Teenagers, Everyday Life and Popular Culture in 1950s Ireland

Eleanor O'Leary, BA., MA.

Submitted for qualification of PhD

Supervised by Dr Stephanie Rains, Centre for Media Studies, National University of Ireland, Maynooth

Head of Department: Dr Stephanie Rains

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I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of PhD, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

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Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

List of Tables

Teenagers, Everyday Life and Popular Culture in 1950s Ireland

Eleanor O'Leary

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to provide a social and cultural history of young people, their lives and their interactions with popular culture in 1950s Ireland. Popular culture is contextualised within the wider social discourses of the decade including emigration, unemployment, globalisation and the rise of mass culture. Understanding the social structures of young people's lives provides a deeper context to their access to and interactions with popular culture. In this study, popular culture refers both to a wide range of texts, such as comics, magazines and films and to social spaces, such as youth clubs, dance halls and cinemas. Internationally the 1950s were particularly associated with the emergence of the new teenager and the rise of teenage culture. This study highlights the opportunities for young people in Ireland to gain access to and participate in teenage culture and internationalised collective identities. Furthermore, this thesis examines the relationship between popular culture and the reframing of social and cultural expectations in the post-war period in Ireland. Patterns of behaviour in relation to work, education, social mobility and leisure are linked to altering expectations of standards of living. A number of social issues, including economic stagnancy and emigration, have dominated investigations of the post-war period in Ireland. This study focuses on popular culture in order to re-examine the 1950s from a new perspective and challenges accepted readings of the decade as closed, dark, dull and lost. This study reconnects a generation of young people and a lost decade to discourses of modern Ireland which have tended to begin with the economic expansion initiated in 1959 and have excluded the more subtle traces of social transition which occurred in the 1950s.

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Introduction

From the beginning

To begin with, the parameters of this research project were set to examine youth culture in Ireland between 1950 and 1980. The decision to focus solely on the 1950s came following an initial period of research. It quickly became apparent that examinations of the 1950s in Ireland had been limited to the dominant economic and social difficulties of the decade. Ireland in the 1950s was stagnant, dull, poor, xenophobic, culturally backward, ruled from the pulpit and had become stuck in a quiet malaise according to most assessments of the period. The story, it appeared, ended there. There were many reasons to draw such conclusions. The economy had failed to develop in a time when most other western societies were enjoying the fruits of a post-war economic boom. There were staggering levels of emigration, particularly among younger generations and the response to these serious social crises from the political establishment was slow and ineffectual. The statistics were damning –approximately 400,000 people left Ireland between 1951 and 1961.[1] As a result much of the academic analysis of the decade had been generated by historians focused on the economy and migration, although there were also a wide range of accounts related to the dominant political personalities of time; most especially Eamon de Valera and Seán Lemass.

Only the work of a small number of scholars suggested anything other than the above. Brian Fallon's account of Irish culture between 1930 and 1960 outlined the many artistic and creative advances of those decades including the setting up of multiple cultural festivals such as the Cork Film Festival and the Wexford Opera Festival in the 1950s.[2] Caitríona Clear's account of women's household work in Ireland from 1922-1961 described the variety of reading materials available to women in Ireland in the 1940s and 1950s and argued that photographs of Irish women and girls from these decades indicated the 'awareness and adaption of contemporary fashion was widespread'.[3] Little or no academic work had been undertaken on young people in Ireland in the post-war period. Internationally the 1950s were particularly associated with the emergence of the new teenager and the rise of teenage culture. In fact, the focus on young people at that time was so intense that it seemed especially remiss that no work had been carried out on that topic in the Irish context. There were numerous questions to address; did this new

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[1] Enda Delaney, 'The Vanishing Irish: The Exodus from Ireland in the 1950s' in D. Keogh, F. O'Shea and C. Quinlan, (eds), *Ireland in the 1950s: The Lost Decade*, (Cork, 2004), p.81

[2] Brian Fallon, *An Age of Innocence: Irish Culture 1930-1960*, (Dublin, 1999)

[3] Caitríona Clear, Women of the House: Women's Household Work in Ireland 1922-1961, (Dublin, 2000), p.93

teenage phenomenon reach Ireland? Did young people in Ireland have access to popular culture in a similar way to their international counterparts? Did the increased focus on teenagers across the western world reframe approaches in the media and society to young people in Ireland? Did teenagers in Ireland attempt to embody manifestations of teenage culture in their style, speech or behaviour? Had mass culture contributed to social change in Ireland? This initial set of questions led to an even longer list from which the new parameters of this thesis were drawn and this led to the final focus on teenagers, everyday life and popular culture in Ireland during the 1950s.

Examining the Fifties

This study relies heavily on the extensive work already carried out by other scholars in demography, population decline, emigration and economic history in mid-twentieth century Ireland.[4] It also interacts with a variety of works on youth and popular culture; the majority of these texts were produced outside of Ireland and focused on social change in relation to teenagers in other western societies during the post war period. The latter works were vital in establishing the development of youth culture in other nations and creating a framework for measuring the expansion of youth culture in Ireland in the same period. It is necessary to clarify, at this juncture, that it would have been pointless to draw up a tick list of the defining features of youth culture in Britain and the United States in the 1950s and then crudely employ this list as a tool to measure social change in Ireland. At the same time it was necessary to understand the development of youth culture in the United States and Britain, not only because so much of the popular culture enjoyed in Ireland was generated in those two nations, but also because it provided a sketch of where to begin to search out both the local and global specificities of youth culture in Ireland in the post-war period.

Numerous forms of popular culture were closely associated with youth culture internationally in the 1950s including rock'n'roll, jiving, teenpics, horror comics and romance magazines. There are some theoretical difficulties in defining the limits of what is understood by and what can be included within the term popular culture. John Storey refers to four definitions of the term outlined by Raymond Williams which included 'work deliberately setting out to win favour with the people', 'inferior kinds of work', 'well liked by many people' and 'culture actually made by the

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[4] Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000) and Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973*, (London, 2006), Tom Garvin, *Preventing the Future: Why was Ireland Poor for so Long?*, (Dublin, 2002); Henry Patterson, *Ireland Since 1939*, (New York, 2002)

people for themselves'.[5] Adrian Horn in his book, *Juke box Britain: Americanisation and Youth Culture 1945-1960,* underpinned his analysis of youth culture in Britain by placing a dividing line between popular pastimes and tastes such as cycling or dancing and mass cultural products such as films or records.[6] Such a limited or neat definition fails to account for the myriad of interdependent experiences filtered through popular or mass culture. For instance, serious complications arise in applying Horn's delineations to situations such as groups of youths coming together to listen to records, read magazines or converging at the airport to cheer the arrival of their teen idol. Many ethnographic and autobiographical accounts of the decade also indicate that social experiences such as going to the cinema involved far more than the viewing of a mass cultural products in the dark. These were important occasions for seeing and meeting peers as well as opportunities for collective expression. In the 1950s, cinema audiences screamed, jeered, cheered and sang along with the latest film productions. Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis will discuss the importance of the cinema space to teenage culture in Ireland. The cinema functioned as a social space to interact with peers and perform teenage identities and it also provided access to the international youth culture through cinematic texts. Chapter 4 highlights how many youth organisations and movements in Ireland were heavily influenced, often directly, by similar international organisations. For the purposes of this study, therefore, the term popular culture will refer to a wide range of popular activities available to Irish youths.

The aim of this thesis is to provide a social and cultural history of young people, their lives and their interactions with popular culture in 1950s Ireland. Popular culture is always in a state of interplay with the other superstructures and forces which shape the everyday lives of teenagers. These include gender, geography, education, employment, family and kinship networks, class and political economy. Understanding the social structures of young people's lives was necessary in order to give a deeper context to their access to and interactions with popular culture. It was also necessary to examine the assumption that financial hardship had prevented teenagers in Ireland from engaging with popular culture. The focus of this study, therefore, extended beyond providing a catalogue of popular entertainments or a limited analysis of youth subcultures in Ireland. Too many significant inter-relationships existed between the structures of their everyday lives and their approach to popular culture to exclude either section without considerably weakening the overall impact of the research. The first two chapters for this reason focus on education, employment and emigration. Chapter 1 discusses the provision of education in 1950s Ireland and points to the state of social limbo and the great unevenness of experience which

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[5] John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, (5th edition, Essex, 2009), p.5

[6] Adrian Horn, Juke Box Britain: Americanisation and Youth Culture, 1945-1960, (Manchester, 2009), p. 1

operated in this decade. Although the numbers of young people who progressed onto some form of second level education began to increase during the 1950s, the majority of young people still started to work fulltime in their early teens. Despite persistent requests from the public to reform the education systems in Ireland and specifically to raise the school-leaving age to 16, the government avoided taking any concrete action on these issues by enacting a series of councils and commissions. Very few of the recommendations of these councils or commissions were ever acted upon but their existence allowed the government to deflect criticism while the subject was under investigation. Chapter 1 identifies some shifts in the perceptions of education and its social value in the 1950s by those facilitating the system and those using it. The chapter highlights some patterns of resistance to the dominant ideologies of education provision in the State. The discussions of education and employment presented in both Chapter 1 and 2 reflect many aspects of Althusser's theory of the ideological state apparatus. These chapters provide numerous examples of ways in which dominant ideologies were extended beyond the private/civic or public/political spheres in relation to young people, education, employment and opportunities.[7] Althusser's theory recognises that seemingly autonomous systems, such as the family, communities or religion, contribute to maintaining the ideologies of the state.[8] These chapters indicate how class played a significant role in relation to the access to education and well-paid, consistent employment to teenagers in 1950's Ireland. The evidence presented in the first two chapters makes concrete links between the states ideological position in relation to young people and the provision and promotion of particular subjects, courses and modes of employment across a number of institutions, organisations and communications systems. Perhaps it is only the family system, to some degree, which appears to operate outside of these systems by demanding the development of new structures for young people and resisting hierarchal constructions of class and opportunity.

Chapter 2 identifies similar patterns of resistance in attitudes to work and employment for young people. It reassesses the relationships between the economic necessity to emigrate and the changing perceptions of standards of living and social status. There has been a curious absence of popular culture from almost every study of emigration and social change in mid-twentieth century Ireland. Enda Delaney's thorough examination of emigration in this period in *Demography, State and Society: Irish Migration to Britain 1921-1971* identified the primary reasons for leaving Ireland as economic and more specifically the inability to secure consistent well-

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[7] Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall, (eds), *Visual Culture: The Reader,* (London, 1999), pp.248-250
[8] ibid

remunerated work.[9]   In subsequent studies, Delaney has also highlighted that the 'tendency to view this phenomenon [emigration] as resulting exclusively from economic causes has been tempered by an appreciation of the social processes associated with migration'.[10]   Mary E. Daly also describes the principal reasons for the higher levels of emigration in this decade as economic, although she does oscillate to some extent between social and economic factors in her accounts of mid-twentieth century emigration.[11]   While there is little doubt that young people in Ireland emigrated for the most part for economic reasons, it is necessary to then greatly elaborate on what specific economic factors fuelled the sudden spike in emigration in the 1950s.

Delaney places considerable emphasis on kinship networks, established patterns of migration and the dissemination of information about work, wages and standards of living by returned migrants.[12]   Daly focuses on changing attitudes to money and standards of living in Ireland after the Second World War as the main social factors which contributed to migration and asserts that people in rural Ireland were no longer satisfied with less than their counterparts in urban centres.[13]   Neither scholar refers in any detail to popular culture as a factor in altering people's perception of acceptable standards of living.   The increasing discourses of consumer and mass culture communicated through the media in the post-war period are not mentioned either.

A wide range of the sources utilised in this thesis suggest that access to consumer discourses were a considerable contributory factor in elevating everyday expectations of standards of living in Ireland.   For example, Helen Byrne's ethnographic study of female cinema goers in the 1940s and 1950s in Waterford City argues that the 'cinema screen became a shop window for the myriad of consumer goods being produced in post-war America and so had an effect on audience expectations'.[14]   Delaney briefly discusses that a number of the reports from the social surveys and commissions instigated in the 1950s referred to changing 'economic expectations' in Ireland but he does not link this back to how these expectations might have been altered in the first instance.[15]   Delaney's reliance on the returned migrant as a disseminator of information on consumer cultures, fails to acknowledge how these returned migrants acted as embodiments of

[9] Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000)

[10] Enda Delaney, *Irish emigration since 1921*, (Dublin, 2002), p. 20

[11] Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973*, (London, 2006)

[12] Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000), pp. 162-202; Enda Delaney, 'The Vanishing Irish? The Exodus from Ireland in the 1950s', in D. Keogh, F. O'Shea, and C. Quinlan, (eds), *Ireland in the 1950s: The Lost Decade*, (Cork, 2004), p. 84

[13] Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973*, (London, 2006), p. 57, pp. 60-61, p.74

[14] Helen Byrne, '"Going to the Pictures": The Female Audience and the Pleasures of the Cinema', in Mary J. Kelly and Barbara O'Connor (eds) *Media Audiences in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1997), p.99

[15] Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000), p.98

expectations which had already been raised through the media and therefore they operated as a three dimensional representation of how these expectations could be fulfilled elsewhere.

Chapter 3 presents some evidence on how returned migrants may have contributed to the adoption of the Teddy Boy subculture in Ireland. But the high levels of media coverage of Teddy boys, both in the Irish press and in the British newspapers which were read widely in Ireland, would have far outweighed the influence of individual returned migrants. The focus in this study is on the non-migrant; the cohort who remained in Ireland. The issue of emigration was so large in Ireland in the 1950s that all sections of Irish society were affected by it in some way. In fact, the level of this exodus were so high that it forced Irish society and its political leadership into a period of deep reflection which subsequently contributed to the social and political changes which emerged from the end of the decade. Taking into consideration that such a large body of work already exists on the topic of emigration and that teenagers in Ireland are the primary focus of this research project, emigration appears only in the context of how it links to popular culture and how it affected the lives of teenagers living in Ireland in the 1950s. For instance, Chapter 4 investigates how investment in facilities and leisure activities for rural youths was dominated by the issue of emigration.

Teen Time

This study investigates whether international teenage culture was integrated into Irish culture and society in the 1950s. It quickly emerged that this occurred in numerous ways and on a variety of levels. One early indicator was the widespread use of the word 'teenager' in Ireland in the 1950s. It appeared frequently in the media and to a lesser extent in government papers and reports. Aside from the word itself appearing in articles, letters and advertisements, Chapter 4 discusses how as the decade progressed an increasing number of publications started to include teenage sections and features in their regular content. The increasing use of the word teenager had the effect of reinforcing the idea that the teenage years were a separate and recognisable life stage with distinguishing features or as Thomas Doherty describes it 'the teenager was counted as a special creature requiring special handling'.[16] This was also represented in the style of reports which tended to use the word 'teenage' including articles on juvenile delinquency, dancing, rock'n'roll, American films, American teenage culture, fashion, events and club nights. It appears to a much lesser degree in articles discussing emigration and unemployment which

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[16] Thomas Doherty, *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s*, (Philadelphia, 2002), p. 35

indicates that, for a while at least, the word was closely associated with popular culture and ideologies of the 'new' teenager.

In order to better ascertain how ideologies of teenage culture were communicated in Ireland it was necessary to look at the availability of the main forms of teenage popular culture in Ireland. Thomas Doherty identifies teenpics as an important part of teenage culture in the 1950s in the United States and his study of this genre indicates how teenpics were closely linked to other commercial products and popular culture marketed to teenagers including rock'n'roll albums, soundtracks and merchandise linked to crossover stars like Elvis Presley. Chapter 3 considers how Irish teenagers would have accessed films from this genre and Chapter 4 examines how changes to the film industry in the United States impacted on teenage social spaces in Ireland. Chapter 3 looks at different popular crazes of the 1950s, such as hula hoops, to assess if their popularity internationally could be mapped on a similar trajectory in Ireland. Teddy boys were the most prominent and iconic teenage subculture of the 1950s. In Chapter 3 manifestations of the subculture are examined in order to analyse how media representations and the particular socio-economic circumstances shaped expressions of the subculture in the Ireland. Tracing these cultural phenomena facilitates a better understanding of how young people in Ireland filtered their identities through international forms of teenage and mass culture. It also provides a template to examine the ways in which popular iconography of teenage culture were adopted and adapted within the Irish context.

Chapter 5 focuses on two of the major international moral crises and discourses linked to youth culture in the 1950s. One of the largest moral panics of the decade was associated with horror comics. This crisis originated in the United States but eventually spread to 17 countries and led to the introduction of legislation in 5 countries including Britain.[17] The particular political, social and cultural dimensions to the debates around horror comics in Ireland are discussed and the chapter exposes how political power struggles were mainly responsible for manufacturing the crisis in Ireland. The issue of juvenile delinquency was a greater cause of concern across a wider stratum of social service providers, moral guardians and to a much lesser extent the general public. This chapter of the thesis displays how some of the issues which led to greater visibility of young people in the media and public debate in Ireland were linked to international discourses and anxieties related to teenage culture. These issues were not necessarily reflective of the

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[17] Martin Baker, 'Getting a Conviction: Or, How the British Comic Book Campaign only *just* Succeeded' in John A. Lent, (ed), *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Post-war Anti-Comics Campaign*, (1999, New Jersey) p. 69

dominant social issues in Ireland. Concerns expressed by the public in regard to young people tended to circulate around the more concrete social issues of emigration and unemployment. In the absence of any great public concern, many of the discourses around young people were established by Church authorities and other organisations as demonstrated in Chapter 5. This is not to say that popular culture was entirely absent from debates related to youth culture in Ireland but in many instances they were expressed in anxieties linked to the moral dangers associated with modern, urban societies. Films were associated with giving young people false ideas about modern life; rock'n'roll was linked to the marginalisation of national culture and music; and it was argued that imported literature had the potential to 'to arouse the lowest passions'.[18]

Mass Culture

Many of the above debates could also be located in wider international discourses of mass cultural production in the post-war period. Dominic Strinati suggests that 'theories of mass society and mass culture usually rely upon a clear division between the past and present. The division is normally taken to refer to a process of social change from a 'better' or preferable past to a degenerating and uninviting present and future'.[19] This was one of the discourses which defined intellectual debate in the western societies in the mid-twentieth century. The threat of cultural, political and economic domination by the United States in the period also formed a large aspect of these debates fuelled by the Cold War, the continued presence of American troops in many European countries and the fact that America was easily the largest producer of mass goods and culture.[20] The issue of imported popular culture has not received a great deal of attention by Irish scholars. Similarly the issue of Irish sentiment in relation to Americanisation has not been investigated and is often simply referred to as a special relationship or 'close affinity' with the United States.[21] Much of the evidence in this thesis suggests that for the general public in Ireland, and to a large extent for the political establishment, there was little objection to the arrival of mass cultural products and texts from the United States. This is not to say that there were not dissenters in the intellectual and political elite and these opinions are also represented in this thesis. In relation to Irish youths, Maeve Barrington argued in 1953 that it was difficult to take the issue of horror comics to task when there were so many other serious

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[18] Letter from the Secretaries of the Hierarchy, 30th January 1958, (Department of An Taoiseach, TAOIS/S 2321B, National Archives of Ireland)

[19] Dominic Strinati, *Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, (2nd Edition, New York, 1995), p.8

[20] Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters, (eds), Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945-1964, (London, 1999), p.19

[21] Tom Inglis. *Global Ireland: Same difference*, (New York, 2008), p.23

political and economic issues.[22] She stated that 'there are already too many problems connected with youth –delinquency, absence from school, over-attendance at the cinema, over-absorption in the radio, obsession with synthetic jazz, and the next worry, heaven help us, will be television.[23] This clearly reflects international discourses not just in relation to youth culture but also to the proliferation of mass cultural products.

In other ways the lack of modern products and services in Ireland in the period after the Second World War has been represented as a clear indicator of an essential backwardness in Irish society at this time. This thesis has sought to avoid any neat definitions of modernisation or any linear perceptions of the processes which tie economic growth and the arrival of modern goods and technologies to the transition of a state from traditional to modern.[24] Tracing markers of modernity in this way leads to a very closed and limited representation of a nation at any point in time and most especially in a decade where the expansion of mass culture and products came to define the period. A range of scholars have questioned the dominant perception of Ireland in the mid-twentieth century as essentially backwards including Caitríona Clear, Clair Wills, Luke Gibbons, Michael G. Cronin and Brian Fallon. It is argued in this thesis that much of the lack of engagement with modern goods and services in Ireland in the 1950s was linked to insufficient funds. This could be linked at a local level to the low rates of ownership of consumer goods and at a national level in relation to the setting up of a national television station. But this lack of finance should not be perceived as a lack of interest and this is reflected in the many ways that young people in Ireland found to participate in teenage culture despite their low level of disposable income. The preferred ideological approach to the process of social change in this thesis is best represented in the following quote from Kieran Keohane and Carmen Kuhling

> The local and global, community and society, tradition and modernity, are not forms of life that supersede one another in a linear historical process, but that exist contemporaneously and interpenetrate with one another, collide and collude with one another in the time/space of contemporary Ireland. Borders and boundaries between local and global, community and society, tradition and modernity are permeable.[25]

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[22] Maeve Barrington, 'The Comic and the Book', in *Irish Monthly*, April 1953
[23] Ibid
[24] Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters, (eds), *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945-1964*, (London, 1999), p.9
[25] Kieran Keohane and Carmen Kuhling, *Collision Culture: Transformations in Everyday Life in Ireland*, (Dublin, 2004), p.6

With the understanding that there was no essentially true or ideal past, or for that matter an essentially dark past, in Irish history; this thesis sets out to examine the social realities of teenage culture in the period of transition from 1950 to 1960.

Slowly but Surely

There was no great revolutionary scene in the 1950s in Ireland but change was beginning to occur and questions were being asked. The closing sentiments of the documentary *Ireland: The Tear and the Smile* claimed that the 'battle for a more abundant life' stood as the main goal and challenge to this new generation.[26] Gabriel Duffy claimed in his autobiography that his 'generation had all the unscrewing to do.'[27] Compared to the more overt social and economic changes that began at the very end of the decade and made a real impact in the 1960s the levels of social stagnation and cultural isolation in the 1950s may have appeared to be more absolute than they actually were. The slow march to the social change so clearly associated with the 1960s should not be separated from its roots in the previous decade. There are ways in which the 1950s have become a cut-off point in Irish history and cultural memory as the end of traditional Ireland; a new and more enlightened period is perceived to have begun in 1959.[28] This does not fit either with the approach in this thesis or with the reality of the continuity of social change.

