Ladies and gentlemen,
I would like to thank you for inviting me to this lecture, which I accept all the more gladly because I have spent years researching the development of electronic media in both cultures, especially the relationship and difference between radio in the USA and radio in Europe and in Germany.
Therefore, I would like to jump directly into the radio straight away, not only because, from the very onset, radio makes the difference between the two media cultures Germany versus USA most visible, but first and foremost because here in the USA you will celebrate the hundredth anniversary of radio in less than two years,

Radio historians tell us that everything began more or less here in your wider vicinity, at an amateur station of Frank Conrad, an engineer employed by Westinghouse in Pittsburgh. He had been a Navy officer and one of these 10 thousands of radio-engineers, who were, after the war, converting their military radio equipment to peace-full use now, playing records every Saturday, in order, to receive reports on the quality of reception from these 400 other radio amateurs around, as the New York Times reported.

In the first two decades of the 20th century the American radio is created, maintained and pushed ahead by amateurs and hobbyists. At the end of the war, there are over 10,000 such amateur radio devices in use all over the country. They often look very simple, rural and idyllic like this one here. But, Westinghouse in Pittsburgh, the famous US electrification company and Conrad's new employer, sees this new medium as a growing business and is donating new tubes and larger transmitters to the amateurs.
Thus, in October 1920, the first commercial American radio station was built under the call sign of KDKA. And this station is working until today and KDKA is still its name. Westinghouse in Pittsburgh wanted to build radio sets in large quantities. This required not only having their own radio stations but also an effective publicity campaign, which took place a few weeks later. It was the very first coverage of the election of an American president. KDKA broadcasts the results, of course, what we hear is reproduced a few years later:

The Republican Harding was the first president, whose election was radio broadcast. But Harding, of course, he also appears immediately on the new medium:
Harding O-Ton “America’s present need is not heroics, but healing; not nostrums, but normalcy; not revolution, but restoration; not agitation, but adjustment; not surgery, but serenity; not the dramatic, but the dispassionate; not experiment, but equipoise; not submergence in internationality, but sustainment in triumphant nationality.”

Whatever nationalistic messages he had to announce, Warren G. Harding was the first president of the USA to speak on the radio to all Americans, at a time when there was no radio at all in most other countries of the world, least of all in Germany.

O-Ton Coolidge

After Harding and Coolidge, few American presidents have failed to speak on the radio. President Roosevelt became famous with his "fireside chats" in the 1930s, which none other than the former radio host Ronald Reagan resurrected in the 1980s.

Already after this short introduction I want to mark two important differences, which distinguish the German from the American radio system. First: American radio takes its origin from the people, it comes from the people, supported by thousands of mostly young radio amateurs, who give the whole thing a rather chaotic character, especially in the beginnings, perhaps well comparable to the early days of the Internet in the 1990s.

The chaos consisted essentially of the fact, that many radio stations were broadcasting on one and the same frequency, and thus created intolerable overlaps, which ultimately came into order a decade later with the
A third striking point of difference, which again has no comparison neither in Europe nor in Germany, concerns the 6000 sequential radio plays, radio shows and serials that shaped American radio between 1925 and the mid-fifties, i.e. for more than 30 years. Each of which had hundreds of individual episodes. This iterative form of programming, which was actually a forerunner of today’s quality serials in modern cable tv, had been invented in radio by thousands of creative artists, most of them having lost their stage presences in the Vaudeville theatres, which in the 1920s had disappeared all over the country.

Amos ‘n’ Andy, “The Presidential Election”

Amos ‘n’ Andy is an American radio show, which ran from 1928 until 1960 in about 4,500 episodes, created, written and voiced by two white actors, Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll, playing Amos ‘n’ Andy as well as incidental characters in blackface.

Election 1928 O Ton

As I have indicated, the Viktor record we just heard marks a fourth and no less significant difference of the media culture between the USA and Germany. The fact that we can hear this episode of Amos and Andy at all after 90 years is related to the fact that Corell and Gosden already had started to produce their radio show on record discs in the mid 1920s. They then sent these records to the radio stations that wanted to broadcast their show and in this way they formed a syndicated network of their own.

