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Rock 'n' roll radio: A case study of 'tactics' and teenage identity in Perth, WA, 1955-1960

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Rock 'n' Roll Radio: A Case Study of 'Tactics' and Teenage Identity in Perth, WA, 1955-1960

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ABSTRACT

Post-war Australia was a time of celebration, of prosperity, abundance and consumerism. The booming economic and technological forces within Australia propelled the rise of popular culture and led to a transformation of traditions and identities. Most notable of these transformations was that of youth culture. The rise of the teenager, as a category of person and a consumer of culture, had an impact on the social interactions of many communities. At the same time, new technologies combined with newfound prosperity meant that popular culture, such as music, was available to all and radio became a prominent feature of everyday life. In addition, changing musical styles of the era (in this instance, I examine rock 'n' roll) were marketed towards teenagers, and this led to an expansion of self-expression and self-awareness amongst young people.

This case study refers to the work of De Certeau (1984), specifically, his concept of 'strategies' and tactics', and investigates the role that radio played in the emergence and development of a distinctive youth culture in Perth. A key focus of this study is to explore how radio addressed the new social categories of the post-war period, and the consequent impact of this on the everyday lives, practices and past-times of WA teenagers. Through semi-structured interviews and a content analysis of archival newspaper articles, this case study will measure the difference between those who experienced the social and cultural changes (teenagers), and those who reported on them (print media).

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(i)   incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

(ii)   contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or

(iii)   contain any defamatory material.

Signed:

Date:

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Lastly, I dedicate this thesis to Alan Sharples (1962 – 2015), who embodied and inspired rock 'n' roll, and the essence of 'tactics'. Forever loved and missed.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

My interest in undertaking this research into the social and cultural impact of radio on Western Australian teenagers and teenage stems from my love of music history and popular culture. I initially became interested in this field after examining the phenomenon of pirate radio in Britain for my undergraduate degree, the Popular Music and Culture Unit (CMM3104), in 2012. Through secondary research, I examined this phenomenon from a cultural studies perspective by looking at radio's impact upon U.K. youth subcultures of the 1960's. Focusing upon the British Broadcasting industry (BBC), I identified their efforts to resist the potential commercialisation (and Americanisation) of British radio, and the effects this had on the distribution of popular music throughout the U.K. My research project into the BBC led me to reflect upon my own experiences with radio, and in turn, radio's significance for Australian culture. I was intrigued as to whether WA teenagers experienced the same music limitations as British youth had, or whether Australia's radio content was more liberal in the 1950's and 1960's.

Through my examination of Australian history in the 1940's and 1950's, it became evident that Australian popular culture, and the Australian media industries were more reflective of America's broadcasting formats than the U.K. radio industry during this time. The following section will outline the historical context of this thesis, specifically making the link between the presence and influence of the American servicemen on Australian cities; the post-war Australian economy and the increased importance and prominence of popular culture within the home.

Historical Context

This section will provide a historical context prior to the diversification of the radio industry. Starting with the social conditions which faced Australians during WW2, and the impact of the visiting American servicemen, I explore how Australian society changed in the decade after the war. I discuss the conditions which led to post-war prosperity - the rise in employment, home ownership, consumer practises and leisure pursuits. These conditions also provided a space for the re-energised popular culture to become a part of everyday life.

The American Influence

Australia had long looked to Britain for its national identity, its traditions and its values, and British patriotism, prior to the 1940s, was a uniting force for almost all Australians (Stratton, 1992, p.27). In years past, many Australians died to defend Britain, and many more would. However, with the rising influence of globalisation, modernisation and the influx of overseas popular culture products, Australia was beginning to lose its cultural ties to Britain. Media products, such as film and the cinema, introduced American culture to Australian audiences in the early 20th century (Stratton, 1992). At this point, however, American culture was still considered distinctly different, or exotic, from that of Australian culture. In the years to come, however, alienation towards American culture would soon diminish, resulting in an amalgamation of styles, morals, and cultural traditions between the two nations. Political and economic forces within Australia would distance Australia from Britain even further, and the war effort, if anything, would work to increase this divide.

At a time of considerable trouble, and when unable to defend its own, Australia appealed to America, rather than Britain, for help. It was in December of 1941 when Prime Minister John Curtin made a political decision that challenged the deeply entrenched belief of Britain's desire, and capacity, to defend Australia. This decision, according to Aitchison (1975, p.46), brought about fundamental changes in the relationship between Britain and Australia. Whilst weakening ties with Britain in some respects, the war also helped to form new allegiances. The result was the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Americans on the shores of Australia between

the years of 1941-1945, challenging the local culture and broadening social experiences. This act, initially viewed as a gesture of support and kinship by the wider Australian public was, in actuality, a strategic move by the Americans (Aitchison, 1975, p.57). In his 1975 text *Thanks to the Yanks: The Americans and Australia,* Aitchison explains:

> There was nothing altruistic about the Americans new presence in Australia. The American nation had been following its policy of twenty-five years earlier. The Americans were now in Australia because the U.S. army in the Philippines had been all but crushed by the enemy. The Americans were in Australia because they had no place to go except home. It was much better for them to fight the Japanese in Australia than on the American mainland.

The American servicemen were situated all throughout the nation, with most residing along the east coast. The city of Brisbane was besieged by the highest concentration of Americans. At the time, Australia had a population of approximately 7, 300, 000, and with 250,000 foreign troops (Potts, 1985), the Americanisation of Australia had begun to encroach. Potts (1985, p.xvii) further state that the experience of having so many Americans within Australia over several years "was marvellous; it was akin to sustained travel abroad and could not help disturb the insularity of the inhabitants and redraw the image of Americans held by Australians". Never before had Australia experienced such a high concentration of foreigners – these men possessed glamour, self-assurance, money and according to Rickard (1996, p.224), a "touch of mystery". This inundation of American troops, according to Thompson and Macklin (2001, p.1), was to result in a growing cultural tension between the locals and their visitors. It was therefore inevitable, as Thompson and Macklin (2001, p.viii) suggest, that there would be friction, and occasionally, violence.

This friction was to come to a head on the 26th of November 1942, in an outbreak of inter-allied conflict in the streets of Brisbane, resulting in the fatality of an Australian solider, Gunner Edward Webster. According to Thompson & Macklin (2001, p.1), Webster's death was symbolic of ambivalence in the relationship between the fledging superpower and the "former convict colony struggling towards its own identity". Thompson and Macklin (2001, p.1) continue, "the explosion of anger and resentment in 1942 epitomised a deep and dangerous divide between the

fighting men of both countries which seriously threatened Allied unity in the Battle of the Pacific". This act of violence on allied land was the result of an increasing animosity that separated the two nations, driven by jealousy and angst and heightened by the Americans' status and access to beer, cigarettes, partying and girls.

The American soldiers were paid significantly higher salaries than the Australian servicemen – and with greater pay, came greater opportunity to spend. Impressing, and antagonising, the locals with items of war-time luxury, the Americans' ideologies of excess had a profound impact upon Australian popular culture. For Brisbane in particular this was exacerbated by the city's provincialism (Thompson & Macklin, 2001, p.4). In this respect, the American presence exposed the people of Australia to new ways living, thinking and consuming. According to Moore (1981, p.207) "the American's had access to many luxury goods that were in short supply – liquor, silk stockings, chocolate, as well as hard to get staples". Furthermore, beer was rationed for most Australians throughout the war, except for the Americans. Stratton (1992, p.74) explains that the government did not see it appropriate that our visitors should suffer the same restrictions as the locals, and as a result, "a significant portion of the beer available was turned over to the American force clubs". In addition, there was a tolerance of Americans drinking alcohol at local balls and dances, despite Australian licensing laws forbidding this. It appeared, to many locals that the Americans and consumption went hand in hand. American soldiers exposed Australians to their consumer culture. It would be at least another decade until such patterns of consumerism were adopted by Australians themselves. Idealised by some, despised by others and treated as royalty by the bureaucrats – Americans became a new model in which to aspire to.

Much to the dismay of the local Australian men, many young Australian women dated the American servicemen, and a great deal more dreamt of doing so (Potts 1985). The result was that the Americans were idealised, and the notion of America was glamorised. The troops facilitated the 'Americanisation' of romantic love, "embodying new ideas about dating, romance and sexuality" (Arrow, 2009, p.50). To the Australians, the Americans forged new links between the ideas of leisure and pleasure. According to Stratton (1992, p.134), the American troops taught many young women how to jive and jitterbug, with others receiving their first

taste of jazz from the Americans. As well as bringing new cultural practises to Australia, the Americans brought new cultural products (Lees & Senyard, 1987, p.2). The Americans breathed life into Australian culture, which had been dominated by the conservative values of Britain for many years. With differences in vernacular, opinions, mannerisms, and traditions – the reserved nature of the British contradicted the outgoing and open manner of the Americans – and it was inevitable that Australia would experience a transformation of identity in the years to come.

The American lifestyle resonated with a particular group of young Australians who began to imitate the styles, fashions and mannerisms of their idols. Differing themselves from their pre-war British heritage, these young people became notorious throughout the wider Australian community. This group was later to be known as the Bodgies and Widgies, a working class gang who, supposedly, traumatised the conservative Australian culture in the late forties and early fifties (Stratton, 1992). Their outlandish American fashions, controversial behaviour and lack of respect threatened to uproot social etiquette, and as a result, they were frowned upon within society. I explore this group in further detail in Chapter 4.

Post-war Australia

Post-war Australia was a time of economic prosperity and social change. Traditional roles and identities were reviewed and revised, which had a fundamental impact on the social hierarchies of many communities (Arrow, 2009). New identities emerged, with people using what De Certeau (1984) would refer to as new strategies and tactics to negotiate their everyday lives. People settled into their lives of newfound prosperity and peace and their thoughts turned to innovation and leisure. The boom in technological innovation and the increase in leisure time fuelled the rise in consumerism. At the same time, youth culture became evident with the rise of the teenager.

In order to understand the ways in which Australia became a consumer society in the 1950s, and how the possession of commodities and popular culture products became regarded as new and desirable aspects of Australian standards of living, it is first necessary to explore shifts within Australian economy and industry. The following section will illustrate how the post-war growth in employment,

manufacturing, mining and agriculture production paved the way for significant cultural change, a transform of Australian identities and a rise in consumption patterns amongst Australian society. This section does not, however, attempt to provide a historical snapshot of Australian life in the 1950s; rather it will provide an overview and discussion surrounding the social, cultural and financial aspects of post-war society which were transformed throughout the decade.

Many Australians experienced the perks of post-war affluence and economic security and with this came a rise in consumer culture throughout the decade of the 1950s. Consequently, Australian standards of living in the second half of the century increased. Financial security enabled an expansion in the mass production and distribution of consumer durables, and this coincided with a new willingness to spend by many Australians. Whitwell (1989, p.4) observed "by the mid-1950s most Australian households had disposable incomes greater than was required to meet their essential needs". Increasing incomes created many new cultural practises and leisure activities, such as shopping. Shopping "replaced producing and creating" as an important social activity (Arrow, 2009, p.19). Women were at the forefront of this new cultural development, with many new products designed exclusively for their use. Whitegoods and household appliances were introduced as necessary, time-saving devices. The marketing industry exposed society to many new products, and technological appliances, including the transistor radio and the television. Possession became a marker of status, and the new consumption patterns transformed the middle class family home from a site of production to a site of display. Stratton (1985, p.27) views this shift as being significant because by displaying goods consumed the owner is also displaying their wealth and higher status. Therefore, "the shift from production to consumption is important because it alters the status of the goods produced" (Stratton, 1985, p.27). Commodities were celebrated nation-wide, not only for the enjoyment and ease of life that they promoted, but also for the optimism and opportunity that they represented. Australians celebrated their liberation from the constraints of war-time frugality.

The boom in consumerism, commodities and the notion of possession throughout the fifties ensured that popular culture was now an important aspect of modern life. Popular culture had the potential to reflect and reinforce the traditional family ideal, as well as impose threat upon such values. In the fifties, popular culture

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was moulding new identities, social practises and creating sites of leisure. Arrow (2009, p.7) states that "modernity – in the form of radio broadcasts, jazz music, Hollywood cinema, dance crazes, advertising and magazines – was giving Australians glimpses of world a world that seemed far more glamorous, cosmopolitan and fast-paced than their own". It was popular culture that brought new ideas, values and ways of life to our shores, in the form of film, TV, radio and music. An increasing reliance on, and individual connection to, media products transformed everyday life for many Australians.

Following the introduction of television to the Eastern States in 1956 (Arrow, 2009), and an increase in popular discourse surrounding 'the teenager' (in the print media) between the years of 1955-1960, the commercial radio industry adopted changes to attract and retain Australian audiences. It is an examination of these changes (what, why and how) that has formed the basis of this enquiry.

Research objective

The objective of this thesis is, first, to explore how the radio industry addressed the changing social categories of the 1950's (to expand its target audience and disseminate new musical forms). Secondly, I look at radio's cultural significance and role in the formation of Western Australian teenage culture between 1955-1960, and its impact on the everyday lives of individuals (aged 10-25) during this time. I focus specifically on these years, as this period encompasses changes in regards to social categories, such as the teenager and the teenage market and their representation in the print media. In this study, I use the terms of youth culture and teenagers interchangeably, as I found both phrases were reflected similarly in the popular media of the day. In this thesis, I argue that despite the print media's negative view of rock 'n' roll, WA teenagers used tactics to negotiate the supervision, restriction of regulation of their consumption.

This case study will address the following questions:

- How did Australian radio address the changing social categories of youth in the 1950's?

- How did popular accounts, (interviews and literature) as well as the print media representation of rock 'n' roll in the 1950's, impact the reception of this musical form on Australian radio, and in the wider community?

- What was the impact of radio on the everyday lives of WA teenagers, 1955-1960?

Theoretical perspective

In order to understand the social and cultural implications of radio broadcasting, I examine this medium through the theoretical lens of everyday life. Everyday life, as a theory, looks to examine the tasks, rituals, objects and activities that constitute day-to-day living (Sztompka, 2008). Often such phenomena are considered mundane and ordinary; however, by examining the everyday in greater detail, I draw meaning and significance from how people choose to live, including how they use their media in the everyday (Pink, 2013). In this respect, aspects of everyday life are often "naturalised" and "normalised", and appear hidden to from view (Highmore, 2002). By delving deeper and examining how individuals use media, I uncover the values and belief systems that underpin my interviewees' daily lives.

Central to the theory of everyday life is the work of Michel De Certeau, a 20th-century French post-structuralist theorist who investigated the "art of doing". According to De Certeau (1984), by analysing the "particular" (as in my case the print media, and representations of rock 'n' roll), I draw conclusions about the "general" (Australian broadcasting censorship regulations in the 1950's). De Certeau (1984) emphasised that the everyday is situated across both public and private spheres; it transcends all (class, culture, gender, ethnic) boundaries and extends beyond time and space. Paddy Scannell has recently extended the work of De Certeau (1984) to look at media consumption practises and everyday life.

Paddy Scannell is a media historian and a pioneer in the field of radio history. Scannell (1996) has examined how radio and television are situated within the context of everyday life, and how these media continue to shape and reflect our understanding of the world. His book, *Radio, Television & Modern Life: A Phenomenological Approach* (1996), considers radio and television broadcasting in terms of intentionality, sociability, sincerity, eventfulness, authenticity, identity and

dailiness (the chapters are labelled in kind). His chapter on "Dailiness" holds significance for this research, as he discusses the domestication of media, and highlights the ways in which our days are structured around the usage of media. Further, he explores how our interactions with radio work to shape our sense of time, space and the everyday. Scannell (1996) unpacks the ritual of listening to the radio, and explores how and why this medium continues to permeate our daily lives. In chapter 4, I unpack the use of radio for young Western Australians from 1955-1960 through my interviews.