The focus in this thesis on popular and youth culture has allowed for some reimagining of Ireland in the 1950s. However, the grand narratives of this decade are referred to extensively, especially in the way they shaped the social and cultural opportunities available to this generation. One topic which is not dealt with in any detail is the incarceration of young people in borstals, industrial schools and Magdalen laundries. Firstly, the information on these institutions and the treatment of women and children is still being uncovered. Secondly, it is too sensitive and large a topic to be dealt with in the context of rock'n'roll and hula hoops. This study does examine the provision of youth services like youth clubs by Church authorities but does not extend into the subject of institutional abuse and incarceration. There are a number of other scholars who have already produced important volumes on this subject.[29]

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[26] *Ireland: The Tear and The Smile*, (1961), (Irish Film Archives, AA450)
[27] Gabriel Duffy, *Sham to Rock: Growing Up in Forties and Fifties Dublin*, (Derbyshire, 2003), p. 20
[28] Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, (Cork, 1996), p.83
[29] James M. Smith, *Irelands Magdalen Laundries and the Nations Architecture of Containment*, (Indiana, 2007); Frances Finnegan, *Do Penance or Perish: Magdalen Asylums in Ireland*, (Oxford, 2001); Mary Raftery and Eoin O'Sullivan, *Suffer the Little Children: The Inside Story of Irelands Industrial Schools,* (Dublin, 1999)

In the end it is difficult for any study to fully represent a culture or a generation even when the focus is narrowed to the subjects of youth and popular culture. There were a wide range of social and cultural factors which influenced and impacted upon the lives of young people in Ireland in the 1950s. The most prominent social factors included their geographic location, gender, the ability to find consistent work which was well remunerated, education, class and their position with the family unit (with non-inheriting family members being most affected). However, outside of individual circumstances there were wider trends and this thesis focuses on the areas where the greatest commonality of experience can be identified. This thesis also traces the careful balances of power which existed between young people and the larger political structures in 1950s Ireland. In an article from 1957, which debated whether special programmes for teenagers should be provided by Radio Éireann, the journalist claimed that

> Perhaps it is now time to give these young people some extra attention, because many of our political and spiritual leaders have been noticing a certain frustration, not altogether economic, which is adding its toll to our emigration figures[30]

Teenagers in Ireland in the 1950s had to work within a very closed and limited system but at the same time they found numerous ways to draw attention to their needs and demands. Some requests were more direct, like the letter from a teenage reader to the *Times Pictorial* in 1950, which opened with the statement 'Wake up, Radio Éireann and broadcast a programme for teenagers' but the majority of the time this generation of teenagers had to find less demonstrative ways to express their frustrations. [31] De Certeau's theory of tactics and strategies is utilised throughout this thesis to highlight how young people in 1950s Ireland created new ways to resist the dominant systems without actually being able to operate outside of them. De Certeau's theory analyses the relationships of power which exist between 'dominant economic order' the individuals or collectives which resist these systems of power through the practice of everyday life.[32] De Certeau characterises a tactic as being in direct conflict with the dominant strategies of those in control of the political and economic systems of power. He details how a tactic must 'insinuates itself into the other's place without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance.'[33] This theory is especially relevant to this thesis because it is mostly through the practice of everyday life that tactical resistances to the dominant order by Irish teenagers are located. In addition, the theory of the tactic as identified by De Certeau outlines that it is not

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[30] *The Tuam Herald,* 22 June 1957

[31] *The Times Pictorial*, 20 May 1950

[32] Michel De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, (California, 1984), p. xii/xiii

[33] Ibid, p.xix

possible for the tactic to manifest itself outside from the system or strategy which is it part of and must exist within the limited space that is available to it. In this thesis such points of resistance are identified through the everyday practices and popular culture activities of teenagers in Ireland in the 1950s. De Certeau also underlines the collective nature of these resistant activates of everyday life.[34] This is also particularly relevant to the cohort being examined in this thesis most especially in relation to the provision of social spaces which is covered in Chapter 4. The research in this thesis builds on the existing academic works in relation to Ireland in the 1950s but it also highlights the ways in which this generation were more than passive victims of economic failure and cultural control. The focus on popular and youth culture facilitates a greater understanding of everyday life in Ireland in the mid-twentieth century and also the ways in which social change often manifests itself outside of the traditional structures of power.

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[34] Ibid, p. xiii/xiv

Chapter 1 – Education and Opportunities

Introduction

For contemporary teenagers in Ireland the school system shapes and informs their daily lives until their late teens and prepares most young people to continue on to some form of third level education or other qualification. In the 1950s staying at school beyond the age of 14 was not a social norm; for some it was a privilege but for others it was not even an option. Despite this education remained a dominant social system in the lives of young people and was deeply linked to employment, opportunity and other life choices. It is therefore necessary to understand these formative systems in order to engage fully with the motivations behind patterns of behaviour of young consumers. This chapter will show that education was one of the major forces which shaped the experiences of young people in Ireland during the 1950s whether they operated as part of that system or outside it. This chapter will examine the education system that existed in the 1950s and indicate its influence on young people and society. Chapter 2 will show some of the social transitions linked to modes of work and employment and there are strong correlations with the sites of social change suggested in this chapter on education. The resistance to traditional career trajectories indicated over the next 2 chapters and in particular in the unskilled and low paid section of the labour market, provides a clear delineation of a generation attempting to operate outside of the available systems and wider political hegemonic discourses. During the 1950s the education system was utilised by teenagers and their families to expand the range of possibilities available to this generation. On the one hand education expanded the opportunities available to many teenagers in Ireland but on the other it also completely shut off opportunities for others.

In the 1950s the compulsory school age was 6 to 14 years. Although most official bodies and reports recommended that the school leaving age be raised to 16 it did not happen until well into the following decade. This chapter will examine some of the debates that surrounded that issue. Mary E. Daly argues that 'any extension of second-level schooling threatened to undermine traditional rural Ireland. A leaving certificate reduced the prospect of emigrating but few young men or women with leaving certificates took up careers in farming'.[35] This indicates the interdependence of many cultural and social systems in Ireland and the necessity in the 1950s for new approaches to education in order to facilitate change, including economic growth, across the whole of Irish society. In the 1950s the age group of 14 to 20 were not legally required to

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[35] Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973,* (London, 2006), p.64

remain in any type of schooling and as a result they remained in a type of limbo between childhood and adulthood. Some left school with a basic education and went straight to work aged 14. Others went on to secondary school and completed their Inter Certificate or Leaving Certificate and a very small number of young people went on to University. A large number of young people worked full or part-time while taking classes at the local vocational or technical school, if one was available. A smaller number gained an apprenticeship qualification in a similar manner. There was very little uniformity of experience in relation to teenagers and education in the 1950s and variables included geography, class, gender, family size and the availability of suitable and desirable employment. This chapter will show that while the provision of education continued to improve during the 1950s, and in fact made some clear advances, it still failed to facilitate any type of coherent education experience for the vast majority of young people. The government and other controlling bodies, most obviously the Church, also failed to modernise the educational systems to meet the needs of a new generation. This study examines the discourses connected to the ideological and social shifts within patterns of education and modes of employment. In the later chapters these social and ideological transformations are linked more clearly to engagement with new global popular cultural texts and commodities.

Staying at School

The 1951 Census of Population showed that there were approximately 241,000 people aged between 14 and 19 in the country.[36] Out of this total figure only 28% or 69,000 teenagers were listed as students. The general category of student fails to indicate the level or type of education in which these young people were engaged. Other figures provided in the census show that some teenagers were enrolled in an educational course but may not have categorised themselves (or possible the CSO may not have categorised them) as students. For instance, one category states that the number of pupils attending vocational schools amounted to 86,000[37]. The majority of these students would have been attending part-time evening courses as opposed to full-time day school which might explain why this number appears to contradict the figure of 69,000 students provided in the original census figures. What can be surmised from these statistics is that far less than half of the teenagers in Ireland were accessing post-primary education and for those that did the experience varied widely. The numbers of students attending full-time secondary education was much lower than those young people who took up

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[36] Census of Population 1951

[37] Adrian Redmond, (ed), *That was then, This is now: Change in Ireland, 1949-1999*, Central Statistics Office Publication, (Dublin, 2000), *p.48*

part-time vocational education alongside fulltime work. During the 1950s the overall number of pupils attending secondary schools did greatly improve with almost 30,000 additional pupils continuing onto secondary education by the end of the decade.[38] The drop-off levels from national school to secondary school remained stark with over 421,000 pupils attending a national school in 1959 compared to only around 73,500 in the secondary system.[39] Table 1 below indicates the high rate of drop-off as students progressed through the national school system.[40] Students were promoted to a higher standard once they had successfully completed the previous year. The huge drop in the numbers of pupils between the 6th and 8th standard was the result of students receiving their Primary Certificate and therefore deeming it unnecessary to remain at school once this had been achieved. In 1950, 30,726 pupils sat the Primary Certificate and although this had increased to 40,157 by the end of the decade, there were still a large quantity of young people not taking this exam and therefore leaving school at 14 without any formal qualifications.[41]

Table 1 Number of Pupils Promoted to a Higher Standard on 1st July, or during school year

Year	To 1st Standard	To 2nd Standard	To 3rd Standard	To 4th Standard	To 5th Standard	To 6th Standard	To 7th Standard	To 8th Standard	Total
1951	55,874	56,960	53,161	51,737	49,036	41,818	25,877	8,545	343,008
1953	60,036	58,950	55,221	53,236	49,963	42,381	26,234	8,660	354,681
1954	61,285	59834	55,876	54,075	50,470	43,260	26,677	9,012	360,498
1955	61,034	60,514	56,894	54,825	51,722	43,964	27,414	8,793	365,160
1956	61,817	61,226	57,531	55,462	52,321	44,488	27,751	8,905	369,501
1957	62,936	61,915	58,860	55,818	52,773	44,662	28,421	9,139	374,524
1958	58,452	62,085	59,297	57,120	55,707	47,656	29,540	8,270	378,127
1959	57,528	61,156	59,359	56,704	55,264	48,092	30,175	8,230	376,508
1960	58,899	59,790	57,837	57,786	55,087	49,109	30,308	8,536	377,442

[38] Department of Education Annual Reports 1950 -1960
[39] Ibid
[40] Appendix II Primary School Stats, No.24 – Number of Pupils Promoted to a Higher Standard on 1st July, or during school year (all years) (only totals taken), (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Reports 1950 to 1960). The original tables can be located in the Appendix II, Primary Education Statistics section of the Department of Education Annual Reports
[41] Ibid

Attendance levels were also an issue in the 1950s with the average daily attendance hovering around 85 per cent throughout the decade in primary schools.[42] This was especially apparent in the age-group of 14 and over and in rural areas. Figures relating to the ages of 14 and 15 are difficult to extrapolate because there was no clear transition point between national and secondary school. A 1947 report from an internal committee within the Department of Education indicated that only 15 per cent of pupils aged 14-16 were in secondary schools. However the report also indicates that 19 per cent of children aged between 14 and 16 years remained at primary schools.[43] This highlights the lack of governmental regulation of the education sector in this decade and the fragmentary nature of education provision at a local level. Outside of any economic and social factors the experience of the individual student very much depended on the local structures for facilitating both primary and secondary education.

One of the main areas of advancement in Irish education during the 1950s was the increased capital investment in school buildings. Over 88 new secondary schools were built during this decade and the number of primary and vocational schools also greatly increased.[44] The extra investment in secondary schools reflects the rising demand for further education. Although these increases were significant, in reality the supply of new schools barely covered the increasing demand for student places in primary, secondary and vocational schools. There were many complaints about students and teachers working in unsuitable, ill-equipped and unsanitary buildings. The State also frequently failed to provide sufficient school facilities in areas on the outskirts of city centres where new housing schemes and communities had been created and children often missed out on school as a result.[45] The shortcomings and inconsistencies of the national schools system, however, were nothing in comparison to the various systems pupils entered when they finished national school. The opportunities for further education, training and development depended very much on location, with both rural and urban areas struggling to provide sufficient places in sufficient institutions. While the majority of young people had the opportunity to attend secondary school near their locality only a very small number progressed onto even Inter Certificate level with fewer still completing the Leaving Certificate. **Table 2** below shows the enrolment levels at secondary schools throughout the 1950s including number enrolled for certificate exams. When taking into account that the number of young people aged

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[42] Department of Education Reports 1950 – 1960, (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Report 1950 to 1960)

[43] Coolahan, John, *The ASTI and Post-Primary Education in Ireland, 1909-1984*, (Dublin, 1984), p.171

[44] Appendix III, Secondary Education Statistics, No. 1, Schools and Pupils, (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Report 1950-1951), p.79; Appendix III, Secondary Education Statistics, No. 1, Schools and Pupils, (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Report 1959-1960), p.79

[45] *The Irish Times*, 19 May 1953

between 14 and 19 in the country was almost 250,000 the numbers achieving this level of education appears to be very low. By 1960 there were still less than 56,000 young people sitting the Inter Certificate and less than 19,000 students were enrolled for the Leaving Certificate. At this time it was still necessary for families to pay for children to attend secondary school and this may have made the proposition of remaining in school less attractive to teenagers and to their families. As the following chapter on employment will indicate many households were dependent on the wages contributed by older working children in order to support younger members of the family. Many teenagers gave part or all of their wages to their parents for many years after they started working. In rural areas teenage children also provided important free labour which was often essential to the financial viability of small family holdings. Chapter 2 investigates how assisting on family farms and agricultural labouring more generally became patently unpopular as an employment option as the 1950s progressed. This was strongly linked to the low levels of remuneration and lowly status accorded to assisting relatives. It is furthermore linked to the ability or inability to participate in popular culture. Many examples are provided in the following chapters on how money became more important in 1950s Ireland and how, for teenagers, this was often linked to the desire to attend the cinema and other social events and to engage in consumer culture.

Table 2 Department of Education Figures for pupils in attendance in Secondary Schools between 1950 and 1960 including numbers of pupils enrolled for certificate examinations

Year	Pupils in Attendance	Increase on Previous year	Enrolled for Intermediate Certificate	Enrolled for Leaving Certificate
1950-1951	48,559	1,494	37,215	11,344
1952-1953	52,151	1,972	30,464	12,687
1953-1954	54,020	1,869	40,854	13,166
1954-1955	56,411	2,391	42,740	13,671
1955-1956	59,306	2,895	44,998	14,308
1956-1957	62,429	3,123	47,727	14,702
1957-1958	66,221	3,782	50,832	15,389
1958-1959	69,568	3,347	53,097	16,471
1959-1960	73,431	3,863	55,411	18,020

Gender, Education and Rural Life

The subject choices for Inter and Leaving Certificate covered several languages such as Latin, French, German and Italian. Science was taught as one subject for Inter Cert before being split into the options of Physics, Chemistry, General Science, Physics and Chemistry, Physiology and Hygiene, and Botany for the Leaving Certificate. English, Irish, Art, History and Geography were also offered to boys and girls as examination subjects. A gender based division occurred in relation to Maths. Boys were required to pass Maths in order to receive either certificate but girls were not. Girls were offered a lower grade Maths subject, Elementary Maths, for the Inter Cert. Although they could also be examined on the same level as their male counterparts many took the lower option. There was some debate as to the validity of viewing it necessary for only boys to receive a pass in Maths. In a minority report, which was part of the Council of Education Report into the curriculum of secondary schools, Father P.E. Mac Fhinn expressed the opinion that 'there should be no difference in the pass conditions as between boys' and girls' and added that he 'did not see any real substance in the suggestion that "in general, the careers followed by men demand mathematics to a greater extent than those followed by women"'[46]

Department of Education statistics show that girls outperformed boys in both the Inter Certificate and Leaving Certificate in every year of the 1950s. More girls than boys sat the Inter Certificate each year and in some years almost 1,000 additional female pupils were examined. The percentage of pass rates on honours papers tended to be fairly consistent between the sexes but in the overall pass rates girls routinely performed better than their male counterparts with at least a 5% higher success rate in each year from 1951 to 1960.[47] In three years, 1954, 1958 and 1959 the pass rate among girls taking the Inter Certificate was 10% higher than boys in that year.[48] Ironically, considering these statistics, a greater number of boys remained in school to complete the Leaving Certificate. In 1959 almost 7,000 boys and 8,300 girls took the Inter Certificate. In the same year 3,844 boys were examined for the Leaving Certificate but only 3,465 girls, less than half the amount taking the Inter Certificate. The combined examinations pass rates for Inter and Leaving Certificate for boys in that year was 81.5% and for girls it was

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[46] Submission to Government, Council of Education Report on the Curriculum of the Secondary School, Synopsis of Minority Report – Supplied in Irish Only – by An tAthair Oirmh. P.E. Mac Fhinn, 1961 (National Archives, S15015B/61, Department of An Taoiseach)

[47] Appendix III, Secondary Education Statistics, VII Examination Statistics, Table (3) Showing General Examination Statistics, (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Reports, 1950-1951 up to 1959-1960)

[48] Appendix III, Secondary Education Statistics, VII Examination Statistics, Table (3) Showing General Examination Statistics, (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Reports, 1953-1954, 1957-1958 and 1958-1959)

89.1%.[49]   Although the numbers of pupils taking the state exams increased throughout the decade, the pass and fail ratios remained consistent.   The percentage of male to female participants fluctuated slightly from year to year but there were no significant changes over the decade.   With the exception of Maths the trends in subject choices tended to be similar among the sexes.   The most popular subjects were Latin, Gaelige, English, History and Geography. The clearest division of the sexes in education occurred in relation to Domestic Science and Agricultural Science.   Girls were not permitted to study or to be examined in Agricultural Science for Inter or Leaving Certificate and the same applied to boys and Domestic Science.   Manual Instruction was also offered to boys for the Inter Cert but not to girls.

One of the wider social debates in Ireland during the 1950s in relation to education surrounded the value of teaching domestic science to girls and agricultural/manual education to boys.   Many believed that teaching domestic science to girls was essential and would help solve the issue of female unemployment as well as the problems of emigration and Ireland's low marriage rate.   In fact the variety of ideologies, aspirations and anxieties that were linked to and projected onto these subjects indicates some of the turmoil associated with post-war social change, particularly in relation to gender roles.   In 1952, the Most Rev. Dr. Dignan, Bishop of Clonfert, stated in relation to the provision of vocational training facilities that, 'the subjects taught in the schools should be subjects that make life worth living in rural areas –subjects that would enable the boys and girls to see that they were foolish to be leaving the country to go into towns and cities'.[50] The Very Rev. Felim O'Brian, Professor of Philosophy, made the statement that, 'many careers called for equal preparation, but the fundamental function of a woman must not be forgotten at any stage of her education.'[51]   At a meeting of the Westmeath Vocational Committee, Mr. T. Conroy, a national teacher, discussed the importance of teaching domestic science and related to his audience a discussion with a local parish priest in respect to the low marriage rate.   He claimed that the priest attributed 'the shyness of the young men' to marry to the 'inability of the young women of the country to cook properly'.[52]

Many of these discourses were tied to underlying anxieties about the role and function of women in society.   Ireland was not unique in this idealisation of the domestic (and in this case rural

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[49] Appendix III, Secondary Education Statistics, VII Examination Statistics, Table (3) Showing General Examination Statistics, (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Reports, 1959-1960), p.106

[50] *The Irish Times,* 24 January 1952

[51] *The Irish Times,* 27 February 1950

[52] *The Irish Times,* 15 March 1950

domesticity) and the attempt to re-establish traditional gender roles in the 1950s.[53] Following the upheaval of the Second World War many Western societies endeavoured to return to pre-war social norms. Women were placed firmly back in the home, as the backbone of the household and of society. Laura Shapiro describes how in the United States women were expected to return happily to the home and spend their days 'fussing with cake mixes and marshmallow salads'.[54] In addition she relates how women who 'dared to feel restless were kept in line by a culture that ferociously enforced the laws of traditional femininity'.[55] Although Ireland was not directly part of the Second World War it was not immune to this movement. There may not have been many Irish women fussing over marshmallow salads but they were certainly carefully confined by national ideologies of traditional femininity. The discussion of gender roles especially in relation to the care of children emerged regularly in popular media. An article from the *Irish Times* from January 1950, suggested that issues of juvenile delinquency occurred where there was a lack of parental supervision during war conditions. The article goes on to say that 'Women as a whole will have to accept much of the blame for this state of affairs'.[56] Advertisements and promotional campaigns linked to companies in Ireland selling domestic goods including the Electricity Supply Board reinforced traditional ideologies of gender by portraying Irish women as blissfully contained in their modern kitchens.

There were particular post-war social issues in Ireland which fuelled social tensions around the changing role of women in society and a loss of traditional family and community structures. The high rate of female emigration, the desertion of rural areas and small villages and the very low marriage rate among young people in Ireland were the most prominent social discourses in 1950s Ireland. Media coverage of these issues was prolific and the bitterness of the debates is well represented in an article from the *Sunday Independent* from 1953.[57] The journalist described a village in rural Ireland as a place 'where men die bachelors because there are no young women to marry'. He went on to detail how in the tiny village 'no child had been born for 10 years'.[58] In the same issue of the above newspaper, a female journalist claimed that the 'slovenliness of the Dublin girls in their dress affects their marriage prospects, for what man is likely to "fall" for a girl if she makes a bad impression by her bad taste in dress?'.[59] The frequency of such articles in

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[53] Eileen Connolly, 'Durability and Change in State Gender Systems: Ireland in the 1950s', in *European Journal of Women's Studies*, (2003), Vol. 10, No. 65, p. 66
[54] Laura Shapiro, *Something from the Oven: Reinventing Dinner in 1950s America,* (New York, 2004), p. xx
[55] Ibid
[56] *The Irish Times*, 4 March 1950
[57] *The Sunday Independent*, 28 June 1953
[58] Ibid
[59] Ibid

the Irish media indicates the levels of social anxiety around these issues. The tone of these articles also indicates how often these social failures were associated with women and in particular young women –either in their large scale abandonment of rural Ireland or their inability to encourage marriage proposals. The next section on domestic science will illustrate how these ideologies informed and interjected into the provision of education for young women in Ireland.

Domestic Science

Newspapers carried regular articles and features on the advantages of a qualification in domestic science, domestic economy and home crafts. An article from 1953 entitled 'Irish Girls will catch the men with nifty fingers, business sense and cooking', promoted an intensive Homemaker's Course in Domestic Science that was tailored to suit 'brides, future brides and homemakers generally'.[60] While the course content was highly practical and applicable to the role most women would have been expected to fulfil in the domestic sphere of the 1950s, it is the promotional tone of the article that is of particular interest. The article was not just endorsing an individual course it clearly promoted the idea of becoming a wife. The article opened with the statement 'Irish men take note! Irish girls all over the country have rediscovered the old tactics to win a man's heart. They are working furiously to become first-class homemakers!'[61] It then goes on to outline the skills necessary to win a man's heart including cooking, being able to make a dress or hat cheaply and being able to nurse their husband back to good health at home should he become ill. There is a sense in which the role of homemaker is being represented as a professional role and a recognised qualification with terms like 'keeping accounts', 'business sense', 'child welfare' and 'menu-planning'.[62] It is mentioned, in a quote from the course director, that out of the 19 students in attendance one is about to begin training as nurse but the others just want to run a home efficiently. The article was accompanied by a photograph of a happy, smiling newly married couple and some individual stories from women on the course and the important skills they had learned. The article shows that vocational education was used as a vehicle to promote marriage, domesticity and motherhood. The readers addressed were young women and the message was 'if you want to win a husband you must learn to become an attractive package –a woman that can cook, be thrifty and take care of children'.[63] It is likely that most women did want to be good wives and mothers but the need for such domestic economy

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[60] *The Irish Times,* 23 May 1953
[61] Ibid
[62] Ibid
[63] Ibid

courses and activities to be heavily promoted in the media clearly indicates that educationalists and society more generally were anxious to ensure that women did fulfil this role. Furthermore it is apparent that the provision of education did not operate outside the hegemonic forces in society. Contemporary ideologies relating to gender were applied to the composition and promotion of vocational courses for both sexes.

Traditionally one of the main areas of employment for young unskilled girls was domestic service. There was a clear movement away from this career path during the 1950s in Ireland mainly because of the unregulated work hours, low rates of pay and the lack of independence connected with live-in positions. Migrating to towns and cities or emigrating outside of Ireland for jobs in factories, offices, shops and trades became more attractive to Irish girls in the 1950s. These shifts in patterns of female employment are covered in more detail in Chapter 2. The changing nature of female labour and employment was not reflected in government policies for education provision. In fact the futility of promoting domestic economy and home crafts in modern Ireland was mentioned in an observation in the Commission on Youth Unemployment in their 1951 report. The following passage from the report demonstrates perfectly the inability to reconcile the changing social situation:

> Facilities are also available in the continuation schools and in residential schools of rural domestic economy operating under the aegis of the Department of Agriculture for girls who want to train specifically for domestic work. Unfortunately these facilities are not available to the extent that they should owing to the general reluctance of girls to pursue this course of livelihood. These facilities should be expanded should the need arise.[64]

The report therefore perceived that girls were reluctant to undertake these courses and were disinterested in domestic economy both as a subject and as a career path. The members of the Commission appeared to have been unable to process or comprehend this reluctance and this is reflected in the contradictory recommendation to expand the courses when needed rather than offer a more popular or relevant subjects to young women. There was also no attempt to examine the underlying issues that made domestic science such an unpopular choice with modern Irish girls and there was no attempt to offer an alternative. This demonstrates a refusal, by those in a position to make recommendations, to analyse in any real way the needs and

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[64] Memorandum for the Government, Recommendations of the Commission of Youth Unemployment 1951, Recommendation 109, (National Archives, TAOIS/S 13109 B, Department of An Taoiseach)

demands of teenagers in 1950s Ireland. Change was brought about from the bottom-up rather than the top-down. The result was that this Commission like so many others in the 1950s failed to make any real impact on the problems of youth unemployment or emigration.

