

Children's Television in the GDR

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From the first test program in December 1952 to the end of German Democratic Republic television in December 1991, children's television was one of the fundamental features of East German television. The 14,000 hours of programming for children over a period of just under four decades demonstrates the vitality of GDR television programming. In this article we will concentrate on the following topics: first, a discussion on the political, ideological and aesthetic position of programming for children, and second, results of an analysis of children's programming.

Children's Television for Education and Free Time

Political influence and the education of youth in the GDR played a central role in the thinking and actions of the regime from its very beginning. In addition to the creation of a socialist education system, development and control of the mass media for children formed the central guidelines in the development of the GDR. Newspapers, magazines, books, radio stations, movies, and television shows for children were especially targeted for special political attention. Therefore, functional and structural changes in children's programming became more and more subordinate to the political whims of the regime. These changes can be divided into four different time periods and categorized according to the institutional structures of children's television. Consideration of national and international developments in politics, the economy and culture, however, is also taken into account.

First Phase, 1952 to 1963: founding of children's television

Even before the official beginning of East German television, in the summer of 1952, the first test show for children called *Bärbel erzählt* (*Barbara Tells Stories*) was broadcast, culminating in the formation one year later of an independent editorial staff for children's programming. In November 1958, *Karli Kurbels Flimmerkiste* (*Charly Krank's Flickering Box*) began, which turned into the highly popular *Bei Professor Flimmrich* (*At Home with Professor Flickering*) in September 1959. This show became a series, broadcasting famous fairytales and children's films. On 8 November 1959, the first co-production between the East German TV network *Deutscher Fernsehfunk/DFP* and *Czechoslovakian Television* premiered. The series was called *Clown Ferdinands Abenteuer* (*Clown Ferdinand's Adventures*), featuring the clown Ferdinand, a figure familiar to several generations of children.



FIG. 1. Clown Ferdinand, (*source*: RBB Brandenburg).

The editorial staff of children's television was located in the 'Department of Youth and Education'. Since television was in somewhat of an experimental phase at that time, very few households were equipped with a television set. Children's programming developed under difficult political and economic conditions which directly influenced staff and programming decisions. This affected first and foremost the topics and contents of shows, often addressing current political situations and events.

Several examples can be given for this: the uprising in the GDR on 17 June 1953, Stalin's death in the same year, recognition by the Soviet Union of the GDR as a sovereign state in September 1955, and acceptance into the Warsaw Pact. Furthermore, in the 1950s and 1960s, there were considerable changes in the economy, international trade, service sector and in agriculture, which were all organized along the lines of socialist doctrine (collectivization and central planning). In May 1958, food ration cards were abolished and it was believed (as Walter Ulbricht, leader of East Germany at that time, hoped) that the GDR would surpass the West German in per capita consumption of foodstuffs and the most important industrial consumer goods by 1961. However, the erection of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 and the system of compulsory military service in 1962 prevented this from gaining further support among the political elite. Cultural conferences discussing the acceptance of youth centers and other free time activities also began to take place at this time.

Second Phase, 1964 to 1972: consolidation and distinctions

During this period, several restructurings at the *Deutsche Fernsehfunk* occurred which also affected children's television. One result was the foundation of two separate departments for children's television and youth in 1969. The aims were to provide program scheduling and the targeting of various age groups (younger and older children, teenagers). The main department for children's television consisted of several editorial staffs such as fiction, entertainment and sports, information and preschool programming.

More importantly, this period in GDR history also shows major changes both politically and economically. In 1966 the five-day working week was instituted. In 1967 the rebuilding of city centers destroyed during the Second World War began, especially in Berlin, Dresden and Leipzig. New cities also began to spring up around large industrial plants. At the same time the GDR issued new identity cards with the words 'Citizen of the German Democratic Republic', symbolizing a new national self-confidence. In the 1960s, the regime attempted to discourage people from tuning in to television and radio stations from the West, as East Germany saw these stations as an alternative source of entertainment and information. Although viewing Western programs in the GDR was not strictly forbidden, it was officially frowned upon until the 1980s.

An important turning point in the development of children's television was the 11th Party Congress of the ruling SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands—Socialist Unity Party) in November 1965. At this congress, Erich Honecker criticized the negative influence of Western television on the young generation in the GDR by stating:

Television shows, films and magazines have lowered themselves to portraying more and more anti-humane portrayals, brutality and sexual promiscuity. American immorality and decadence is not being properly countered [1].