Methodology

Research Design

In this thesis, I explored how radio addressed changing social categories and traditions in the 1950s, and the impact that this had upon Australian youth culture through the methodology of a case study. Case study methodology has been defined by Yin (2014) as an investigation that works to establish meaning surrounding a particular topic through an examination of multiple sources. Utilising the case study research methodology allowed for data to be viewed from three approaches, and in turn, covered different angles for the interpretation of data – for instance, semi-structured interviews, a content analysis and a literature review. Yin describes the process of triangulation as "the convergence of data collected from different sources, to determine the consistency of a finding" (2014, p.241). Furthermore, Yin (2014) suggests that triangulating the data will allow for the development of converging lines of enquiry. This is important as data triangulation "helps to strengthen the construct validity" (Yin, 2014, p.121) of the case study, and therefore, the study's findings are supported by more than a single source of evidence.

In the context of this case study, the process of triangulation enabled the researcher to source data from a range of resources. This was achieved through:

1. A literature review to provide a background on the research, established the objectives at the centre of this case study, discussed similar studies, relevant literature and has outlined a gap in the research available explore the history of cultural studies. Through the literature, I identified the best approach to understand, evaluate and engage with this thesis topic and era

2. Six semi-structured interviews with individuals who had experienced, and contributed to, the development of Australian youth culture. The interview participants would have been aged 10-25, and would have lived in Perth in the period beginning 1955. The semi-structured questions focused on what role radio played in their everyday life, and in particular, how radio may have influenced their experiences as a young person, and the development of their identities (for instance, music consumption, leisure activities, social groups, appearance, priorities and ideologies).

3. A content analysis of print media texts published between 1955-1960 regarding youth, radio and popular music. A number of West Australian newspaper were surveyed, and articles were sourced from *The Mirror* (Perth), the *Beverley Times* (Perth) from 1955-1960. This provided context and detail surrounding the historical context of youth, and their interactions with popular culture throughout this time.

Data collection methods

Interviews

This case study used interviews to gain an insight into the social, cultural and economic contexts of the participants as young people living in post-war Western Australia. The interviews were used as a method to understand the participants' social reality, their recollections of everyday life as teenagers, and how radio was situated within their daily routines during this era. This method provided a platform for the participants to consider, in retrospect, the social and cultural impact of radio on youth and youth culture, and also on their own personal development. Weerakoddy (2009, p. 179) states that semi-structured or unstructured interview formats work to "gather data about the person under study and examine it in the larger context within the cultural and societal themes of the time the person lived". In this way, interviews were the most suitable approach in sourcing valuable data and information about the changing social categories and shifting modes of (cultural) consumption that affected post-war Perth youth. Before interviews were conducted, an Ethics Application was submitted to the ECU Ethics Committee outlining the studies approach.

Participant selection

        The recruitment of participants for the semi-structured interviews required a systematic and structured approach to ensure that all respondents met the eligibility criteria. Interview participants needed to have been living in Perth throughout the years of 1955-1960, and to have been aged between 10-25 during the time period studied. It is important to note that the eligibility criteria was adjusted in response to interest from a number of participants who fell just below of the identified age bracket (i.e the original request was for interviews with individuals aged 12-25 during the years of 1955-1960 – this was later changed to include participants between the ages of 10-25).

        A number of sampling approaches were used in the recruitment process. The first approach involved the snowball or 'word-of-mouth' method (Sarantakos, 2013). This approach was beneficial, in that it allowed the researcher to recruit from those within their immediate network, such as to friends, family and colleagues. Not only was this approach time-efficient, the interview respondents tended to be located within a relatively close geographical proximity to the researcher, and to the university campus.

        The second approach involved the recruitment of individuals via flyer. The researcher designed and developed a poster, which briefly detailed the research purpose and contact details for the researcher. The poster was submitted to the ECU Ethics committee (and was subsequently approved) and then distributed throughout libraries, community centres and town halls within the Perth Metropolitan area.

        The third approach involved liaison with the local print media industry. A number of community newspapers (such as the *Perth Voice* and *The Post*) were called upon to display and feature an article about the research, and to call upon community members to participate. A select number of newspapers featured the article, and some displayed the research flyer. This approach was beneficial in that it gave the research study exposure to a wider demographic of the Perth community.

        The final approach was the engagement of community radio stations, such as RTR FM 92.3 and 101.7, Capital Radio. This involved direct consultation between the researcher and the broadcasting staff to discuss the case study and promote it as a

'community call out' piece. This approach did produce further community interest, by drawing upon the station's audience network. Unfortunately, this method did not result in further exposure for the research project, nor did it result in any interviews.

In summary, multiple approaches contributed to the recruitment of interview participants for this case study. Immediate social and family networks were contacted by word-of-mouth, and by email, with the request for possible participants. The flyers, community newspaper articles, and radio exposure all worked to promote the study across a wider sphere of influence. In doing so, the researcher successfully interviewed seven participants.

Interested interview participants were provided with an information letter, and a consent form, which contained information about the case study research, the interview and the participant's role and rights in agreeing to an interview. A follow up email, and / or phone call, was sent within 10 days if no further contact was made. If the participant was willing to be interviewed - a date and a time was arranged to meet. The interviews were conducted in public spaces, with the exception of one interview that took place in a domestic environment (as the participant was known to the researcher).

Instrument

This case study used semi-structured interviews as the instrument by which the researcher sourced relevant and time-specific information about the phenomenon studied. According to Yin (2003) and Merriam (1990), interviews are considered one of the most important sources for data collection within a case study. Semi-structured interviews, in particular, allow for this flow of information to take place in an informal setting, and involve open-ended questions that (at times) lead to a wider scope of discussion. The open-ended or unstructured questions were developed with the view to allowing both the participant, and the researcher, with enough freedom to explore varying lines of enquiry within the interview setting.

Consistent with the theoretical perspective of the case study (everyday life), the interview questions were developed in line with Sztompka's (2008) perspective in *The Focus of Everyday Life*. Sztompka's (2008) text considers the process of applying everyday life theory to everyday life routines. In this respect, exploring

Sztompka's (2008) examination of the everyday allowed the researcher to situate the radio usage of young Western Australians in the 1950s, within a historical context.

Transcriptions

To assist in the analysis of data, each semi-structured interview was recorded. The most efficient method of accessing the data recorded in the manner is a 'verbatim transcription' (reference). The researcher aimed to reproduce as accurately as possible, what was said by the participant and the way in which it was said. Each completed transcript was numbered sequentially by page to facilitate location of data. This allowed for a close examination of the transcript and identification of text.

Identification of categories

The data obtained from the content analysis and semi-structured interviews needed to be first analysed, and then organised. The analysis of both techniques required a staged process of recognition, clarification, and coding of categories and concepts from the raw data (Rubin & Rubin 2016). In order to utilise the research findings and successfully link the data with the body of the thesis, the identification of categories for all data was the first step in the analysis process. The second step involved the content analysis of the print media articles, and the categories and concepts that they reflected.

Content analysis

In addition to the use of semi-structured interviews, I conducted a content analysis a selection of print media articles published between 1955-1960. According to Sarantakos (2013, p.III), a content analysis is often employed to assess the time, frequency and the duration of an event or phenomenon, and assists the researcher to examine the thematic content of communication that aims to make inferences about individual or group values.

In this instance, I coded for categories or themes in the coverage, sources cited in the articles as well as specific phrases used to describe 'teenagers'. I performed individual searches on TROVE for 'teenagers' in conjunction with the key words (see Table 1), for articles that were printed within all WA newspapers

between 1 January 1955 and 31 December 1959. An article would only be collected as a sample if it featured the word 'teenager' in conjunction with any of the key words more than once. If the frequency was less than this, the article was deemed irrelevant to the search. The rationale for selecting this timeframe was to chart any changes over the five-year period. This encompassed the marketing of radio programming towards young audiences; driving the popularity of rock 'n' roll music in Perth and influencing teenage behaviours and leisure pursuits in the public sphere.

Table 1. Key words

'Juvenile'; 'Bodgies'; 'Bodgies and Widgies'; 'Radio'; 'Rock 'n' roll'; 'Delinquency'; 'Gangs'; 'Concert' and 'American music'.

The initial sampling of articles comprised of a total of 279 articles. The researcher did a keyword search using the words of either "teenager" or "youth" and by selecting articles which:

- Were published in Perth, and were related to local Perth or Western Australian matters.

- Were published between 01/01/1955 and 31/12/1959.

- Were news articles, some of which contained images, rather than advertisements.

After narrowing the search, the researcher was left with a total of 16 articles for the content analysis. The researcher produced a coding sheet for this purpose. The coding sheet assisted the researcher in analysing the manifest and latent content of each article. It was set out similarly to the heading below

- Article ID:
- Newspaper:
- Date of Issue:
  Origin of Story
- Length of story:
- Photograph (Y / N):
- Story type:
  Three Main Topics Emphasised:
- Most emphasised topic

- Second most emphasised topic
- Third most emphasised topic
    Sources cited in news story:
- Local journalists

The articles were then categorized according to the 'most emphasised' topics apparent within each article. The researcher then proceeded to analyse 16 articles in further detail, according to the use and frequency of emotive language, particularly in the article title and subheading. The results of this analysis is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Research limitations

As previously mentioned, this thesis will follow the methodology of a case study. A case study allows for the focus of a specific phenomenon in more detail, and in a short period of time. A case study is limited because it is not generalisable in that it is difficult to extrapolate beyond the specific design used for the study. One of the methods used was a series of interviews with individuals who lived in Perth 1955-1960 and were aged 12-25 at the time. These interviews were limited in number to 6 individuals. The limited amount of interviews did not detract from the outcomes of the project, as the research did not aim to draw conclusions about radio's role in the everyday lives of all young Australians who lived in Perth, 1955-1960.

There is, however, an awareness that the information provided, the experiences, opportunities, and perspectives discussed throughout the interviews, may be limited to a certain socio-cultural demographic of the Western Australian public. Furthermore, as the interviews are being conducted in the Perth Metropolitan area, the data gathered (regarding experiences of youth and radio 1955-1960) from the interviews, may not necessarily correlate with the experiences of new migrants, from the same age and era, arriving in Perth after 1949, as well as individuals living in other parts of Australia.

Significance

Over the years, there has been significant research into the effects of media (film, television, print media, and the internet) on youth and youth culture (Liebert, 1988; Buckingham, 2011; Jagodzinski, 2008). Australian radio, on the other hand, is a medium that has had comparatively little academic and empirical research, particularly its impact upon youth. The theorists and historians who have examined Australian radio previously have either focused upon the history of the ABC (Mackay, 1957); the rise of talkback radio (Turner, 1994; Potts, 1989; Jones, 1995); or commercial radio and its role in popular culture (Griffen-Foley, 2009; Waterhouse, 1996). To this date, I have not found an academic enquiry into the social impact of radio on Australian youth in Perth 1955-1960. The purpose of this case study is to address the role of radio on youth living in Perth during this era, and to understand the broader social implications on the community.

Since commencing this study in 2014, there has been further interest in this era of Perth music culture. I am aware of two studies published by Adam Trainer, *From Snake Pits to Ballrooms: Class, Race and Early Rock 'n' Roll in Perth* (Trainer, 2016) and *"Making do in Ways That we Hadn't Done Before": The Early Popular Music Industry in Perth* (Trainer, 2016). This interest indicates that my study is significant and that it contributes a new perspective to the discussions surrounding this era of Western Australian history.

Thesis Overview

This case study examines the social conditions that governed Australia throughout the fifties, including, in chapter 1, the impact of the WW2 American servicemen. In this chapter, I analyse the cultural and economic forces which resulted in a consumer culture, and the heightened social importance of popular media (and radio). I also identify the steps taken in the methodology of this case study, and the research design and the data collection tools used.

In chapter 2, I conduct a review of literature from cultural studies, audience studies, consumption theory and the study of everyday life. This review is important as it a) explores the history and relevance of these different fields of thought; b)

consolidates my understanding of previous studies in audience studies and everyday life; and c) highlights where my case study contributes to this discussion.

Chapter 3 examines the emergence of the teenager and the sociological and psychological discourse surrounding this social category. Then I discuss the cultural phenomenon of the Bodgies and Widgies and the rise of rock 'n' roll in Western societies. In this chapter I also examine the emergence of notion of the teenager, which changed the social structure of many Western societies. An important part of this chapter is my discussion of Australian commercial radio, in the eastern states and in Perth.

Building upon this understanding, in chapter 4, Section 1, I analyse a range of print media articles published by West Australian papers between the years of 1955-1960. This highlights the language and tone used to describe teenagers, rock 'n' roll, and Bodgies and Widgies during this time. From this analysis, I gain an insight into how this age group was portrayed, and also how teenage commodities and cultural practises, like jiving, were portrayed. This chapter informs my understanding of the interviews' content, which is discussed in chapter 5.

It is in section 2 of Chapter 4 where my key findings came to light. Here I explore the interviews conducted with individuals who lived in Perth between 1955 and 1960. I consider the theoretical perspective of everyday life and the work of De Certeau (1984), in particular his theory of 'strategies' and 'tactics' to examine how radio was used by teenagers and their parents.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion to the thesis. This chapter discussed the key finding in this study which is that teenagers employed 'tactics' to access and enjoy music of their preference, and in a location and at a time of their preference. These tactical moments and opportunities were found to be important in the establishment of a thriving youth culture in Perth in the '50s.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Radio has played an influential role in the development of Australian popular culture, yet there are significant gaps in our knowledge and understanding of its history and impact on social groups. In this review of the literature, however, I do not examine the history of Australian culture, nor radio's significance for Australian popular culture – this will come later. Instead, I examine the theories around which I base my research – the concepts, ideas and evolutions of thought which historically, have shaped our understanding of the reception and consumption of radio. These are theories and changes in cultural studies, audience studies, consumption theory and the study of everyday life.

As much as this thesis is a cultural studies paper, it is also an everyday-life study – an examination of teenage audiences and the manner in which they consume. Therefore, I have structured this literature review in a way that guides the reader through an understanding of culture from a cultural studies perspective – drawing upon theorists such as Adorno, Hall, Hedbidge, and Hartley through a history of audience studies. In this history, I explore the shift from the American mass-communication approach to the "participatory experience" as described by Jenkins (2013, p.29): the theories surrounding consumption and its link to identity construction (through Marx, Veblen, Bourdieu and Baudrillard) and the study of everyday life and everyday practices (Pink, Highmore, and De Certeau).

Culture and Cultural Studies

Culture, what is ordinary, what is everyday and what is not, can be examined from a range of academic fields and disciplines. In order to better define the concept of culture in everyday life for my study, I turned to cultural studies, which provided the most useful approach. The following section will look at cultural studies theorists who have each defined the term and will highlight how these definitions vary in their understanding of culture.

Williams (1986, p.237), an early cultural studies writer, describes culture as something that is "made by people for themselves". In the 21st Century, however, culture is defined by Ryan (2010, p.34), as "creative destruction as much as it is system maintenance through embedded normative prescription". In this respect, culture is both the process and the product. Ryan (2010) suggests that culture, as a concept, produces a commonality of values, beliefs and behaviors, as well as conformity with standards, norms and values. In this sense, for Ryan (2010), and for Williams (1986), culture continually reflects and informs our experiences as we engage with daily life.

