because they were promoted by the US government in terms of consumption) facilitated the processes of reception and institutionalization of rock'n'roll in these countries. Needless to say, changes in terms of social structures also played a major part in these processes. It is generally acknowledged that the emergence of the "teenager" as both a social group and an important consumer community, were the factors that made the explosion of the new popular culture surrounding rock'n'roll possible.<sup>46</sup> The emergence of the "teenager" occurred at a slower pace in the European countries discussed here than in the USA, but this is not to deny that it did strongly affect the way this music exploded in these countries and the direction the "institutionalizers" chose to follow in order to achieve a balance between their will to dilute the music coming from the USA while at the same time keeping it transgressive enough to please their youthful audiences. In the process, they created their first youth-oriented pop styles that helped in spreading and legitimizing rock'n'roll elements (albeit "tamed") within their national contexts.

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45 The importance of technology for the development of popular music is explored in Paul Théberge, "Plugged in": Technology and Popular Music," in *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*, ed. Simon Frith, Will Straw and John Street (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 3-25.

46 Iain Chambers, *Urban Rhythms*, 4-16.

At the same time, however, they “stole” the possibility of rebelliousness that rock’n’roll gave the indigenous audiences and left an empty space in their musical grounds in these terms: a space soon to be filled —but this is a different sound from the past.

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