Agricultural Science

The general approach to agriculture both as a school subject and as a career choice for young Irish men fell in similar patterns of decline and promotion. The lack of independence and opportunity, the difficulty of the work and long hours had encouraged young men to seek alternative employment to agricultural labour. The lack of entertainment and general loneliness and dullness associated with life in rural Ireland in comparison with urban centres was increasingly a factor in young men's decision to seek out other career opportunities[65]. Maurice Kennedy, the Educational Director of rural youth organisation Macra na Tuaithe, observed that 'you can no longer satisfy the boys and girls of the countryside with less than their cousins in the cities'.[66] The small number of students taking up places in Agricultural Science as a subject both in secondary and vocational schools clearly indicates this new generation of young men's refusal to be positioned in the rural labour force despite their new nation's ideological and philosophical desires. While thousands of male pupils were taking annual examinations in English, Maths, History, Geography and Gaeilge a comparative handful were studying agricultural science and manual instruction. In 1951 the number of pupils taking agricultural science for the Inter cert was as low as 92 compared with just over 5,000 taking History and Geography or almost 3,500 pupils taking Litríocht na Gaeilge.[67] Although this number had increased to 161 by 1960, it was still markedly lower than most other subjects, despite its widespread promotion as a vitally important subject to students in rural areas.[68] A similar situation occurred in Vocational Schools. Thousands of students took courses in English, Irish, Commerce and Engineering but the numbers taking Rural Science remained extremely low. The uptake improved slightly over the decade but was still less than a quarter of the number of students studying Irish and English.

The reluctance to undertake classes or courses in agricultural science may in part have been the linked to farmers and farmer's sons deeming it unnecessary for boys to take classes in something

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[65] Henry Patterson, *Ireland Since 1939*, (New York, 2002), p. 81

[66] *The Sunday Independent*, 18 January 1959

[67] Appendix III, Secondary Education Statistics, VII Examination Statistics, Table (4) Analytical Tables of results of Examinations, A. Intermediate Certificate, (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Reports, 1950-1951), p.97

[68] Appendix III, Secondary Education Statistics, VII Examination Statistics, Table (4) Analytical Tables of Results of Examinations, A. Intermediate Certificate, (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Reports, 1959-1960), p.107

they already had extensive knowledge of through working on the job. At the time of the 1951 census labouring on their family farm or the farm of a relative was still the largest area of employment for young men. There was an urgent need to modernise agricultural practices in Ireland. The government and rural organisations like Macra na Feirme and Muintir na Tíre all actively encouraged farmers to make improvements to their farms. Installing electricity, increasing levels of mechanisation and adopting more scientific approaches to crop and animal rearing were necessary to raise the levels of production on Irish farms but also to make farm life more comfortable and less labour intensive.[69] The direct effect of all these changes, however, was to reduce the need for farm labourers.

Although less direct labour was required on Irish farms following increased mechanisation and other changes to work practices, which will be covered in more detail in Chapter 2, state, church and educational institutions continued to promote agricultural science as a subject. This was linked to the hope or belief that encouraging youths to take a greater interest in the land and agriculture would stem the loss of youth from the countryside and re-invigorate their interest in rural life more generally. One of a series of articles published in 1953, entitled 'Crisis in the Kingdom', addressed the role of vocational education as a method to stem emigration from rural Kerry. Mr James McDwyer, chief executive officer for the County Kerry Vocational Educational Committee reported that the primary purpose of the vocational committee was to 'return young people to the farms and homes from which they came better equipped to manage these farms and homes in an efficient and progressive manner'.[70] Here again, it is apparent that vocational schools operated as an important part of a larger national discourse directed at young people. These educational providers also failed to recognise that the training in efficiency that they promoted further reduced the need for human labour on farms and that this form of education was only really relevant to the family member who stood to inherit the family holdings. Therefore, while better education in modern approaches to farm management was highly beneficial to young people who wished to remain in the countryside and to the eldest male sibling, it was unlikely to make any impact on the high numbers of young people who were emigrating from rural areas because of lack of opportunity and employment.

The rural youth organisation Macra na Tuaithe (which was part of the larger parent organisation Macra na Ferime) appeared to have a better grasp of the realities of life in rural Ireland than many of the state organisations. An article from the *Evening Press* argued that the leaders of

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[69] Enda Delaney, *Irish Emigration Since 1921,* (Dublin, 2002), p.22
[70] *The Irish Time,* 11 April 1953

Macra na Tuaithe were not 'rabid conservatives preaching some 'Back to the Land' gospel' and that they were fully aware 'that most of their country children are not destined to stay on the land at all'.[71] They aimed to provide transferable skills that would equally equip the inheriting son and his siblings who were more likely 'to end up as a doctor or a navvy in Birmingham'.[72] Even allowing for these more enlightened approaches, the promotion of rural life in Ireland during the 1950s occurred across a wide range of media and state apparatus or systems.

Mary E. Daly asserts that by the late 1950s 'a lot of intellectual effort and money had been devoted to saving rural Ireland, in the belief that this was the way to end emigration and population decline'.[73] As per the quote from Bishop Dignan above, one contemporary perception appeared to be that young people just needed to be shown how 'foolish' they were for leaving rural life behind in favour of the modern attractions available in towns and cities. He was certainly not alone in believing that education would lead them to be happier with life in rural Ireland despite the fact that it did little to alter the available opportunities beyond working for subsistence levels of remuneration as a farm hand or domestic servant. Furthermore, as suggested by Mary E. Daly, the availability of higher levels of education may in fact have made rural teenagers less likely to be satisfied with life in the countryside and farm work.

As the decade progressed, official institutions both political and cultural were too slow to react to changing social attitudes and behaviours. Working from within this closed system which offered limited social and employment opportunities young people decided to take the path of least resistance and move to large urban centres in Ireland and abroad where work and other opportunities were more freely available. Although teenagers in the 1950s may not have been particularly vocal, their actions often spoke very loudly on their behalf. Ultimately many young people left Ireland without having received what they needed from the education system but many also decided to get better qualifications in order to enter the workforce on a more favourable level and ensure a better standard of living.

Gaining a Qualification

A number of routes were available to teenagers in 1950s Ireland to extend their education beyond the primary certificate. Secondary and vocational schools offered courses and examinations in various topics and some workplaces offered training and career development.

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[71] *Evening Press*, 2 March 1959
[72] Ibid
[73] Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973,* (London, 2006), p.64

Some borough councils, namely Cork, Limerick and Waterford, supported Compulsory Continuation Education courses that were initiated under Part V of the 1930s Vocational Education Act. In these Borough Councils youths aged between 14 and 16 who were not already enrolled in a recognised school or course were required to attend 180 hours of tuition per annum.[74] According to Department of Education documents most of the participants were working full-time and fitted their education into one day per week over the year. Working as a messenger was the most common occupation listed for male participants followed by factory hands, trade apprentices and clerks. Working as a factory hand was the largest area of employment for girls enrolled on the courses, followed by domestic service, working as retail or shop assistants and dressmakers.[75] Some of the available records show that this compulsory one-day-a-week at the vocational schools caused difficulty for young people when they were offered fulltime employment. An oral history provided by a Cork messenger boy related how his boss 'could never understand that he had to let me off work for one day to go to the one-day-week'.[76] Another record from the Cork Newsboys Club detailed how a boy, who was employed fulltime as a messenger in the city, ran into difficulty with his employers when he received a letter instructing him to attend vocational school one day per week.[77] The Brothers running the club intervened and the boy kept his job with the agreement that he went to work immediately after school. Remaining at school or on vocational courses was always in direct competition with employment opportunities. Family circumstances also impacted on the opportunity for young people to continue with their education. When a child progressed from school to work they became a net contributor to their household. The cost of allowing children to remain at school therefore involved more than just the fees; parents also had to be able to financially support children for a number of additional years and survive without the income that child would otherwise have provided. Older siblings from less advantaged backgrounds were often automatically excluded from the option to remain in education regardless of ability or interest. The sad reality of this situation is communicated by a female contributor to the Cork Folklore Project

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[74] VII Compulsory Post Primary Courses (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Report, 1950-1951, p.32)

[75] Appendix IV, Vocational Education Statistics, Return No. 4, Compulsory Continuation Courses under Part V of the Vocational Education Act 1930, (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Report 1950-1951), p. 125

[76] Cork Folklore Project, Liam Ó hÚigín, 25 August 2011, p.9

[77] Register of Members of Cork Newsboys Club, 1954-1955, (Item 1, IE CCCA/U612, Cork City and County Archives)

When you were fourteen years of age you'd have to leave St Mary's of the Isle and I started crying and the class teacher said to me what are you crying over. Miss Tubridy was her name. I said I don't want to leave school and she said you have to leave here. Your next step she said is St Al's over but you have to be paid for there and when I went home I started crying and I said to my mother I don't want to leave school. But she said I'm sorry girl she said, I have no money I couldn't send ya anywhere, she said. You have to leave school and you'll have to get a job and I'll always remember I was really and truly fed up eh because there well like – there was nothing she could do or I could do to make extra money to go to St Aloysius School.[78]

The above contributor went on to get work cleaning private homes before finding a better position in a professional garment cleaning service. Much of the work available to young people who left school at 14 years of age was lowly paid, unregulated and offered little in the way of career progression. As a group they were easily abused by employers and industries that required cheap, temporary labour. As the 1950s progressed there was more of an attempt at defining the rights of young people within these systems of labour and education and to regulate their working hours and remuneration. This topic is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 2 of this thesis. These steps towards redefining the parameters of youth in relation to work and education enabled and informed a great deal of the social transformations that occurred in the 1960s in relation to young people including the raising of the school leaving age and the introduction of free secondary school education. These shifts then slowly shaped common understandings of youth and youth culture in Ireland. During the 1950s Irish teenagers remained in an unresolved position between childhood and adulthood. This limbo-state contributed to a great unevenness of opportunity and experience which extended beyond education and employment into areas of leisure, social mobility and participation.

Vocational Education

The value of education in itself was much debated in the 1950s. The high levels of youth emigration inspired many discussions as to whether it was better to encourage young people to stay at school and receive a qualification or whether money was being wasted educating young people who emigrated. The common complaint was that other countries like Britain then benefitted from the system of education which Ireland had provided and paid for. Such

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[78] Cork Folklore Project, Margaret Newman, 5 August 2011, p.5/6

sentiments are well represented in an article by George H. Burrows when he stated 'They're talking in the West about training our Irish girls to cook so they may make more competent wives. So far the result of training the girls in modern methods of cooking seems to be to prepare them more effectively for the trip across to England'.[79] However, particularly in the middle of the decade, when money was scarce and the young were emigrating in large numbers, education was often cited as the most effective way to keep young people at home. Seán Moylan, Minister for Education, stated in 1952, 'I am hopeful that the creation of extensive facilities for vocational training will create a capacity for, and a spirit of industrial enterprise, long discouraged, and the lack of which has been a great contributory cause of our emigration losses'.[80] By the end of the 1950s over 90,000 people were engaged in either full-time or part-time education at Vocational schools and most of the students were 20 years of age and under.[81] As was the case with Domestic and Agricultural Science, far too much of an emphasis was placed on what could be achieved through vocational education without properly linking this assumption to other political and social strategies. The lack of industrial enterprise and the large emigrations losses were unlikely to be solved in any great way by part-time courses in short-hand, mechanics, languages or even commerce.

The Vocational Schools did facilitate a wide variety of courses. They ran whole-time day courses in continuation education as well as apprenticeship courses and manual training courses. **Table 3** below details the breakdown of student numbers in vocational education, showing that part-time evening courses were easily the most popular and this continued to be the case throughout the decade.[82] Whole-time continuation courses were mostly attended by youths under 16 years of age. The whole-time courses consisted of about 20-30 teaching hours per week depending on the course and the particular vocational committee.

Table 3 Vocational Education Statistics

	Total Enrolments	Under 16 Male	Under 16 Female	Total	Over 16 Male	Over 16 Female	Total
W/T Day Courses Continuation Ed	21,036	9641	7693	17334	1716	1986	3702

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[79] *The Irish Times,* 8 April 1950
[80] *The Irish Times*, 24 January 1952
[81] Appendix I, General Education Statistics, School Year 1959-1960, (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Report 1959-1960), p. 69
[82] Appendix IV, Vocational Education Statistics, Returns No. 1 (a), 1 (b), 1 (c), 1 (d) and 1 (e), (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Report 1955-1956), pp. 102-106

W/T Day Courses Technical Ed*	886	27	37	64	546	276	822
P/T Day Courses Tech Ed for apprentices	3323	322	43	365	2739	219	2958
Day Courses Misc. (all other day courses usually P/T)	9425	2079	3148	5227	1047	3151	4198
Evening Courses Misc.	95,623	7768	6521	14289	43400	37934	81334

*Higher Courses, usually 25-30 hours per week, in Architecture, Art, Dietetics, Engineering, Science etc

The courses offered at Vocational schools were mainly manual or technical and provided training for particular career paths. Courses for apprentices were offered on a part-time basis in negotiation with employers. Nearly all of the courses including the apprenticeship schemes were run part-time to enable students to work alongside their education. All of the courses were certified and students took exams at the end of each year. The pass rates on these courses were often quite low and it is difficult to ascertain from the available data if this was a result of teaching practices, attendance rates or lack of interest or ability. There are some suggestions in relation to apprenticeships that students were often too tired to make the most of the classes in the evenings and found it difficult to engage with learning after a long day at work. In a memorandum from the Department of Education, stating their observations on the Report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment, the Department commented that

> Until quite recently Technical Education in this country rested almost entirely on the voluntary attendance of workers at evening classes. While good results were achieved it may be observed that fatigued minds are not receptive of instruction, especially on technical matters, at the end of the working day. Those engaged in organising such technical education have long felt that such education during the day should be an integral part of the organising of industry and commerce.[83]

Table 4 and **Table 5** below display the pass and failures rates for certificate exams in the Vocational Schools for year 1958-1959.[84] They are a good representation of pass and failure

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[83] Recommendation No. 27, Letter and Memorandum from Department of Education, 24 April 1952, (National Archives, TAOIS/ S 13109 B, Department of An Taoiseach), p.65

[84] Appendix IV, Vocational Education Statistics, Table VI (b), Technical School Examinations, 1958-1959, (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Report 1958 -1959), p. 108; Appendix IV,

rates throughout the decade and demonstrate the generally poor examination results achieved at Vocational Schools. Although many of the subjects have a pass rate of about two thirds, in a large proportion just over half of the students passed in their chosen topic. The totals for the technical schools show that almost 19,000 students were enrolled for exams but only about 13,000 actually passed. Similarly in **Table 5** we see that in the Vocational School Certificates close to 36,500 students were enrolled but less than 25,000 achieved a pass and less than one third achieved an honour in their course exam. This would indicate that the Vocational Schools were failing in a large capacity to assist students in receiving the qualification that they had enrolled and paid privately for. The number of young people receiving a recognised qualification in the 1950s did increase very steadily over the decade and this was in no small part due to the supply of new schools and to the tenacity and determination of young people to gain a qualification while working full or part-time and attending classes on a voluntary basis. This generation took it upon themselves to move up in the world although this also often meant physically moving to towns, cities and other nations away from rural life and traditional family structures. Although the 1950s have often been described as bleak, lost and stifled, a hegemonic shift was beginning to occur in this decade. It may not have been as overt as the social movements of the 1960s but people were starting to make choices and decisions that were different from those being promoted by the Church and State. This movement may have been slow to develop but close examination of education suggests that while people were engaging with the systems available to them they did also work outside and against these systems for their own gain.

Table 4 Technical School Examinations 1958-1959

Group	Number of Candidates	Number of Passes
Trade and Technological Exams		
Applied Chemistry	357	143
Building	1043	672
Electrical Engineering	799	329
Flour Milling	42	31
Hairdressers' Work	44	39

Vocational Education Statistics, Table VI (a), Certificate Examinations for Day Vocational Courses 1959, (Department of Education, Department of Education Annual Report 1958-1959), p.107

Subject		
Mathematics	643	338
Mechanical Engineering	2187	1204
Motor Car Engineering	1901	1256
Printing	347	232
Radio Service Work	118	64
Telecommunications (PO Employees)	219	104
Totals	7700	4412
Other Examinations		
Art	1101	692
Commerce	7527	4601
Domestic Economy	4262	3706
Irish	2321	1235
Manual Training	608	375
Other Languages	3066	2225
Totals	18885	12834

Table 5 Certificate Exams for Day Vocational Courses 1959

Subject	Entries	Honours	Passes
Irish	4177	867	1570
English	4765	739	2213
Book-Keeping	1702	584	521
Commerce	1786	481	935
Commercial Arithmetic	1635	672	623
Typewriting (general)	1175	874	241
Typewriting (Secretarial)	469	257	118

Shorthand (General)	941	317	315
Shorthand (Secretarial)	469	150	184
Commercial Geography	91	17	32
Retail Practice	42	--	21
Art	786	119	446
Domestic Economy (Written)	819	154	526
Business Methods	320	160	117
Household Science	131	33	49
Mechanical Drawing	2965	1041	1051
Mathematics	2329	268	650
Mechanics and Heat	1024	233	288
Magnetism and Electricity	1251	314	299
Rural Science	956	174	417
Cookery	1018	320	604
Needlework	1004	361	555
Laundrywork & Household Management	987	357	592
Woodwork	3131	308	2041
Metalwork	2404	309	1305
Totals	36,377	9109	15,713

State, Church and Changing Attitudes

'A cry for reform is in the air. It can be said without bitterness that the Council of Education is listening on another wavelength.'[85]

During the 1950s several major investigations of education policy in Ireland were either initiated or submitted their report. The recommendations of the Commission on Youth Unemployment were published in 1951 and although their main remit was to look at the issues pertaining to youth unemployment, many of their proposals related to education. Established in 1943 the Commission outlined in its terms of reference that it hoped to 'afford the boys and girls of this country a better opportunity of becoming useful citizens of a Christian State, adequately instructed in the teachings of religion, healthy in mind and body, willing and able to work for their own benefit and that of their country'.[86] The Commission interviewed many people including industry professionals, clergy and youth workers and it took recommendations from Government departments and relevant organisations. Considering the time scale afforded the Commission and the apparently thorough nature of their investigations, very few of its proposals were acted upon and some were immediately rejected by the Department of Education as either unnecessary or untenable. The Commission recognised that a great deal of youth unemployment could only be solved by the expansion of industry but they did report that education could be used to increase the potential of young people as future employees and also to keep them busy and out of trouble while they were unoccupied. While recognising that the incidence of unoccupied youths was not greater in urban districts than in rural areas, the report did conclude that idle youth in the city were in greater moral danger. Education schemes were recommended to prevent idle young people congregating in urban areas without proper supervision. This approach again demonstrates how the social regulation of young people was clearly envisioned through the education system both in relation to work and leisure time.

Both of the Councils of Education and the Commission of Youth Unemployment recommended the raising of the school leaving age to 16 years. The Department of Education, the Irish Housewives Association, the Women's Workers Union and many other organisations and individuals called for this extension of the school leaving age throughout the 1950s. Many of these organisations felt that 14 years of age was much too young to enter the workforce and felt that the extra two years at school would afford young people greater physical and mental

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[85] *Irish Independent*, 26 April 1962
[86] The terms of reference, Report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment, (National Archives, TAOIS/ S 13109 B, Department of An Taoiseach), p.4

maturity. The Commission on Youth Unemployment concluded that the removal of 14 to 16 year olds from the labour market would free up a great deal of work that could then be taken over by youths over 16. In the end, however, it recommended that young people should only remain in school in the absence of suitable employment and that 'commencing work at an early age inculcates discipline and the habit of work'.[87] Despite all the recommendations from a wide variety of sources during the 1950s the school leaving age remained at 14 years. The reluctance of the successive governments to raise the school leaving age despite so many requests to do so seems to be mainly financially based. They defaulted to supporting the continuation schools in urban areas and increased the emphasis on vocational training when employment was not available to young people. It is probably no coincidence that the group of young people most affected by the cost of secondary education were working class youths; the same cohort most likely to be engaged in low paid work. This is deeply connected to other evidence which suggests that some large companies and industries did not want the school leaving age to be increased as it removed a large source of cheap labour. This issue will be dealt with in more detail in the next section. Discourses linked to urban, working class youths in this decade are often connected to juvenile delinquency and unemployment. Urban youths were framed in a completely different way to their rural counterparts whose loss was lamented loudly throughout the decade.

There had been sustained requests for a commission to review the curriculum of primary and secondary schools since the 1940s. In the 1950s two separate Councils were set up but both received scathing criticism from their inception. The Councils of Education were heavily criticised in the media for their choice of board members. Many interested parties, including trade unions, parents, women's groups, agricultural colleges, and the vocational schools were largely unrepresented in the composition of the Councils. They were criticised for appointing too many higher level educationalists at the expense of people who had direct and practical experience of the education system. The first report, issued in 1954, considered the curriculum of primary education. The report was conservative and lacked any real criticism of the system that existed. The second Council focused on the curriculum of secondary schools and took an extended period of time to deliberate the issue. Their report was released 1962. It was equally conservative, maintaining the status quo and promoting the teaching of Christian values and national culture through the school system, with far less concentration on the modernising of the

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[87] Recommendation 29, Raising the School Leaving Age – Observations and suggestions put forward in evidence, Report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment, (National Archives, TAOIS/ S 13109 B, Department of An Taoiseach, p. 14)

curriculum content. Practically none of even the minor changes that were suggested ever made it to policy level.[88] Both Councils failed to make any impact on the provision of education which was a great disappointment to those working on the ground in education and by parents and pupils. This failure also confirmed the initial criticism of the Councils; that the members of the boards were clearly out of touch with the needs of a modern society, the pupils, the teachers and industry. They had acted in a vacuum and the reports they produced remained in that vacuum when they were issued. What they did represent was the government's hands-off approach to the education system. Appointing the Councils abated some of the pressure to reform the system and allowed Government departments to defer other interest groups from engaging with the education systems while the Councils were in session.[89]

The religious orders, both Catholic and Protestant, essentially controlled the education systems from ground level up and this greatly facilitated the government's ability to take a back seat in regard to education. Their influence can be clearly indentified in the composition of the boards and in the tone of the reports. The Council of Education report of 1962 reported that the main purpose of the school system was to inculcate religious ideals and values to students.[90] This pinpoints that those in control of the system viewed the schools as an ideological apparatus as opposed to a place for young people to extend their knowledge and gain a qualification. It is important, however, not to confuse the system with the people using it. As indicated in the comments by George H. Burrows, while the intention of the system was to teach girls to cook in order to become better housewives, they took the opportunity to learn these skills but then used that knowledge to emigrate and make better lives for themselves elsewhere.[91] Whether they actually achieved a better standard of living cannot always be ascertained, but what we can surmise is that they found a way to work within the severely limited system available to them and then built a new reality outside of that system.

Ultimately the attitude of the government towards education was for the most part as conservative as that of the Church. A good example of this can be found in the discourse around a recommendation by the Commission on Youth Unemployment. The number of children being held in industrial schools amounted to almost 6,000 children in 1950.[92] This had

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[88] Coolahan, John, *The ASTI and Post-Primary Education in Ireland, 1909-1984*, (Dublin, 1984), p 186

[89] Ibid

[90] Coolahan, John, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, (Dublin, 1981), p.80-81

[91] *The Irish Times,* 8 April 1950

[92] Annual Report of the Department of Education, 1950-1951, p.42; Annual Report of the Department of Education 1959-1960, p. 55

been reduced to about 4,000 children by 1960, which the lowest number since the inception of the State, but the number of children being managed in this system was still enormous.[93] The Commission recommended a 'boarding-out' scheme where children would essentially be fostered out on a regular basis with families so that they would have a more normal upbringing in a family unit rather than the sterile austerity of the industrial schools. The Department of Education, however, rejected this point saying that the children would not be properly supervised in a boarded-out scheme and there was no guarantee that they would receive the same 'good and regular diet, suitable physical training, constant moral and medical supervision and regular attendance at school'.[94] Other recommendations, including the provision of comprehensive vocational training and the inclusion of more women on the staff of industrial schools, were also completely ignored by the government and specifically the Department of Education. It appears that the position of the Department of Education was to facilitate rather than engage with the system and this is clearly demonstrated in their appointment of so many commissions and councils but their reluctance to instigate any of the recommendations put forward by those committees.