Another very important event was the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops in August 1968, which destroyed the idealism and hopes of many young people for a more humanitarian socialism. The scientific and technological revolution became the slogan for politics, economics and art. Cybernetics and information theories even began to compete with the official political slogans of the regime. Terms such as 'scientific-technological revolution', 'science as a direct source of productivity', and 'cybernetic model' began to appear in novels, plays, films and in children's television and journalistic works. The goal was to create a scientific society in the GDR.

Third Phase, 1973 to 1982: increasing differentiation of target groups

In the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, children's television posed a strong emphasis on differing groups of age, with the goal of providing informative and popular shows (animation, television plays) for all ages. It must be noted that at this time there was a greater focus on older children, with this imbalance reflected in the large number of television reports on current political and historical topics.

After the Basic Principles Treaty between the two German states in 1972; and the signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975, it appeared that the GDR had finally been internationally recognized and become internally stable. East Germany issued a constitutional amendment in 1974 defining the borders between itself and West Germany. Between 1971 and 1976, the GDR attempted to present the East German society as a

viable alternative to West Germany by initiating various social changes as e.g. pension increases, meeting demands of young families and working mothers, housing programs. Economic, political and cultural problems, however, could only be partially concealed.

Children's television developed in the 1970s in this arena of new ideas, financial bottlenecks and political spoon-feeding. Proof of a need for less controlled and more open conditions in the areas of art and media was shown in the statement by Erich Honecker at the beginning of the 1970s shortly after he had become the head of government:

Coming from a strict position of socialism, I believe there can be no taboos in art and literature. This refers to both the content and the style. In other words, the question is what artistic mastery is called [2].

Fourth Phase, 1983 to 1991: reorganization and orientation

Important structural changes took place again in *GDR Television* at the beginning of the 1980s. Children's television was divided into three editorial staffs—journalism, film and puppet shows, fiction—with the goal of increasing program quality and efficiency. A focus on new formats and target groups, beginning in 1983, predominated this phase of children's television. Changes were especially seen in preschool programming, which was a reaction to the success of *Sesame Street* in many countries.

However, economic conditions worsened in the GDR during this time. There was a constant shortage of hard currency and its neighboring socialist countries were also undergoing difficulties. The ambitious housing construction program as well as various economic experiments were at risk of collapsing. Agricultural problems affected food distribution, and the increasing prices of raw materials brought the GDR into ever greater difficulties. In addition, the gap between the reality of everyday life and the propaganda promoting the successes of socialism became too great to ignore. Even though daily reports in *Aktuelle Kamera*—the prime time evening news in the GDR—and newspapers published these so-called successes with barely a hint of disguise, reality could not be ignored. On the other hand, new words such as 'glasnost' and 'perestroika' gave hope to millions of disillusioned people. In USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev they saw a hope for a more humane touch in socialist society.

The GDR regime, however, continued to use its own standard form of the 'real existing' socialism, believing that a 'change in wallpaper' in its own house was not necessary, since 'glasnost' and perestroika' had already been achieved in the GDR in the 1970s. These and other arguments were the answers to the challenge made by Gorbachev. GDR State and Party leader Erich Honecker's state visit to Bonn and other high level East-West German talks at least gave East Germans the impression they were living in a sovereign and stable country. However, the discrepancy between everyday life in the GDR and the propaganda media spectacles resulted in ever growing criticism of the regime.

The end of the GDR also sealed the fate of the overall popular children's television. At the end of December 1991, the last children's program produced by *Deutscher Fernsehfunf*—hereafter *DFF*—was broadcast. The following figures show the relatively continuous growth of children's television until the closing of *DFF*: 1955 = 47 hours, 1960 = 267 hours, 1965 = 194 hours, 1970 = 383 hours (the first time the figure reached an average of more than one hour a day), 1975 = 404 hours, 1980 = 444 hours, 1985 = 580 hours and 1990 = 560 hours.