The production and consumption of culture is a phenomenon considered, and expanded on, by Lawrence Levine. In his 1993 text, *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History,* Levine examines definitions of culture, and also examines the growing phenomenon of popular culture. Popular culture, Levine (1993) states, can be defined in three ways: "culture that is popular; culture that is widely accessible, widely accessed and widely disseminated, and widely viewed or heard or read" (1993, p.276). This definition brings in the role of the audience because, as Levine (1993) suggests, they are central in determining what constitutes a (popular) culture. In addition, Levine's (1993) definition highlights the relationship between those who produce, and those who consume, such culture.

Culture and popular culture have been considered over the decades by a wide range of theorists and historians. One particular perspective, arising from the Frankfurt School considered popular culture a mass-produced, mass-marketed and mass-consumed product of capitalism. Most notably, Adorno and Horkheimer's (1982) concept of the 'culture industry' rendered popular culture as both a dominating and regulating force over the masses. In their text, *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*, Adorno and Horkheimer examine the rise of consumerism and the (powerless) consumer. The social, cultural and technological changes of the 20th century, they argue, render the individual as bound to the commodities in which they consume. Therefore, popular culture, according to Adorno and Horkheimer (1982), works to both contain and subvert oppositional perspectives.

In a separate study, Adorno (1977) considers the concepts of 'style' and 'genre' as gimmicks introduced by the 'culture industry', feeding the spectacle of

'pseudo-individuality'. 'Pseudo-individuality' is a perceived uniqueness attained by an individual, based upon cultural choices and consumption. Adorno (1977), for example, believes that the consumption of popular music is "regressive listening", which is conditioned by the capitalist mode of production. "Listeners suffer from the delusion that their musical choices set them apart from the rest, that they are exercising control in their leisure pursuits" (Adorno, 1977, p. 57). Society is governed by the consumption of commodities; our desire for uniqueness and individuality is based upon the illusion of "choice". Adorno and Horkheimer (1982) understand the culture industry to be totalitarian, stating that any "choice" made, no matter how deviant or outside of the norm it is considered to be, is still within the confines and expectations of the culture industry. This perspective is consistently reflected in views about popular music culture today by some sections of society.

The Birmingham School, however, offered a very different approach towards the study of culture and popular culture. Founded by Richard Hoggart in 1964, the school was home to theorists such as Stuart Hall, Paul Willis, Dick Hebdige, Angela McRobbie, Iain Chambers, Paul Gilroy, Lawrence Grossberg and Paul Du Gay and worked to challenge concepts originating from the Frankfurt School, which rendered considered consumers as passive. The Birmingham School developed new ideas, new concepts and new perspectives surrounding the consumer, and inspired further studies in the field audience reception, and ultimately promoted the idea of audiences as active and powerful agents in a post-modern age (Longhurst et al, 2017, p.32).

This literature leads to my consideration of where culture, popular or otherwise, sits within the field of cultural studies. Evolving from a convergence of academic fields of enquiry – anthropology, sociology, history, ethnography – cultural studies, as a discipline, works to examine the way we live, and observes the ideologies, philosophies and institutions that shape different societies. In addition, cultural studies scholars analyse popular texts and cultural products, and examine modes of creative resistance, which work against dominant norms and values that often dictate the everyday (Arrow, 2009). According to Hartley, in his text *Short history of Cultural Studies*, "cultural studies introduced into the academy the novel idea that you might not have to choose between high and low culture, or even between the rich and the dispossessed, but instead you needed to find out what connected, drove and separated these differences" (2003, p.4). In this respect,

cultural studies explores, analyses and celebrates, culture at all levels, and across all social, class and ethnic boundaries. Cultural studies, in Hartley's (2003) sense, investigates and considers culture as a force which can be found, enjoyed, experienced and consumed across private and public spheres.

More recently, Hartley's (2003) examination of cultural studies has been expanded by the work of Ryan (2010) in *Cultural Studies: An Introduction*. In this text Ryan (2010) explores the history of the field, as well as varying modes of resistance that have been documented throughout the decades. In particular, Ryan (2010) considers the bohemian movement in Western Europe of the late 19th century as a precursor to the social resistance of youth in the 1960s and 1970s. These movements became the focus of many early scholars and academics in the field of cultural studies. For instance, Thompson (1968), a 20th-century cultural theorist, considered the tension between 'popular' and 'high' culture in Britain, and the role that these two categories of commodities played in the formation of social identities. In particular, Thompson's (1968) work examined the British class system, and how patterns of class resistance and tension were linked to established modes of cultural consumption amongst British audiences.

It is the concepts originating out of the Birmingham School, particularly those of Stuart Hall, which I have found particularly relevant and shall draw upon in my study in later chapters where I discuss and examine youth subcultures.

Audience Studies

As I am exploring the impact of radio on groups of people (audiences) through qualitative research, it is both logical and necessary to understand audience studies and where it sits within cultural studies. The first serious discussion and analysis of audiences and audience reception in media and cultural studies emerged in the early 1980s (Morley, 1980; Radway, 1984; Ang, 1985; Hobson, 1989). Whilst Audience Studies is not a new field – it does reflect new methods and approaches within the field of cultural studies that explore individuals' and groups' interactions with media and social phenomena. Audience studies can be linked to cultural studies, in that both fields explore social and individual reactions to popular culture and cultural products. Whereas cultural studies explores social systems and structures,

and the way that popular culture products come to be located within their culture, audience studies directly examines and observes how and why we, as human beings, engage with certain forms of entertainment, information and media. It is evident, in the increasing number of readers published in the last several years (such as Brooker & Jermyn, 2003; Gillespie, 2005; Nightingale, 2011), as well as a range of courses available at various institutions (University of Newcastle; Cardiff University; University of Leicester) that audience studies is a growing field.

In the late 20th century, Stuart Hall's (1973) encoding/decoding model of communication challenged dominant discourses of the time, (i.e. the American mass communication perspective of the sender-message-receiver model) suggesting that the process of audience reception and cultural consumption was often, if not always, linear. Hall's (1973) essay promoted the idea that the consumption of and interaction with media texts cannot be pre-determined; nor are they universal, and the transmission of communication and meaning between text and audience allows for varying levels of negotiation and resistance.

Further investigations in the field of audience studies, such as Morley's (1980) Nationwide Audience ethnographic study, explore audience reception and consumption on a macro scale. Morley (1980) charters the audience reception of particular texts (television), recording the dominant readings, and commonalities, typical of specific subcultural groupings within society. Whilst Morley's (1980) investigation identifies that there are variant readings of texts within society, he fails to recognise that different readings occur within the subcultural groups.

It is Radway's (1984) and later Ang's (1985) studies of (largely) female audiences that work to identify difference and diversity of audience consumption within subcultural groupings. Radway's (1984) study and Ang's (1985) study work to render the audience as plural, as diverse and, according to Condit (1989), as having the capacity for dominant and alternate readings. This was further extended in the work of Liebes and Katz, (1989), Press, (1991) and Hobson (1989) who found that viewers interpreted and interacted with media in particular and varying ways. Rockler (2002) later examined inter-racial readings of media texts, and found that media use works to reflect the political and cultural climate of different nations.

In his text, *Audience Analysis*, McQuail (1997, p. 2) defines an audience as being "both a product of social context (which leads to shared cultural interests, understandings and information needs) and a response to a particular pattern of media provision". McQuail (1997) works to explain audiences, and charters the changing perspectives surrounding this concept and the field of audience studies.

In an investigation into the history of audience studies, Livingstone (1998) suggests that contemporary research surrounding audience reception can be seen as stemming from the work of the Birmingham school. In this respect, Livingstone's (1998) study is in line with Hall's (1973) essay, which suggests that any meaning produced or derived from a text is not inherent within the text itself, but is found within the interaction, experience, or relationship between the text and the audience. Livingstone (1998) explains:

> Thus, media and communications research has moved on, irreversibly, from the assumption that media texts have fixed and given meanings to be identified by elite analysts, that media influence works through the linear transmission of meaning to a passive audience, that audiences are a homogenous, uncritical mass, or that high culture differs qualitatively in obvious and uncontentious ways from popular culture (Livingstone, 1998, p.4).

More recently, however, academics and theorists of media audiences have placed significant focus on the interactivity and participation of the viewer / reader experience. Jenkins (1992), in his text, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture*, explores audience members and fan culture, and their ability to shape and determine media content. In his later work, *Spreadable Media* (Jenkins, 2013), Jenkins argue that "participatory practices" are activities that can be seen as "generative" (Jenkins, 2013, p29). His text refers to "the potential – both technical and cultural – for audiences to share content for their own purposes, sometimes with the permission of rights holders, sometimes against their wishes" (Jenkins, et al, 2015, p.3). The media landscape today, which Jenkins (2013) refers to, has facilitated audiences' capacity to use and distribute media content.

In an age of rapid communication and cultural exchange, the rise of digital technology has transformed the media landscape, and in turn, created many new spaces for audience engagement, consumption and interaction with media text. In turn, this shift has highlighted new areas of potential research for audience studies

and ways in which the field can be linked with Consumption Theory.

Theories of Consumption

Discussions surrounding consumption derive from the work of Karl Marx and his theory of capitalism. Marx (1975, p.183) was primarily concerned with the distribution of power within society, between those who had resources (the bourgeoisie) and those who did not (the proletariat). Marx's (1975, p.182) work describes the relationship between production and consumption, profit and power, and the idea of "commodity fetishism". "Commodity fetishism" refers to the desire to acquire commodity items, which works to mask the social processes of labor and to distance the product from, what Marx (1975) considers as, human exploitation.

The work of Marx (1975) was followed by Thorsten Veblen, who in 1899 conducted research on consumption and the aristocracy of late 19th century America. His research one of the earliest links between commodities as symbolic markers of status, consumption and good 'taste' (Mackay, 1997, p.4). The idea of good and bad 'taste' was later adapted by Bourdieu & Nice (1984), who developed the term 'cultural capital'. 'Cultural capital', Bourdieu & Nice (1984) argue, is fundamental to knowledge, status and opportunity for social mobility and is often reflected through intellect, style of dress and speech patterns. Bourdieu & Nice (1984) examined a range of social groupings, the distribution of 'cultural capital' and their capacity to invest symbolic value in consumer goods. Bourdieu & Nice (1984) deviates from Marx's economic definition of social relations and moves towards an understanding of culture and consumption as a process of identification and differentiation.

Bourdieu & Nice (1984) further states that the consumption of such goods is an active process of identity construction. Thus, the consumption of products accounts for who you are, your status, and your opportunities. Bourdieu & Nice (1984) argues that we, as social subjects, continue to classify and distinguish ourselves against others through the consumption and acquisition of goods. It is through the distinctions of goods and the distinctions of taste that reflect the structure of class difference. Bourdieu & Nice' (1984) examination of patterns of consumption

was, however, later criticised for not considering other modes of difference (gender, race, income).

In contrast, post-modernist theorist Baudrillard & Poster (2004) writes about the notion of fragmented and symbolic consumption. Whereas Bourdieu (1984) considers consumption patterns to be guided by who you are, Baudrillard & Poster (2004) considers consumption patterns to reflect who you are. In essence, Baudrillard & Poster (2004) argue that the consumers become what they consume.

In a similar sense, Althusser's (1994) theory of the ideological state apparatus (ISA) can be applied to consumption. In his text, Althusser (1994) discusses how power within society is regulated through ideological social formations and material experiences. It is through such formations and experiences, Althusser (1994) insists, that ideology 'hails' individuals as ideological 'subjects' in capitalist societies. It can be suggested that ideological institutions within post-war Australia 'hailed' young people as ideological subjects, and in doing so, contributed to the formation of a youth category: a new type of worker, consumer, and person in Australian society.

Whilst Baudrillard & Poster (2004) and Althusser (1994) do offer interesting perspectives, they ultimately construct the consumers as passive, as do Adorno and Horkheimer (1982). As my research will be drawing upon theories which support the concept of audience participation, interaction and active engagement and consumption, I will not be using either Baudrillard's or Althusser's text to inform my research.

In a 1959 study of British adolescents, Abrams (1961) surveyed teenagers living in Britain between the ages of 15-25 and their consumption patterns. This is a particularly useful study as Abrams (1961) examined the 'working class' youths and identified that they were the largest consumer group in the economy at that time. As a result of this study, theories arose around a material culture being created specifically for this group of consumers by commercial interests. Downes' (1966) text *The Delinquent Solution,* similarly comments on this newly created commercial culture, commenting that this market expansion was not only linked to teenagers, but also to other groups in the post-war era.

Early on, the Birmingham School identified patterns of consumption and investigated the ways in which individuals, particularly those in subcultures, engaged

with commodities – not merely consuming but also appropriating meaning, re-working and redefining their function. Hedbidge (1979) expanded on this theory through his work on British youth subcultures and their DIY style in *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979), *Cut 'n' mix: Culture, Identity and Carribean Music* (1987); and *Hiding in the Light: Youth Surveillance and Display* (1988). It is authors Warde (1990) and, later, Lury (2011), who extend the idea of consumption and identity construction beyond the realm of subcultures, arguing that most (if not all) consumers engage in the act of re-defining the meaning of consumer goods. Warde (1990) and Lury (2011) suggest that rather than this being a deliberate act of social resistance, the re-working of consumer products is an everyday practice of resistance in everyday life.

Everyday Life and De Certeau

I now turn to examine the literature about everyday life within cultural studies. The period I am examining (1955-1960) encompasses significant changes regarding social categories, such as the increasing visibility of the teenager, and changes to teenage modes of consumption and expression in everyday life. Everyday life, as a theory, looks to examine the tasks, rituals, objects and activities that constitute day-to-day living (Sztompka, 2008). In this sense, everyday life constitutes not only the physical, and tangible, elements of reality, but also the cultural, ideological and emotional forces which determine our day-to-day lives (Highmore, 2002).

Michel De Certeau, a 20th-century French post-structuralist theorist, developed theories such as the "art of doing" (1984), now considered central to the theory of everyday life. In his text, *The Practise of Everyday Life*, De Certeau (1984) underlines the importance of studying the everyday, arguing that it is the everyday actions, everyday rituals, and everyday modes of expression that hold meaning. De Certeau (1984) emphasised that the everyday is situated in both the public and the private spheres of everyday life - that it transcends all class, culture, gender and ethnic boundaries and extends beyond time and space. Furthermore, De Certeau (1984) was predominantly concerned with analysing culture and society from a micro to a macro level suggesting that in order to draw conclusions about the

"general", we must first examine the "particular". More recently, De Certeau's (1984) investigation into the everyday has been expanded by the work of Sarah Pink (ethnography), Paddy Scannell (media) and Ben Highmore (art history).

In his 2002 text, *The Everyday Life Reader,* Highmore considers the everyday as not merely a reality that is readily available for scrutiny and observation, but also as the aspect of life that lay hidden. This is because everyday life, at a primary level, predominately exists within the domestic sphere. Thus, it is often difficult to account for, to measure and to examine. According to Highmore (2002, p.4), cultural studies, sociology, social history, anthropology, ethnography, literary studies and psychology are able "to lay some claim to attending to the everyday – yet for the most part the tendency has been for specialised disciplines to invoke the everyday as a taken-for-granted aspect of social life without further enquiry".