University Education

If attending second level education in the 1950s was a privilege not yet enjoyed by the majority of young people in Ireland, attending university was a luxury extended only to a tiny minority. **Table 6** shows the total number of new entrants to full-time courses at all the Irish universities between the years 1953 and 1959.[95] The table also provides information on the gender breakdown of first entrants for each of the available academic years. **Table 7** shows the total number of students enrolled at the Irish universities collectively from 1950 to 1959.[96] The figures reveal that the average number of first time entrants to universities in the 1950s amounted to less than 1% of the total teenage population. The total numbers of students enrolled at the Irish universities at any time during the decade was less than 4% of the total

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[93] Table 211, Statistics of industrial Schools in each year ended 31 July, *Statistical Abstract of Ireland*, 1960, p. 239

[94] Recommendation 49 and 54 inclusive page 72, Observations of the Report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment, (National Archives, TAOIS/ S 13109 B Department of An Taoiseach)

[95] Table 212, Ages of new entrants at admission for the first time to full-time graduating courses in the Universities (c) in the academic year 1958-1959, with comparative totals for 1953-1954 to 1957-1958, in *Statistical Abstract of Ireland*, 1960, p. 239

[96] Particulars of Students, 1949-1950, 1950-1951, 1951-1952 and 1952-1953, in *University Statistics 1953-1954*, compiled by the Central Statistics Office, (1957), pp. 16-17; Table 214, Students, Professors and Lecturers (full and part-time) in the Universities (a) in the Academic year, in *Statistical Abstract of Ireland*, complied by the Central Statistics Office, (1960), p. 240

number of young people. This outlines starkly the lack of opportunity for progression to professional occupations for Irish teenagers in the 1950s. The highest numbers of female university students were enrolled in Arts degrees, although about a quarter of the total female student population were also enrolled in Medicine and Science.[97] Male students were similarly enrolled in higher numbers in Arts degrees, more than double the number found on the other popular university courses for males which included Science, Engineering, Medicine and Commerce.[98] Since the experience of attending university in this decade was so severely limited to a very small minority of the youthful population it will not be considered in any greater detail here. It is a further indication, however, of the institutional layers of privilege which prevented the majority of young people from gaining social and professional mobility. Free second level education was introduced in 1967 and this made the greatest impact on altering the opportunities and possibilities available to young people through education. This expansion of free education also facilitated greater economic and social development in Ireland.[99]

Table 6 First time entrants to Irish universities 1953-1959

Year	Males	Females	Total
1958-1959	1,858	617	2,475
1957-1958	1,564	524	2,088
1956-1957	1,421	500	1,921
1955-1956	1,295	527	1,822
1954-1955	1,573	536	2,109
1953-1954	1,323	471	1,794

Table 7 Total number of students enrolled in full and part-time courses at Irish Universities from 1950-1959

Year	Male	Female	Total
1958-1959	6,953	2,447	9,400
1957-1958	6,545	2,237	8,782
1956-1957	6,230	2,163	8,393

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[97] See Table 213 and Table 216 in *Statistical Abstract of Ireland*, complied by the Central Statistics Office, (1960), pp. 240-241
[98] Ibid
[99] Diarmaid Ferriter, 'Ireland in the twentieth century', available at http://www.gov.ie/en/essays/twentieth.html, accessed on 27 June 2013

1955-1956	5,893	2,173	8,066
1954-1955	5,865	2,112	7,977
1953-1954	5,744	1,985	7,729
1952-1953	5,642	1,959	7,601
1951-1952	5,486	1,977	7,463
1950-1951	5,490	2,066	7,556
1949-1950	5,528	2,146	7,674

Conclusion

Government and Church representatives appear to have been frozen in an immobile conservatism around the subject of education in the 1950s which prevented any advancement outside of capital development in that decade. It is also possible to locate this conservative approach in some public discourses related to education. On the other hand the successive changes of government in the 1950s indicate the public's overall unhappiness with government policies. An article by political journalist Aknefton in 1950 discussed the issue of universal education and criticised those sections of Irish society who believed that the provision of education was not an issue of equality or entitlement. "Where will it all lead to?" they say, "Why all this education of the masses? What is the point in educating everybody when somebody has to clean out the sewers?"[100] Aknefton was opposed to this position and stated that 'we can hardly acquiesce in a system which condemns the majority of our population to intellectual starvation.'[101] Aknefton may well have been directing this criticism towards the government as well as particular sections of society. In a speech from 1953 the then Minister for Education, Seán Moylan, stated that he did not agree with 'this idea of equal opportunities for all'.[102]

The text of some of the Department of Education reports also betrays a certain bias or underlying philosophy as to how the provision of education should function. In the report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment the committee outlined that their agenda in relation to education and training was 'to consider the most suitable form of education and training for young persons' before entry into employment, the measures whereby they may be guided

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[100] *The Irish Times*, 10 December 1950
[101] Ibid
[102] Séamus Ó Buachalla, *Education Policy in Twentieth Century Ireland*, (Dublin, 1988), p. 69

towards the type of work for which they are best suited'.[103] The intention of the Commission was therefore to guide young people towards suitable work rather than offer an equal and complete education system to all. They gave no indication of how this suitability would be identified or provided for within a system of education. John Coolahan argues that the Irish government in the 1950s had prioritised the promotion of 'true Irish' or 'Gaelic cultural heritage' through the school curricula and demonstrated far less interest in the 'social aspects of educational provision'.[104]

There was continuous debate in the media as to the direction education should take and how it could assuage some of the contemporary social problems. A letter from the Minister for Justice to the Secretary for the Department of Education, discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, urged the department to instigate a ban on horror comics and other imported printed materials through the schools. The Minister for Justice hoped that parents would be influenced more directly by a nationwide ban instigated by the schools rather than a piece a legislation created by the government. The Minister's closing sentiments give an indication of the division, in many ways, between these state institutions and the people using them. He stated

> I myself believe that if parents banned these magazines in the home and teachers banned them in the schools it would go a long way towards remedying the problem. But apparently parents cannot or will not do this. Even so, as I said earlier, I think a ban by teachers would be a considerable help.

This passage reveals the distance between the priorities of the government and those of parents and the general public. This attempt to convince parents that they should be more concerned about the reading materials of their children and young adults, despite their disinterest in the issue, suggests that lines of communication between the Government and the public in relation to social institutions such as educations centres was decidedly one way. At the very least it suggests that parents were focused on a very different set of priorities to the government in relations to young people in Ireland. Tom Garvin claims that in the 1950s 'something had happened to education, or, rather, nothing much had; the dog, or rather dogs, that didn't bark in the night added up to a pack of very large Irish Catholic clerical and neo-Gaelic wolfhounds.'[105]

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[103] The terms of reference, Report of the Commission on Youth Unemployment, (National Archives, TAOIS/ S 13109 B, Department of An Taoiseach, p.4)

[104] Coolahan, John, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*, (Dublin, 1981), p. 73/74

[105] Tom Garvin, *Preventing the future: Why was Ireland poor for so long?*, (Dublin, 2004), p.71/72

Nevertheless, as the decade progressed the calls for change to the education systems became more insistent. Public demands for the raising of the school-leaving age were given lip-service but never ratified and calls for free public education for all were written-off as utopian and untenable. Demands to reform the system were assailed by ineffective education councils and requests for better funding for schools were deflected by claims that the cupboard was bare. While the systems of education did not change rapidly in the 1950s they were certainly questioned and attacked. There was no blind acceptance of the status quo and there was no let up in the demands from the public that the systems be improved and modernised. While the actual changes may have largely taken place in the 1960s, the unyielding pressure placed on the government during the 1950s certainly contributed to the heralding of change in the following decade.

The succeeding chapters will demonstrate how these demands for change to the social systems of education and employment were deeply linked to the aspiration for better standards of living in Ireland. This is very well illustrated in one of the reports from the Limerick Rural Survey, which outlined that 'without exception, parents of the farm-working class who were interviewed held the opinion that secondary education is desirable and , if they could afford it, they would send their children to secondary school'.[106] The report went on to say that 'education was seen as a way to escape unskilled manual work and its associated low status'.[107] This clearly demonstrates the shifting social attitudes to work and education in 1950s Ireland and underlines that there was a need to reform the system to reflect the needs of a wider section of Irish society. Chapter 3 to 5 of this thesis focuses on popular culture and will underline the role that popular culture played in fostering ideas about modern standards of living and lifestyles in Ireland particularly among this teenage generation.

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[106] *Limerick Rural Survey*, 3rd Interim Report, Social Structure, July, 1962
[107] Ibid

Chapter 2 - Employment and Opportunity

Introduction

With compulsory school attendance ending at age 14, finding suitable employment was the main preoccupation for the majority of young teenagers and their families in 1950s Ireland. The records of the Cork Newsboys' Club, which are discussed in more detail in chapter 4, indicate the levels of investment and involvement by parents, Church organisations and other local authorities to facilitate work placements for teenagers. These young teenagers hovered in a kind of social limbo; through work they entered an adult world but they were still considered to be somewhere between a child and an adult in many other circumstances and this produced a unique set of challenges for this cohort. Work and wages changed their social positioning but the superstructures that underpinned their development and mobility, including kinship networks and religious organisations, often narrowed the possibilities available to these young people. As indicated in the previous chapter on education, there were a huge number of factors which dictated whether teenagers had the choice to remain in education. For the majority, the prevailing options were limited to finding work in Ireland or emigrating. Large family structures with dependent siblings, class conventions and economic downturns were among some of the circumstances that determined whether teenagers had to find employment. Going to work simultaneously provided teenagers with access to deeply desired independence but also gave them a range of additional, often unwanted responsibilities. For many rural youths, work did not even always equate to paid employment. This led to an intense resistance by Irish youths in the 1950s to the option of subsistence labour on a family farm. This in turn led to higher levels of rural exodus and a dramatic drop in the numbers employed in this area.

Employment was the area where education, popular culture and social change truly interlinked. The seismic social shifts of the late 1950s through the 1960s were the result of accumulated social and political pressure and tensions following through from the previous decades. Popular culture raised the expectations of Irish youths and informed them of the standards of living available elsewhere. Education, and in particular further education, created new opportunities for social mobility by providing skills which enabled teenagers to break away from labour intensive, low paid work and the redundancy of being the non-inheriting rural son or daughter. Many contemporary articles about this generation described them as 'restless'. An article by Michael Fogarty compared this generation to the men of 1916 stating that 'behind them is rising up that infallible sign of change, a generation dissatisfied with the ways of the past, a generation

of genuinely Angry Young Men' [108]. In response, an article appeared in the *Sunday Independent* entitled 'Angry Young Men...No We're Rebels says a Teenager'.[109] The teenager stated

> It is because the world is in its greatest mess –in this the late 1950s, and because there were never so many causes worth rebelling for, that we teen-agers are dismissed by stupid adults as crazy-mixed-up-kids, young-people-looking-back-in-anger, the down-beat-generation, and, greatest of all –rebels without a cause.

> What are Teddy-boys and Teddy-girls but intelligent underprivileged teen-agers rebelling because they were denied the education and chances in life which were their due? What are the screaming teen-age fans of Elvis Presley and Tommy Steel but frustrated teen-agers who have no political or cultural leaders worth cheering for?

> What are the rock-and-rollers and jive and pop music enthusiasts but robust, rhythm-loving teenagers rebelling against blind adults who refuse to move with the times and who fail to realise that the Ireland of the fiddle, the jig and the cross-road dance is with O'Leary in the grave.

> We are not crazy-mixed-up-kids.

> We will be greater crusaders than ever if the adults give us half a chance. But until they do -don't brand us as the down beat generation because we cover up our ideals with a Hula-Hoop.

The tone of this article articulated a clear sense of frustration and an intention to break with the past. The language and dialogue reflect the level at which Irish youths had gathered their sense of entitlement through popular culture. This combination of popular culture references and critiques of the political, cultural and social systems in Ireland in the late 1950s suggest that young people in Ireland were adapting the new international discourses of teenage culture and locating them within their own national experience. Uncovering strategies and discourses about popular culture and social change in mid-twentieth century Ireland requires a focus on more subtle lines of communication. There were few public protests or demonstrations in 1950s Ireland but exploring the topic of employment offers the opportunity to consider the macro-

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[108] *The Irish Digest*, Vol. LXIII, No.1, July 1958, p.4
[109] *Sunday Independent*, 14 December 1958

structures which shaped the lives of teenagers and the spaces where they had the chance to be rebels, with or without a cause.

Part of the Workforce

Teenage workers provided very cheap labour to various industries in the 1950s. Their pay levels, across all sectors, reflected their lower status compared to adult workers but the hours they worked were virtually the same as their adult counterparts and the conditions they endured were often less favourable. Their age made them vulnerable to exploitation by employers, but considering that they constituted quite a small part of the overall workforce a great deal of legislation was put in place during the 1950s to protect their interests and working conditions. They fared better than female workers in this respect who made up a much larger part of the workforce. Female workers' wages tended to be placed somewhere between juvenile and adult male workers; they earned about one quarter more than juvenile workers and one quarter less than adult males. Although overall pay levels increased during the 1950s these group ratios remained consistent in the main. When considering the subject of employment in the 1950s it is also necessary to also discuss the issue of emigration. It was an extensive social problem during the 1950s and people aged 25 years and under accounted for the largest sector of the overall numbers emigrating.

Although this chapter will engage with emigration as a major aspect of this decade, it will approach this topic from what Enda Delaney described as the necessity to explore 'non-migration'.[110] In other words, this chapter will reflect on the cohort who remained in Ireland more than the cohort who left. Investigations in relation to emigration will not extend to the experience of migrants in their new nation states; exceptions will be made for communication between emigrants and their non-migrant counterparts who remained in Ireland. The main focus in this chapter will be employment in Ireland and the circumstances, systems and economic and social structures that influenced their positioning of young people in the workforce.

The four main occupations for young people in the 1950s were agricultural labourers, domestic servants, messengers and factory workers. Males were employed in higher numbers in agriculture and as messengers (virtually no girls took positions as messengers); domestic service and factory work attracted more female employees. **Table 8** below shows the employment

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[110] Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000), p.14

figures from the 1951 and 1961 census for young people aged between 14 and 19 in occupations where more than 1,000 persons were employed (please note that figures under 1,000 that are included are for comparative purposes).[111] The figures show that in 1951 two thirds of the 152,447 males aged between 14 and 19 years were gainfully employed. Of the remainder 31,355 males were in fulltime education. The statistics relating to females in this decade indicate a gender discrepancy with just under half of the total females aged between 14 and 19 listed as gainfully employed. Although there were almost 6,000 more females in fulltime education this does still not fully explain the gap in male and female employment patterns. A further figure of 12,304 were listed as engaged in home duties and as this was listed under the Not Gainfully Employed section we can assume that these positions were unpaid. These two figures added together bring the female figure a little more in line with the male pattern but not completely.[112] In the case of male employment, agriculture was easily the largest sector with almost 45,000 occupied on farms. However, just over 65% of these employees were relatives assisting on their home farm. The wages and conditions of these workers will be discussed later in this chapter both in comparison to other occupations and as a contributory factor to emigration in this decade. The figure for females employed in agriculture was considerably lower and this is probably due to the physical nature of the work but also due to the fact that female domestic labour on the home farm was not viewed as agricultural labour (and further explains the earlier figure of females listed as engaged in home duties).[113]

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[111] These statistics are taken from the following 1951 and 1961 Census Report Tables: (i) Table 7a Males in each Occupation Classified by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19 and Table 7b Females in each Occupation Classified by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19, Census 1951, Volume 2, Part II, Ages and Conjugal Conditions, Classified by Occupations, Central Statistics Office (ii) Table 5A, Males Classified by Occupation and by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19 and Table 5b, Females Classified by Occupation and by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19, Census 1961, Volume 5, Occupations Classified by Areas and Conjugal Conditions, Central Statistics Office

[112] Table 7b Females in each Occupation Classified by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19, Census 1951, Volume 2, Part II, Ages and Conjugal Conditions, Classified by Occupations, Central Statistics Office

[113] In a report discussing an increase in the wages of female agricultural workers by the Agricultural Wages Board the definition of an agricultural worker is defined as "a person employed under a contract of service or apprenticeship whose work under such contract is or includes work in agriculture, but does not include a person whose work is mainly domestic service." , *Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin*, Vol. XXVII, No.1, (March, 1952), p. 188

Table 8 Comparison of male and female occupations from 1951 and 1961 census

	Male	Female	Male	Female
Year	1951	1951	1961	1961
TOTAL	152,447	141,479	150,028	141,307
Total Gainfully Occupied	101,628	68,929	84,302	65,899
Agriculture total	44,664	7,909	32,560	3,111
Farmers and relatives assisting on home farm	29,942	7,742	{ 22,538	{ 2,972
Agricultural labourers, living in, employed on farms	3,239	75		
Agricultural labourers, living out, employed on farms	9,225	-	9,216	-
Turf Workers	1,006	-	574	-
Workers in Metals Manufacture, Engineering and Allied Trades (total)	7,010	630	349 α	-
Workers in Metals (other than precious metals) and Engineering trades	5,662	436	-	-
Motor and cycle mechanics	2,031	-	-	-
Electrical Apparatus Makers and Fitters and Electricians	1,216	-	$1,357_\beta$	226
Machinists, Fitters and Related Workers	-	-	6,203 γ	-
Textile Workers	943	3,519	1,339	3,903
Tanners, Leather Goods Makers and Fur Dressers	1,318	1,460	769	1,380
Makers of Textile Goods and Articles (not shoes and boots)	1,284	8,447	906	7,140
Makers of Foods, Drinks and Tobacco	1,395	2,019	1213	1,539
Makers in Wood and Furniture (total)	4,498	-	2337	-
Carpenters and Joiners	3,122	-	-	-
Makers of and workers in paper and paperboard, printers and bookbinders	735	1,280	800	1,340
Workers in Building and Contracting	4,455	-	2,329	-
Persons employed in Transport and Communication	9,525	843	6,759	499
Road Transport Workers	2,090	-	2,278	-
Lorry Drivers' helpers and mates	1,313	-	1,616	-
Messengers	5,997	-	3,547	-
Commercial, Finance and Insurance Occupations (Total)	7,520	8,336	7,276	9,486
Salesmen and Shop Assistants	5,686	7,578	5,533	9,113
Barmen	1,023	597	1,051	416
Persons Employed in Public Administration and Defence (excluding professional occupations)	1,282	548	1,877	-
Professional and Technical Occupations	2,708	2,701	837	2434
Articled Clerks and pupils and other professional students	1,309	486	-	-

Persons Engaged in Personal Services	1,960	19,408	2,416	17,210
Clerks, Typists and Draughtsmen (excluding civil service and local authority clerks	2,878	6,448	3,173	10,595
Typists, shorthand typists and secretaries (not company secretaries)	18	3,677	-	4,001
Warehousemen, Storekeepers, Packers and Bottlers	1,425	2,730	2,063	3,508
Engaged in home duties	-	12,304	-	9,182
In School or students 14 years of age or over	31,355	37,398	47,506	52,218

α In the 1961 Census this category is just listed as workers in metal manufacture and engineering does not appear on the census
β This category appears in the 1961 census as Electrical and Electronic workers
γ These include sheet fitters, welders, mechanics and assemblers

The single largest sector of female employment in 1951 and 1961 was personal services. This sector included domestic servants, waitresses, hairdressers, cooks, laundry workers and hospital orderlies. Although the overall figures in this sector do not appear to change in any significant way during the decade, the breakdown of the numbers reveals more about the service industry. While the numbers engaged in private domestic service in 1951 stands at approximately 15,000 by 1961 this number has dropped to less than 9,000. The number of young women engaged in waitressing and hairdressing doubled in the same period.[114] There was also a listing of almost 3,000 maids and related workers outside of private domestic service in the 1961 Census. These were most likely engaged in hotels, bed and breakfasts and similar businesses. Due to inconsistencies in the categorisation of some of the occupations between the 1951 and 1961 census some of the figures are more difficult to interpret and assess in regard to overall trends. They do indicate that some areas of employment declined while others increased in popularity during the decade. The reasons for these trends will be looked at in more detail along with the nature of each occupation as the chapter progresses. What this focused assessment of occupations will show is that the social status and opportunities for personal privacy and independence attached to particular positions was regularly regarded to be equally as important as wages and hours of work.

Should I Stay or Should I Go

When the majority of this age group entered the work force at the age of 14 they then became part of larger social systems including national and familial economic structures. From

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[114] Table 7b Females in each Occupation Classified by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19, Census 1951, Volume 2, Part II, Ages and Conjugal Conditions, Classified by Occupations, Central Statistics Office; Table 5b, Females Classified by Occupation and by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19, Census 1961, Volume 5, Occupations Classified by Areas and Conjugal Conditions, Central Statistics Office

immediately after the Second World War, discourses emerged at a local level but also within governmental departments in relation to young people and employment. The Commission on Youth Unemployment in the late 1940s was one of the earliest official investigations into the causes of youth unemployment in the post-war period. However, the later Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems also concentrated on this cohort in its assessment and conclusions of the wider social issues contributing to emigration. Emigration and migration from rural areas were major catalysts for the increased focus on young people and work during the 1950s. Statistics show that the age category of 20 to 24 were most likely to emigrate, with more than double of this cohort leaving between 1951 and 1956 when compared with 15 to 19 year olds.[115] However when split along gender lines the figures from 1951 show that while the ratio remained the same in the age categories in relation to male migrants, the case of female migrants was markedly different. The figures show that from the overall numbers of females migrating 36.4 per cent were aged between 16 and 19 years old and 35.5 per cent were between 20 and 24 years of age.[116] Therefore, teenage girls were the group most likely to emigrate during the 1950s. The topic of female migration is too large to be included in any great detail in this study and has been addressed by other scholars including Enda Delaney, Mary E. Daly and Pauric Travers.[117] However, the subsequent gender imbalance in Ireland as a result of higher female migration and the discourses around the effect of the loss of this cohort on Irish society will be reflected in aspects of social and cultural engagement throughout this thesis.