The four phases in the development of children's television in the GDR were affected by different perceptions of the editors and moderators as well as through various forms of political influence. The general manager of the *Deutscher Fernsehfunk*, Heinz Adameck, wrote in 1961:

Children's television helps children to form their world view and their ability to judge. It can also have a positive affect on their education and at the same time influence parents and encourage a good upbringing by providing role models and stimulating learning [3].

In his view the role of children's television was clear: children should be raised in a socialist manner with the help of television. Therefore, programs were chosen that reflected the current mood and political wind. Those responsible for the programming truly believed there would be a mass attraction for such shows.

The attempt to influence children's television in the 1950s and 1960s took place under complicated technical, economic and personal conditions. This could be seen during the Cold War and later as well, when an unquestionable belief in television became apparent. From the producer's viewpoint, it became a process of trial and error. It was a complex and continual process to establish a fully functional children's television apparatus providing each target group every genre that would appeal to them. This was, however, not without its difficulties. Conflicts arose between the official state ordered education and the equally strong creative talent for fantasy, creativity, and entertainment. This can be seen in the plans for children's fiction on the one hand, and the shows that were actually produced on the other.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the conceptual tasks of children's television read as follows:

Referring to the guidelines of the *Deutsche Fernsehfunk*, it is the role of children's television as part of the entire program to install a strong class consciousness in girls and boys, so that their personality, knowledge and ability, feelings, needs and behavior be refined for the socialist cause, to engage in the overall strengthening of the GDR and lead an optimistic, happy and fulfilling life. This means mastering dialectics and linking high socialist ideas with mass effectiveness [4].

In its official conception, ideology and education stood at the foreground, while less attention was paid to entertainment and popular themes. However, in many television shows and children's films a more aesthetic portrayal of childhood in the GDR played a greater role. How far this 'forgetting' of the political and ideological guidelines affected children's viewing habits can only be surmised.

The fact that the producers of children's shows developed more programming which met the viewer's daily needs rather than following the political line can also be suggested in the following statement:

For a long time, our children's programming had a real head start over that of the FRG, especially the many popular figures and dramas. ... In the past few years this has slipped because not enough people feel responsible enough to meet the societal demands necessary to maintain a high standard. As a result, there have been few improvements in children's programming in many years which match their maturity and especially their high level of education. The array of characters has remained more or less the same. Not enough attention

was paid to the efforts of FRG children's television to increase its effectiveness through modern structures [5].

Because of this loss in effectiveness, West German children's shows were viewed in order to adapt popular shows and figures in the GDR. This resulted in a strong orientation towards entertainment, games, fun and emotion, which, in the 1970s and 1980s, became an important criterion to maintaining viewing numbers. Children's television in the GDR adopted changes seen abroad, such as series, especially in the 1980s with popular and entertaining fantasy series [6].

One of the most widely used genres was the fairytale. Fairytale films were regarded nationally and internationally the most successful productions of *DEFA Film Studios* (State-run German Film Corporation) and GDR children's television. The 1950s saw successful *DEFA* films such as *Der kleine Muck* (1952, dir.: Wolfgang Staudte), *Das kalte Herz* (1950, dir.: Paul Verhoeven), and *Das tapfere Schneiderlein* (1956, dir.: Helmut Spiess), which helped shape the form of future films. Productions from children's television were added in the 1960s and especially in the 1970s.

Fairytale films from the 1950s, however, were partly influenced by the realism debate. Fairytales not revised according to this political discussion were regarded as damaging to the balanced psychological development of children. For example, the Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm, which appeared in 1952, were selected according to their educational value and then revised: fairytales with educational potential were ideologically in fashion. As a result, political undertones in fairytales often became over-emphasized, as *Der Teufel vom Mühlberg* (*The Devil from Mühlberg*, 1954, dir.: Herbert Ballmann) shows. In this film theories of class struggle were fit into the original story line.

The first live fairytales were broadcast on TV from the studios of *Deutsche Fernseh-funk/DFV* in 1953, and since 1955 *Meister Nadelöhr* (*Master Pinprick*) accompanied children during these broadcasts. From 1957, shows and cartoons for children from three to five were shown while in the FRG at this time programming for young children was banned. The all-time classic of GDR children's television, *Sandmännchen* (*Sandman*), was first broadcast in 1959. The 1960s saw the beginning of the standard production of fairytales and children's programming on East German television. Until 1971, most of these productions were made almost exclusively in studios, although in the 1960s some current themes were also used in films. *Der Kleine und der große Klaus* (*The little and the Great Klaus*), which came out at Christmas in 1971, was the first fairytale film made by *DEFA*. The second, *Die klugen Dinge* (*The Clever Things*, 1972/1973, dir.: Rainer Hausdorf) appeared two years later on television. However, not many films were made in the first half of the 1970s (as in the late 1980s). Children's television at this time produced mostly family and current affairs stories, as well as shows on historical figures (Johann Sebastian Bach, Martin Luther, Karl Marx).