In his overview of the theory of everyday life, Highmore (2002) considers the validity and relevance of De Certeau's (1984) approach towards studying the everyday. According to Highmore (2002), De Certeau's (1984) method differs from other theorists who have explored everyday life (often via the 'top-down' approach) in that De Certeau (1984) explores everyday social experiences at a micro level. In order to articulate the complex nature of everyday interactions and occurrences, the researcher must first focus upon the aspects of daily life which are often hidden or overlooked; boiling water, drinking coffee, walking to school, working at a desk, or listening to the radio (on which my study is focussed). These everyday phenomena, Highmore (2002, p.4) suggests, whilst rarely found at the centre of academic enquiries, once examined, can offer great insight into the functioning and organisation of society in general.

In *The Practise of Everyday Life*, De Certeau (1984) explains that, by examining the ways in which individuals engage with objects, media, and situations, we can establish not only patterns of usage and consumption, but also patterns of resistance. De Certeau (1984) observes how everyday life is governed by the conventions, norms and regulations controlled by institutions, and those in positions of power. In his chapter "Walking in the City", De Certeau (1984) explores how individuals are placed within constructed environments (the urban city) and are expected to follow the prescribed routes laid out for them. For De Certeau (1984), these predetermined paths represent "strategies" enforced by those in positions of

power (institutions, organisations, government agencies). In my study, these strategies are evident in the institutions such as the school, the church, and the family home, which work to define the ways that young people should behave and experience everyday life. The institutions, De Certeau (1984, p.149) argues, do not account for modes of creative resistance - everyday acts of defiance and rebellion performed by ordinary people, at a localised level. These, he describes as "tactics". Resistance, he suggests, need not always be based on grand scale uprisings, but can be as simple, as instantaneous and as "tactical" as taking a short cut down a laneway. In this respect, De Certeau's (1984) concept of "strategies" and "tactics" is in line with recent research (Tutt, 2008) into how teenagers negotiate, behave and interact within society.

In a recent ethnographic study titled *'Tactical' living: A Situated Study of Teenager Negotiations Around Interactions With Living Room Media*, Tutt (2008) observes how young people are often required to negotiate access to media in the home. The study found that house rules, or in De Certeau's (1984) terms 'strategies', were enforced by parents to monitor and control their child's contact with various forms of living room media. These 'strategies', Tutt (2008, p.2335) states, were often subverted by teenagers to gain access to such media, and to "claim their stake in daily living". Throughout the study, it was found that 'tactics' were deployed by the teenagers as a way of asserting their identity and independence in everyday life. Tutt (2008, p.2336) explains "through their tactical play, individuals can reinvent, challenge or equally reaffirm the powerful discourses which hold sway over them". Other studies, (O'Brien, 2009; Heron-Hruby, Hagwood & Alvermann, 2008) have also shown teenagers to employ 'tactics' as a way of creatively engaging and negotiating with the rules that shape their daily lives.

In the context of mid-century Australia and its people, popular culture and politics, it can be suggested that individuals and groups may have had far more agency and influence in the consumption and reception of media texts than studies of this era previously determined. When examining the everyday lives of post-war Australians, various shifts in the fields of both cultural studies and audience studies bring to light new aspects and areas of audience agency to explore. It has become evident that in order to understand the social and cultural context of this particular area, the instance, and influence, of media usage and media audiences (such as radio

listening) will require further examination.

Conclusion

This literature review has explored a range of texts regarding the study of cultural studies, audience studies, consumption theory and everyday life. It is evident, from gathering and analysing these texts, that there are a number of significant gaps within the literature.

To begin with, whereas several texts discuss everyday life theory, everyday life practices and acts of resistance (Highmore, 2002; De Certeau, 1984, very few have examined everyday life in Australia in significant detail. A detailed study of youth culture and youth identities has not yet been undertaken, despite there being a few texts exploring youth engagement with media texts like television (Gorman, 1992) and mobile phones (Tutt, 2008). Furthermore, I have found no texts that focus predominantly upon the post-war period and everyday life. It is here that my Honours project fills a gap in the field of cultural studies.

In the next Chapter, I explore the context around post-war radio, popular culture and the rise of the teenager. I look at changes made within the radio industry across the eastern states and in WA. The following chapter presents the reader with an insight and understanding as to the historical period in which my interviewees lived, experienced and remember (as discussed in Chapter 4).

CHAPTER THREE
ROCK 'N' ROLL RADIO

This Chapter will explore the youth category, and the emergence of the teenage identity. I draw upon Stratton's (1992) study of the Bodgies and Widgies, and his consideration of youth subcultures in relation to class, consumption and style. Then, I examine rock 'n' roll a musical genre which gained immense popularity in the decade of the '50s. I end this chapter with a discussion of radio in the Eastern States and reflect upon the context of radio in WA.

Youth Category

In 1950s Australia, the teenager embodied a new conception of youth produced by a convergence of academic, educational, industrial and commercial interests (Arrow, 2009, p.48). These discourses promoted that idea that youth was a distinct life stage, experienced by individuals of all races, gender and class. This life stage was considered a universal phenomenon; however, according to a range of academics and psychologists (Manning, 1958; Irving, Maunders & Sherington 1995; Ibid & Johnson, 1993), it was to be treated with great care. According to Ibid and Johnson (1993, p.49), youth were now considered both in terms of 'hope' and 'risk' by the general public – and "these ideas became well-rehearsed in several spheres throughout the 1950s". In her 2009 text, *Friday on our Minds*, Arrow describes how psychologists and sociologists 'discovered' the teenager in the 1950s and this discovery contributed to the popular construction of youth as a separate category of person in Australian society.

This new academic focus led to further discussion surrounding the psychology and predicament of the teenager. For instance, in a 1954 sociological study of over 200 Sydney adolescents, Connell, Francis and Skillbeck (1957, p.11) stated that in order for teenagers to 'become adults' they were to attain intellectual maturity, learn appropriate roles and achieve emotional stability.

In post-war Australia, teenagers who had already left school played a considerable role in local economies. According to Irving, Maunders & Sherington (1995, p.2), whilst many teenagers remained at school throughout the 1950s, post-school teenagers were able to maintain an independent income from their parents, and this gave them greater consumer choice. In their text, *Youth in Australia: Policy, Administration and Politics*, Irving, Maunders and Sherington (1995) describe how post-school teenagers and working-class youths were able to maintain roles in unskilled jobs, which in turn worked to separate them from their peers. Working-class youths in the early 1950s were now a distinct, wage-earning, consuming group of young people, and according to Stratton (1992, p.8) "the effect of this was to produce a wave of working class youth behaviour which brought the kids into opposition to middle class authority". This opposition, Stratton (1992) suggests, was to take the form of the Bodgies and Widgies, a youth subcultural group in post-war Australia.

The Bodgies and Widgies

Whilst working-class gangs had existed throughout Australian history, never before had our nation been so at arms over a group of youth, the Bodgies and Widgies. This section will draw upon Stratton's (1992) examination of this subcultural group in Australian history. Whereas Stratton (1992) focuses predominantly on class, and status – my study does not. I reference Stratton's (1992) text as it provides an insight into the history and development of the Bodgies and Widgies.

The Bodgies and Widgies disrupted Australian conservative culture in the late forties and early fifties with their outlandish fashions, controversial behaviour and lack of respect. Threatening to uproot social etiquette, this group of working class youth were frowned upon within society. The name "Bodgie", originally a derogatory term in Australia, meant fake or bogus, and was related to the counterfeit produce that they were selling. Stratton (1992, p.71) suggests that the name "Widgie" was an abbreviation of the word "widgeon" which was used to describe a young female in the forties. There were two waves of Bodgies and Widgies in Australian cultural history.

The first wave of Bodgies, according to Moore (2004, p.6), was World War II Australian seamen who impersonated American servicemen. Their use of the American accent was an attempt to sell products claiming to be made in America, and to American standard. The promise of American quality had great appeal to the wider public, who, at the time, were enthralled by the consumer culture of the Americans. Throughout the war, American popular culture had gained widespread popularity and acceptance by many young Australians. Young Australians were taken with the liveliness and abandon of this new culture, embracing their clothing, swing music and jive dancing.

Hundreds of Bodgies and Widgies frequented the local milk bars in Sydney, wearing blue jeans, leather American airline jackets or zoot suits to complete their look. The Bodgies were mostly working class, and according to Moore (2004, p.6), their imitation of the American servicemen was an attempt to achieve upward social mobility. Arrow (2009, p.48) states that the first wave of Bodgies and Widgies predated the development of a youth culture in the fifties. The notoriety of the first wave in the late forties was continued and amplified in the second wave of Bodgies and Widgies. The second wave of the Bodgies and Widgies coincided with the discovery and acceptance of 'the teenager' in the early fifties.

The second wave of Bodgies and Widgies were predominately a working-class group of teenagers. They were the first group of teenagers in the fifties to gain wide spread recognition with their notoriety, power and rebellious behaviour. This group confronted the social expectations, conventions and potential of young people in Australia. They posed a threat to middle-class authority, taking teenage rebellion to the streets, and placing it in the public domain. Moore (2004, p. 3) states that the rebelliousness of these teenagers was considered both unnatural and treacherous to those who had experienced the economic depression and the disciplines and demands of wartime,. As acknowledged in the previous section, the combined social effort for post-war peace and prosperity was essential. The Bodgies' and Widgies' non-conformist presence threatened to disrupt this effort. They were thought to disrespect the stable, safe and predictable life that so many families had strived and struggled to create. Furthermore, they were thought to have the potential to corrupt the innocence and decency of the middle class youths.

In the early fifties, Stratton (1992, p.8) states that the working-class youths were separated as a wage-earning, consuming group from the middle class. Increasing numbers of working-class youths left school to enter the workforce and had access to more of a disposable income, independence and consumer choice than their middle class counterparts. Their wages allowed the Bodgies and Widgies access to the popular culture products that were glamorised and glorified by the American presence during the war. The group indulged in American-style fashions and leisure activities, such as drinking at milk bars and frequenting the cinema. The Bodgies and Widgies were able to negotiate and develop their young, radical style and their potential. "Their conspicuous consumption gave them a sense of control of their identity" (Kociumbas, 1997, p.227). Stratton (1992, p.4) suggests "this produced a wave of working class youth behaviour which brought the kids into opposition to middle class authority". The radical identities of the Bodgies and Widgies would later be popularised in society and commercialised within the teenage consumerist culture but in the early fifties, they were a source of fear and alarm.

The Bodgies and Widgies dressed to stand out. The boys wore bright and tight clothing, with long, oiled hair that was curled at the front. Their unique appearance signified their oppositional stance to middle class conformity. Arrow (2009, p.50) illustrates the appearance of the Widgie – flared skirts, matador pants, tight tops and beehive hairdos, further adding that "these new styles, with their emphasis on the wearer's sexuality, challenged established ideas of decorum" (2009, p.50). The Bodgies' and Widgies' captivation with personal appearance emphasised rituals of consumption, and in turn, influenced the consumer practises of other teenagers. Interviews.

Underage drinking and pre-marital sex were cultural practises employed and embraced by the Bodgies and Widgies. Their stylised appearance and promiscuous behaviour was exaggerated and sensationalised by the Australian (print) media, who portrayed this group of working class teenagers as deviant, and a source of 'moral panic'.

Rock 'n' roll

Rock 'n' roll, media and consumerism defined and developed youth culture in the 1950s. The wartime presence of the Americans exposed many Australians to a lifestyle different from their own. This cultural impact resonated within the post-war industries of Australia. Economic prosperity and new consumer power created many market opportunities in fashion, films, music and media. The discovery and acknowledgment of the teenager in the early fifties, coupled with the 'menacing' presence of the Bodgies and Widgies, paved the way for the inauguration of a distinct youth culture in society – designed for a new audience, a new consumer, and a new "type of person" (Arrow, 2009, p.48). As Kociumbas (1997, p.218) suggests, the adolescent rebellion embodied by the Bodgies and Widgies – their appearance and behaviour – was later adopted and appropriated to meet the desires and expectations of the teenage majority, who were rebelling within the cultural sphere of middle-class authority.

Rock 'n' roll burst onto the Australian scene in 1955 – it caused hysteria and controversy wherever it was played, danced to, or even talked about. Coinciding with the growing teenage discontent that was bubbling under the surface of the 'happy' and 'functional' suburban landscape, the rise of youth culture challenged the status quo. Rock 'n' roll acted as the vehicle through which many young people embraced their new identities, freedom and independence from their conservative upbringings. The expansion of media in the fifties, most notably the diversification of radio, took rock 'n' roll, the defining feature of youth culture, to a much broader audience. This new cultural phenomenon became the music, and cultural expression, of a generation. Australian popular culture later welcomed the introduction of television, which showcased an array of televised programs designed for youth consumption. However, in the beginning of youth culture and rock music, radio was the predominant medium. This section will examine the role that radio and its broadcasters played in the dissemination of rock n roll, and its contribution to the rise and expansion of youth culture and youth identities.

The cultural phenomenon of rock 'n' roll appropriated the style and sounds of American rhythm and blues, country and western, to suit the popular music tastes of the white middle class majority. The sounds of early rock 'n' roll resonated with a

distinct audience – youth. Rock 'n' roll was raw, wild, loud and exciting. It challenged traditional conventions of musical expression, and forged new rituals of consumption and appreciation. Jive, swing and jazz music – rock 'n' roll's predecessors – experienced considerable exposure in Australia during the war years. American servicemen introduced new styles of clothes and music to young Australians. These styles were a contrast to popular music tastes; however, they did not cause the level of excitement and alarm that rock 'n' roll provoked. Evans (1997. p.107) proclaims "thus rock 'n' roll had seemingly descended, fully fledged and with its origins relatively unknown, from another country around 1955—as mysterious as the sounds of '*Heartbreak Hotel'*, as incomprehensible as the lyrics of *'Long Tall Sally'*".

This new style of music appealed to many young Australians. Arrow (2009, p.56) explains that rock 'n' roll was disruptive and it offered teenagers a new kind of identification and self-expression. Furthermore, she adds "rock 'n' roll was modern, American, an embodiment of freedom and energy" (Arrow, 2009. p.57). Young Australians had been fascinated with the culture of the Americans since their presence during World War Two. Rock 'n' roll was exotic, but most excitingly, rock 'n' roll was American, and young Australians embraced this. Originally resonating with the working class Bodgies and Widgies – rock 'n' roll soon recruited thousands of other young followers, yearning for a change, and a chance to belong.

As Rogers (2008, p.4) enthusiastically declares – youth had never before had such an exclusive province "in which to let rip and they staked it out with a fierce sense of possession". Rock 'n' roll united teenagers from all races, classes and cultural backgrounds.

In his 2008 autobiographical text (first published by Rogers in 1975), *Rock n Roll Australia: The Australian pop Scene 1954-1964*, Bob Rogers explains that Australia was late to join the rock 'n' roll revolution. Whilst the United States was dealing with the cultural onslaught of rock 'n' roll from as early as 1952, many Australians did not have their first taste of rock 'n' roll until 1955. "When rock eventually hit Australia it exploded with the same cataclysmic force as it did with when it hit other liberal democracies" (Rogers, 2008, p.1). It was at the 1955 screening of *Blackboard Jungle* that Bill Haley and the Comets blasted out the infamous tune *Rock Around the Clock*. Although several other films in the fifties

embodied the idea of juvenile delinquency, such as *The Wild One* (1954) and *Rebel without a cause* (1955), it was *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) that exposed many to a new sound which created shockwaves throughout the nation. Arrow (2009, p.55) suggests that this film cemented the early associations of rock 'n' roll with juvenile delinquency and rebellion. Furthermore, she notes that these films demonstrated to middle-class audiences (and middle-class parents), that the temptation of rebellion was not restrained by class boundaries.