But above all, if Corell and Gosden hadn't chosen this production method of their serial, I wouldn't have been able to play you anything. Until today we
I will therefore only play you one last exemplary excerpt, this time from a very legendary German radio play from 1928, which represents the first time that a German radio station recorded a radio play on disc before broadcasting. I give you the German transcription on the left and an attempt of an English translation on the right.

HWE 01

Hello Wave Earth Ball!
Wer dort?
Kein Geheimnis mehr zwischen Süd und Nord!
Was die Welle empfängt, die den Erdball umschmieß,
Wir senden es aus, es wird vorgeführt.
Ein Ausschnitt nur, Momentaufnahme.
Aber es ist das Dasein, liebe Dame.
Es kennt keine Logik, es springt mit uns um.
Eins, zwei, drei, der Plumpback geht rum!

Hello! This is "Welle Erdball"("Station Earth")! Who's there?
No more secrets between South and North!
What is received by the wave that laces the Earth star,
We'll send it out, it'll be performed.
A clipping only, snapshot.
But this is existence, dear lady.
It doesn't know any logic, it jumps with us.
One, two, three, the bum goes around.

HWE 02

Help! Hunger, hunger, hunger!
Erbarmen!
Im Namen des Gesetzes: Zum Tode verurteilt!
Umschalten! Umschalten!
Das Leben in tausend Gestalten,
Die Wahrheit in tausend Systeme gespalten!
Was sollen wir tun?
Umschalten!
Schaltet Euch um, dann seid ihr im Spiel.
Eins, zwei, drei, der Plumpback geht rum.

Help! Help!
Hunger, hunger, hunger!
Mercy!
In the name of the law, condemned to death!
Switch! Switch!
Life in a thousand guises,
The truth split into a thousand systems!
What are we going to do about it?
Switch!
Switch over, then you're in the game.
One, two, three, the bum goes around.

HWE 03

Fritz Walter Bischoff’s 1928 "Hörspiel" (that is translated literally "Hear-Play") “Hallo! Hier Welle Erdball”/"Hello Wave Earth Ball", – this piece, without any doubt, was one of the greatest of the Weimar Republic. Unlike most other Hörspiele before, which were produced live, – “Hallo! Hier Welle Erdball!” made use of edited material, making it a sort of forerunner of “quality” audio plays as they were produced in the US e.g. from the midst of 1930 on, on CBS.
Berlin, Oct '29 1923 - radio starts in Germany

Troupes of the "Reichswehr" marched into Saxonia.

"Help! Help! - Hunger, hunger, hunger! Mercy!”, good keywords. The official introduction of German radio in October 1923 happened on a day when half of all workers were unemployed, one kilo of bread cost 5000 million marks. A workers uprising in Hamburg had just been suppressed bloodily. The weeks before there had been fierce 'hunger demonstrations' throughout the Reich, and a state of emergency had prevailed since September. In the morning of that October-day the Social Democratic and Communist ministers in Saxony and Thuringia had been taken out of bed, expelled from office and imprisoned. Nevertheless, the radio program on 23

In 1923, only five years after World War I, the shocks and injuries were far from being healed. Germany had caused the First World War and had lost it. Thereafter chaotic and devastating years followed, full of fear, full of failed revolutionary actions and reactionary counter attacks. Therefore, when the radio was launched three years later than in the USA, the strongest barriers were imposed on it.

Of course, there had been also a vivid amateur radio movement in Germany, as in the US. But in Germany it was oppressed. Under threat of high prison sentences, no one was allowed to broadcast anything without a state license.