In the mid-1970s, internationally recognized fairy tale films were produced, such as *Die Schwarze Mühle* (*The Black Mill*, 1976 dir.: Celino Bleiweiß), *Die Regentrude* (*The Rain Maid*, 1979, dir.: Ursula Schmenger), *Die zertanzten Schuhe* (*The Shoes that Were Danced to Pieces*, 1977, dir.: Ursula Schmenger), *Der Meisterdieb* (*The Master Thief*, 1978, dir.: Wolfgang Hübner) and, starting in 1979, the famous *Spukgeschichten* (*Spooky Stories*). In addition to fairytales there were also shows such as *Zu Besuch im Märchenland* (*Visit to the Fairyland*). The highpoint of this series were the cartoons that were integrated into the show.

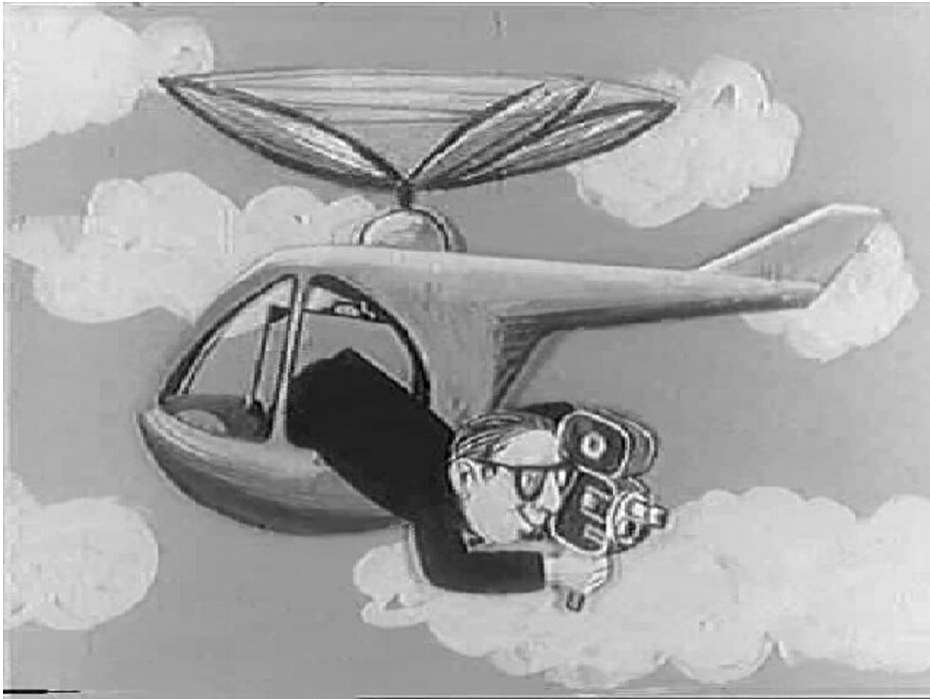


FIG. 2. Professor Flimmrich, *Source*: DRA Babelsberg/France enlargement.

Fictional children's programs of *GDR Television* amounted to over 500 original productions, including fairytale films, television plays, film versions of popular literature, political or historical documentaries as well as family and everyday situations. Two of the most popular shows were *Alles Trick* (*Cartoon World*) and the *Flimmerstunde* (*Flicker Time*). *Alles Trick* was a series that ran over several years in which cartoons of varying topics and forms from international film studios were shown. However, due to a chronic shortage of hard currency, internationally licensed cartoons couldn't always be shown. *Flimmerstunde* (*Flicker Time*) appeared on East German television for over 30 years. It consisted mainly of Eastern European films, along with additional information about cinema, stars, film careers, and behind-the-scenes reports. This formed one part of the overall line of children's shows which included news, sports and entertainment, revues etc.