Rock 'n' roll refreshed a music industry that was dominated by adult tastes, such as classical and 'light music'. In many respects, this cultural phenomenon divided the nation; "separating Them from the Rest" (Rogers, 2008, p.4). Whilst welcomed with open arms by the newly recognised 'teenager', it was considered bad-taste by many older generations and as a result, the music was laden with measures of immorality and deviance. This is evident in many of the news articles I analysed between the period of 1955-1960. The generational divide appeared to polarise families, communities and society as a whole. Not only was the music considered lewd, uncivilized and unsuitable by the older generations, it "went against the grain of a dominant culture that emphasised discipline, restraint and sobriety" (Arrow, 2009, p.57). Furthermore, the African-American roots of rock 'n' roll caused great controversy amongst the conservative, racially prejudiced, masses of Australia in the fifties. Rogers (2008, p.6) illustrates how "race music", as they called it, began to catch the ear of American teenagers living in urban communities where there were large populations of "blacks". According to Rogers, teenagers in America and Australia identified with its stridency and complete contradiction of their parents' musical values – its origins were less important to them than its pulse.

Rock 'n' roll created new practises of listening and experiencing music. Rock 'n' roll was experienced in dance halls, concerts, and in Western Australia – in a place called the "Snake Pit". Andy Andros, Diane Lewis and Dr Cecilia Netolicky declared "Perth's rock 'n' roll history was forged on Scarborough's foreshore, on the pavement, across from the old Scarborough Hotel, on a concrete-terraced pit that became known as "The Snake Pit" in about 1957". They added, "When you looked down on the Pit you'd see a seething mass of mainly black with bits of bright colour wriggling, or seething, around. This is what led to the name The Snake Pit. So the Snake Pit was born" (Andros, Lewis & Netolicky, 2009, June 24). In his article, The

Politics of Dancing: When Rock 'n' roll came to Australia, Sturma illustrates the social impact of this new music in social spaces:

The rituals of concert going like clapping, screaming and stomping controlled and managed emotions, but also made the experience of concert going more exciting – the music was experienced in the body, as part of a crowd, and the fact that screaming made the music inaudible was less important than the sense of release and catharsis gained by the audience in the process. (Sturma, 1992, p.127)

Rock 'n' roll was as much about the music as it was about the spectacle. In many respects, the audience's response to the music heightened the experience. The rock 'n' roll ritual of concert-going paved the way for future generations of music lovers.

Evans (1997, p.107) acknowledges that whilst on the one hand rock 'n' roll embraced youthful abandon, answering back to regimentation and conformity – on the other "it increased middle-class surveillance and social control – a more intense policing of orderly, adult sanctioned contexts and redoubled patrols along the border between what was seen as good, clean, respectable fun and overt delinquency". Concerts, dance halls and milk bars were seen as places of youthful rebellion, and in turn, they were policed regularly. Many parents, teachers and adults within society were aware that "rock 'n' roll was a thinly veiled euphemism for sex" (Rogers, 2008, p.6). Therefore, this music was deemed unsuitable for young listeners. This attitude was extended to the broadcasting programs and policies of the major radio stations around Australia. The next section will examine the broadcasters who pioneered this musical revolution over the airwaves, the listening practises of youth and the social implications of such changes in programming.

Radio

I am aware of a range of research surrounding radio and radio programs in Australia (Barfield, 1996; Higgins & Moss, 1982; Jones, 1995; Mackay, 1957). These studies have looked at the impact and development of AM and FM radio throughout Australian history. My study, however, looks only at events in Australian commercial radio between 1955-1960, and as such, does not draw on these texts.

In post-war Australia, teenagers did not identify with the lifestyles and leisure pursuits of their parents, and were restless for change (Rogers, 2008). Many teenagers identified with American music and the American lifestyle (as outlined in Chapter 1). The diversification of Australian radio, however, did take place until 1956. Rogers (2008, p.2) found that unlike the American broadcasting industry, which had 'race music' radio stations that played rock and other 'black' music excluded from 'white' radio, Australia's access to American rock 'n' roll was controlled by media gatekeepers, delaying its dissemination here. Rogers (2008) explains:

> Commercial radio, the omnipotent home entertainment of the time, arrogantly broadcast to a single target audience, and behaved as if everyone had the same taste in entertainment. They were years when the controlling hand on the dial was almost inviolably adult and when middle-age meant incontestable authority, if not always wisdom (Rogers, 2008, p.2).

Teenagers who had been liberated by the sounds of Bill Haley and the Comets in *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) were yearning for more rock 'n' roll – and at the time, radio programs in Australia were not delivering. It was October 1956 when rock 'n' roll was first introduced on Australian radio, exposing the listeners of Brisbane to this cultural phenomenon. According to Evans (1997, p.110), Dr Jerry Grahame, a visiting American wrestler, co-hosted Allan Lappan's 'Anything Goes' programme on 4BH. Dr Grahame shared his private collection on air and played music from American rock 'n' roll artists such as Little Richard and Little Willie John. According to Evans (1997), it was reported that teenage listeners loved it, but the studio received negative feedback from outraged parents and adults within the Brisbane community. As a result, rock 'n' roll continued to be banned from normal programming formats. In the following month however, Evans (1997, p.110), describes how Lappan received scores of letters from teenager listeners, demanding more of the music they loved. Six weeks later, in November of 1956, Lappan was forced to accede to listener pressure. He introduced half an hour of rock 'n' roll each Tuesday night at 9p.m., on 4BH. This signified one of several shifts which would transform the Australian radio industry in the '50s .

With the advent of television in 1956 (in the Eastern States) – there was concern within the industry that radio stations were losing listeners. As acknowledged by Potts (1989, p.13) social trends create new needs and possibilities

that are met by technological forms, and radio had to change in order to survive. In *Changing Stations* (2009, p.264), Bridget Griffen-Foley outlines a turning point in the history of broadcasting. "In the early months of 1958, 2UE and its parent company 2KO Newcastle, experimented with popular music shows presented in the style of American disc jockeys". On the 2nd of March, 1958, 2UE began a daily Top 40 program. This radical broadcasting format was based upon the American style of broadcasting and was distinctly different to program styles of the day. However, it soon became popular by listeners and presenters and spread to other commercial stations including 3DB, 4BC, 4BK, 5AD, 6PM and 6KY.

The reinvention of radio ensured that adult tastes no longer dominated the programming formats. Music now catered for teenagers, and the impact of this was wide-ranging. Rogers (2008, p.37), who was in fact the disc jockey involved in this movement on 2UE, claimed that the Top 40 programming had a "galvanic" effect on the local teenage market, and the radio audience (Rogers, 2008, p.36). The top 40 format exposed thousands of listeners in the Eastern States, of all generations, to rock 'n' roll on a regular basis. Eastern States teenagers who were unable to see *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), and who did not have the money, or permission, to attend the rock 'n' roll concerts, were now able to participate in the appreciation of this musical form through radio listening.

Perth Radio and Colin Nichol

In Perth in the mid-to-late-fifties, radio stations had not yet begun to play rock 'n' roll music, as had become a popular practise in the Eastern States. Owing to its geographical location, and relative isolation, the Perth community could only access this new musical genre through films (such as *Blackboard Jungle*, 1955), or through imported records (as explained by my interviewees). Trainer (2017, p. 250) explains "there was often a lag in the infiltration of popular cultural trends into the city". It was not until 1957 that rock 'n' roll was introduced on Perth Radio station 6PM by Colin Nichol (a year later than Brisbane). This section briefly examines the Hifi Club – a local phenomenon which connected Perth to an international network of rock 'n' roll distribution. In this section I refer to an interview with Colin Nichol

in 2015, in which he explains how the club came about, and the subsequent social impact it had on Perth teenage and music culture.

In 1957 Colin Nichol, aged 20 was working as a radio announcer on 6PM. At the time, Colin was involved with hosting a number of programs which ranged from breakfast to afternoon programming formats. Colin would later go on to become a pioneer of popular music broadcasting industry in the 50's and 60's; and original Disc Jockey (DJ) on board the pirate radio stations in the U.K. of Radio Caroline and Radio Luxembourg, which brought rock 'n' roll music to millions of listeners. Initially, however, rock 'n' roll music did not resonate with his tastes. He explains:

> At the time I was a bit reticent to play Elvis, because I thought it was, I didn't really like him, and it kind of, um, broke up the nice harmony of the other songs that were playing! But I soon cottoned on. (C. Nichol, personal communication, April 28, 2015).

After playing Elvis on WA radio, like Lappan in Brisbane and Rogers in NSW, Colin received considerable attention (both fan mail and hate mail) from the Perth public. Like his Eastern States counter-parts, Colin acceded to listener pressure and began to play rock 'n' roll music on a regular request program called "Tunes for Teenagers". After a period of success with this new programming format, Colin was approached about another opportunity:

> Suddenly out of the blue I was hauled into the office and told, "Coca Cola want you to do a program for them, called the Coca Cola Bottles Hi Fi Club". I'd never heard of it, but it was world wide by then. (C. Nichol, personal communication, April 28, 2015).

The Hi Fi Club was a worldwide teenage radio club, originating out of New York. It was run by an advertising agency, and was a major marketing campaign for Coca-Cola. Colin explained that the program featured exclusive interviews and competitions and played imported records, which were not yet available on the Australian market. This was significant, in that it brought new music to Perth, ahead of other states in Australia. Perth soon caught up to the rest of the world (at least, in terms of music consumption).

In addition to the radio program, the Hi Fi Club also took the form of a popular music venue, located at the Embassy Ballroom in Perth. It became a space for teenagers to enjoy live bands, dancing and jiving. Colin reflects:

It was an enormous campaign, and it was world-wide. And. So, I was running these dance shows, we had a 1000 people in the Embassy ballroom. Youngsters. Um, I would get up and introduce various guest performers, bands and singers, between times, we'd have a short break of recorded music played through the system. Then go back to the live bands. We were all well behaved and well controlled. Plenty of Coca Cola available. (C. Nichol, personal communication, April 28, 2015).

By the time the fan base reached 10,000 teenagers, Colin was approached with another opportunity. Colin explains how the Hi Fi Club was later transferred across to a rival radio station, 6KY:

This was going so well that the general manager of Coca Cola Bottles Perth Proprietary Limited, decide that, he wanted the program to go to his mate. Bob Mercer who ran radio 6KY in Perth. And part of the reason for that was that, um, I think he had a financial interest, but also, 6KY was trying for a commercial television license and all of this, and I fitted in pretty well, to that idea. You know, they would get very successful, um, major successful youth market. And they'd get a presenter as well. So they ask me to go to 6KY. And they would pay me £5 or more, to do that. (C. Nichol, personal communication, April 28, 2015).

Whether hosted through 6PM or 6KY, the Hi Fi Club had created considerable change within the Perth teenage community. By the end of the '50s the venue had gained such popularity, and due to its association with a commercial venture, that it was deemed to be acceptable. Trainer (2017, p. 223) explains that "this association of rock 'n' roll within a commercialised structure, arguably lent the genre some legitimacy, and removed it from the subcultural, anti-authoritarian and criminal connotations that it had previously held". As Trainer (2017) states, the Hi Fi Club was deemed acceptable unlike its predecessor, the Snake Pit (discussed in Chapter 4).

This Chapter has examined rock 'n' roll, radio, and the teenager. I have provided a historical background to events which occurred between 1955-1960, and moulded the development of a distinct youth culture in Perth. The following Chapter will examine, in detail, the impact of these changes on individual teenagers and on the way this social group was presented in the print media, and perceived in the family home.

CHAPTER FOUR
PERTH, PEOPLE & PLACES

Following on from my discussion of post-war Australia in Chapter 3, it is evident that the teenager rose as a separate (consuming and creating) generation in the years between 1955-1960. This was paralleled by the growing popularity of rock 'n' roll, a new musical form, and the introduction of television. As such, the radio industry implemented changes which also brought changes to the daily lives of individuals, and to what was reported in the print media.

This chapter is presented in two sections. First, I examine the representation of teenagers and teenage practises in the Perth print media. I observe how those with power (civil service / police / magistrates) created a discourse of deviance and allocated meaning to specific practises, behaviours, and consumption patterns of teenagers. Through the method of a content analysis, I explore how this was reflected in the newspapers of The Mirror and The Beverly Times. I frame my discussion around the main categories and themes of the articles – being 'parental role', 'juvenile delinquency', 'crime', 'rock 'n' roll' and 'violence'.

Next, I analyse 5 of my semi-structured interviews (an interview with Colin Nichol was discussed in Chapter 3), and provide a discussion of each participant's memories of Perth during this time. I explore these experiences considering De Certeau's (1984) theory of everyday life. As discussed in chapter two, the use of De Certeau's (1984) theory helps to identify the division and regulation of power within daily living and the 'strategies' and 'tactics' used to maintain these divisions. This discussion is important because it provides the evidence for the key findings presented in Chapter 5 - Conclusion.

Section 1 – Content Analysis

In order to examine how teenagers and young people were constructed in the Perth print media between the years of 1955-1960. I found that there was an abundance of articles printed during this timeframe in the Perth Print media about

teenagers that matched the keyword search; however, most were stories outside Western Australia and were therefore considered irrelevant to the study. After discounting all articles focusing on interstate and international events, advertisements and any detailed lists, results or guides, the search produced a total of 16 articles from two of the main state newspapers: *The Mirror*[1] and *The Beverley Times*[2]. I was able to search seven newspapers from the period 1955-1960, which had been digitalised and made accessible on TROVE. These were: *The Blackwood Times*; *Narrogin Observer*; *The Northam Advertiser*; *Sunday Times*; *Western Mail* and *The Mirror* and *The Beverley Times*.

Broadcast media and other forms of coverage were outside the scope of this study. Although print media is just one component in the consumption of news, I examined this medium as, historically, it was most likely to reflect, and perpetuate, the concerns and opinions of the target audience (adults, parents, teachers). The purpose of this content analysis was to measure the difference between the print media's representation of teenagers' events, habits and leisure practices, and the teenagers' everyday lived experience. Through examining the manifest and latent content of the articles, I wanted to ascertain whether teenagers were vilified by the print media in WA, as they had been in other states during this timeframe (refer to studies of Moore, 2011; Evans, 1997; Stratton, 1992).

The sample comprised searches for the term 'teenager', not accounting for phrases such as 'kids', 'children', 'youth' or 'adolescents'. It looked at all instances where that term was used in conjunction with key words that could be used to describe the phenomenon studied (i.e. the rise of the teenager as a social grouping in Australian society, and the increasing visibility of their leisure pursuits). This gave me a manageable sample for a comprehensive content analysis, allowing me to focus on specific discussions surrounding teenagers in the post-war era. I will first examine the types of sources referenced across the 16 articles. This analysis is then followed

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[1] *The Mirror* ran between 1921 and 1956. Interestingly, it was purchased by Rupert Murdoch's News Limited in 1955. The articles which I collected from this newspaper were published between 55-56, and all held similar views around teenagers.

[2] This is a country town newspaper, located 133km south-east of Perth, so it would not have been widely circulated throughout the State of WA. However, I included a few articles from this paper to show that *The Mirror*'s views' on teenagers and juvenile delinquency were replicated by other newspapers throughout the state.

by a discussion of the (most dominant) categories and a detailed look at the articles content.