"The loudspeaker is an instrument of mass propaganda, the effectiveness of which we can’t even estimate today. In any case, our opponents didn’t know what to do with it. The better we must learn to handle it”

One of the bitter truths of the emergence of the German Nazi regime is that the Weimar Republic, as the historically very first democratic state in Germany, in the end turned out too defenceless and weak, not even supported by the left political forces, let alone the conservative ones, and never making use of the beneficial effects of the most modern mass medium at that time.
Goebbels at an internal speech to the radio directors, March 22, 1933

"Wir machen gar keinen Hehl daraus, der Rundfunk gehört uns. Niemandem sonst. Und den Rundfunk werden wir in den Dienst unserer Idee stellen. Keine andere Idee soll hier zu Worte kommen. Zu glauben, dass wieder einmal eine Zeit kommen könnte, wo man alle Parteien, von der sozialdemokratischen Partei bis zu den Nationalsozialisten nun Gelegenheit gäbe, am Rundfunk ihre so genannten Ideen an das Volk zu bringen, das ist kindlich... Der Rundfunk muss uns diese 100 Prozent zusammen trommeln. Und haben wir sie einmal, muss der Rundfunk uns diese 100 Prozent halten, muss sie vertheidigen, muss sie so innern, durchdrücken mit den geistigen Inhalten unserer Zeit, dass überhaupt niemand mehr ausbrechen kann."

Goebbels O-Ton

Goebbels talked extensively over the radio until the last days of the third reich. Here you see one of these events in 1943, and you have read the rallying cry, which went out on all frequencies of the “Großdeutsche Rundfunk” “wollt ihr den totalen Krieg”.

As most radio historians would say, with his perfectly manipulating radio rhetoric Goebbels extended the war by at least two years, and thus became directly responsible for millions of deaths.

Goebbels, 1943: "Do You Want Total War?"

Folowing Goebbels's instructions the "Sportpalast" was filled with "true old Party comrades" during "plebiscite" for total war. February 18, 1943

Let me jump directly into the post-war period of the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany which took place in 1949. As you may expect, the constitution, the “Grundgesetz”, of a new German Republic after the war had to react to how Goebbels used and misused the radio.
Everyone has the right to express and communicate freely his opinion in words, writing and pictures and to obtain unhindered information from generally accessible sources. Freedom of the press and freedom of reporting by radio and film are guaranteed. Censorship does not take place.

The constitution of my country was written four years after the collapse and capitulation, after all these unimaginable war crimes and the Holocaust had become known, for which the generations of my fathers and grandfathers, but also the present generations must continue to take responsibility; the constitution of my country..., after this most bloody war in the 20th century, a second time caused by Germany, which in the end left many parts of Europe and our own cities in complete ruins; this constitution has indeed drawn its lesson from all this, representing surely the best state constitution that Germany has ever had;

Therefore, the German public broadcasters of today are financed by fees. To be precise, half of them a financed by fees, the other half is financed by advertising, media by equity and other source. Fees are not a tax and therefore not dependent on decisions of the respective government. Cable TV is not a relevant market in Germany, again another difference to the US.

In terms of reach, both systems, private and public, share the market equally, with a small plus for the public service in the older generations. In more than 20 decisions on the subject, the guardians of our constitution, the judges at the Federal Constitutional Court, have repeatedly emphasized the

The fee in Germany is currently 210 € per household per year. Thus, no less than €8 billion a year is made available to the public broadcasters, for their 78 programs including 2 national and 11 regional television programmes stations. The expenditures of the broadcasters are not directly monitored by the state but through a sophisticated system of broadcasting councils.
All this marks a very big difference to my so esteemed host country here, whose current president announced some time ago, that he would like to cancel the 450 million available to the U.S. public service from tax revenues. A good half of this goes currently to local television and PBS, while the other half is used to support public radio.

As we all know, probably there would not be any relevant public broadcasting in the US at all, if there weren’t great donations and countless contributions beyond the state subsidies. After all, the reach of public channels in the USA is estimated at 100 million people per week.

And there are, a very important part: the college stations. I forgot to mention them, especially WDCV at the college here, about which I learned from the Dickinsonian Journal that it has existed for over 80 years, founded in 1931 again by amateurs. In Germany we have university radios as well, but very few and nothing comparable to the US.

German state laws regulate very precisely what should be offered in our more than 20 television and over 60 radio programmes financed with this 8 Billion fee. These regulations are essentially about the requirement of truth-full news-coverage framework, of journalistic credibility and, as a main point, of political fairness, “the principles of objectivity and impartiality of reporting, diversity of opinion and the balance of their offerings.”