In the first part of this article we have given a rough overview of the complex ideological expectations and the direct and indirect influence of the SED Party on children's television. With this in mind, the attempts to influence these expectations led to different reactions by producers, be it the dependence on the direction of the 'political wind', individual accommodation and acceptance, or the distancing from these expectations. The search to find room for hidden messages and meanings plays a large role here, as well as the desire for a positive educational role for children. The ambition to make attractive shows was also present, as well as the belief and the portrayal thereof that life in this society was better. Furthermore, children's television was always measured up against the expectations and high standards of the children's productions from the *DEFA* Film Studios.



FIG. 3. The world of children's programming.

Analysis of Children's Programming

There is little written in publications on children's television about the development of program structures and the number of shows made by individual editorial staffs. For this reason we have conducted our own study of the development of children's television programming from the beginning of regular broadcasting in 1957 to the end of *Deutscher Fernsehfunk* in December 1991. According to Hickethier, 'a television program is presented to viewers as a collection of generally different products, which follow a particular schedule and can be found in one particular place' [7]. The particular characteristics of programs are the timing and continuity of shows, which guarantees recognition and dependability. This definition of program not only summarizes the quantitative side of television programming, but also the audience: for which age group is the programming targeted? Which broadcasting methods have proven successful?

The following topics were of interest to us: children's television programming was analyzed according to the scope, production areas, and editorial forms. How high was the share of program production in children's television? Which age groups should have

been more or less focused on? What changes were there in the different phases? What can these changes be attributed to? Fiction and non-fiction news and entertainment shows have been taken into account. In terms of the non-fiction programming, there are stronger philosophical effects than can be seen in the fiction area, whose contents were largely made up of foreign productions. In this respect a particular program strategy was visible (especially concerning financial demands), in particular through the selection of films purchased from other countries.

Methodology

Similar to content analysis, program analysis should select data in order to categorize the content. As opposed to a micro-analytical content analysis, program analyses deal with the program as a whole, or on a much broader level. A model was developed that covers practically the entire time period of children's television, in total 34 years. This extended research period forced us to find pragmatic solutions. We used the main categories of a current program analysis model [8] and supplemented this with historical information from GDR children's television (editorial structures such as preschool programming, journalism, genres, target groups, as well as different time periods). The main categories used from Krüger's program structure model were information (journalism), fiction/drama, non-fiction entertainment, sport and various other topics. All shows from children's programming which are explicitly designated as children's shows were registered. Information necessary for the classification was taken from the printed television magazine *FF Dabei* and the program schedule of *Deutsche Fernsehfunk*. Using the information from the TV magazine we were able to make a quick analysis of the airing time, length and the kind of show [9]. In the program guide one can often find information on the main theme or alternative themes. Because of the large amount of time which gathering this information would have involved, it was not possible to do a complete survey of all children's television shows that were broadcast. Therefore, we used a random sample for the program analysis. The data was gathered in two year cycles, beginning in 1957 until the closing down of the *Deutsche Fernsehfunk*—DDR 1—were registered, since most of the children's programming were broadcast on this channel. From each respective year surveyed two months were selected, determined by a particular method of rotation. The sample came up with 1650 relevant shows, with each show representing one survey unit [10].

Results

Until 1956, shows for children could be seen but rarely, in and very few timeslots per week. In September 1956, programming was expanded to five days a week. From Monday to Friday, children's shows were broadcast mainly in the afternoons and early evenings, and on weekends in the late morning and early afternoon. Since the 1950s, children's television was a substantial part of the overall programming provided by *Deutscher Fernsehfunk*. The timeslots for these shows changed very little during the 40 years of its existence. In the 1980s, timeslots were expanded to include more programming for preschoolers and on weekends.

The 1950s and 1960s can be looked upon as an experimental phase in the history of television, where emphasis was placed on the search for structural continuity. However, it could not yet be termed as 'mass media'. Programs at this time could not fall back

TABLE 1. Number of programs in various production areas (number of shows, in %).