The topic of emigration dominated social discourses in Ireland during the 1950s especially after 1955 when the problem became acute. The debates that centred on this issue could be categorised into a few main topic areas. The first portion of these discourses admonished the physical loss of a generation of young people from rural areas and the country as a whole. (Interestingly there is very little reference to young people leaving urban areas, although this most certainly happened). The subsequent effect on marriage rates, social cohesion and rural development were raised alongside the demographic loss. Issues around exposure to moral dangers, modern influences and loss of connection to nation and faith formed the second thread of discourses. Finally, the financial loss incurred by the nation as a result of raising and educating a generation that eventually emigrated and contributed to the expansion of other

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[115] Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000), p. 168
[116] Ibid, p. 167
[117] Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000); Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973*, (London, 2006) and Pauric Travers, 'Emigration and Gender: The Case of Ireland, 1922-1960', in Mary O'Dowd and Sabine Wichert (eds), *Chattel, Servant or Citizen: Women's Status in Church, State and Society*, (Belfast, 1995)

societies appeared regularly in discussions around young people, work and emigration. (This final argument was often expressed with particular vehemence towards the contributions of young Irish people to the economy of Britain). Many of these discourses were delivered with elevated levels of anxiety about the vulnerability of young people in their new urban environments. An example of this can be seen in an article from 1950, in which Douglas Hyde described the emigration of young people as 'throwing them straight to the wolves' and as a 'crime against God and man'.[118]

While the economic factors which compelled young people to emigrate were easy to understand; the other contributory factors appeared to cause greater ideological problems to older generations and to a government with a romantic and increasingly unsustainable approach to nation state.[119] The Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems admitted

> It is not possible, therefore, to attribute emigration to a single cause which would account satisfactorily for the decision to emigrate in all cases. The causes put before us in evidence were very many – principally economic, but also social, political, cultural and psychological.[120]

The Archbishop of Dublin, Dr A. W. Barton, described the idea that so many young people were leaving Ireland because they could not secure employment here as 'a great deal of rubbish'.[121] He went on to discuss how young people who migrated from the countryside because of boredom, did so under the false impression that they would 'not be bored in the city because there are so many cinemas, amusements and people'.[122] There were certainly a myriad of reasons behind the high levels of emigration and migration that included boredom, poverty, lack of opportunity, lack of freedom and the lack of modern goods and services. These reasons were all linked to a general public dissatisfaction with life in Ireland. At the root of this dissatisfaction were both an understanding of and a desire for what were perceived to be the better conditions and more modern lifestyles already available in large urban centres outside of Ireland, and to some extent in Dublin. This focus is expressed in the closing sentiments of the 1961 American

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[118] Douglas Hyde, 'The Plight of our Emigrants' in *The Irish Digest*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3, September 1950
[119] Tom Garvin, *Preventing the Future: Why was Ireland Poor for so Long?*, (Dublin, 2002), p.49
[120] Chapter 7, Emigration, Immigration and Internal Migration, Part II, The Problem of Emigration, p. 130, No 290, Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems 1948-1954, Majority Report, (National Archives, S14249 Annex, Department of An Taoiseach)
[121] *The Irish Times*, 26 November 1955
[122] Ibid

produced documentary on Ireland, *Ireland: The Tear and the Smile*, where the narrator claims that 'this generation has a different battle to fight, a battle for a more abundant life'.[123]

The necessity to raise the standard of living in Ireland was reflected in an increased awareness that the pay and conditions awarded to juveniles (and also adult workers) needed to be improved in order to retain workers in Ireland. Although there are some wage fluctuations in the middle of the decade, owing to a series of austerity budgets and economic stagnation, for the most part, wages in Ireland increased steadily during the 1950s. Work conditions and breeches of employment agreements by employers were better legislated for and also more rigorously inspected. The Labour Court was set up in 1946 as part of the *Industrial Relations Act, 1946*.[124] During the 1950s the Labour Court initiated a wide range of Joint Labour Committees, which facilitated representation for employers and employees in wage negotiations. The pay and conditions of messenger boys were settled through a series of these committees. Interestingly, most wage negotiations were limited by the boundaries of individual borough councils rather than applying to the country as a whole; for example, there were separate wage agreements for messengers in Waterford City Borough, Dublin and Dun Laoghaire County Boroughs, Limerick City and Cork City during the 1950s. This seems to be reflective of wage negotiations across industries based on the regular reports on principle changes in rates of wages which appeared in the *Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin*.[125] Individual industries also entered wage negotiations separately. For example between October 1950 and April 1951 the wages paid to messengers in the distributive trades in Dublin increased on a scale from 22 shillings at entry level and 37 shillings and 6 pence for more experienced workers up to 26 shillings at entry level, with a top level of 41 shillings and 6 pence per week.[126] In the same period, messengers in the meat industry in Dublin had their wages increased from 40 shillings and 6 pence up to 43 shillings per week.[127]

Table 9 below gives an indication of wage stratification for 1953, 1954, and 1955.[128] Workers under 18 years were very much on the lower end of the pay scale, although the bulk of earners, and in particular female adult workers, were only slightly ahead of them. Such fragmented wage

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[123] *Ireland: The Tear and The Smile*, (1961), (Irish Film Archives, AA450)

[124] Dan Bradley, *Farm Labourers Irish Struggle, 1900 -1976*, (Belfast, 1988), p. 17

[125] See regular reports such as the following example, 'Principle Changes in the Rates of Wages Reported from October 1950 to April 1951' in *The Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin*, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, June 1951, p.101

[126] Ibid

[127] Ibid

[128] Table 1, Number and Distribution of Wage Earners in a pay week in October, Classified according to rate of pay of weekly earnings, in each of the years 1953, 1954 and 1955, (c) All Industries in *Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin*, Vol. XXXII, No. 3, September 1957, p. 206

negotiations as outlined above would not have helped secure better terms for young workers across all industries. The variance in levels of wages and conditions in each borough council and within each industry must also have prevented clear comprehension of rights to individual workers and withdrawn opportunities for strong unified negotiations by larger numbers of workers. Although the trade unions were very active in the 1950s, juveniles tended to be represented within their industry rather than as a separate interest group and this weakened their position as an industrial group. Even relatively organised youth workers, like the messenger boys, appear to have been without trade union representation and this weakened their representation at Labour Court proceedings.[129] Trade unions were also involved in restricting entrance to trades and this further disadvantaged young workers who wished to enter forms of employment which provided formal training and career progression.[130]

Table 9 Number and distribution of wage earners in a pay week in October, classified according to rate of pay of weekly earnings, in each of the years 1953, 1954 and 1955 (All industries)

Weekly Rates of Earnings	Under 18 Years of Age						18 years and over					
	Males			Females			Males			Females		
	1953	1954	1955	1953	1954	1955	1953	1954	1955	1953	1954	1955
	Numbers Engaged											
Less than £1	303	211	200	857	675	435	403	420	516	190	134	210
£1 l/t £2	3857	3826	3423	6748	7031	6159	1254	1232	1136	1711	1603	1361
£2 l/t £3	3156	3419	3704	3571	3699	4507	3747	3197	2738	5955	5422	4647
£3 l/t £4	1102	1289	1346	911	868	1470	9716	7357	5782	15440	14164	12364
£4 l/t £5	285	330	508	190	188	302	22321	21461	16035	10235	10913	11710
£5 l/t £6	92	71	147	18	17	71	18656	19283	21785	3713	3933	5208
£6 l/t £7	14	18	80	7	4	5	23215	22981	20326	954	955	1762
£7 l/t £8	8	3	19	-	1	1	22306	23301	23927	218	253	428
£8 l/t £9	3	1	8	-	-	-	18,080	18773	18327	74	49	107
£9 l/t £10	1	1	6	-	-	-	10,900	12699	15946	22	29	40
£10 l/t	-	-	2	-	-	1	4816	5444	7497	8	7	24

[129] Letter to T.J. Cahill, Principal, The Labour Court from Brendan Roche, Chairman, Crusader Labour Committee, 1 February 1953, (National Archives, LAB/IR60 , Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment)
[130] Tom Garvin, *News From a New Republic: Ireland in the 1950s,* (Dublin, 2010), p.174

£11											
£11 1/t £12	-	-	1	-	-	-	2626	2980	4198	3	6	9

Leaving the Land

As indicated in the earlier figures provided, agriculture was the largest employment sector in Ireland for 14 to 19 year old males in the 1950s. The reduction in numbers employed in this sector as the decade progressed reflects a myriad of social, political and personal issues that included pay, conditions, personal freedom, economic viability, family structures, social perception, political policies, marriage opportunities, technology, globalisation and gender. From the inception of the State, agriculture took up a central positioning in both ideological and economic narratives of the nation and the familial nature of its structures meant it operated on a level not necessarily comparable with other industries. This is reflected in the figure of 65 per cent of young men being engaged on their home farm or that of a relative. **Table 10** below indicates the decline in the numbers of people employed as farm labourers over the decade and the small sector of workers engaged as independent agricultural labourers.[131]

Table 10 Males engaged in farm work, 1950-1959

	Males 14 years and Under 18 years			Males 18 years and Over		
	Members of Family	**Other Males**		**Members of Family**	**Other Males**	
		Permanent	**Temporary**		**Permanent**	Temporary
Year						
1950	22,707	3,274	2,469	329,688	70,426	41,422
1951	21,407	3,099	1,830	323,814	65,825	36,729
1952	19,639	2,945	2,179	315,143	63,046	38,304
1953	18,226	3,324	1,987	306,096	56,367	34,786
1954	17,862	3,535	2,205	299,201	58,402	40,104
1955	17,998	3,436	2,439	297,579	56,736	40,253
1956	16,900	3,200	2,100	297,000	52,700	37,500
1957	18,300	3,000	2,400	285,300	50,500	39,100
1958	18,100	3,200	2,700	284,500	49,400	37,400
1959	17,400	3,200	2,800	281,800	48,100	35,800

The pay and conditions of farm workers were consistently poor when compared with other occupations. The nature of the work demanded long hours of physical labour; the unskilled

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[131] This table is an amalgamation of statistics from the following: Males Engaged in Farm Work, Number Engaged in each County and Provence on 1st of June 1955, with comparative totals for each year 1950 to 1955, *Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin*, Vol. XXXI, No. 2, June 1956, p.150 and Males Engaged in Farm Work, Number Engaged in each County and Provence on 1st of June 1959, with comparative totals for each year 1953 to 1958, *Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin*, Vol. XXXV, No. 1, March 1960, p.55

status ensured low wages and for non-inheriting relations it offered little hope of progression. Continuous agitation occurred from the 1940s onwards regarding the improvement of the conditions and remuneration for agricultural workers but many obstacles prevented any dramatic change in their circumstances. Farmers often argued successfully that farm work was different to other forms of employment such as factory work or construction and thereby postponed the inclusion of farm labourers in general workers legislation.[132] In a series of parliamentary debates surrounding the awarding of a weekly half-holiday to agricultural workers Mr Patrick Cogan stated that

> Any Deputy who has any connection with farming knows that in agriculture you are
> not dealing with an inanimate thing as in industry. You are dealing with living
> animals and growing plants. You cannot completely mechanise all agricultural
> processes. No machine will lay an egg or give birth to a calf. The farming industry
> has to keep to a certain extent closer to nature than industry can. Therefore, this
> comparison between agriculture and industry is unreal.[133]

Interestingly, throughout the debate on the issue of a weekly half-holiday, those on both sides of the argument agreed that the pay and working conditions of farm labourers were very poor when compared with similarly skilled workers. In relation to working hours farm labourers were expected to work at least 10 hours per week more than most of their counterparts in other industries. The attitude of those against the Bill was that it was untenable for farmers to offer shorter working hours to their employees when the nature of farm work was continuous and cows needed to be milked, crops needed to be sown or harvested and this type of work could not easily be fitted into the same working week as office work or factory shifts. Those politicians involved in agriculture also argued that it was simply not possible to improve the pay and conditions of labourers because Irish farms were not profitable enough to sustain it. The Bill to award the weekly half-holiday to agricultural workers was passed on the 21st February 1951 by a strong majority of 86 to 18 votes.[134] Reviewing the legislative improvements for agricultural labourers in the 1950s leads directly to a second important issue that affected farm labourers and made this type of work singularly unpopular with young people; the difficulty in the application

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[132] Dan Bradley, *Farm Labourers Irish Struggle, 1900 -1976*, (Belfast, 1988), p. 16/17
[133] Dáil Éireann, díosbóireachtaí páirliminte (parliamentary debates), Vol. 123, 15 November 1950, Agricultural Workers (Weekly Half-Holidays) Bill, 1950, Second Stage (Resumed)
[134] Dáil Éireann, díosbóireachtaí páirliminte (parliamentary debates), Vol. 124, 21 February 1951, Private Deputies Business - Agricultural Workers (Weekly Half-Holidays) Bill, 1950, Final Stages

of these legislative improvements in an environment where work was controlled and extended through kinship connections and in small communities.

The vast majority of farm work was apportioned through family systems and this weakened the position of agricultural workers to assert their rights and make demands around pay and conditions. In relation to this Mary E. Daly states that, 'Faced with the requirement to give labourers a weekly half holiday, dairy farmers tended to place greater demands on family labour; but it would be naive to assume that farmers' sons and brothers did not hanker for the right to time off work.'[135] The Commission on Youth Unemployment suggested that to prevent farm work becoming 'one of the least attractive occupations', farmers should provide young workers with proper amenities and pay due regard to their working hours.[136]

The complexity of inter-family relationships must also be highlighted as they extended from the assistance of inheriting sons and non-inheriting sons to daughters, nephews, nieces, cousins, brothers, sisters, parents and also in-laws. The low status of the farm worker can be directly linked to their low rate of pay but there were other hierarchal considerations that added to the reluctance of young people to choose farm work. Dan Bradley quotes a Limerick farm worker in his book *Farm Labourer's Irish Struggle 1900-1976* who stated, "It is not the work that would pinch you but the class distinction".[137] Bradley elaborated on how social exclusion was frequently experienced by the farm labourer, especially by those living-in. They were rarely treated as part of the family, fed at a separate table and not encouraged to occupy family spaces when their working day was completed. This suggests that farm labourers often experienced a social limbo, where they had no recognisable personal space and were not welcome in the open family spaces. The social stigma and patent unpopularity of farm work is keenly shown in an article entitled 'Does Emigration Start in Our Schools' by Sir Shane Leslie for the *Irish Digest* in 1950.[138] He reported that on his many visits to primary schools he posed the question of what the children would like to do when they had grown up; their response he stated was universally as follows

> The boys will readily propose being bus-drivers, teachers, engineers or lorry drivers.
> Two professions are barely mentioned: those of a soldier or the farmer. When

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[135] Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973*, (London, 2006), p.61
[136] Workers who do not come within the scope of existing Acts relating to conditions of employment, No. 147, p.53/54, Commission on Youth Unemployment Report, 1951, (National Archives, TAOIS/ 13109 B, Department of An Taoiseach)
[137] Dan Bradley, *Farm Labourer's Irish Struggle, 1900 -1976*, (Belfast, 1988), p. 19
[138] Sir Shane Leslie, 'Does Emigration Start in Our Schools' in *The Irish Digest*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 4, October, 1950, p.9

farming is chosen, there is a titter as though the boy were good for no other. There can be no doubt that the hallmark of success in the parents' minds is the ability to get into a town, and the bigger the town the better.[139]

This article indicates that from an early age children were conditioned to regard farm work and those who carried out this work as inferior. The evidence presented in Chapter 1 that those who remained in school rarely chose agricultural science as a subject further supports this hypothesis. The Limerick Rural Survey discussed in detail both the segregation of family spaces at meal times and the tense and difficult relationship between the agricultural labouring class and the farmers.[140] The report indicated that in most households the farmers' family was fed at a table near the fire and a small basic table was placed near the door to feed the labourers.[141] In some homes screens were used to separate the families eating space from the labourers at mealtimes.[142] The report also claimed that many farmers resented the recent legislations to protect the employment rights of labourers and saw them as an imposition on their rights to manage their farms as they wished. Furthermore, the report claimed that farmers chose to rely more heavily on family labour rather than extend these new rights to the labouring classes.[143]

More generally there appears to have been a level of complicity by parents with their children in choosing off-farm employment and this appeared frequently in public discourses. An *Irish Times* article from 1950 went as far as stating that the attitude of mothers was 'one of the greatest factors in flight from the land' because they did not wish their daughters to endure the same type of hardship that they had experienced.[144] In his investigation of the reports of farm inspectors, Pauric Travers highlights that women were unwilling to marry into farm life due to the associated low standards of living.[145] Caitríona Clear also details how social commentators and the public generally sympathised with the difficult working conditions endured by women in farming households.[146]

The Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems stated that the choice to emigrate in order to attain a higher standard of living, rather than accept the drudgery of work

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[139] Ibid

[140] *Limerick Rural Survey*, 3rd Interim Report, Social Structure, July, 1962

[141] Ibid, p. 5

[142] Ibid

[143] Ibid, pp. 12-24

[144] *The Irish Times*, 14 January 1950

[145] Pauric Travers, 'Emigration and Gender: The Case of Ireland, 1922-1960', in Mary O'Dowd and Sabine Wichert (eds), *Chattel, Servant or Citizen: Women's Status in Church, State and Society*, (Belfast, 1995), p. 196

[146] Caitríona Clear, *Women of the house: Women's household work in Ireland 1922-1961*, (Dublin, 2000), p. 49

like agricultural labour, was often supported by the parents of young people.[147]   This pattern of household collusion in migration, in order to ensure the survival of the family unit, is also supported by modern migration theory.[148]   These theories suggest that rural families took a pragmatic approach to ensuring the survival of the economic unit of the family farm by encouraging non-inheriting siblings to emigrate. When the remittances of emigrated siblings are taken into account it becomes even clearer how the survival of the family farm was dependent on the removal of at least some of the non-inheriting children (most especially those who were not contributing to the household by providing cheap or free labour). However this approach by farming families represents a clear break in ideology between the government and both young people and their parents, as already highlighted in the first chapter on education provision. While the government, the Church and many intellectuals of the time supported and encouraged young people to remain on the land and lead simple, frugal lives away from modern social and moral dangers, young people actively sought out better conditions for themselves and clearly chose modern, urban life and all it had to offer.[149]   The necessity for them to leave Ireland in order to achieve this goal is a substantial contributory factor in what eventually motivated the government to abandon protectionist economic policies and set about modernising Irish society in order to retain young people in Ireland. In this respect, Irish citizens and in particular younger people, have too often been represented as passive victims rather than active participants in social change.

The image of farm work was further damaged in the eyes of young people by the inevitable curtailment of social opportunities and also by the lack of disposable income. The Commission on Emigration and other Population Problems suggested that rural society was experiencing a changing relationship with money. It concluded that sufficient provision of cash income had become more important to workers and that previous types of payment-in-kind were less popular. They further stated that 'expenditure on conventional necessities such as cigarettes, cinemas and dances are now regarded as inevitable'.[150]   The most consistent cry from all sides of the debate in regard to life in rural Ireland was that in order to dissuade young people from migrating to towns and cities, better social facilities had to be provided. Everyone agreed on

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[147] Chapter 7, Emigration, Immigration and Internal Migration, Part II, The Problem of Emigration, p. 131/132, No 295, Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems 1948-1954, Majority Report, (National Archives, S14249 Annex, Department of An Taoiseach)

[148] Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000), p. 13

[149] Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973*, (London, 2006), p.74

[150] Chapter 7, Emigration, Immigration and Internal Migration, Part II, The Problem of Emigration, p. 131/132, No 295, Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems 1948-1954, Majority Report, (National Archives, S14249 Annex, Department of An Taoiseach)

this, but no party appeared to know how to provide it. In many instances Government bodies were requested to provide money to develop social spaces in local areas but they rarely obliged. The lack of a local population made the provision of these services unlikely to attract commercial interest or private investment.

Although large numbers of young men still continued to be engaged in farm work throughout the 1950s, the lure of life in towns and cities ensured that the numbers steadily declined. Greater emphasis on education played a role in reducing the amount of young women remaining in rural areas. Caitríona Clear argues that as a group, farmer's daughters were more likely to stay at school from the 1940s onwards.[151] Since further examination of the 1951 and 1961 census figures provided above does not indicate any transferral of these workers to other industries or occupations, it must be assumed that the vast majority emigrated in order to achieve a better standard of living. The conclusions of the Commission on Emigration concur with this analysis and there was further reflection of this supposition in the additional observations of economists Dr. R.C. Geary and Dr. M. D. McCarthy, which stated

> The force of the attraction operates not through wages rates (or even earnings) for given occupations being different in the two countries but through the fact that so many emigrants are children of small farmers whose income at home in cash and in kind is very much lower than the income they receive in the kind of employment the go to in Britain.[152]

The inability of farm work to support better pay and conditions for workers and the unwillingness of young people to continue to accept a subsistence standard of living led to an inevitable drift from the land. The lack of alternative suitable employment within Ireland and the huge need for unskilled labour in Britain resulted in an out-flow of young, energetic labour from the State. As the decade progressed and the numbers increased there were louder calls for a solution. A slow transition took place where those in positions of power came to realise that simply appealing to young people to remain was not an effective strategy. Interestingly there was even a slower acceptance that this generation would leave rather than quietly accept what was being offered to them at home and this mass movement did trigger reactions, albeit delayed reactions in some cases, by the State. The second half of this thesis elaborates on the role

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[151] Catríona Clear, 'Women in De Valera's Ireland1932-48: a reappraisal ', in Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh (eds), *De Valera's Irelands*, (Cork, 2003), p. 110
[152] Reservation No.3 by Dr. R.C. Geary and Dr. M.D. McCarthy, Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems 1948-1954, Majority Report, (National Archives, S14249 Annex, Department of An Taoiseach)

popular culture played in creating dissatisfaction among this generation with their circumstances and in inspiring them to seek out a better standard of living elsewhere. There were various media which facilitated open communications with the rest of the world including radio, films and comic books. Comics were one of the popular cultural forms which enjoyed an enormous circulation throughout Ireland in the 1950s and covered a wide range of topics and styles including romance, science fiction and horror. Gabriel Duffy explained that 'Through my comics, I began to experience, albeit by proxy, a sense of the sheer variety of life and an awareness of the relative narrowness of the environing adult-world view, in comparison'.[153] His observation suggests that popular culture provided Irish teenagers with an alternative framework for evaluating their own experiences. Chapters 3 to 5 of this thesis contain many more illustrations of how popular culture documents and in particular films and comics, allowed young people in Ireland to participate in international teenage culture. In relation to employment it is both important and relevant to note that one of the ways in which teenagers made sense of the world around them was through popular culture texts.

Domestic Service

There were many parallels between the decline in domestic service as the main form of employment for girls and agricultural labour as the main form of employment for boys. But domestic service, which had consistently provided work for females for centuries, was for multiple reasons including class relations, economic viability and female suffrage, about to disappear from the labour market. Certainly, women still work today providing assistance in private domestic homes but in the form which it had been known up until this decade, domestic service came to its natural end. Or at least it did so in Ireland; a huge number of young girls who emigrated to Britain took up roles as domestic servants in commercial businesses and private homes. Mary Jones observed that, 'The "skivvy" for former days now works in England on an eight hour day basis and a wage of £2 per week with full board'.[154] Wages and conditions in Britain were higher, better regulated and some of the stigma attached to the role also appeared to dissipate with relocation.

At the beginning of the 1950s, however, domestic service was still the single largest employer of young girls in Ireland.[155] It was also the most unpopular and denigrated form of employment, heavily burdened with social stigma and class differentiation. The live-in nature of most of these

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[153] Gabriel Duffy, *Sham to Rock: Growing Up in Forties and Fifties Dublin*, (Derbyshire, 2003), p.47

[154] Mary Jones, *These Obstreperous Lassies: A History if the Irish Women Workers Union*, (Dublin, 1988), p.192

[155] Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973*, (London, 2006), p. 43

posts meant many domestic servants had little control over the hours they worked and the amount of work demanded of them within the home.[156] There was no regulation of the sector and so guidelines about what should be expected by and from domestics provided nothing to these girls except general terms of reference. The Commission on Youth Unemployment recommended that domestic service be brought under the remit of the Joint Labour Committees and the Industrial Relations Acts, but officials were slow to legislate around work that took place within the domestic sphere. Aside from that, the circumstances in which girls found themselves varied widely in terms of duties; some girls were hired principally to help with children and infants, some to help with housework, some to cook and assist with laundry but for the most part they were expected to be involved in all the domestic chores including the above but also mending, cleaning, shopping, sewing and bringing children to school and other activities. Considering the low pay and status of the domestic servant, they were expected to be proficient in a wide range of duties. The general perception of this work as unskilled was undoubtedly connected to the popular perception that skills such as childcare were naturally present in women and girls. The indication from the previous chapter on education, however, reveals that there was an increasing acceptance that girls needed to be trained in areas such as care of infants and cookery.

Some difficulty arose around the issue of training girls for domestic service in the 1950s. From the perspective of the employer, girls with proper training were a great asset to any household. The position of the State and Church appears to be that girls who were encouraged to take domestic science as a subject would be more likely to find employment in these areas and subsequently would also make better wives and mothers and thereby improve the dismal marriage rate. However, two issues arose from the provision of domestic training that were viewed as negative; the first was that professionally trained girls would expect better pay and conditions from prospective employers and the second was that girls would use the training they had received to emigrate to better jobs in the UK. The Commission of Emigration and Other Population Problems examines this issue in detail. They discouraged the promotion of professional training for girls destined to be domestic servants and for work that they describe as

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[156] This assessment of domestic work as one of the least popular modes of work for women is supported in the oral histories collected by Elizabeth Kiely and Máire Leane in their book *Irish Women at Work 1930-1960*, (Kildare, 2012). Participants in the study indicate that they often only took up domestic work 'because they felt that they had no other choice'. (p.42) This study also indicated that working-class girls were the most likely to end up in this kind of work because they had less opportunity to improve their social mobility through education. This type of work was readily available and it was it was therefore easy for girls to find positions.

'personal' in nature.[157]   They associated increased training with the expectation of increased remuneration, which may have been difficult for employers to meet. What they suggested was that a modest amount of additional training be provided and that employers should be assisted in offering better wages by the provision of tax breaks.[158] The recommendation of a domestic service tax incentive was rejected by the Minister for Finance in his memorandum to the Government in relation to the Commission on the grounds that it would give an unfair tax break to better off families who are already in a position to hire domestic help.[159]

Nothing came of multiple recommendations on this issue through the Commissions and other organisations. In an acerbic letter to the editor of *The Irish Times* in September 1951, Louie Bennett, secretary of the Women Worker's Union stated, 'Surely it is worse than futile to offer domestic science as the only preventative to frivolity, excess attachment to cigarettes, cosmetics, the cinema and the dance hall!'[160] Although Bennett may have overstated the point here, she connected the continuing inability of those in power to recognise the changing landscape of young women's lives. Offering further training in a career path that girls were clearly rejecting did appear to be a futile exercise. Bennett's letter suggested that young women had new priorities and while the tone of the article indicates that Bennett did not approve of these new distractions, she understood that a new approach was required in order to offer young women an attractive alternative to domestic service and to subsequently reduce the high levels of young women emigrating in order to find work.