Source citations

I coded for sources that appeared within stories in order to explore the breadth of contributors who were given a voice within the discussions and discourse surrounding post-war teenagers. A source was classed as an individual or body contributing a direct quote that appeared in quotation marks within a news story. Of the 16 articles in the sample, 12 articles contained quotes from sources. From examination of the 12 articles, I identified 11 different types of sources.

As Table 2 (below) demonstrates, there was a dominance of civil service sources across the sample, accounting for 45% of all sources. In other words, the discourse surrounding Perth teenagers was informed and dictated by a bureaucratic, authoritarian discourse. teenagers / youth appeared as sources three times as frequently as citizens or public figures. Police and magistrate / attorneys all received a fair amount of inclusion as sources, yet each remained under 20% of all sources. Parents / teachers were largely invisible in the coverage, only appearing once across all stories. Additionally, members of the church remained scarce, appearing once overall. What the sample showed consistently is that visibility and voice were accorded to those who were incriminatory in their appraisal of teenagers. In the instances where teenager / youth sources were cited, often the quotes included would reflect negatively on the age group, reinforcing the broader argument of 'teenager as delinquent'.

The representation of the teenager in WA print media

In order to record the representation of teenagers across the five years period, I coded for the three most emphasised categories (or themes) apparent within each news story. According to Kracauer (1952, p. 638), this process can be defined as "the selection and rational organisation of such categories as condense the substantive meanings of the given text, with the view to testing pertinent assumptions and hypotheses". Within the print media, categories can impact upon how issues, events or stories are depicted and the perspective from which it is viewed. There were 24 categories apparent across 16 articles.

In this section, I focus on the five most frequent categories across the articles. At a glance, the most dominant category was 'Parental role' at 25%, closely followed by 'Juvenile Delinquency' and 'Crime' at 20%, then 'Violence' and 'Rock 'n' roll' at 12%. The following section will examine the figures from Table 3, focusing on the (mostly) negative connotations associated with teenagers (directed at their parents) in the post-war era.

Table 2. Source citations

Source	Count	Percentage
Magistrate / attorney	2	18%
Magazine / publication	2	18%
Civil service	5	45%
Teenager / youth	4	36%
Journalist / reporter	1	9%
Academic / expert	1	9%
Police	3	27%
Church	1	9%
Citizen	1	9%
Public Figure	1	9%
Parents / teacher	1	9%

Table 3. Identification of the categories

Themes	Count	Percentage
Juvenile delinquency	5	20%
Crime	5	20%
Parental role	6	25%
Rock 'n' roll	3	12%
American music	1	4%
Violence	3	12%
Jive	1	4%
Jazz	1	4%
Youth	2	8%
Police	2	8%
Gangs	2	8%
Drugs	1	4%
Teenage development	2	8%
Leisure habits	2	8%
Consumption	1	4%
Unemployment	1	4%
Club	1	4%
Dance	2	8%
Film	1	4%
War	1	4%
Widgies	2	8%
Behaviour	1	4%
Children's court	1	4%
Teenage boys	1	4%

Parental role

In one quarter of all articles examined, the importance of parental guidance and the apparent dangers of parental neglect formed a key part of the discussion around young people and teenagers. In an article published by the *The Beverley Times* on 15 November 1956, in "Weekly Newsletter by Florence", parents were warned about allowing their children to enjoy rock 'n' roll and films (*Blackboard Jungle*) unaccompanied.

As I see it, to forbid children to see this picture would be a mistake, but the better way is for parents to go and see it with them. What child, or even a teenager, is going to make an hysterical outcry when Mum and Dad are there?

Similarly, on 12 June, 1958 in *The Beverley Times* "Weekly Newsletter by Florence" published:

Youth requires responsive parents. It is not enough to pay for children to learn games. We must take a personal interest. I like young people, and consider if only parents would give a little more time to help the teenagers we should have less delinquency.

It is evident throughout the articles that responsibility for young people is continuingly traced back to the parents. That teenagers' behaviours, appearance and demeanor are considered the result of either good or bad parenting, rather than individual choice or action.

An article published in *The Beverley Times* almost a year later, on 30 June, 1959 titled "Calling All Parents" declared juvenile delinquency to be "one of Australia's most heartbreaking problems and one of the costliest to the tax payer". Mr. E. H. Box, President of Fire and Accent Under-Writers was quoted stating "Too often parents have no idea where their children, of both sexes, are spending the night hours. It is high time parents reviewed their responsibilities to their children". Author Gil Wain wrote "biggest ally in the stamping out of this social evil, however, is the home".

Juvenile delinquency

20% of all articles surveyed expressed the concern of juvenile delinquency and more often than not, the "condition" was linked with parents. Children and teenagers were consistently constructed as having the 'potential' to become delinquent. In many cases, juvenile delinquency was portrayed as a "sickness" of youth, and with many suggestions given to prevent and treat any symptoms.

For instance, in "Weekly Newletter by Florence", published in *The Beverley Times* on 2 July, 1959, Florence wrote "Look at your child when he lies sleeping. Could he be a juvenile delinquent? Could it be possible that he, with a number of

others slashed the cushions of a railway carriage?". Opinion pieces such as these worked to question and create concern amongst the parent community (in Beverley). So much so that on 6 November 1959, *The Beverley Times* published "Juvenile Delinquency MEETING TO BE HELD". "The Beverley Road Board recently received a letter from the Child Welfare Department in the city inviting the Board to consider the problem of juvenile delinquency". The article publishes a letter from A.L. Young, A/Director Child Welfare Department requesting action to be taken on the matter of delinquency. In response Chairman of the Board Mr. A. W. Miles agrees to call a meeting of representatives to discuss the subject and Suggested Framework (below) at a local and state government level.

1. Causes of Delinquency: a) Hereditary. b) Environmental. c) Economic. d) Psychological. e) Social. F) Other

2. Preventative Measures: Parent influence. b) Schooling. c) Sport. d) Youth clubs. e) Legislature. f) Parentcraft training. g) Special clinics. h) Religions.

3. Remedial Measures for established delinquents: a) Supervision. b) Probation. c) Committal to Child Welfare Department. d) Placement in reformatory. e) Placement in gaol. f) Day or evening attendance at centres. g) Clinical services. h) Religions. i) Other. (Weekly newsletter, 1958).

This is noteworthy, in that it clearly portrays teenagers as exotic or foreign objects, a phenomenon to be studied and scrutinised. Not only are they a new category within society, but they are also positioned as a threat and as a source of 'moral panic' amongst communities. By definition, 'moral panics' challenge traditional values, (i.e. the integrity of the 'nuclear family') and ignite social tensions and public anxiety about certain topics. According to Thompson (1968, p.54) the idea of 'moral panic' excites strong feelings of righteousness. The mass media (as evident through articles published by *The Beverly* Times) reinforces the divide between those who deviate, and those who conform to social normality.

Crime

Teenagers were linked to the category of 'crime' across 20% of all articles. In an article published by *The Mirror* on 24 December 1955, titled "MOHAWKS, HELL-FIRES, SAINTS, DUKES, ROCKS, AND THE LOOS, THEY WERE: The 'bodgies' of yesteryear Bodgies are nasty but they're by no means new", West

Australian readers were educated on youth subcultures of previous decades. The author writes "Bodgies are bad – but they could be classed as small-time compared with some of the old-time pushers". Teenagers, or 'bodgies', whilst not considered as dangerous as other gangs – are consistently referred to or considered within the context of 'crime'.

On 17 December, 1955 *The Mirror* published an article titled "It Is Now War On 'Bodgies' Says Perth C.I.B. Chief." The article was printed on page 1 of the newspaper, and branded the subheading "Special squad formed to wipe out the cult. Perth police intend to wipe out the Bodgie cult" (see Appendix 1). The author writes "CIB Inspector J.I. Johnston today announced the start of an all-out war declared by the police on the bodgie cult in WA." According to the article, an "anti-bodgie squad" would be formed in WA, with the intent to eliminate the presence of Bodgies and Widgies. All "cult members" were to be kept under close surveillance by adults, parents and teachers. As in many of the articles, the author reiterates a fear of the 'Bodgie/Widgie' wave of terror would hit Perth. The inspector's words, such as "contamination" and "plagued," draw parallels with the phenomena of cane toads (originating in the eastern states, portrayed as a continual threat to the people and wildlife of WA). In a more extreme sense, it also references the language used to describe the Germans in WW2 propaganda material.

> We will fight to keep our young people free of contamination from an Eastern States infection. Bodgies have plagued other Australian States – (two big robberies in NSW in recent weeks, a murder in New Zealand and a disgusting sex orgy involving 13-year-old girls in Adelaide) – and we don't want them here. We will make sure that the bodgie type as seen in the Eastern States will not get a foothold here. (It is now war on 'bodgies' says Perth C.I.B. chief, 1955).

The "war" between Bodgies and police was referred to in other articles. On 21 January 1956, *The Mirror* published "BODGIES CHASED FROM CITY DANCE Police called as brawlers flee". The author writes "The war between "squares" and bodgies was on again in earnest at a city dance hall last night". The article describes a brawl between youth at a dance hall. What is particularly interesting about this article is a quote included by the A/Deputy Police Commissioner Inspector H. McLernon: "This alleged gang war-fare between bodgies, squares, leatheries – or whatever you like to call them – exists mainly in the

imagination of the pressmen". McLernon's quote questions the validity of the article's claims of juvenile delinquency, of war, and of cult behaviour by teenagers.

Rock 'n' Roll and Violence

Both the categories of 'rock 'n' roll' and 'violence' were featured in 12% of the 16 articles. Significantly, the two categories were consistently grouped together. This section will look at the representation of rock 'n' roll in the print media and how it was reported to have violent tendencies.

On 21 April 1956, an *The Mirror* announced the introduction of this new musical genre in "ROCK IN ROLL HITS PERTH Please, teenagers, take it gently!" (See Figure 1). The following text reads "Rock 'n Roll, latest musical craze which has swept to world-wide acclaim, is popular with Perth teenagers and local radio stations receive plenty of requests for Rock 'n Roll discs." The author writes "In the US, parents and responsible authorities are more than worried over the grip which the violent semi-jungle rhythm of Rock 'n' roll has imposed on young America". The genre is described as "violent", shocking and disruptive:

But the more serious side of the violence and mayhem which has been unleashed since the Rock 'n' roll boys (Elvis) started their damaging dirges is best shown in the comment from District Attorney Garret Byrne, of Suffolk County, Massachusetts "The music inflames teenagers and is obscenely suggestive.... Some of these records are so vulgar they are sold under the counter".(Rock 'n' roll hits Perth, 1956).

The article describes events occurring in America: "In Minneapolis a local newspaper described a 'midnight music mania session' in which hundreds of teenagers staged a near riot during the climax of a concert". The author continues to explain other similar events, as well as a Baltimore cinema owner who rejected playing the film (*Blackboard Jungle*, which features one rock 'n' roll song) because he didn't want trouble. "This attitude sums up the nervousness apparent in the entertainment field, where despite the sudden flood of dollars, the hysterical Rock 'n' roll snowball may prove to be more than costly to those who first set it in motion."

In another article featured by *The Mirror* (30 June, 1956), the article declares "there will be no Rock 'n' roll in Perth – if local dance chiefs have their way". This

new music genre was portrayed as a threat to local values and beliefs. The journalist talks with those in the dance industry: "It's an utterly shocking affair" and "You shouldn't give it any publicity. I won't even mention its name – these teenagers hear something and the next thing they want to try it". Members of the church were also consulted on this new musical form, and declared rock 'n' roll "suggestive and immoral". The article quotes a US sheriff : "Rock 'n' roll is a symptom of a condition which can produce delinquency." Again, rock 'n' roll is invoked alongside violence, and disruptive behaviour and is described as a 'symptom' of juvenile delinquency.

Key Findings

This content analysis has examined the construction and representation of teenagers in the Perth print media between 1955-1960. It has demonstrated that two local broadsheet newspapers, *The Beverley Times* and *The Mirror*, constructed teenagers as 'delinquents', 'Bodgies' and as a cause for concern. I have shown that debate about teenagers was informed by a top-down discourse, with articles referencing sources from the civil-service, magistrates, lawyers and police, and with a scarcity of oppositional representation from teenagers, youth, parents or members of the public. As such, readers were positioned to accept the information provided to them about young people, about the Bodgies and Widgies, and about the violent nature of rock 'n' roll.

I began this content analysis by asking if the representation of teenagers within the Perth print media was comparable to the representation of teenagers in the Eastern States. I refer, now, to the studies of Moore (2004), and Evans (1997), who both examined print media representation of teenagers, in the 1950's in the cities of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. In his case study, Moore (2004, p.6) observes a 'declaration of war' against a local Bodgie gang in December of 1951 (Melbourne Herald, 4 December 1951), and in November of 1952 reports in the Melbourne Sun on violent clashes of 200 Bodgies and Widgies with police at a Swanston Street milk bar (Sun News Pictorial, 17 1952). Similarly, Evans (1997) found that sensationalist journalist techniques were being used throughout Brisbane in the early 1950s to

demonise teenager behaviours and practises (the consumption of Rock 'n' roll, for instance).

What is evident from this analysis is that the Bodgie/Widgie phenomenon, as well as the introduction and dissemination of rock 'n' roll, occurred years earlier in the Eastern States than it did in Perth. This meant that by the time rock 'n' roll and cultural practises such as jiving and new fashions came to Perth, they had already been tainted with accusations of deviance (reinforced and carried by the print media). In effect, the content of articles may have impacted upon how teenagers were perceived and treated by some members of the Perth community (at least by the readers of *The Mirror* and *The Beverley Times)* between 1955-1960.

The following section will be a discussion of semi-structured interviews with 6 individuals who were teenagers in the years of 1955-1960, in Perth. I will explore their memories of everyday life, and (in reference to De Certeau, 1984) the strategies and tactics they employed to negotiate the parameters of mid-century teenage living.

Section 2 – Semi-structured Interviews and Everyday Life

Drawing upon De Certeau's (1984) concepts of 'strategies' and 'tactics', this section will explore how everyday life is a process of negotiation with (institutional, social and cultural) laws, paths and guidelines. As discussed in Chapter 2, it is this negotiation that works to influence our sense of identity, and to shape our everyday experience. By examining the ways in which individuals (for instance, teenagers) engage and interact with various aspects of their routine, their environment, their contexts or their possessions, I was able to explore potential values and belief systems that underpin their everyday lives.

Strategies and Tactics

De Certeau's (1984) everyday life theory reveals that post-war radio consumption in the family home can be considered as a site of struggle between those with power (parents) and those without (teenagers). In this context, parents can "produce, tabulate, and impose these spaces, when those operations take place" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 30). In the first instance, it would have most likely been the parents who purchased the radio as a product for family use and enjoyment. Teenagers would have been expected to act appropriately and obediently within the spatial and temporal environment created for them by their parents (the living room).

Through the examination (in interviews) of teenage modes of consumption and resistance, I began to form conclusions about the independence and status of teenagers in general, and reflect upon broader generational tensions within society. The interviews I conducted were considered in relation to my content analysis of print media (as discussed in the previous section). It is with this combined data, that I will now define, identify and discuss the 'tactics' used by teenagers as consumers, and the strategies directed by parents, (and teachers, and local and state governments), affecting and controlling their consumption.