Production areas	1957–1963	1964–1972	1973–1982	1983–1991
Preschool	26.3	27.5	20.2	23.6
Fiction	23.9	28.2	27.8	25.4
Journalism	34.8	32.2	39.5	38.0
Entertainment	15.0	12.1	12.4	13.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Author's children's television program analysis.

on previous recordings of films and series as is possible today. Characteristic of this period is that many themes used in television dramas were later used in journalism. At the beginning of children's television, the genre of fiction showed strong components of current political themes (rebuilding of Germany after World War II, the East–West conflict). In addition, certain formats were developed during this initial phase which were still used until the end of the GDR. However, this was rarely the case with news reports, entertainment and sports broadcasts. It can be said that children's programming in the area of fiction showed remarkable continuity in form, despite various changes in format and aesthetics. These shows and their characters became, and still are today, the hallmark of GDR children's television.

Financial constraints played a large factor into why there was a great amount of in-house production of films and series: 'Television shows and movies produced in-house decisively determined the character of programming. The move towards film imports and outside productions was different in the GDR as opposed to West Germany since there was a lack of hard currency to purchase such films' [11]. This led to more cost saving in-house productions instead of the purchasing of expensive licenses for films and series from the West. Compared to other areas of GDR television, children's television did not perceive itself as greatly affected by these financial constraints.

When the individual production areas are taken into consideration, children's programming appeared very consistent, the largest area being that of journalism. At the beginning of the 1970s, when there was a focus on more news and social programs, there was also an increase in the use of current events in these shows, especially for older children. From 1983 to 1991 this field represented almost 40% of total children's programming. The smallest changes occurred in the areas of drama and entertainment: fiction provided 26% of the total, while non-fiction took 13% of the total. Only preschool programming registered a decline, which can be attributed to the increase in the production of journalistic programs.

In-house and outside productions showed relatively stable figures throughout the entire time period. Table 2 underscores the fact that four fifths of the programming in children's television was produced in their own studios. This large percentage is rather considerable compared to other countries. One reason for this was the daily production of non-fiction shows, which did not exist in this form in West Germany. Another reason was the financial constraints mentioned before that affected the overall production of shows. Overall, a trend towards outside production is clearly visible in the 1970s and 1980s. In the period from 1973 to 1982 outside production increased by 7 percentage points to 24.2%, but in the final period its share decreased to 20%. The reasons for this

TABLE 2. Production forms of children's television (number of shows, in %).

Production form	1957–1963	1964–1972	1973–1982	1983–1991
In-house production	83.0	82.4	75.8	79.5
Outside production	17.0	17.6	24.2	20.5
Of which:				
<i>DEFA</i>	2.8	6.2	6.1	4.7
Foreign Production	7.1	8.5	13.1	11.8
Co-production	0.0	0.4	0.8	0.5
<i>Other</i>	7.2	2.5	4.3	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Author's children's television program analysis.

increase are partly due to the *Intervision* [12] shows, and the increased broadcasting of Eastern European films. The share of *DEFA* productions, at 5%, is quite small. More remarkable is the low portion of co-production. However, when taking into account only the production of fiction, the figures for outside and co-production appear more significant.

Co-production with other socialist countries remained mostly at the beginning stages. The very few examples of cooperation with other Eastern European countries represented the exception. Against this background, the Ministry of Education and the State Television Committee (Staatliches Fernsehkomitee) in the 1980s criticized the programming of children's television and proposed greater cooperation with Soviet television. Such demands were repeated often, although the criticism remained hollow and without consequences in content and concept. Regarding cooperation with other countries, Hoff duly noted: 'The differences between the socialist countries outweighed their similarities' [13]. His assertion that outside production companies provided the distribution network for *GDR television* proved not to be the case with children's television. The share of in-house production dominated during all time periods. Only *Flimmerstunde (Flicker Time)*—children's films on the weekends—countered this trend by broadcasting *DEFA* films and Eastern European productions, especially from the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Western European and American fairytales and children's films, on the other hand, were first broadcast in 1990.

The shares of fiction (47.3 %) and non-fiction (45.9 %) remained more or less unchanged during the entire time period. There were only slight changes in certain time periods, with fiction format decreasing slightly along with a corresponding increase in

TABLE 3. Children's programming format (number of shows, in %).