The government and society needed to focus on the future and develop work for women outside of the domestic sphere but the issue of women working outside the home was contentious in the 1950s and became an area of international social debate in subsequent decades. The mass of young girls emigrating were largely unskilled and this prevented many of them from seeking work other than domestic service when they went to the UK. Statistics garnered from travel permits between 1948 and 1951 indicate that of the 40,819 females travelling to work in the UK 21,903 of that number would at least initially be working as domestic servants.[161] It is less clear whether the majority of these women were finding

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[157] Chapter 8, Part II, The Social Environment, p. 171, No 434, Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems 1948-1954, Majority Report, (National Archives, S14249 Annex, Department of An Taoiseach)

[158] Ibid

[159] Memorandum to Government, Emigration and Rural Depopulations Commission of Enquiry 5th July 1956, (National Archives, S14249D, Department of Finance)

[160] *The Irish Times*, 6th September 1951

[161] Pauric Travers, 'Emigration and Gender: The Case of Ireland, 1922-1960', in Mary O'Dowd and Sabine Wichert (eds), *Chattel, Servant or Citizen: Women's Status in Church, State and Society*, (Belfast, 1995), p. 189

employment in private homes or in industry. A government investigation into employment agencies from 1955, suggests that a percentage of these women were being placed under the term domestic servants but they were in fact working in hotels, care institutions and other businesses as well as private homes.[162] What is heavily implied from the available statistics, from anecdotal evidence and from studies of female migration is that even when similar work was available in Ireland girls still chose to emigrate to work as domestic servants in England. Where interviews with female migrants are available they support the theory that Irish women were simply fed-up with the low status and terms of employment offered to them in this role in Ireland.[163]

In a further parallel with agricultural labourers, the live-in nature of domestic service often left the girls in a type of limbo where they existed in a family space without actually being part of the family. The lack of independence and personal space added to the unpopularity of this job. Factory work, nursing, secretarial positions and even shop positions were considered of a higher status and had better pay and conditions than domestic service and women sought out this type of employment where available. Refusing to take work as domestics and choosing to emigrate rather than settle further indicates the social pressure applied by this cohort in forcing the government to meet their demands for a higher standard of living. Change happened because this generation refused to engage with the systems they were offered; they looked at the options available to them and their choices made the government and society take action before the decade ended.

Messenger Boys

The role of messenger boy attracted a lot of media attention during the 1950s. As the second largest employment sector for boys aged between 14 and 19, this group appear to have been successful in drawing public awareness to their poor working conditions and rates of pay. The fact that messengers were more visible on a daily basis in urban centres than many other young male workers helped their cause greatly and they sought out and received support from many Church, youth and employment organisations. This additional attention was deserved, as the work carried out by messenger boys was difficult; they worked long hours for poor remuneration, in all sorts of weather conditions and often without the proper equipment or protective clothing. The youth and vulnerability of these boys meant they were easily exploited

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[162] Tabular Statement of Reports received from Local Officers, R.L.S. Circular Minute 14/1955, (National Archives, DFA/402/218/6, Department of Foreign Affairs)

[163] Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000), p. 172

by employers, but it also made them a figure of public concern during the 1950s. Articles appeared regularly in the media lamenting the conditions that many messengers were forced to work in and also the unstable and unsustainable nature of their employment. Although working as a messenger was viewed as low in status and without prospects, it did offer the boys a degree of independence and camaraderie which would not have been found to the same degree in other work such as agricultural labour. Ultimately, technology, telephones and increased efficiency of postal and transport services would replace the necessity for messenger boys for businesses but in the 1950s their numbers were still large, with almost 6,000 listed in the 1951 census. Interestingly, but also unfortunately, the category does not appear in the 1961 census. This may have been because the numbers had already dwindled or because of the re-categorisation of these workers into their individual industries but either way it makes comparison of these figures difficult. As late as 1958 legislation was being put in place to regulate the pay and conditions of messengers so this would indicate that there were sufficient numbers employed in this role to warrant Labour Court attention.

Messenger boys tended to enter employment at a very early age and had generally become too old for the trade by the age of 19. Some records do show boys as old as 21 years still working as messengers but they would have been the exception. Messengers were used across industry and commerce to deliver goods, letters, and other items around urban centres. Their hours were long; even during the Labour Court proceedings for Dublin and Dun Laoghaire in 1951 the recommended working hours were 45 per week for boys aged under 16 years and 48 hours per week for boys over 16 years. The law did not stipulate that the boys could not work longer hours but that they had to be paid overtime if required to do so.[164] The Joint Labour Committee also recommended minimum remuneration and holiday entitlements but judging by the many complaints to government departments and in the newspapers, messenger boys were seldom extended their entitlements. Messenger boys, unlike other youth workers did appear to have had the ability to unite for their own cause. A series of strikes by messenger boys in Cork in January 1951 is one of the few instances of public demonstration by youths in Ireland during the 1950s (apart from small protests by university students).[165]

The strikes in Cork began because wage demands and requests for the free provision of protective clothing were not being met by employers. The issue was referred to a Joint Labour Committee but when some of the boys returned to work their employers refused to take them

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[164] *The Irish Times*, 20 April 1951
[165] *The Cork Examiner*, 9 January 1951

back. What was described in the papers at the time as a 'lightening strike' followed as boys spread word around the city about their colleagues who had been dismissed and about 150 boys took to the street in protest, shouting and cheering.[166] The boys were advised by the Chairman of the Joint Labour Committee to return to work and allow due procedure of the committee and trade unions but he also advised employers to take the boys back in order to avoid further disruption of work. His advice appears to have been heeded by both sides as no further strikes took place. The Labour Court subsequently issued an Employment Regulation Order for Messengers in the Cork City Area in May of 1951. Liam Ó hUigín, a young messenger boy in Cork at the time of the strikes recalled how militant the local boys were in sustaining the strike. He related how many businesses were forced to keep their messenger boys off work because if they went out and were seen by the other boys their bikes would be thrown into the river.[167] He also described how the boys themselves began to pay attention to how workers across the city were being treated by employers and organised themselves to protect and lobby for their work entitlements. The extract below shows that the messenger boys in Cork were organised in a way that even many of other adult workers had not managed at the time. Their ability to mobilise for their rights in a society where silent obedience often dominated is an indication that these teenagers were agitating for social change in a wide range of ways.

> There was great camaraderie with the messenger boys, you know if you were seen out on the bike without raingear they'd want to know why you didn't get raingear and they were just starting to get organised that time which was great because I suppose prior to that do you know 'twas very hard work I was going up on a bike a cold frost morning and probably some of them we hadn't even the footwear that they have today. There wasn't any water boots and things like that.[168]

There were a series of Joint Labour Committee's dealing specifically with the regulation of pay and conditions for messengers throughout the 1950s including Dublin City and Dun Laoghaire in 1950, 1955 and 1958; Cork City in 1951 and 1958; Waterford 1957 and also Limerick in 1958. The wages of messengers were also increased through general industrial wage negotiations which tended to take place on an individual industry basis i.e. drapery trades were negotiated separately to transport or shoemaking or food production. Again the splitting of wage negotiations in this manner must have caused some confusion for individual workers, particularly those who were

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[166] *The Irish Press*, 10 January 1951
[167] Cork Folklore Project, Liam Ó hÚigín, 25 August 2011, p.2
[168] Cork Folklore Project, Liam Ó hÚigín, 25 August 2011, p.7/8

young and uneducated. According to groups who represented messengers at the Joint Labour Committees, exploitation of these boys was rife and employers were slow to respond to legislation even where it was in place.

The government appear to have taken a backseat on the issue of the plight of messenger boys whenever it was raised. When the conditions of messenger boys were discussed in a Dáil debate in 1951, Deputy Cosgrove insisted that this issue was the concern of the Labour Court and not his responsibility.[169] The Minister for Industry and Commerce expressed similar sentiments when it was suggested by the Commission on Youth Unemployment that his department should look into the pay and conditions of domestic workers and messengers. He asserted that he would set up such a committee when it had been 'shown to his satisfaction that the establishment of such a committee is necessary or desirable'.[170]

Church and voluntary organisations were more active in assisting the boys in wage negotiations. In the early Labour Court meetings regarding the setting up of a Joint Labour Committee for messengers in Dublin City and Dun Laoghaire, the interests of the messenger boys were represented by the Catholic Youth Council, the Juvenile Advisory Committee and the Mount Argus Youth Association.[171] The reasons behind the need for such militant action by messenger boys in Cork may be better understood in an extract from a letter on behalf of messenger boys in Dublin to the Labour Committee

> We are very much concerned, however, at the wholesale violation by employers of the existing regulations. Every day instances of the breach of these regulations are brought to the notice of our Labour Centre. Wage scales are ignored; statutory minimum meal interval is also ignored and more often than not is substantially curtailed, and the prescribed annual holiday completely denied. More extreme cases are instances of boys of fourteen working, on two or more days in the week an eleven to thirteen hour day without any increased remuneration, and boys of eighteen years of age working on carrier bicycles for eighteen to twenty five shillings per week.

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[169] Dáil Éireann, díosbóireachtaí páirliminte (parliamentary debates), Vol. 124, 22 February 1951, Ceisteanna – Oral Answers, Conditions of Messenger Boys
[170] Recommendation No. 46 (a) and 46 (c) Joint Committees to be established for Domestic Workers and Messengers, Memorandum to the Government, Recommendations of the Commission of Youth Unemployment 1951, which fall for examination to the Department of Industry and Commerce (National Archives, S13109 B, Department of An Taoiseach)
[171] *Irish Press,* 9 April 1950

The letter highlights how commonly various aspects of the boys' work entitlements were ignored by employers and their vulnerability as young employees. Regular letters and articles appeared in the local and national press complaining about the ill treatment of messenger boys and the poor conditions in which they were expected to work from a very young age. The Secretary of the Limerick Branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union even claimed that 'some employers considered messenger boys to be less than human. Some would not even dream of treating animals in the way they treated messenger boys.'[172] The Waterford Chamber of Commerce also represented local messenger boys at the Labour Court and they maintained that many boys were still working under 'shocking conditions'.[173] The saving factor for these boys was probably their visibility on the streets of the cities and major towns. Throughout the 1950s various organisations and the boys themselves agitated for better pay and conditions which eventually led to their representations at the Labour Court. Unfortunately all of these improvements arrived just before the messenger boy was made obsolete by cheaper transport and new technologies.

The Factory Floor

Factory work was the one of the largest employment sectors for girls aged between 14 to 19 years and one of the largest for males outside of farm work. Exact figures are hard to attain because this type of employment was spread across many industries including textiles, food and drink manufacture, metals and chemicals, electronics and printing. Estimates taken from the correlation of the figures provided in the census indicate that in 1951 approximately 22,500 females aged between 14 and 19 years were employed in some type of manufacturing; the figure for the corresponding male cohort was approximately 12,000.[174] The same exercise based on the 1961 census reveals that the figures had not changed dramatically with approximately 20,500 females and 13,000 males in the same age category as above employed in factory work.[175] Just over half of female factory employees were employed in textile manufacture. Of the 22,500 females employed in manufacturing in 1951, 3,519 were employed in the production of textiles in roles such as spinners, weavers and bleachers; a further 8,447 females were employed in the

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[172] *Irish Press*, 24 May 1956
[173] *Irish Press*, 29 March 1929
[174] Table 7a Males in each Occupation Classified by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19 and Table 7b Females in each Occupation Classified by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19, Census 1951, Volume 2, Part II, Ages and Conjugal Conditions, Classified by Occupations, Central Statistics Office
[175] Table 5A, Males Classified by Occupation and by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19 and Table 5b, Females Classified by Occupation and by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19, Census 1961, Volume 5, Occupations Classified by Areas and Conjugal Conditions, Central Statistics Office

production of textile goods in roles such as dressmakers, sewers, machinists and cutters. The second largest area was the manufacture of food and drinks. The male figures reflect similar patterns with the exception of metal manufacture and electronics where more male workers than females were employed. Other types of factory employment included leather production, furriers, bottlers and packers, printing and paper, tobacco and makers of electronic apparatus. Henry Patterson estimated that over 80 per cent of industrial firms in Ireland were small in size and had fewer than 50 employees.[176] The development of industrial areas such as Shannon did attract international companies such as Sony. Newsreel footage from the Gael Linn Amharc archive often reported on topics like factory openings and visits of dignitaries to factories in Ireland. This reveals the public's interest in industrial development. A good deal of the footage focused on the industrial spaces, machinery or new technologies and new purpose built industrial buildings and to the viewing public of the 1950s these images represented something modern, positive and futuristic. However, most workers in Ireland were certainly not working in shiny, new factories and many worked in unsavoury conditions with poor light, heat and facilities.[177]

One of the advantages of factory positions was that they were well catered for in legislative terms and enjoyed good trade union representation. There were still many instances where factory owners were fined under the 1936 *Conditions of Employment Act*, for offences such as not giving appropriate breaks to workers during their shifts, extending shifts beyond the legally appointed hours limit and not paying workers their correct wages or withholding holiday pay.[178] Despite the support of the trade unions for factory workers and the of agitation and wage negotiations during the 1950s, wages for women and girls were relatively low for the level of work and expertise they were expected to deliver. In some instances women's wages were less than half that of their male counterparts even though they worked the same hours in similar work. **Table 11** below shows the break-down of hours and rates of pay for workers under and over 18 years and also male and female workers across all industries and services.[179] A very similar situation is reflected in closer examination of specific manufacturing sectors as shown in **Table 12,** which

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[176] Henry Patterson, *Ireland since 1939*, (New York, 2002), p. 81

[177] Mary Jones, *These Obstreperous Lassies: A History of the Irish Women Workers' Union,* (Dublin, 1988), pp. 192 - 195

[178] For example see: 'Conditions of Employment Act, 1936: Prosecutions' Case No: 27, Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin, Vol. XXX, No. 4, December 1955, p. 267

[179] Table 4a, Earning and hours worked in all industries and services, 1952 and 1953, *Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin,* Vol. XXX, No.2, June 1955, p.97

shows average earnings and hours worked in Women's and Girl's Readymades Wholesale Factories.[180]

Table 11 Earnings and hours worked in all industries and services, 1952 and 1953

Year	Males		Females		Total
	Under 18 years	18 years and over	Under 18 years	18 years and over	
Average Earnings Per Hour					
1952	1s 6d	2s 9.2d	0s 10.6d	1s 7.8d	2s 4.7d
1953	1s 0.3d	2s 11.2d	0s 10.8d	1s 8.9d	2s 6.2d
Average Earnings Per Week					
1952	41s 1d	124s 10d	36s 9d	71s 8d	106s 6d
1953	43s 11d	134s 1d	38s 2d	75s 9d	113s 2d
Average Hours per week					
1952	42.5	45.1	41.5	43.3	44.5
1953	42.8	45.7	42.2	43.8	45.0

Table 12 Average earnings of, and hours worked by, wage earners in a week in October 1949 and 1950; Clothing - Women and girls readymades (Wholesale factories) (number of establishments: 182 in 1950 and 157 in 1949)

Year	Average Earnings				Average Hrs Worked	
	Under 18 yrs		Over 18 yrs		Under	Over
	Per hour	Per week	Per Hour	Per week	18 yrs	18yrs
Males 1949	0s 8.3d	28s 9d	2s 9.3d	119s 2d	41.4	43.0
Males 1950	0 9.2	32s 1d	2s 9.9	125s 6d	41.7	44.4
Female 1949	0s 7.9d	27s 1d	1s 5.7	62s 3d	41.2	42.2
Females 1950	0s 7.8d	26s 9d	1s 6.4	64s 5d	40.9	41.9

With female workers providing labour at almost half the cost of male workers it is easy to see why almost twice as many women were employed in the manufacturing industry in Ireland. However, factory work at least offered some prospect of progression for young workers. Their wages usually doubled in rate when they reached 18 years of age. The protection of workers' rights through factory legislation helped prevent the exploitation of young workers in this sector. Compared to domestic and agricultural labour where the hours were irregular, employees were completely at the mercy of their employers and the nature of the work meant they were isolated from their peers, the attraction of factory work was clear. Even if work was not available once they had graduated from being a juvenile worker, factory experience was a huge benefit when

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[180] Clothing- Women's and Girls' Readymades (Wholesale factories), Table 5: Average Earnings of, and hours workers by, wage earners in a week in October 1949 and 1950, *Irish Trade and Statistical Bulletin*, Vol. XXVII, Vol. 1, March 1952, p.31

seeking out work in the UK, even in terms of showing that the youth had experience of working in a large professional environment. In his memoir of his childhood in 1950s Dublin, Martin Coffey tells how his older sister worked in a local sweet factory until she reached the age to apply for a nursing position in the UK.[181] While this work may still have demanded high levels of physical labour in sometimes uncomfortable conditions, it did offer a degree of financial and personal independence, as well as the prospect of career progression and that made it an attractive career option to young people in the 1950s.

Other Occupations

There were a wide variety of other posts available to young men and women in the 1950s. Other popular occupations for young women included nursing, shop assistant positions, typists and clerks. Young men had a slightly wider range of options including construction, furniture making, mechanics, bicycle repairs, shop assistants, mining, clerks, engineering and barmen. Some of these occupations were held in greater esteem and considered more desirable in terms of pay, conditions and status. Working as a shop assistant was one of the positions which carried a lower status although still higher than farm work or domestic service. Many shop positions were live-in, and therefore carried some of the disadvantages associated with the other live-in positions above. There were very high numbers of young people in the 14 to 19 year old age range undertaking apprenticeships in the retail trade. The 1951 census shows that 5,686 young men were employed as shop assistants or salesmen, with the majority finding positions in grocery and provisions stores or general drapery.[182] The number of young females working as shop assistants or saleswomen was even greater with a figure of 7,578 listed in the 1951 census, the largest employer in this instance was general drapery followed by grocery and provisions.[183]

These positions appear to have been treated as apprenticeships, with training provided in-house; although it is unclear if any formal training was really offered in many of these positions. Rates of pay were staggered on a yearly basis but there appears to be very little consistency across this industry as to how many years accounted as a completed apprenticeship. The figures provided in **Table 13** below demonstrate the variance in rates of pay and years of service required before young people were paid as adults.[184] Shop assistants tended to start out of a very low rate of pay

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[181] Martin Coffey, *A Time of Innocence*, (Drogheda, 2007), p. 45/46

[182] Table 7a Males in each Occupation Classified by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19 and Table 7b Females in each Occupation Classified by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19, Census 1951, Volume 2, Part II, Ages and Conjugal Conditions, Classified by Occupations, Central Statistics Office

[183] Ibid

[184] *Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin*, Vol. XXVI, Vol. 2, June 1951, p. 101

even compared with roles like messengers and domestic servants. **Table 13** shows that 1st year male and female apprentices could start on wages as low as 20 shillings per week; messengers sometimes started on almost twice that rate. Although public complaints about these roles were far less than other occupations such as agricultural labour and messengers, questions were raised about the lack of training and low pay in certain areas and grocery merchants were accused on many occasions of using young workers as cheap labour. It was also suggested that many employers simply disposed of juvenile employees before they graduated to the level of adult worker and then replaced them with new apprentices who would ultimately face the same fate. In an *Irish Times* article from 1957, Mr Moran, Secretary of the Irish Union of Distributive Workers and Clerks (Castlebar Branch)outlined how many young men and women were taken on as apprentices and then forced to work as messengers and yard boys and were never actually provided with the training they had been promised. They were often dismissed when the time came to pay higher wage levels and forced to leave without the experience required to gain a good position elsewhere. Mr. Moran singled out the grocery trade for criticism and stated that he has received multiple complaints of this taking place in Mayo and around the country.[185]

An article from *The Distributive Worker*, a specialist industry magazine, also accused employers in the Drapery Trade of not cooperating with Vocational Educational Committees. The article states that while trainees were enthusiastic about receiving the formal training provided by the VEC, employers were reluctant to release them for the 3 hours a week required for them to attend the classes.[186] In a later article in the same publication, a contributor suggested that a high level of voluntary resignations from the union could be attributed to employers who would not provide decent remuneration and conditions to their young workers, who ultimately resigned and emigrated to Britain where better pay, conditions and opportunities for progression were readily available.[187] Despite these types of complaints the number of young people employed in this area remained consistent throughout the decade; the 1961 census shows figures of 5,533 males and an increase to 9,113 females aged between 14 and 19 years employed as shop assistants.[188] Although it may not have been the most popular occupation available to young people, it was not denigrated to the same degree as some of the larger employment sectors outlined above and positions were available in rural areas and urban centres. While job satisfaction may have

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[185] *The Irish Times*, 5 April 1957

[186] The Distributive Worker, Vol. XXIX, No. 2, New Series, February, 1950, p. 29

[187] The Distributive Worker, Vol. XXXVI, No.3, March, 1957, p.57

[188] Table 5A, Males Classified by Occupation and by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19 and Table 5b, Females Classified by Occupation and by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19, Census 1961, Volume 5, Occupations Classified by Areas and Conjugal Conditions, Central Statistics Office

depended on the luck of gaining a decent employer, the inclusion of on-job training, however inconsistent, raised this job in status to a skilled rather than unskilled position.

Table 13 Principal changes in rates of wages reported in the period October 1950 to April 1951

Industry	Area	Classes of Workpeople	Particular of Change
Distributive Trades: Grocery and Provisions	Dublin	Messengers	22s – 37s 6d to 26s -41s 6d (per week)
Distributive Trades: Retail	Gorey 1.11.51 Wexford	Assistants: Males, 1st to 10th year Females 1st to 8th years Assistants: Males, 1st to 10th year Females 1st to 8th years	(per week) 17s 6d – 82s 6d to 20s -92s 6 17s6d – 65s6d to 20s-71s6d 20s-97s6d to 22s6d-106s6d 17s6d-65s6d to 20s-71s6d
Meat	Dublin 4/12/50 23/4/1951	 Messenger Boys 1st -3rd yrs Messengers Apprenticeships (yr1-5) Female Shop Assistants (yrs 1-5)	Per week 32s-42s6d to 33s 6d -45s 40s 6d to 43s 33s-79s to 35s 6d -85s 32s-62s to 36s – 66s

Fish (Retail)	Dublin 25/11/50	Males: Apprentice Operatives (yrs 1-5) Apprentice Shop Assistants (yrs 1-6) Messengers (1-5 yrs) Female Apprentices: Shop Assistants(1-5yrs)	19s -66s to 23s – 70s 34s-66s to 38s 70s 32s -42s to 35s -45s 30s6d- 53s6d – 34s6d to 57s6d
Drapery	Wexford 19/11/1950	Males 1st to 10th years Females 1st to 10th years	20s- 102s6d to 20s-110s 20s-75s to 20s-81s

Home or Away

When considering Irish female employment patterns in the mid-twentieth century, nursing is probably one of the occupations that would feature most strongly in terms of cultural imagination and memory despite the fact that it was not actually one of the largest employment sectors for women in Ireland at the time. Following the introduction of the NHS in the late 1940s new levels of staffing were required in British hospitals and a large number of migrant workers from Ireland and the Caribbean were employed as nurses in the 1950s.[189] The 1950s was a decade when an increasing number of Irish girls trained to be nurses but the image of the Irish nurse may be more directly connected to the large proportion of young Irish women who took up training posts in British hospitals rather than any significant increase in the sector in Ireland. Aside from the demand for workers, the entry requirements for British hospitals tended to be lower and trainee nurses were paid, while some Irish hospitals still charged training fees.[190] Hospitals in Britain also offered better rates of pay along with many other ancillary benefits

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[189] Julian M. Simpson, Aneez Esmail, Virinder S. Kalra and Stephanie J. Snow, 'Writing Migrants back into NHS History: Addressing a 'Collective Amnesia' and its Policy Implications' in *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, Vol. 103, No. 10, p 392

[190] Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973,* (London, 2006), p. 172

including paying the travel expenses for trainee nurses to relocate to the UK. Newspaper advertisements for nursing positions in Britain were a source of some contention in Ireland because some viewed them as encouraging girls to emigrate rather than waiting to apply for posts in Ireland.