And, very importantly, all that is not a German invention. While Germany had been already one year in Goebbels hand, the US-administration did the following:
1934, the FCC, the regulatory authority for the media in your country, issued under the romantic title “Mayflower” what was later called the "fairness doctrine", according to which a radio or television station could only give broadcasting time to a partisan political point of view if it also gave the same time to the opposite point of view. “to furnish well-rounded rather than one-sided discussions of public questions”, says the Fairness Doctrine.

In addition to a high level of journalistic ethics, this requirement of fairness became the blueprint of german broadcasting regulation after the war.

In the US, however, this fairness doctrine was abolished at the end of the 1980s under the presidency of Ronald Reagan.

It was argued, the doctrine “restricts the journalistic freedom of broadcasters”. There could be no radio market, it was argued, that is a market for commercial trading of radio stations, if all radio stations were forced to operate in a balanced manner.

Since the turn of the millennium we’ve seen the concentration of hundreds of radio stations in the United States, changing the formerly regional and local flair of the American radio culture quite significantly, but as the latest “IHeart

But more importantly, after removing the fairness doctrine in 1987, the field was opened up for the conservative talk radio in the manner of a Rush Limbaugh, who started in ’88 and currently reaches a weekly audience of over 13 million listeners, making his show the most listened-to talk-radio program in the US.

Like Sean Hannity who also works at Fox News, Limbaugh and the other hundreds of right wing radio talk hosts in this country paved the way for the current brutalisation of the political discourse, something that had not existed before, surely not in the White house.
What we have in common is a social process that is best described as a "digital transformation". That is to say, we live in a new world characterised by three major trend factors: a) economic and social globalization, b) the logistics of intensive world trade, and c) the complete digital integration of all data and media.

All three trends have the same origin in time and history in the middle of the 1980s, when the personal computer came to the table with all the implications of computerisation, plus the Internet and the evolution of cellular mobility of the cellphone.

The extent to which globalization and the logistics of world trade are depending on each other, can easily be shown, for instance, when you take a smartphone apart and wonder where the components come from. You may find, for example, that the 7MP-Camera comes from Korea, the Touch Panel Display from Britain, the accelerometer from Germany, some special chips from Cupertino, California itself, others from Hong Kong, and, as we know, the whole thing is assembled in China. This economical and logistical interlinking across continents and countries is

However, this same globalisation also tears deep wounds. It scares many people and leaves a lot of people behind. Globalisation is causing formerly flourishing industrial regions to decay, they becoming wastelands and people in many regions can no longer find work. Detroit and the Rust Belt in the north of this country are exemplary, but we see similar things also in Italy, Greece and in the east of Germany, where, since the reunification of Germany and the bankruptcy of their former socialist enterprises, people feel left behind and no longer taken into the new time.

In these complicated times, we are encountering that similarly in the USA and
The most obvious characteristic of this transformation is the decay of classical mass media. Both in the US and in Germany, newspapers, radio and television, are considerably losing importance.

Young people no longer read a daily newspaper, the use of radio and television is declining, Netflix, Amazon, iTunes, YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Google are taking their place. Because people in the US and in Germany are spending so much time on these new platforms and social networks, the budgets for media advertising are shifting towards online, and that again reinforces the dramatic death of newspapers on both sides of the

In the USA, as in Germany and Europe, globalisation, logistically computerised world trade and the digital media-integration is a double-edged process, because of which people seek and primarily find orientation in the new digital media. In difference to the classical analog mass media print, radio and TV, we media researchers call them not social media, but "media of connectivity". They do great things, enhancing everything we do with localisation, playing, buying, networking, publishing, interactions and conversations of all kind. Thus we gain a new quality of life, find more opportunities, more friends, more access to the world, no doubt.

In this respect, I’ll come back to the beginning of my lecture. It makes a big difference, whether a chancellor or a president talks on the radio or twitters on Twitter. Tweets reach out to the followers but exclude the others, the non-supporters, the opponents, which easily can be called liars, fake news media or liberals, because they wouldn’t know about it. This disconnecting way of connection distinguishes a twitter president from the old radio presidents Harding, Coolidge, Roosevelt or even Ronald Reagan who spoke explicitly to all their ”fellow Americans”.

As far as I know, there is no German chancellor yet twittering every morning
Thank you for your attention