Format	1957–1963	1964–1972	1973–1982	1983–1991
Fiction	50.0	53.1	49.1	42.3
Non-fiction	44.7	44.0	46.0	47.0
Mixed	3.4	2.2	4.3	9.7
Other	1.9	0.7	0.6	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Author's children's television program analysis.

non-fiction programming. The total of mixed forms remained under 5% until the 1980s. With the development of new varieties of program forms in the years 1972 and 1973, 1982 and 1983, as well as in 1987, the share of programs containing elements of fiction and non-fiction increased. This primarily affected preschool programming.

Taking into account the individual categories of programming, a different picture arises. Information programming had the largest share during the entire period. The reason for this was the large amount of news, advice, science and educational shows that were broadcast during the week. Against this background, children's programming took on a certain orientation, concentrating on shows with political and social themes, as well as technology, education, science and nature and wildlife. The purpose of these shows was not only to educate, but to advise and entertain.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the main themes on East German television were the reconstruction of the GDR and current issues in both fiction and non-fiction areas. Shows dealing with agriculture, industry and science took up a large portion of the total shows broadcast in the mid-1960s. At this time the share of journalism on television increased, while the share of drama fell slightly. Children's television was only partly affected by these changes. Changes in journalistic programming are especially visible between 1974 and 1983. During this period various new shows, advice and entertainment shows were developed which only lasted a few years. Shows and reports dealing with political and social topics had an especially limited attractiveness for children, and, due to low viewer ratings, were reorganized or taken out of the program listings [14].

The share of journalistic shows, on the other hand, increased dramatically at the beginning of the 1970s. This was the result of a combination of new concepts for children's television. Interesting to note is the focus on journalism for older children, which resulted in a greater variety and change in programming. As a result, more and more hobby and advice shows giving tips on spare time activities were integrated into the program, running until 1990. Important changes—through program reforms in 1973 and 1983—were visible mostly in terms of content, not the structure [15]. Thus, the general manager of *GDR television* explained in January 1972: 'A greater variety and better balance of material and genres, especially an increase in the amount of comedies, adventures and thrillers, is the decisive challenge for our writers and producers' [16]. This means that the role of television began to change more and more into a form of entertainment. Increased pressure at the beginning of the 1980s (second program reform, 1983) to meet this challenge also affected children's television, leading to more adventuresome, interesting and emotional productions. The strength of children's television lay more in the area of scenic forms rather than in journalism, although education and information still dominated program listings. The increasing emphasis on entertainment did not affect the number of shows, but more the characteristics and the form.

When referring to programming for specific target groups instead of the types of shows, clear shifts in these groups are visible. At the beginning of the 1960s, there were only two age groups that children's programming focused on: children up to nine years old and 10–13 year olds. Programming at that time provided a variety of shows for young people. At the beginning of the 1970s, however, newly structured age groups were fit in along with specific programming for these groups. The preschool program was aimed at three to six year olds, elementary school program for the seven to nine year olds, and other programming for the 10 to 13 year olds. In the 1980s, children's television increased its focus on three to nine year olds after repeated criticism of the concentration on nine to 13 year olds. This age group migrated away from children's

TABLE 4. Programming related to age groups (number of shows, in %).

Age groups	1957–1963	1964–1972	1973–1982	1983–1991
3–5 years old	13.6	11.9	10.2	25.7
6–9 years old	33.3	27.9	24.2	16.9
9–13 years old	52.3	59.4	46.8	33.3
6–13 years old	0.8	0.9	8.3	10.3
Other			10.5	13.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Author's children's television program analysis.

television to the evening programs of East and West German television. One of the most challenging tasks was getting older children (10–13) to watch. This was not achieved, despite extensive efforts and various conceptual changes. The consequences for children's television were that the nine to 13 year olds turned their backs on it and became more interested in watching adult programs.

Conclusion

This analysis shows that little change occurred in the levels of program production and format throughout the entire period of East German television. Children's television in the GDR was noted for its stability and continuity. These results do not belie the fact that changes in concept, content and aesthetics occurred. These changes affected the structural levels very little. The few changes that did occur were due mainly to internal or external factors in media, for instance, in the 1980s in the establishing of popular themes and characters, as well as more diversity for children. Over the years, there appeared a particular dynamic in terms of age groups: in the 1950s and 1960s older children were more the target group, while reform in 1973 brought further subdividing of these age groups. This resulted in a strong program offer for younger children, which, by the 1980s, had become the primary target group for children's television.