There are no concrete figures available as to how many girls emigrated to take up nursing positions abroad especially after the cessation of travel permits. Between June 1948 and December 1951 5,578 females listed nursing as their intending employment in their travel permit application.[191] However, from a report on travel permits in 1950 it appears that only 321 females applied for travel permits to emigrate to Britain to train as a nurse, compared with 2,531 in 1947.[192] Enda Delaney pin-points nursing as one of the principle sources of employment for Irish women in Britain but he suggests that most girls were in their late teens entering this occupation.[193] Census figures for 1951 list 809 girls as probationer nurses/nurses in training; 149 girls as trained nurses and midwives and 284 as mental health nurses and attendants in the 14 to 19 year old category.[194] We see a dramatic rise in these figures by the 1961 census with 2,009 girls listed as probationer nurses (we do not see the other categories above appear on the 1961 census).[195] It appears that conditions were the main attraction for taking up positions in Britain although pay was also better across the channel.[196] Reports of the conditions available to nurses training in Britain were very favourable and the Irish government may simply have been unable to match them. In an article about nursing from 1953, a journalist interviewed an Irish nurse training in Britain and outlined the facilities she enjoyed

> Pat received £1 10s a week, but it is all pocket money. Meals, living, uniform, laundry, and so on are all supplied while she is being trained. The rooms in the Nurses' Home are neat, bright and comfortable. There is a large common room with a piano and a television set. Outside, there are tennis courts and the nurses have use of the swimming bath. They can entertain girl friends in their rooms, men

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[191] Pauric Travers, 'Emigration and Gender: The Case of Ireland, 1922-1960', in Mary O'Dowd and Sabine Wichert (eds), *Chattel, Servant or Citizen: Women's Status in Church, State and Society*, (Belfast, 1995), p. 189

[192] *Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin*, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, June 1951, p. 81/82

[193] Edna Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000), p.167

[194] Table 7a Males in each Occupation Classified by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19 and Table 7b Females in each Occupation Classified by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19, Census 1951, Volume 2, Part II, Ages and Conjugal Conditions, Classified by Occupations, Central Statistics Office

[195] Table 5A, Males Classified by Occupation and by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19 and Table 5b, Females Classified by Occupation and by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19, Census 1961, Volume 5, Occupations Classified by Areas and Conjugal Conditions, Central Statistics Office

[196] Mary Jones, *These Obstreperous Lassies: A History if the Irish Women Workers Union*, (Dublin, 1988), p.213

friends in a sitting-room set aside for this purpose. There is a dramatic society, a music society, and an operatic society combined with the school. Social evenings, which include games and dancing, take place nearly every week, and about once a month a dance is held.[197]

Reports of these types of comforts points to their exceptionalism and such multiple benefits must have held sway in Ireland and possibly did convince some girls to take up training in the UK. Kinship networks were also important in these instances with friends and sisters sending back information about pay, conditions and life in Britain. Understanding the impetus for emigration as more than purely economic in basis has been an important transition in modern Irish social history.[198] With regard to nursing, conditions and opportunities seem to have outweighed economic motivations. The great need for trainee nurses in Britain may also be viewed as a 'pull' factor, as girls could make an easy transition to a good position; terms of employment often even included the price of transport to the UK and set-up costs. These terms must have been hard to ignore when opportunities were few and prospects limited in Ireland. Beyond that, the facilities and lifestyle described above would have been an important attraction –dances, television, music societies and the greater opportunities for dating were the things that Irish girls' dreams were made of. Romance comics and women's magazines were full of stories of young employees falling in love with their bosses and other male suitors including colleagues. The work place was often represented in these media texts as the space where love stories began. Films also appeared to have played a role in communicating to young girls that beyond work there were also better social and personal opportunities abroad. An articles from *The Irish Times* exclaimed that 'it is a small wonder that so many Irish girls seek fortune across the water, where the films have taught them that romance and wedlock come earlier and more naturally'.[199] Employment was not therefore simply selected because of the associated pay and conditions it provided; a degree of work-life balance was also highly desirable and in some cases of central importance.

Office Ambitions

One of the most desirable positions open to young people in this decade and not so rigidly restricted along class lines like other professional positions such as teachers, lawyers and doctors, was the office clerk or office secretary. A degree of training and a higher level of education were

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[197] *The Irish Digest*, Vol. XLIV, No. 2, February, 1953, p.18
[198] Enda Delaney, *Irish emigration since 1921*, (Dublin, 2002), p. 20
[199] *The Irish Times*, 31 August 1951

required for these positions including fluency in the Irish language for Government positions but a university education was not necessary. Training could be achieved through the Vocational Educational Committees and some young people with this career in mind would have stayed in school until Inter Certificate at least. The popularity of this career choice is reflected in the growing number of women who were employed in this sector which expanded from approximately 25,000 in 1936 to almost 50,000 by 1961.[200] Both young men and women were attracted to this role because the pay was much higher, the work was considered to be easier and more refined when compared to the other types of physical work available, the hours were regular and allowed for a good deal of leisure time and finally an air of respectability was associated with these roles. In a memorandum to Government from the Department of Industry and Commerce regarding the supply of labour to Messrs W. & R. Jacob, biscuit manufacturers, the first difficulty listed in recruiting new staff is as follows

> The type of girl who in pre-war days would normally seek factory work on leaving primary school is now attending vocational education classes and qualifying for a job as clerk, shorthand typist, etc. Such girls are either getting more attractive jobs in commercial offices or are going to Britain.[201]

The terminology used in this paragraph confirms that office work was considered to be more attractive by young girls; employers in other sectors were clearly aware of the preference towards white-collared work also. The report outlined how the demand in Ireland for 'fancy biscuits' had increased to about 'three times the pre-war level'.[202] The report went on to detail how 'A very highly trained staff is required for the manufacture of fancy biscuits, particularly in the case of assorted "fancies" which are handmade and hand packed'.[203] The report is clear in stating that the supply of smart, talented girls for the manufacture of 'fancy' biscuits, which the report outlined required 18 months of training, was being directly affected by competition from more popular employment opportunities.

There were gender differentiations between the types of office roles available to men and women. In the census returns most men in the 14 to 19 age category were listed as clerks with only the tiny figure of 18 listed as typists from a total figure of 2,878. In the same category for

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[200] Elizabeth Kiely and Máire Leane, *Irish women at work 1930-1960: An oral history*, (Kildare, 2012), p.55
[201] Report on supply position of biscuits manufactured by Messrs W. & R. Jacob for the home market, Memorandum to Government, 17 February 1950, (National Archives, S 14690, Department of Industry and Commerce)
[202] Ibid
[203] Ibid

females 3,677 girls were listed as typists, shorthand typists and secretaries from a total of 6,448.[204] The feminisation of this type of office work is considered in Graham S. Lowe's book, *Women in the Administrative Revolution*; he claims that the corralling of women into positions such as typist, secretary and receptionist excluded them from progression to other more senior office roles.[205] He also proposes, however, that office work offered the opportunity to working class girls to escape more physically demanding roles such as cleaning and factory work, and to reposition themselves in the safer and more prestigious office environment.[206] In Ireland, jobs in the Civil Service were the most highly sought after administrative positions; in a clear reflection of the situation outlined by Lowe above it appears that in Ireland 'the higher echelons of the Civil service were almost exclusively male dominated'.[207] While office occupations may not have represented any great achievement for women's liberation in retrospect, media representation of office work from the 1950s certainly indicated that this type of work was viewed as respectable, well-paid and glamorous. Office work also provided a higher degree of independence, empowerment and a more comfortable working environment for the most part. The tongue-in-cheek comic strip below appeared in the *Irish Independent* newspaper every week in the early 1950s. Entitled 'Nine to five' the cartoon depicted a secretary with an irreverent attitude to her work and her boss and a conspiratorial relationship with her fellow office workers.[208] In a series of articles about women and work in the *Irish Digest*, journalist Kate Kerry provided some much romanticised depictions of girls employed in the office environment. In 'The Blonde Secretary' she offered this description

> It is obvious why Miss Kirwan was chosen for this extremely delicate and tricky job. With her short golden hair, her blue eyes, and charming smile –she even has dimples! –she looks like an intelligent cherub. Her soft voice convinces the most belligerent trade unionist that he really *could* wait until tomorrow.[209]

The overall series entitled 'Irish Colleens' also introduced readers to the brunette receptionist, the singing journalist, the shop girl and the air hostess among others. Office girls also appeared

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[204] Table 7a Males in each Occupation Classified by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19 and Table 7b Females in each Occupation Classified by Individual Year of Age from 14 to 19, Census 1951, Volume 2, Part II, Ages and Conjugal Conditions, Classified by Occupations, Central Statistics Office

[205] Graham S. Lowe, *Women in the Administrative Revolution: The Feminisation of Clerical Work*, (Cambridge, 1987)

[206] Ibid, p.19

[207] Elizabeth Kiely and Máire Leane, *Irish women at work 1930-1960: An oral history*, (Kildare, 2012), p.64

[208] Nine to Five 1: *The Irish Independent*, 8 May 1952; Nine to Five 2: *The Irish Independent,* 4 January 1950; Nine to Five 3:*The Irish Independent,* 2 June 1951; Nine to Five 4: *The Irish Independent*, 14 September 1954

[209] Kate Kerry, 'The Blonde Secretary' in *The Irish Digest*, Vol. XLI, No. 2, December 1951

regularly as the protagonist in stories in women's magazines, telling tales of glamorous girls in office scenarios that involved romances, intrigue and office dramas. The office is also regularly depicted in films during this time with elegant secretaries often playing the romantic interest or the 'office wife', blurring the lines between the public and private spheres.[210] The wages received by clerks would also have made this job particularly attractive to both male and females. The minutes of meetings held by the Interdepartmental Wages Advisory Committee from 1950 to 1958 show that clerks in government departments were paid between £5 and £7 per week in the early 1950s and by the end of the above period the wages had increased to between £7 and £11 per week.[211] For the sake of comparison female post office factory workers in 1957 had an entry level wage at 16 years of 31 shillings (£1/11s) per week and for age 21 years and over the rate was 80 shillings (£4) per week.[212] This may also better explain the shortage of bright, young female workers for the positions available at Jacobs Biscuit Manufacturers as described earlier in the chapter.

Figure 1: From Nine to Five - You're New Here

FROM NINE TO FIVE.   By Jo Fischer

You're new here, so I'll just teach you the important things . . . like where the coffee shop is, and when it's time to go home.

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[210] Merrill Schleier, *Skyscraper Cinema: Architecture and Gender in American Film*, (Minnesota, 2009)
[211] Interdepartmental Wages Advisory Committee Annual Review of Wages, Minutes of Meetings 25/8/1950 – 28/11/1958, (National Archives, S5577B, Department of An Taoiseach)
[212] Ibid

Figure 2: From Nine to Five – Remind me to Forget

FROM NINE TO FIVE   By Jo Fischer

OLD EAGLE EYE

RIGHT
OR
WRONG—
I'M RIGHT?!
The Boss

JoFISCHER

I'm leaving now. If there's anything I didn't do, remind me
and I'll forget it first thing in the morning.

Figure 3: From Nine to Five – Can you say it's lost?

FROM NINE TO FIVE

JoFISCHER

How can you say it's lost, Mr. Wump? If it isn't in one place
it's bound to be in another.

Figure 4: From Nine to Five – Opinions from my wife

FROM NINE TO FIVE.   By Jo Fischer

OUR LEADER

I want my opinions respected around here . . . even if they
do come from my wife!

Conclusion

This examination of teenagers and work in Ireland is very clearly reflective of wider patterns of
transition in Irish society during the 1950s. The post-war transition from rural to urban and
from heavy, manual labour-intensive forms of work to mechanisation, services and offices is a
globalised narrative. The disappearance of the messenger boy and the domestic servant are
testament to that. Shifting perceptions and attitudes to work suggest that new understandings
and expectations of everyday life were swelling from the ground up in Ireland. This new
generation desired work which would provide them with better wages, a more comfortable life
and allow them access to the trappings of modernity. Money became more important in Irish
life around this time because it was necessary to participate in most of the available leisure
activities, goods and services. Mary E. Daly argues that the traditional structures and
immovability of rural life in Ireland, so heavily promoted by the government and other
institutions in Ireland, were central to its inevitable demise.[213] She goes on to claim that, 'The
men and women who lived in rural Ireland aspired to the benefits and trappings of modern life –
money, material amenities and leisure time. If these could be achieved while living on the farm,

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[213] Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973,* (London, 2006), p.74

they would remain, if not, they would look elsewhere'.[214] Her argument fully supports the findings above in relation to teenage workers. Work was no longer simply linked to surviving; it was linked to products, possibilities and lifestyles. The series of economic crises in Ireland from the mid-1950s exacerbated a process that was already underway; the transition to mass communication, mass consumption and globalisation; work and education were the building blocks to social mobility.

There are dangers in framing this transition as a linear progression from the traditional to the modern and Luke Gibbons posits that this process never involves a 'smooth development from traditional/backwards past to bright/modern future'.[215] Representing a society in a period of transition presents particular difficulties in falling into simplistic oppositional comparisons as suggested above rather than viewing the process within the binary composition in which one side eventually begins to dominate the other but both elements continue to exist. This chapter traces rising trends and ideologies around work and employment but existing and established traditions and occupations were by no means eliminated. Even the area of domestic service, which was in the final stages of its long history, remained a major source of employment for working class young women in the 1950s because of kinship connections, class conventions and economic necessity. Similarly although agricultural labour had started to become a less than desirable occupation, no complete breakdown occurred. Instead consistent resistance to these occupations developed other alternatives and new patterns emerged over a longer period of time. Chapter 1 and 2 carefully illustrate the social, cultural and economic structures which intersected the everyday lives of young people in Ireland in the 1950s. Althusser's theories of social reproduction and the 'ideological state apparatus' have a particular resonance with the findings in this chapter.[216] In fact the superstructures which appeared to govern and maintain social configurations in 1950s Ireland have also dominated representations of that decade since. Repressive socio-cultural regulation was undoubtedly a feature of 1950s Irish society but examining everyday life and approaches to work and education allow researchers to shift the focus from the systems to the people using them. From this perspective, new understandings of how people manoeuvred within these seemingly totalitarian systems can be produced. In Chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this thesis further investigations of everyday life and popular culture reveal how new approaches and attitudes to work, education, culture and society in Ireland developed from the post-war period. These chapters also offer some explanations of how and

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[214] Ibid
[215] Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish culture,* (Cork, 1996), p. 82
[216] Ted Benton, 'Louis Althusser' in Rob Stone, (ed), *Key Sociological Thinkers*, (London, 1998), pp. 198-200

why teenagers in rural Ireland and other parts of the country began to seek out 'benefits and trappings of modern life' as indicated by Mary E. Daly above.[217]

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[217] Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973,* (London, 2006), p.74

Chapter 3 – International Youth Culture and the Irish Teenager

Introduction

The issues of unemployment and emigration loomed large in the lives of Irish teenagers in the 1950s. Chapter 1 demonstrates how access to education affected the pathways and opportunities available to young people but there were a number of other socio-cultural factors which shaped not just how teenagers spent their free time but also how they made sense of the world and positioned themselves within that world. Access to and participation in popular culture in Ireland is often neglected in historical representations of social change. In Irish studies there has been a tendency to focus on political and economic history, literature and theatre. Studies of imported popular culture are especially rare. In the wider academic arena, where there are established and significant bodies of work on the popular, there has been a tendency to focus exclusively on the text without including the consumer, the user or the audience and their experience of that text.

This study focuses on the social, cultural and economic factors which affect the consumer's ability to access, participate or interact with popular culture texts. The principles of access, participation and interaction are more commonly associated now with studies of new media but this theoretical framework also fits well with explorations of popular culture and society. Nico Carpenter has outlined just how fluid understandings of these terms can be but for the purpose of this study access will simply denote the ability to consume media texts, participation will relate to the levels at which teenagers became active users of meanings and messages derived from popular culture texts and interaction will point to ways in which popular culture facilitated connections between Irish teenagers in the 1950s.[218] Such analysis is complicated by the fact that popular culture is presented and approached in a number of ways and an infinite number of meanings can be taken from a text by individual users. It is necessary therefore to focus on the aspects of popular culture consumption which are most representative of this particular generation. Chapter 1 and 2 have already identified the fragmented experience of these teenagers, operating as they did in a system with a great unevenness of opportunity. The next 3 chapters will outline how popular culture produced spaces and contexts which facilitated a sense of

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[218] Nico Carpenter, 'Participation, Access and Interaction: Changing Perspectives', in Virginia Nightingale and Tim Dwyer, (eds), *New Media Worlds: Challenges for Convergence*, (Melbourne, 2007), p. 214-230

collective identity' for Irish and international teenagers and fostered new international understandings of the teenager.[219]

Thomas Doherty argues that new understandings of the teenager as a separate lifecycle stage developed in the post-war period. He observes that

> What lent 1950s teenagers a sense of group identity both peculiarly intense and historically new was that their generational status, their social position *as teenagers*, was carefully nurtured and vigorously reinforced by the adult institutions around them. In the marketplace and the media, at home and at school, the teenager was counted a special creature requiring special handling.[220]

This new approach to the teenager extended beyond the particular social and economic contexts in which they were produced. Many of these ideologies circulated through popular culture texts. Since popular culture texts were not limited by national boundaries, their embedded ideologies travelled with them through their pre-established international networks of distribution. Understandings of the process of accelerated post-war globalisation are many and varied. Conekin, Mort and Waters suggest that 'after 1945, almost all of Western Europe took American society as a major point of reference, either to provide a positive vision of the future or against which to define alternatives.'[221] Mass market distribution of popular culture products placed American culture as the central reference point for modernity. The next 3 chapters will examine the experience for Irish teenagers in terms of international youth culture by looking at points of access, participation and interaction in relation to popular culture produced specifically for teenagers and distributed internationally. Aspects of divergence will also be examined to see where the youth culture experiences of Irish teenagers were directly influenced by local or national socio-cultural factors.

An important part of the remit of the following three chapters is to simply identify products and aspects of international youth culture that were imported into Ireland and available to Irish young people in urban centres and rural areas. These will include mass popular cultural productions, such as films, music, fashion, advertising and magazines, as well as items of material

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[219] Nick Bentley, 'The Young Ones: A Reassessment of the British New Left's Representation of 1950s Youth Subcultures', in *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (2005), p.65

[220] Thomas Doherty, *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s*, (Philadelphia, 2002), p. 35

[221] Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters, (eds), Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945-1964, (London, 1999), p.19

culture such as clothing, beauty products and cosmetics, hairstyles and transport. Impossible to disentangle from these 'products' are the social processes that took place around them, including youth orientated events and social spaces, dating, subcultures, promenading, and opportunities for self and group identification. It is furthermore necessary to include in such assessments aspects of economic analysis including the employment status and disposable income of this cohort. These issues are also directly affected by questions of class and social cohesion among this age group in this decade. As the previous chapters outlined a considerable section of this social grouping were already working and earning a wage. A growing number of young people remained at school or furthered their education though evening classes and apprenticeships and would therefore have received pocket money from their parents or generated some additional income through odd jobs. The social realities that then presented themselves to youths at this time varied widely in respect of work, school, emigration and poverty. It is not possible, therefore, to offer one single thesis in relation to popular culture that is applicable to all young people in Ireland during this decade. What this chapter will do is highlight the more prominent trends and the important exceptions in Irish youth culture in the 1950s and thereby offer a more cohesive account of young people's experiences in this decade of transition.

Local and Global

The Irish experience of social change in the 1950s followed many of the same patterns as other western societies at the time. Tensions arose around the arrival of mass produced popular culture, which appeared to dominate more traditional 'high' art/culture models.[222] In post-war American society it was mostly intellectuals and artists who articulated objections to the proliferation of mass culture.[223] Debates in Ireland developed in a similar fashion. In June 1953, Seán Ó Faoláin suggested that light entertainment radio shows should be interrupted with at least 15 minutes of adult education programming and then it could be 'on with the fun again.'[224] He also objected to the establishment of a national broadcasting station and other 'low' forms of entertainment; he argued that Arts Council funding would be better spent on introducing the

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[222] Tensions around the impact of imported cultural texts and more specifically imported popular cultural texts were not a new phenomenon in the 1950s. Kevin Rockett, *Irish film censorship: A cultural journey from silent cinema to internet pornography*, (Dublin, 2004) outlines the history of film censorship in Ireland. He describes in the introduction how 'Irish film censors from the 1920s to the 1970s took an extreme, at times an absolutist, if necessarily perversely logical, view of how sexuality, private fantasy and desire should, or more pertinently, should not be represented' on the big screen. (p.13). Rockett's account also outlines how from the initial setting up of the film censor there was a particular sensitivity to the perceived negative influence of foreign or imported materials on Irish culture or as the film censor, James Montgomery commented, 'the Los Angelesation of Ireland'.(p.19)

[223] John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, Fifth Edition, (Essex, 2009), p 28

[224] Seán Ó Faoláin, 'Pin Up Literature of the Air' in *The Irish Digest*, Vol. XLV, No. 2, June 1953, pp. 22-24

Irish public to great works of art, theatre and fiction.[225]   At the same time concerned intellectuals within the United States contemplated the damage that cheap mass culture might do to both elite 'high' culture and national folk culture.[226]   With America being by far the largest producer of mass culture in the 1950s, western intellectuals outside of the United States also had to contend with what the effect might be of the arrival of large amounts of foreign popular culture, potentially carrying with it the values and aesthetic standards of the home nation.[227]   The influx of foreign produced popular culture was viewed as a stealth attack on national sovereignty and identity.   As a relatively new nation, without the facilities and finances to produce a great deal of Irish programming and popular culture (possibly with the exception of music), Ireland had to contend with the importation of popular culture not just from the United States but also from Europe and Britain. In an article lamenting the popularity of American films, Maurice Gorham argued that national icons and stories were not safe from greedy film producers in Hollywood looking for a good story.   He stated that if American film producers ever came across the great Irish myths and legends, Irish children would be heard 'quoting the tales of Cuchulainn in American' accents and representations of Deirdre would be 'some sultry swimming-pool owner from Beverly Hills.'[228]   In an address to the North Derry GAA Board, the V. Rev. H. Conway P.P. warned that 'the Irish used to cry out against the British, but at present their cry should be against America because they are being Americanised musically.'[229]

However, very little anti-American sentiment appears in the Irish press during the 1950s. Apart from a few articles here and there and some scathing critiques of Elvis Presley and other popular films and music by particular journalists, American popular culture appears to have been welcomed openly in Ireland.   Chapter 4 will discuss the impact of rock'n'roll music at rural dances and illustrate how popular forms were included in order to meet local demands. For instance, there were some concerns that teenagers would no longer attend ceilís or listen to traditional music once they had been exposed to rock'n'roll and jazz. The types of articles that appeared with far greater frequency were commentaries on the destruction of traditional ways of Irish life and cultural production because of young people's interest in modern urban lifestyles. This is certainly linked at times to their exposure, through popular culture, to city life and the greater social and employment opportunities in the urban centres. It is also frequently expressed

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[225] Brian P. Kennedy, 'Better sureshot than scattergun: Éamonn De Valera, Seán Ó'Faoláin and arts policy' in Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh (eds), *De Valera's Irelands*, (Cork, 2003) p.125

[226] Dominic Strinati, *Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture*, Second Edition, (New York, 1995), pp. 8-13

[227] Ibid, p.19

[228] Maurice Gorham, 'Have we an Answer to Hollywood?', in *The Irish Digest*, Vol. XLIII, No. 1, July 1952, p. 6

[229] *The Irish Press*, 1 January 1957

with some exasperation that this generation refused to accept the simple, reliable realities of country living like their predecessors, although sympathies are also expressed for the difficult social circumstances this generation found themselves in. With increasing regularity articles appeared in newspapers and magazines on the topic of emigration and they varied, in balance of approach, from earnest questioning to borderline hysteria. In an *Irish Independent* article from 1956, the writer queried:

> Is this teenager right? Has he or she the right outlook? Has he any allegiance to his community where he was born and reared? Is he leaving a more "rough and primitive" for a more "cultured and civilised" way of life?[230]

Another *Irish Times* article from 1950 discussed how it was often easy to imagine that 'young folk left the country to come to the towns out of sheer perversity'.[231] Many other articles, and also speeches by Church and state authorities, accused young people of foolishness and selfishness in choosing city life, at home and abroad, over the purity of their rural Irish communities. Although it did not pass without criticism, and enraged many, the sentiment of De Valera's speech as Taoiseach in 1951, which referred to the living conditions of Irish emigrants in Britain and suggested they would be far better off remaining in Ireland, represented the type of mindset that wished to place blame for high levels of emigration at the feet of those who emigrated.[232] An emotional topic, emigration was the focus of much debate during the 1950s. With young people making up the highest percentage of those leaving they were often the focal point of articles on the subject. With so many social ills at hand to associate with emigration including unemployment and low marriage rates, popular culture did not immediately feature as a target of blame but it did begin to be referred to as an underlying issue as the decade progressed. Maeve Barrington captured this exact sentiment, in an article from 1953, when she stated

> What with wars and rumours of wars, political and economic crisis, and the harried trend of life in general, a mere matter of "kid's stuff" seems pathetically trivial. There is so little time these days, and so much to be done; without considering gruesome comics at all, there are already too many problems connected with youth – delinquency, absence from school, over-attendance at the cinema, over-absorption in

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[230] *The Irish Independent*, 28 December 1956
[231] *The Irish Times*, 14 January 1950
[232] Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Transformation of* Ireland, (New York, 2004), p.476

the radio, obsession with synthetic jazz, and the next worry, heaven help us, will be television.[233]

Popular culture may have flown somewhat under the radar in a decade with so many other social and political difficulties but as the following chapters will demonstrate several popular culture forms including films, comics and music were often associated with giving young people a 'false impression of life'.[234]   As the 1950s progressed there were more references to this cohort of young people as an independent, restless generation, fixed on improving life for themselves. In an article entitled 'Angry Young Men are Taking Over', Michael P. Fogarty asserted that, 'The Angry Young Men are taking over; and let us not forget the women, for there are some notable women about. Ireland, I suspect, is about to explode into a new great age of growth.'[235]   The motivations of an entire generation to change their social circumstances and thereby the society they lived in can never be directly tied to one simple cause or explanation. This chapter will indicate that through engagement with popular culture young people in Ireland were fully aware of and interested in the social and financial freedoms enjoyed by their counterparts in other countries. It is further argued that this awareness led to a general dissatisfaction with the social and cultural opportunities available to teenagers in Ireland.