Supervised Socialising

In this study, interview participants described how post-war parents applied various strategies to regulate the teenagers' consumption and leisure habits. However, parents' strategic controls were not used only for limiting teen's access to particular cultural products and past-times (rock 'n' roll, for example). In some instances, the consumption of 'contentious' products was allowed, but only with parental supervision. For example, in an interview with Marilyn from Nedlands, she discussed how she could participate in jiving and partying with other teenagers, but only in the company of responsible adults:

> We'd just go to each other's houses and our Mums were good fun too, they used to enjoy it – seeing us jive, and they used to have a go themselves sometimes.

> ...we weren't really allowed to go to the Snake Pit but we did. And our Mums would come with us, because I think they found that it was a bit amusing too. Well, we used to go down a lot, just to look.

> But we always had to have our Mums or Dads with us. I don't know why, it had a bit of a bad reputation I think. (M. Johnston, personal communication, 8 May, 2015).

The Snake Pit (which will be explored in more detail, later) was a jive 'hive': a place in Scarborough where teenagers from across Perth would come together to enjoy rock 'n' roll and the practise of jiving. Marilyn indicates that whilst she was allowed to go and observe those jiving at the Snakepit, she was closely watched by her parents.

Robin, who grew up in Perth, spent her teenage years in Albany between the years of 1955-1960. Whilst separated from her Perth peers by considerable distance, she was aware of, and able to access, popular music through a record store in Albany. Robin, like Marilyn, shared a love of jiving and also remembers the experience of 'supervised' socialising. She explains:

> My dad, in his wisdom, thinking that we weren't being social enough ... built a 2 carpark garage in front affair with a flat surface which he put on the same stuff you put on cricket pitches to make it waterproof so that we could have dances. (R. Faulkner, personal communication, 2 June, 2015).

> I don't remember anybody having serious behavioural problems and we'd have probably not have invited them (to parties) if they were

nuisance because you had your parents there. No matter whose home you went to parents were there. (R. Faulkner, personal communication, 2 June, 2015).

These experiences correlate with an article which was published in *The Beverley Times* (15 November 1956, "Weekly Newsletter by Florence"), which encouraged Parents to accompany their teenage children to screenings of *Blackboard Jungle* (1955). This 'strategy' was an attempt to prevent further 'radical' behaviour during the film's screenings, as described in a number of articles surveyed.

The film to which the article refers to, *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), was released in 1955 and caused shockwaves throughout the Western world. Directed by Richard Brooks, the film is considered to be influential and iconic of the fifties era. It was also one of the first films to feature rock 'n' roll music. For this reason, it was considered notorious. Eve reflects on seeing the film a first time with her parents:

> ...it was quite a startling movie to us – to see rebellious teenagers who were our age in American high schools and we were absolutely shocked by what we saw on screen in *Blackboard Jungle*. But the theme 'Rock Around the Clock' was the beginning of the heyday of rock 'n' roll in Perth. (E. Lucas, personal communication, 11 April, 2015).

The use of rock 'n' roll music in the film *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) cemented Eve's awareness of rock 'n' roll as a new and valid form of artistic expression.

Robin's filmic experience differs to Eve's – this is evident as she discusses how the films she was allowed to watch were regulated by her parents. When asked about seeing popular films for teenagers such as *The Wild One* and *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), Robin suggested that it was not deemed appropriate by her mother.

> I think that was a bit over the top for Mum. (R. Faulkner, personal communication, 2 June, 2015).

Robin explains that the films she saw growing up had to be 'pleasant' and 'non-threatening', and deemed 'suitable' for teenage viewing by her mother.

> ...the only movies we saw in primary school with our parents had to have Bing Crosby or Bob Hope in it. You know it was really, had to be nice yeah - even though the real world is rotten - it had to be nice. (R. Faulker, personal

communication, 2 June, 2015).

Similar to other post-war parents, we can assume that Robin's parents had been influenced by print media. The articles listed created a dialogue of concern around films like *Blackboard Jungle* (1955), which featured teenagers rebelling against various forms of authority, and (through the use of 'tactics') asserting their independence and status within American society.

Restricted Rock 'n' Roll

As a new form of musical expression – rock 'n' roll posed a threat to the morals and values of local communities. It is clear, from articles analysed in the previous section, and through the literature examined in Chapter 3, that rock 'n' roll music was widely thought of as disruptive and dangerous. In the same regard, over-exposure to this cultural phenomenon, especially for teens, could lead to the risk of juvenile delinquency. In *Rock & Roll: An unruly history*, Palmer (1995) describes how the genre "became a rallying point for an emerging teen subculture that has already begun to embrace media-made models of rebellion" (Palmer 1995, p, 21). Eve refers to when rock 'n' roll came to Western Australia, and remembers the change of musical preference that she experienced as a consequence:

> Where in my early days, I was listening to what my mother had chosen to listen to on the radio... Then, there was this split between me and my mother when rock 'n' roll hit.
>
> I mean I loved Frank Sinatra, before we got to the pop songs, and I still love Frank Sinatra. But it was the era of the crooners, Bing Crosby. But the schism between that sort of music and rock 'n' roll – in my mind and in my memory – was quite life-changing. Because it was so different from what had been before. (E. Lucas, personal communication, 11 April, 2015).

Eve's parents did not share her level of excitement for rock 'n' roll. This new musical genre became a source of conflict in many post-war homes – especially around radio consumption. She commented on her parents' reaction to this change in listening habits.

> Oh, my mother thought Elvis Presley was appalling! (E. Lucas, personal communication, 11 April, 2015).

Robin also battled with anti-rock regulations in her household, and reflects on how this new musical genre was perceived by her family:

> I wanted to buy Elvis Presley's blue suede shoes and my mother wouldn't let me have Elvis Presley in the house, because he was immoral and that was serious issue.
>
> But you know there was that level of 'that's moral', 'that's not' and rock 'n' roll - it was a bit dodgy. (R. Faulker, personal communication, 2 June, 2015).

The term 'dodgy' infers that rock 'n' roll music was a grey area in Robin's household: a new sound that had the potential to corrupt regional youth. Subsequently, Elvis's music was not tolerated in the family home.

Outside of the home, rock 'n' roll was also demonised. In the early-to-mid-fifties, rock 'n' roll was banned on radio, considered controversial in film and, according to an article published in *The Mirror* on Saturday 30 June 1956, not tolerated amongst Perth dance schools. The article, titled "'IT'S SEXY HOOLIGANISM IN JIVE TIME' They won't teach Rock 'n' roll in Perth" discussed dance teachers outrage at the new musical genre. The author quotes teachers describing it as "shocking". One dance teacher declares "It would ruin dancing in Western Australia". The article provides evidence of strategies that were used by community groups and sectors, in addition to parents and other authority figures, to prevent the dissemination of rock 'n' roll (and its symptoms of deviance) into the dance community of Perth.

Regulated Radio

In the late fifties, radio was the medium that first transmitted rock 'n' roll into mainstream Australian society. In the years leading up to this, however, the radio industry was heavily regulated and monitored by 'gatekeepers' who worked to ensure that the moral code of radio programs remained intact (as studies by Moore, 1997; Evans, 1997; and Rogers, 2008 confirm). When rock 'n' roll eventually became a regular feature on Australian air-time in 1957, it was met (by some members of the community), with the same disdain held by the industry regulators (Rogers, 2008). As discussed earlier, this attitude was replicated and reinforced by the print media, which portrayed the genre as responsible for a range of issues

supposedly associated with teenagers. As Colin Nichol describes in Chapter 3, changes to radio programming on 6PM in Perth were met with great enthusiasm from teenagers (and great opposition from parents) within the Perth community.

Radio was a significant part of everyday life in the fifties, and for many, it was more than an appliance. In the post-war years, the presence of the radio replaced extended family members who had, up until recently, frequently lived under the one roof (Arrow, 2009). The radio was often found in the heart of the home, in the kitchen or lounge room, and would take the form of a large piece of furniture. In the early fifties, the use of transistor radios was not yet widespread in Australian society and radio was not mobile. It was fixed within a space (the home) often occupied by individuals of different generations, as John from Scarborough reveals:

> I've still got my grandmothers AWA 4-foot-high radio, which I used to sit with my ear glued to. To listen to Jason and the Argonauts on the ABC, Hop Harrigan, um, Heart of the Territory, which was then a produced audio play from Sydney. And of course – you got your music from there. My grandfather – all he'd listen to was Bing Crosby... and my uncle was a Nat King Cole fan. (J. Hunter, personal communication, 5 May, 2015).

From this, we can tell that radio listening was a shared social activity. John's radio listening was determined by the program preferences of his parents, grandparents or uncle as they were the authority figures within the family. Just as industry regulators and governing bodies were 'gatekeepers' for the radio industry, parents also acted as 'gatekeepers' within the home and many were reluctant to expose teenagers to rock 'n' roll. Therefore, teenagers' ability to consume radio programs of their choice was limited.

By the time rock 'n' roll radio programs were first introduced on air for teenagers, adults and parents already had well-established patterns of radio consumption. Any deviation from this routine was considered disruptive. Eve explains:

> I knew you didn't interrupt Mum when she had her radio plays. And in the afternoons, after the housework was done, she'd go into the lounge and turn on the radiogram (which was the radio and gramophone so you could play your records) so she would crotchet and she would listen to her afternoon plays from the radio until we got home from school. (E. Lucas, personal communication, 11 April, 2015).

From this, it is clear that the radio worked to structure Eve's days: her understanding and expectation of different times of the day, and also signified relaxation time for other family members.

> I think lives revolved around the radio in those early days. I remember – very fond memories of me of waking up every morning and hearing the radio on in the kitchen – that said "Mum was up getting breakfast and everything was alright with the world". (E. Lucas, personal communication, 11 April, 2015).

In the '20s and '30s, radio was considered a novelty and a luxury. Towards the middle of the century, however, radio had become accepted as a normal and expected form of everyday life. Radio played a significant part in regulating daily lives, in that, people structured their schedules around particular radio programs. It was considered appropriate that the primary consumers of the radio were the parents in the household and that they would determine the programs that were listened to at particular times of the day.

Paddy Scannell, in *Radio, Television & Modern Life* (1996) refers to the way that media (including radio) shapes everyday schedules: "Our sense of days is already in part determined by the ways in which media contribute to the shaping of our sense of days" (Scannell, 1996, p.149).

Eve, one of the interviewees who had previously indicated that rock 'n' roll was not favoured by her parents, was only able to listen to her radio program of choice at the times of the day when her mother was not around. Eve talks about her attempts to hear Elvis' *Heartbreak Hotel*:

> I used to sit up… My mother had our radio on a, sort of little ledge made for it, and I used to sit myself up on the kitchen bench with my ear against the radio scribbling down the words to, um, *Heartbreak Hotel*.
>
> That, I'm sure a lot of the stations had the song on rotation, so you knew when your particular favourites were probably going to come up on the radio. And if you were home at the time, that's when you'd be propped up on the kitchen bench with your ear against the radio. (E. Lucas, personal communication, 11 April, 2015).

Scannell further refers to the concept of "zones" in regards to radio consumption. In the years between 1955-1960, we can see how "these zones are part of the fundamental way in which broadcast services are arranged to be appropriate to the time of day – which means appropriate to who in particular is available to watch

or listen at what time and in what circumstances". Robin summarises this regulation of appropriate radio consumption with her experiences:

> We weren't a radio-turned-on-for-fun family. You listen to your serial, you listen to the news, you listen to the ABC plays and stuff. (R. Faulker, personal communication, 2 June, 2015).

Parents used their radio consumption as a 'strategy' to regulate their own lives, and also the lives of their teenage children. They fit their everyday life around what they wanted to consume from the radio. For instance, Eve's mother wanted to listen to her radio plays at a certain time, so would make sure she got her housework done before then. Parents governed the different types of programs accessible to their teenage children by prioritising their own consumption of radio first, and then by reviewing (restricting or allowing) their teenage children's consumption of radio. In this way, they imposed their own values and interpretations of what was acceptable and appropriate for teenagers to consume.

'Tactics'

In *Walking in the City*, De Certeau (1984), talks about 'tactics' as temporary, isolated and time-limited acts of assertion. He explains that individuals are "always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized 'on the wing'" (De Certeau, 1984, p.xix). My interviews demonstrate that, in the context of post-war Australia, 'tactics' were important in the formation of both individual and generational identity for teenagers. Teenagers used 'tactics' in Perth to respond to the 'strategies' enforced upon them, such as 'supervised socialising', 'restricted rock 'n' roll' consumption and 'regulated radio'. The following section will explore the temporary acts of subversion employed by individuals, as described in my interviews.

Transistor 'Tactics'

As discussed in Chapter 1, the post-war economy between 1955-1960 allowed opportunities for many Australians to enjoy new practises of leisure and pleasure, more so than in previous years. Many parents enjoyed an affluent, middle-class existence, and teenagers held after-school jobs (some had even entered the

work force full time). This meant that for the first time in history, teenagers as a social category had disposable incomes, which allowed them to purchase commodity items, such as records, new clothes and the latest transistor radio.

The introduction of the transistor radio in the fifties created new spaces for consuming music in everyday life. This was a significant technological development for both the radio industry and for teenage practises of consumption. The transistor provided many individuals the opportunity to consume radio programs, in private or in public and at a time of their own choosing, but most importantly in a space outside of the family home.

In their study *Sound souvenirs: Audio technologies, memory and cultural practises*, Bijsterveld and Van Dijck (2009, p.128) explain how "the symbolic capital of radio as an intimate companion and link to the world was even upgraded when linked to another key metaphor of modernity: mobility". This meant that music was portable and accessible and available anywhere and at any time. The technology of the first transistor originated in Japan, as Fisher (2007, p. 65) states:

> On a trip to the United States in 1952, the co-founder of Sony Masaru Ibuka, learned that he could license AT&T's new transistor technology for just $25,000. Ibuke persuaded Japan's Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) to pay the fee, and Sony developed a radio small enough to fit in a shirt pocket. While the first models were expensive, by 1959, dozens of similar Japanese companies had copied Sony's work and were flooding the U.S. market with cheaper versions.

In Australia (as my interviewees confirm), the transistor radio became very popular with teenagers, who could extend their places of musical appreciation, such as the beach, the milk bar, work, school, picnics; music could be listened to wherever. The introduction of this technology allowed radio to be consumed as a private medium; individuals (teenagers in particular), were able to enjoy radio listening separate to others. This changed radio listening practises of previous decades where, traditionally, radio was consumed in the company of others, as a group activity, and in the family home. Eve explains what the transistor radio meant for her:

> The transistor radio was another medium by which we were able to get away from the house and listen to what we wanted to! (E. Lucas, personal communication, 11 April, 2015).

This signifies that the transistor radio provided freedom to access different types of music, which otherwise would have been blocked by parents' and guardians' ears. So, through the transistor young people had 'tactics' to resist parents control over their radio consumption. Eve comments on the popularity on the transistor radio in WA teenage culture of the time:

> If you went down to the beach, and walked along the beach, you got everybody's transistor radio as you moved along the beach. These days – with ear buds – you've got no idea what people are listening to. But the transistors… If you'd forgotten to take yours to the beach - you could find a space where somebody was listening to a radio, or playing music that you wanted to listen to. (E. Lucas, personal communication, 11 April, 2015).

For Marilyn, the transistor represented convenience:

> We had little, um, transistor radios which we took everywhere, like a handbag. And um, we'd go to various, you know our various friend's places and we'd either have a radiogram or turn the transistors up and off we'd go. We'd jive and jive and jive and we'd jive all night sometimes... I jived so hard, and so fast, one night, that I got a really bad nosebleed. (M. Johnston, personal communication, 8 May, 2015).