In terms of the long running standard shows, the strength of children's television in the GDR was first and foremost in fiction (fairytales, children's films, cartoons, *Sandman*). These shows were by far the most popular in the GDR. News shows with political topics, on the other hand, had a much smaller appeal. These were either canceled or reformatted because of poor viewer ratings. Children's television was in reality a television station in and of itself: information, education, entertainment, sports, plays and music were part of its standard repertoire. It saw itself as playing an important role in the education of young people, but also offered vital assistance and orientation. The development of programming shows very clearly that there was constant effort to produce attractive and popular shows for young viewers, although not always successfully, because of financial and management constraints. Its strengths were more in the area of scenic forms rather than in journalism even though news shows comprised a large part of the daily programming. While political events and conceptual reformulations led only to few structural changes, affecting more the content level, the findings of this program analysis have succeeded in pointing out the strengths in the structures of children's television.

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NOTES

- [1] Erich Honecker (1971) in Dieter Wiedemann, *Lebenswelten und Alltagswissen*, in Christoph Führ and Carl-Ludwig Furck (eds), *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte. Band VI* (München, 1998), p. 76.
- [2] Erich Honecker, *Zu aktuellen Fragen bei der Verwirklichung der Beschlüsse unseres VIII. Parteitags* (Berlin, 1971), p. 93.
- [3] Heinz Adameck 20.2.1965. Bestand Büro Lamberz: Agitationskommission, Akte Fernsehen der DDR (1963–66), SAPMO-BArch DY 30/IV A 2/9.02/120.
- [4] See Hans-Jürgen Stock, *Das Kinderprogramm des DDR-Fernsehens*, in Hans-Dieter Erlinger (ed.), *Handbuch des Kinderfernsehens* (Konstanz, 1995), p. 51.
- [5] Bestand Büro Joachim Herrmann, Akte Fernsehen der DDR: Aufgaben und Vorbereitung von Fernsehsendungen. Einschätzung, Vorschläge und Gestaltung von Programme sowie Meinungsumfragen bei Zuschauern. Analyse Wirksamkeit Fernsehen DDR, SAPMO-BArch DY 30/IV 2/2.037/41.
- [6] Falk Tennert and Ingelore König, *Flimmerstunden. Daten zum Fernsehgebrauch ostdeutscher Kinder bis 1989* (Leipzig, 2003).
- [7] Knut Hackethler, *Film- und Fernsehanalyse* (Stuttgart and Weimar, 1996), p. 201.
- [8] Udo Michael Krüger, *Programmprofile im dualen Fernsehsystem 1991–2000. Eine Studie der ARD/ZDF-Medienkommission* (Baden-Baden, 2001).
- [9] See Markus Schubert and Hans-Jörg Stiehler, *Programmentwicklung im DDR-Fernsehen zwischen 1968 und 1974. Eine Programmstrukturanalyse*, in Claudia Dittmar and Susanne Vollberg (eds), *Die Überwindung der Langeweile? Zur Programmentwicklung des DDR-Fernsehens 1968 bis 1974* (Leipzig, 2003), pp. 19–57.
- [10] We decided on the following procedure: in 1957, January and July were chosen; in 1959, February and August; 1961, March and September, etc., in this pattern until 1991.
- [11] See Peter Hoff, *Organisation und Programmentwicklung des DDR-Fernsehens*, in Knut Hackethler (ed.), *Geschichte des Fernsehens in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Band 1: Institution, Technik und Programm. Rahmenaspekte der Programmgeschichte des Fernsehens* (München, 1993), pp. 245–288.
- [12] *Intervision* shows were produced mainly for broadcast in other Eastern European countries, similar to *Eurovision* in Western Europe.
- [13] See Hoff (1993), p. 265.
- [14] See Tennert and König (2003).
- [15] Helmut Heinze and Anja Kreutz, *Zwischen Service und Propaganda—zur Geschichte und Ästhetik von Magazinsendungen im Fernsehen der DDR 1952–1991* (Berlin, 1998).
- [16] Heinz Adameck (1972), quoted in Hans-Jürgen Stock, *Das Kinderprogramm des DDR-Fernsehens*, in Hans-Dieter Erlinger (ed.), *Handbuch des Kinderfernsehens* (Konstanz, 1995) p. 54.

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