Marilyn's enthusiasm for jiving was reflected in John's enthusiasm for listening to rock 'n' roll. The transistor allowed the two teenagers to do both. John talks about listening to the transistor after school:

> ...Listening to the Phillip Morris country hour through ear phones, in my own household – with the crystal set and aerials... nailed it for me. I'd never heard anything like it in my entire life. I mean, you know, you got half rock 'n' roll and you got half Perry Como and you got half Mario Lanza, if you like, and some Doris Day numbers or – on local radio – but we started to tune into Bill Hayley and... Gene Vincent was another one, Gene Vincent was very early. He was a Brit, who went to New York, and as a matter of fact, I heard Gene Vincent in '59 and '58 long before I heard, um, Cliff Richard, and he had the same sound as The Shadows – the same electronic sounds – but he'd picked them up from America.

> That was all tuning me right in. (J. Hunter, personal communication, 5 May, 2015).

Eve describes the stations she used to tune into, without the company of her parents:

> For us it was 6PM, 6PR, 6IX for popular music. Ah 6WF and 6WN which were ABC stations, weren't much your rock 'n' roll stations. It was the commercial stations that were playing rock 'n' roll. (E. Lucas, personal communications, 11 April 2015).

For Robin, who came from a household in which Elvis was banned, the transistor allowed her to party with her friends, unencumbered by her parent's musical preference. Robin talks about partying at her friends' houses on the weekend, listening to music and jiving:

> We were encouraged to do this, because it was wholesome, it was dancing. Even if you went to a church social - it would've had one or two dances of jive and then gradually the records were would've been swapped around so. It wasn't looked upon as evil, although the newspapers and reports about sex, drug and rock'n'roll. It wasn't like that.
>
> ...We had cordial with dry ginger in it as specky juice, sandwiches, that was it. (R. Faulker, personal communication, 2 June, 2015).

This is interesting in that it, not only does it demonstrate the innocence of Robin's rock 'n' roll exploits – it also contradicts an article published in *The Beverley Times* which quoted the church as being against rock 'n' roll. Robin's description, however, states that teenagers were encouraged to dance to this type of music as it was "wholesome". This is also reflected in a study by Walden (2009) who examines the rise of rock 'n' roll in Brisbane and similarly found that the church supported young people's appreciation of this new music.

The Subversive Snake Pit

In addition to new spaces being created for teenagers through the use of the transistor, other 'pop-up' areas of music appreciation were appearing in Perth. Teenagers took refuge in public places and spaces, outside of the family home. Milkbars, cinemas and the Embassy Ballroom were among some of the places frequented by teenagers. However, for some, these places were off limits. Carol who, like Robin, came from a strict household, talks about Milkbars:

Uhh, well there use to be a few motorbikes out the front and in those days bikies weren't like they are now, but, they were probably the naughty boys I suppose, depending on the degree of naughtiness in those days, and they probably weren't? Uhh, so bikies use to go to the milk bar, which is a bit sad isn't it, drinking milkshakes. My father was very strict, he was very English so I wasn't allowed to do that sort of thing. (C. Newport, personal communication, 11 May, 2015).

Amongst other things, Carol wasn't allowed to go to the Snake Pit either. Located along the Scarborough Esplanade, the Snake Pit was a venue outside a café / diner on Manning Street. The property was purchased in 1953 by owners Don Errichetto and Rosina Rifici, Italian immigrants from New York. According to Trainer (2017), the property featured a jukebox and originally, played music from the post-war era. Trainer (2017, p.220) continues "Rosina's grandfather sent her records from South America, which alongside other popular music of the time included early rock'n'roll recordings".

The venue soon became very popular with teenagers throughout Perth. It provided a space for the enjoyment, consumption and appreciation of rock 'n' roll – for people to jive and to learn to jive. In reaction to popular discourse in the print media, in which rock music was banned in any dance schools or halls, the Snake Pit was a 'tactical' response by two individuals, which gave teenagers the freedom to socialise and identify with their musical preference and with their peers.
John remembers the Snake Pit well:

> And, um, they played this on a Saturday afternoon. Well, any afternoon, Friday, Saturday... Friday nights, Saturday afternoons, Saturday night um, they played, starting in about 50... late '56 – which it wasn't really – didn't take off til '57 and then the older kids of – anywhere from Scarborough to Vic Park – they'd come to Scarborough on Saturday.

> Erichetti - start playing his records. He had a dance floor made – a tailor made dance floor that would hold about, only about 20 or 30 jitter-bugging, jiving couples. And because it was close-knit, it's the old story you know, when it's close 'n' cuddly its better. If you like. And there was high walls and all the people could sit around and watch. (J. Hunter, personal communication, 5 May, 2015).

Eve, an avid rock 'n' roller, also shares her memories of the Snake Pit:

> A couple of my sisters had their driver's licence and on the weekend we'd get Daddy's… my Dad's car on the weekend and we'd go to Scarborough Beach.

And *de rigeur* – we'd be up at the Snakepit. We – our Mother would have killed us if we'd been jiving in the Snakepit. But we knew good jiving when we saw it. (E. Lucas, personal communication, 11 April, 2015).

Eve and her sisters employed 'tactics' to participate in the jiving, and rock 'n' rolling at the Snake Pit. Here, it is clear that despite her parents 'strategies' to prevent her from entering the venue, she seized the opportunity to borrow her Dad's car to join in the teenage fun.

The Snake Pit had been portrayed in the print media as being associated with the 'deviant' subculture of the Bodgies and Widgies. Hence, the reason some parents were reluctant to allow their children to attend. In my interviews, 4 out of 6 participants said to have attended the Snake Pit, with only Robin (geographical distance) and Carol (forbidden by her Father) missing out.

Not only was the music and dancing a focus at the Snake Pit, but so was the fashion. Eve comments on the clothing styles that could be found at the Snake Pit, a hang-out typically associated with the subculture of the Bodgies and Widgies.

I mean, if I think about the jiving at the Snake Pit - I think about the full skirts down there. But it was much more a stark sort of look, um for the girls. And for the boys, I mean it was very pointy toed shoes for them. And very fitted pants. And the girls too. Jeans were, well in the 1950s jeans came to us from America – so people were more wearing them as well. (E. Lucas, personal communication, 11 April, 2015).

None of the participants identified as being Bodgies or Widgies themselves. They all described their fashion styles as being distinctly different than that of the subcultures of the time. Fashion was, however, linked with the type of music that you listened to. As Stratton (1992, p.106) infers, "the gradual acceptance of the youth culture in Australia in the mid '50s seems to have involved the acceptance of this clothing style as a mass teenage fashion which, in folk memory, is associated with rock 'n' roll". This is evident when Eve talks about the clothes she wore as a teenager.

With rock 'n' roll came the way we dressed. Fashion and music was all tied up. So it very much affected the way we dressed, what we spoke about. (E. Lucas, personal communication, 11 April, 2015).

John's memories of the Snake Pit also involved looking at other teens' fashions:

> I mean, you know, pedal pushers, tight jeans... Um. Brian James was a, was one of the best looking young guys outta Scarborough district. He and his brother, they were perfect physical specimens, and they were older than me, one or two years and they could really jive.

> So. Brian, ah, who, we called 'Scudge' because he has that stamped on the leather on the back of his new Yacka jeans and his desert boots and his new midriff and his six packs and his muscles. What was he. 17 or summin. A magnificent dancer. Scudge. I'll never forget. (J. Hunter, personal communication, 5 May, 2015).

John reflects on the way the Snake Pit was perceived by local community members. He also explains how the Police and the print media became involved:

> In '57 rather, it took off with the better electronic music – rock 'n' roll – and eventually there were three-five-six hundred people congregated on that corner. And that's when the – the locals and the newspapers, well let's face it – the newspapers was always a rag for printing sensationalism and um, the newspaper said – we can't have this! There's 600 people in one spot! And there's only 500,000 in Perth! If it gets outta hand they'll take over!

> Then in late '57, '58, it'd made such a "hoo-ha" in the paper that – and such a police presence, you know, like, you're standing in the road – get off! When you was standing on the curb – when there was nearly no traffic anyway. So any excuse to break it up. So eventually it went outta favour.

> In about 1959, '60, p'raps, went outta favour and that's when the dances started. Round the suburbs. Got bigger. And they ran their own little shows and everybody learnt to copy. But it was never the same again. (J. Hunter, personal communication, 5 May, 2015).

John responds to a question about the newspaper articles, which were similar to those printed in *The Mirror* and *The Beverly Times*.

> Well – that wasn't really true – it was true on the day because there was 600 people standing on the corner! And there was 30 or 40 couples try'n'a dance and they had bare torsos a-a-and the girls had new pointed bras and they looked rather sexy and ya can't have sex! (J. Hunter, personal communication, 5 May, 2015).

John's comments are significant. His description of the Snake Pit confirms my findings that the print media portrayed a negative view of and sensationalised events at the Snake Pit for the purpose of promoting their newspapers. The everyday lived experience that John reported was of the Snake Pit being about young people

having fun. The Snake Pit was the beginning of a thriving music culture in Perth and paved the way for other venues to open throughout the suburbs, which eventually led to the gradual acceptance of rock 'n' roll in Perth as an acceptable form of popular entertainment.

Discussion

This section has discussed and explored the everyday lives of 5 individuals and their memories of Perth, between 1955-1960. As this is an everyday-life study about teenagers and radio, I was looking to see how radio impacted and structured the participant's lives growing up. From this study, it is evident that, for many of the interview participants, radio was a memorable part of daily life. Radio brought different types music and popular culture to the interviewees who may not have been able to access it otherwise.

Through the mobility of the transistor radio, interview participants commented on their freedom to access and enjoy music of their preference. Transistor technology offered an alternative to listening to the radio in the family room, regulated by the company of parents. From my content analysis, it is clear the cultural practises of jiving and listening to rock 'n' roll were frowned upon within the Perth community. In many ways, the transistor gave teenagers the privacy and mobility to enjoy the music of their preference. Teenagers were able to create their own spaces, away from parental supervision, often in the city centre, or at the beach.

Through transistor radio usage and DIY music venues (such as the Snakepit in Scarborough, which John discussed, and Robin's backyard dancefloor in Albany), the interview participants described the 'tactics' (De Certeau, 1984) they used to assert their independence and negotiate the constraints of the post-war parenting community.

In the next chapter (Conclusion), I discuss key points of this case study, paying attention to the impact of the print media on local readers, and their subsequent reaction to changes on Perth radio programming during this era.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION

I now turn to De Certeau's (1984) explanation of the 'particular' and the 'general' (as referenced in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2) to draw together the key points made throughout this thesis.

De Certeau (1984) explains that everyday existences can be understood through an examination of the 'particular' and the 'general'. The 'general' in this thesis is the macro-society such as the media, the family and the music industry. Whereas the 'particular' refers to the everyday routines, priorities and patterns of consumption of individuals. In the context of post-war teenagers, I looked at the 'particular' in Chapter 4, where I explored the systematic and strategic vilification of teenagers in the WA print media, and its impact. I also examined the 'particular' experiences of participants who were teenagers during the period studied. For this reason, my case study was informed by De Certeau's (1984) theory of everyday life and his notion of 'strategies' and 'tactics'.

It is in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 where I explored the 'general'. The 'general', being the economic, societal and industry changes that everyday Australians experienced at the end of WW2. In Chapter 1, I note an increase in employment, and in the opportunity to spend; as a consequence consumer culture thrived towards the end of the fifties. These consumption patterns drove popular culture to the forefront of public awareness. With changes in the media industry, such as the introduction of television and the diversification of radio, popular media brought new ideas to Australian culture.

In Chapter 2, I looked at the 'general' theoretical space in which this study fits – cultural studies. By outlining the history of cultural studies, and the related fields of audience studies, consumption theory and the study of everyday life, I demonstrate where De Certeau's (1984) theories originate and where this case study fills a gap not filled by earlier studies.

I then provided the reader with a historical context in Chapter 3, and looked at the 'general' changes which occurred in society between 1955-1960. I examined the categorisation of the teenager and Stratton's (1992) seminal study of the Bodgie

Widgie phenomenon. I also looked at the history and reception of rock 'n' roll, the changes which occurred in the radio industry (starting at 2UE in Brisbane with Bob Rogers and Allan Lapan, and at 6KY in Perth with Colin Nichol).

I started this study by exploring the impact of the American servicemen during WW2. I explained that my interest in this area developed out of a similar study of pirate radio in Britain. The question I posed was as to whether the Australian broadcasting industry reflected the British Broadcasting Industry in the fifties. I speculated about whether Australian listeners' experienced the same restrictions as U.K. listeners did regarding their music consumption. The thesis found that due to the American presence in the forties, Australian's were more inclined to consume and participate in American styles and activities. Furthermore in the post-war era, teenagers, in particular, perceived American identity as desirable (as discovered in my interviews). This was reflected in the consumption of rock 'n' roll records, music which originated out of the U.S. and in the radio industries adoption of the American style of broadcasting – DJ's and the Top 40.

Now I discuss my key findings. Through my content analysis in Chapter 4, I also found that the print media in Western Australia portrayed rock 'n' roll as a deviant and dangerous cultural form. In the articles studied, it was presented as challenging the values and morals of the Perth community. From my interviews, it is clear that teenagers, however, rejoiced in its exciting, exhilarating and unfamiliar nature. The two broadsheets of the day, *The Mirror* and *The Beverley Times*, reported on rock 'n' roll events from America and the Eastern States in a negative light even before the radio industry in Perth was playing this style of music. This is significant, in that the negative reporting had the potential to effect people's perception of rock 'n' roll, even before rock 'n' roll came to Perth via the radio station 6KY.

The negative media portrayal of rock 'n' roll culture raised concerns in the community and amongst parents, particularly as the sources cited (in the articles studied) were often perceived as authoritative and influential. Parents employed strategies to regulate their teenager's consumption of radio and rock 'n' roll out of fear and concern. In turn, as discussed in Chapter 4 this prompted teenagers to develop tactics to overcome these restrictions and to allow them to consume radio and rock 'n' roll. Whilst these tactics had the potential to cause some conflict in the

family home, such friction was on a small scale and less newsworthy than the delinquency and social unrest which was reported by the media.

According to the literature surveyed and discussed in Chapter 3, post-war teenagers were despondent with the popular cultural forms of entertainment directed by parents, teachers and those who knew better (Rogers, 2008). It is fitting then, that teenagers made considerable effort to access this new form of popular entertainment by the use of their 'tactics'. The teenagers' tactics were facilitated by the emerging technology of radio. The transistor radio was the conduit to the new music which enriched the teenagers' lives and energised their quest for identity. This small device created many new spaces for the consumption of music, the socialisation of teenagers and cemented their identities as a consuming, socialising, generation who personified rock 'n' roll.

The transistor was forerunner of the mobile music experience which shapes everyday life, today. This technology paved the way for other devices such as the walkman, discman, ipod and the smartphone; technologies which have been associated with the development of teenage culture over the last few decades (as Tutt, 2008 confirms). The study of post-war radio consumption in everyday life, whilst identifying these key points, has also identified where further study would be valuable. The Hifi Club as a phenomenon of youth culture and radio history has not yet been explored fully. Similarly, a wide scale study (like Stratton's *The young ones*, 1992) has not yet been undertaken on WA teenage history in the 1950's. I hope that my case study will inspire further examination of everyday lives in this era of Perth history.

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