Table 14 Estimated numbers of admissions to cinema paying entertainments duty and the estimated amount of gross receipts, 1950-1959

Year	Admissions	Gross Receipts
	Millions	£ Thousand
1950	46.1	3,235
1951	47.8	3342
1952	49.1	3420
1953	50.7	3622
1954	54.1	4095
1955	50.9	4000
1956	52.1	4365
1957	49.8	4355
1958	45.6	4165

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[233] Maeve Barrington, 'The Comic and the Book', in *Irish Monthly*, April 1953

[234] *Sunday Independent*, 19 July 1953

[235] Michael P. Fogarty, 'Angry Young Men are Taking Over' in *The Irish Digest*, Vol. LXIII, No.1, July 1958

1959	43.8	3945

Popular Culture in Ireland

Ireland did not have a national television station until 1961. It is estimated that there were approximately 25,000 television sets in Ireland by 1957.[236] These television sets would have been mainly situated on the east coast and border counties and picked up television signals from the UK. This does make Ireland unique when placed alongside Britain and America in relation to popular culture in the 1950s, where the huge increase in television ownership altered the way families and individuals chose to spend their leisure time in the post-war period. Television changed the relationship between the entertainment industry and the private/personal sphere. Advertisers and other commercially interested parties were quick to take advantage of this new intimate access to the family home. Older, more established entertainment industries were also forced to respond to the rapid popular success of television. The film industry in particular suffered from a downturn in numbers attending film theatres as a direct result of the huge increase in television popularity.[237]

The absence of wide scale television ownership in Ireland during the 1950s meant that cinema audiences remained consistent throughout the decade as shown in **Table 14** above.[238] This meant that those of a cinema-going age in Ireland were attending the cinema very regularly on average approximately once every three or four weeks.[239] The figures presented in **Table 14** show that cinema admissions rose in the middle of the decade from 1953 to 1956. It is odd that cinema attendance should have risen at a time when the country was entering one of the most difficult economic periods in its history. The only possible explanation may be that it was one of the cheapest forms of popular entertainment available at the time. Chapter 5 deals in more detail with the cost of attending the cinema but it should have been easily affordable, even to teenagers on the lower end of the pay scales outlined in Chapter 2. It is also worth noting that other scholars have shown that cinema audiences often remained constant or increased in times of economic depression.[240] Todd McGowan has linked the attraction of the cinema, even in times

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[236] Brian P. Kennedy, 'Better sureshot than scattergun: Éamonn De Valera, Seán Ó'Faoláin and arts policy' in Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh (eds), *De Valera's Irelands*, (Cork, 2003) p.125

[237] Thomas Doherty, *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s*, (Philadelphia, 2002), p.19/20

[238] Cinema Admissions and Expenditures, *Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Journal*, Vol. XXXV, No. 1, March 1960, p. 40/41

[239] Chris Morash, *A History of the Media in Ireland*, (Cambridge, 2010), p. 154

[240] Susan Currell, *The March of Spare Time: The Problem and Promise of Leisure in the Great Depression,* (Pennsylvania, 2005), p. 126

of economic recession, to its ability to 'ensconce spectators in the logic of desire'.[241]   This observation fits well with the argument presented in this thesis and in the work of Helen Byrne which identified the cinema as a place where viewers could 'experience pleasure, excitement and a sense of liberation'.[242]

Most information from newspaper articles, autobiographies, interviews, oral histories and other sources indicate that young people attended the cinema far more frequently, usually more than once a week. The industry changes taking place in the United States during the 1950s had a direct effect on youth culture. The loss of the family audience to the television set forced Hollywood film producers to focus on teenagers as the major social grouping who were still interested in the cinema. It provided an approved social space and allowed teenagers to interact away from parental supervision.[243] As a result a very large number of the films produced in this decade were specifically targeted at and marketed to the teenage audience, in fact so many of these films were produced that they became a genre in their own right called the 'teenpic'.[244] A great many of these films were also shown in Ireland and the impact of these films and their reception in Ireland will be assessed in this chapter. The importance of the social space created by teenpics will be analysed in Chapter 4.

Rock'n'roll music rose in popularity in an almost identical trajectory to the teenpic and often they were so commercially intertwined that it was difficult to separate the success of the film from that of the soundtrack. The huge commercial success of teenpics and rock'n'roll helped identify youth culture in America as something distinct from adult culture and entertainment.   What emerged through this proliferation of popular youth culture has been described as a 'seamless web of culture, centred on high schools, souped-up cars, teen magazines and a social order of gangs, new dating customs, drive-in theatres, haircuts and clothes'.[245] This was now a world with teenagers and their interests at the centre. Although a world of high schools, souped-up cars and drive-in theatres may appear to be worlds away from the teenage experience in Ireland during the 1950s, it is important to note that Irish teenagers were experiencing the world of American teens through these films and the associated music. Irish teenagers often adapted, in whatever way they could, the iconography of these popular culture documents into their own lives and this will

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[241] Todd McGowan, *Out of Time: Desire in Atemporal Cinema*, (Minnesota, 2011), p. 32
[242] Helen Byrne, '"Going to the Pictures": The Female Audience and the Pleasures of the Cinema', in Mary J. Kelly and Barbara O'Connor, (eds), *Media Audiences in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1997), p. 89
[243] Peter Lev, *The Fifties: Transforming the Screen 1950 -1959*, (California, 2003), p.244
[244] Ibid, pp.32-54
[245] James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s*, (New York, 1986), pp. 15-17

be highlighted through a number of examples in this section. This allowed Irish teens to be part of the international rise of the teenager at the beginning of an era after which Thomas Doherty asserts that 'teenagers would have a major, sometimes dominant voice, in determining the nation's cultural diet.'[246]

Teenage Moviegoers in Ireland

In his comprehensive book, *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s*, Thomas Doherty identifies 146 films from the 1950s that were specifically targeted at the teenage market.[247] Although he stressed that this list was not exhaustive, it provides a good framework from which to analyse the transfer of American teenpics to Ireland. Doherty divides the films into a rough content guide under the following categories: (JD) Juvenile Delinquent, a film dealing with troubled or aberrant youth; (CT) Clean Teenpic/(M) Mainstream; a respectably budgeted film with teen-oriented subject matter and potential crossover appeal for adults, (M-M) Motor-mad, a filmed vehicle for hot rods or motorcycles; (R&R) Rock'n'Roll, a musical aimed at a teen music "craze"; (V) Vice, teen-targeted licentiousness and (W) Weirdie, an offbeat science fiction or horror film as well as hybrids of any of the above.[248] Utilising Doherty's list as a template it is possible to examine not only how many of the films were released in Ireland but also the general delay in exhibition between the USA and Ireland. Appendix A provides a detailed table of the teenpics and the months that they were released in the United States, Ireland and, where information was available, in Britain.

92 of the 146 films listed by Doherty, were awarded certification in Ireland by the film censor. Of the remaining films there are no records for 39 of the titles listed by Doherty which suggests that no distributor applied to show those films in Irish cinemas. There are higher numbers of 'Weirdies' and 'Juvenile Delinquency' than other genre in this group of films without a record. This more than likely reflects the overall volume of films produced in the decade rather than the popularity of these two particular categories of teenpics. The reasons behind some of these films not being released to the Irish market may simply be related to the size of the cinema market in Ireland when compared to Britain and America. The proliferation of teenpics during the 1950s meant that it was unlikely that the there would have been a need to transfer all the film titles to satisfy cinema audiences in Ireland. There are no major film releases on this list of 39 so their

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[246] Thomas Doherty, *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s*, (Philadelphia, 2002), p. 43
[247] Ibid, pp. 237 - 250
[248] Ibid

absence most probably relates to a case of supply and demand within the Irish market. The rate of transfer of films between the American, UK and Irish markets is surprisingly rapid. The vast majority of the films were issued with certificates in Ireland within 6 months of having been released in the United States. A high percentage of the films were certified in Ireland within 1 to 3 months after their initial exhibition in United States. The comparison of teenpic release dates in Britain with Ireland shows that almost all of the films were exhibited either in the same month or very closely after their release in the UK. There are even some titles which were released in Ireland first. After the Second World War, the British cinema conglomerate Rank, entered the Irish market and rapidly expanded its holdings in Ireland in the late 1940s and early 1950s.[249] Kevin and Emer Rockett describe this move into the Irish market as the 'most momentous transformation of Irish film exhibition' since the turn of the century.[250] This expansion into the Irish market by such a large British distribution company is likely to have facilitated the early exhibition of international films in Ireland.

A total of 15 films from the list of 146 were rejected by the film censor on various grounds, bringing to 54 the overall number of films that were not accessible to young people in Ireland. Out of the 15 films that were banned by the film censor, 6 fall into the category of 'Juvenile Delinquency' and 4 were 'Weirdies'. Interestingly of the remaining 5 prohibited films 3 titles are what Doherty referred to as 'Clean Teenpics'. While Doherty describes this category as 'unabashedly wholesome entertainment that was at once teen-targeted and parent-approved', the Irish Censor seems to have taken a different view of some of these films.[251] Doherty's chapter on Clean Teenpics opens with a quote from the theme song from *Gidget*, 'although she's not king-sized, her fingers are ring-sized, Gidget is the girl for me'.[252] The Irish film censor stated in his reasons for rejecting this film for classification that 'This picture is too much preoccupied with sex – adolescent sex – for my liking'.[253] The film censor appears to have picked up a different message from the film than Doherty who believed that Gidget was shown to be more interested in surfing than boys. The other two 'Clean Teenpics' banned by the Irish Censor were

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[249] Kevin Rockett and Emer Rockett, *Film Exhibition and Distribution in Ireland, 1909-2010*, (Dublin, 2011), pp. 115-125

[250] Ibid, p. 115

[251] Thomas Doherty, *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s*, (Philadelphia, 2002), p. 153

[252] Ibid, p. 145

[253] FCO4, Irish Films Classification Office, Films Rejected Book, July 1953 – December 1972, 2260, *Gidget,* July 1959, (National Archives, 98/29/5, Department of Defence)

removed for similar reasons; *Life Begins at 17* was described as being 'too suggestive'[254], while the film *The Careless Years* was rejected because it dealt with 'the problems of adolescent sex in the United States and is presented in a manner that would be extremely offensive to the vast majority of people – particularly parents – in this country'.[255]

In contrast, films that attracted far more controversy internationally seem to have passed with much greater ease than these films, sometimes receiving minor cuts but often passing without any interference from the film censor. The cuts made to the film *Blackboard Jungle* by the film censor mirrored those made by the British Censor and related mostly to sexually suggestive remarks between the school teacher and his wife.[256] The high levels of teen violence in the film, which were widely discussed and lamented by film critics, parents and other concerned parties, were not raised as an issue by the Censor in Ireland. *Rock Around the Clock* was passed in Ireland without any cuts even though it had already built up a whirlwind of controversy across Europe and the United States before it reached Ireland. In Belfast *Rock Around the Clock* was initially prohibited from exhibition in the city by a special order invoked by the Corporation Police Committee, following a wave of violence in England associated with screenings of the film; the ban was later lifted.[257] The film attracted a lot of media attention in Ireland and some slightly riotous behaviour, including a spontaneous rock'n'roll session in the streets of Sligo by teens who had not gained access to the film.[258] An article from the *Nenagh Guardian* suggested that the few incidents of violence or demonstration were associated with Teddy Boys and the incidents that did occur in Ireland were blown out of proportion by the media seeking out such stories.[259] The article went on to state that the publicity around the film had resulted in some of the best box office takings of that year for cinema owners. Reactions to this film in Ireland are also discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to cinema spaces

The remit of the Censor according to the 1923, Censorship of Films Act was to 'certify all films submitted to him to be fit for exhibition in public, unless he is of the opinion that all or part thereof is indecent, obscene or blasphemous, or is otherwise contrary to public morality'.[260] The tendency to focus on material pertaining to sex, sexuality and relationships may therefore have

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[254] FCO4, Irish Films Classification Office, Films Rejected Book, July 1953 – December 1972, 2227, *Life Begins at 17*, July 1959, (National Archives, 98/29/5, Department of Defence)

[255] FCO4, Irish Films Classification Office, Films Rejected Book, July 1953 – December 1972, 2183, *The Careless Years*, July 1959, (National Archives, 98/29/5, Department of Defence)

[256] Kevin Rockett, *Irish Film Censorship*, (Dublin, 2004), p.143/144

[257] *The Irish Press*, 30 August 1957

[258] Kevin Rockett, *Irish Film Censorship*, (Dublin, 2004), p. 146/147

[259] *The Nenagh Guardian*, 29 September 1956

[260] *The Irish Times*, 25 August 1956

been directly tied to the way the original legislation was framed in that it clearly places such issues at the forefront of the Censor's responsibilities. Depictions of violence, horror or criminality, for example, rarely appear in the notes of the Censor, even though they are frequently discussed by the public in relation to juvenile delinquency. Chapter 5 reviews the 'horror' comic's crisis and examines how the issue of imported reading materials was debated in Ireland. A great many films, which allowed teenagers to have access to international teenage culture such as dancing, music, fashion, lifestyles, attitudes, issues and consumer culture, passed without comment from the Irish Censor, despite some of his reservations about the 'Los Angelisation' of Ireland.[261] This presents an argument for examining not just the films which were censored but also the films which were released. The persistent focus by the Censors on sexual content allowed a great deal of other important socio-cultural information to be transferred without difficulty. In this way the regime of censorship in Ireland was very different from how it might have been applied in closed societies which prevented the transfer of all foreign materials. Therefore, the particularly narrow focus of the film censors in Ireland facilitated the transfer of information on consumer culture, popular culture and teen culture through the teenpic. Other issues relating to the difficulty in fully controlling the circulation of imported materials are dealt with in more detail in Chapter 5.

Through the cinema Irish teenagers had access to werewolves, Frankenstein, *High School Hellcats*, rock'n'roll rebels and creatures from outer space and under the sea. The cinema was undoubtedly one of the most important youth culture spaces of the 1950s and Irish teenagers were in no way excluded from that experience. Films and the cinema had the ability to cross rural, urban and cultural divides and to provide a space that offered social interaction and cohesion, group identification and peer communication. The experience of attending the cinema in the 1950s was quite different from what might be the social conventions of that experience today. Teenagers interacted with the cinema texts by shouting, jeering and singing along with the films. Newsreels, short films and double features were also regular occurrences and the interval provided time for teenagers to mingle. The importance of the cinema as a social space is discussed in Chapter 4 and illustrates how the experience of attending the cinema extended far beyond the particular film being exhibited. More specifically in relation to the film texts themselves, materials gathered by Helen Byrne in her study of female cinema audiences in the 1940s and 1950s in Waterford, suggest that the cinema functioned on three levels for the viewer. First it provided a selection of role models for the audience to identify with; second it dispersed

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[261] Kevin Rockett, *Irish film censorship: A cultural journey from silent cinema to internet pornography*, (Dublin, 2004), p.19

consumer discourses and raised material expectations; third it provided a forum for the discussion of issues that would generally have been considered taboo in Ireland at the time.[262]

The cinema allowed Irish youths to experience some aspects of American teenage culture which were not available to them in Ireland, particularly in terms of material culture and independence. Kevin Rockett asserts that while 'Irish teenagers of the 1950s could feel empathy through cinema and music with their American and British counterparts, they lacked the employment income (or pocket money) to engage in their consumer choices of clothes or cars'.[263] Car ownership by teens in Ireland would have been negligible and might explain why only 5 of the 13 films listed in the 'Motor-mad' category by Doherty were exhibited in Ireland. While drive-in theatres and diners were significant spaces for youth culture in the United States, they could not and did not transfer over to Ireland. However, there is plenty of evidence that where possible Irish youths adopted the more affordable aspects of style, dress and material culture from their international counterparts. Helen Byrne's study above indicates that female cinema-goers adopted hairstyles and other more affordable style trends from their screen idols such as make-up and small accessories even when more expensive emulations were not possible.[264] In an oral history, 1950s teenager from Cork described how she would buy materials locally and produce cheaper versions of the latest 1950s fashions with her friend at home on their sewing machines.[265] Another article on teenage fashions from the *Sunday Independent* described how Irish girls were keeping up with the latest teen fashions through ingenuity.[266] The article described how Irish teenage girls were buying bright coloured mohair stoles and using the material to make sweater tops in order to keep up with latest teenage styles.[267] The research presented in this chapter and the subsequent two chapters supports the argument that young people in Ireland were very much engaged with and aware of international youth culture and found ways to directly translate and adopt aspects of the associated material culture and behaviours into their own lives. These chapters trace some of the material manifestations of international teenage culture in Ireland during the 1950s and show that Irish teenagers could do more than feel empathy with their American and British counterparts; they could actively participate in the cultural phenomenon.

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[262] Helen Byrne, '"Going to the Pictures": The Female Audience and the Pleasures of the Cinema', in Mary J. Kelly and Barbara O'Connor (eds) *Media Audiences in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1997), pp. 97/98

[263] Kevin Rockett, *Irish Film Censorship*, (Dublin, 2004), p. 143

[264] Helen Byrne, '"Going to the Pictures": The Female Audience and the Pleasures of the Cinema', in Mary J. Kelly and Barbara O'Connor (eds) *Media Audiences in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1997), p. 99

[265] Elizabeth Kiely and Máire Leane, *Irish women at work 1930-1960: An oral history*, (Kildare, 2012), p.55

[266] *Sunday Independent*, 19 October 1958

[267] Ibid

The Teddy Boy

Not all youth culture was imported from the United States. The Teddy Boy symbolises one of the most iconic movements in 1950s youth culture and was a very British phenomenon which grew out of the general dissatisfaction of working-class youths who had been marginalised from the 'upward mobility for post-war British affluence'.[268]   There were plenty of disenfranchised youths in Ireland but the adoption of the Teddy Boy subculture appears for the most part to have been more style than substance. The origins of Teddy Boys and their emergence from the early 1950s were well documented in the British press, owning to their distinctive style of dress and association with gang violence.[269] British newspapers were widely available and very popular in Ireland in the 1950s and the Irish public appear to have been very familiar with all aspects of the subculture. Both national and regional Irish newspapers regularly reported incidents from Ireland and across Europe that referred to Teddy Boy violence particularly between 1954 and 1957 when the subculture was at its most prominent. This would have contributed to their reputation even before the style crossed over to Ireland and increased the general media attention extended to this youth culture. Visual representations of British and European Teddy Boys also appeared in Irish newspapers; these images identified Teddy Boy style and attitude for interested teens as well as concerned parents and undoubtedly added to the attraction of adopting this style.

Press reporting crystallised the image of the Teddy Boy in the public imagination as 'dangerous social deviants, prone to gang violence and wanton cruelty'.[270] Adam Lowenstein argues that it was the distinctive style of the Teddy Boys which deeply unsettled British society because of its appropriation of the 'cultural markers that once set off the middle class as distinct'.[271] The main style pieces of the Teds included 'long, drape jackets and drainpipe trousers' which played on Edwardian costume and the zoot suits of earlier American gangsters.[272] Mike Brake describes the look and style of the Teddy Boys as 'Edwardian suiting of the prosperous upper classes...combined with a Mississippi gambler image, drape jackets, velvet collars, pipe-trousers,

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[268] Mike Brake, *Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Culture and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain and Canada*, (New York, 1985), p.73

[269] Adrian Horn, *Juke Box Britain: Americanisation and youth culture, 1945-1960*, (Manchester, 2009), pp. 127-130

[270] Adam Lowenstein, Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema and the Modern Horror Film, (New York, 2005), p. 74

[271] Ibid

[272] Bill Osgerby, *Youth Media,* (Oxon, 2005), p.57

crepe-sole shoes and bootlace ties'.[273]   The particular social and political contexts for the emergence of the Teddy Boy phenomenon in urban Britain may not have been as relevant to Irish youths. Tony Jefferson contends, however, that these young men found themselves lacking in social status and political relevance and turned to the only means of expression available to them, their own bodies, followed by the 'social extension of the self' or group identification.[274] If Jefferson's assertion is that the most important element of the Teddy Boy phenomenon was their group identification through style then it follows that the central element of this subculture did transfer to Ireland in much the same way as it made itself known in Britain. That being said the violence associated with Teddy Boy gangs in Britain, whether justified or not, was not a large problem in Ireland. Most of the bad behaviour associated with Teddy Boys in Ireland related to much lower degrees of anti-social behaviour.

Violence and public disorder were habitually associated with the Teddy Boys in Britain. When the subcultural style transferred to Ireland press reporting presented the same tropes and representations which had already been established in the UK. Most reports focused on the style and behaviour of the Teddy Boys in Dublin and other urban centres. Newspaper headlines like 'Action Urged Against Teddy Boys', '"Brutal Teddy Boy Attack", says Justice', 'War on Teddy Boys says Band Leader', 'Why not Whip Respect into the Teddy Boy' and 'Teddy Boy Gang Assault and Molest Guards' appeared regularly in national and local newspapers in relation to incidents relating to Teddy Boy violence in Ireland.[275]   Reports of anti-social behaviour connected with Teddy-boys in Ireland included coverage of a large gang of up to about 20 youths in Ringsend who intimidated local residents and generally made a nuisance of themselves.[276] Teddy Boys were also blamed for causing £100 worth of damage on New Year's Eve 1955 in the Christchurch and Thomas Street areas of Dublin, breaking shop windows, stealing and throwing fireworks.[277] There appears to have been a Teddy Boy gang in Limerick who were involved in attacking the Gardaí and other anti-social behaviour. In an article relating to a crime in which one youth (claimed in the article to be part of a Teddy boy gang) slashed

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[273] Mike Brake, *Comparative Youth Culture: The Sociology of Youth Culture and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain and Canada*, (New York, 1985), p.73

[274] Tony Jefferson, 'Cultural Responses of the Teds', in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, (eds), *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain*, (Birmingham, 1976), p. 82

[275] *The Irish Times,* 12 July 1956
   The Irish Press, 14 October 1955
   The Times Pictorial, 9 July 1955
   The Connacht Sentinel, 26 March 1957
   The Limerick Leader, 26 January 1957

[276] *The Irish Independent*, 2 February 1957

[277] *The Irish Times,* 7 January 1956

another youth in the face in Limerick, the judge asked the Sergeant involved about the seriousness of Teddy Boy crime in the city.[278] Sergeant Farren reported that in 1956 there had been '10 to 12 assaults by Teddy Boys in the city and in some cases chains, coppers wires and other articles were used'.[279] There were many more newspaper articles including letters from the public reporting street skirmishes, intimidation and hassle at night time and evenings from groups of Teddy Boys in several of the main Irish cities. In relation to a case before the Waterford Circuit Court, the representing Sergeant gave evidence that the young man in question 'associated with a group who went round dressed up as "Teddy Boys" terrorising the people'.[280] Another newspaper reported how a group of 80 Teddy Boys in Dublin had cleared one side of O'Connell Street by shouting, chanting and intimidating members of the public.[281] The article also attributes the breaking of several plate glass windows to the group.

For the most part, the Irish Teddy Boy does not appear to have been taken too seriously by the Gardaí. One Garda spokesman commented that Teddy Boys 'presented no problem' and 'that too much publicity was being given to these people which had the effect of exaggerating their importance'.[282] In an article from 1955 the Civic Guard describes the Irish Teddy Boy as 'a young Irish gom that has been to London and picked up a taste for queer clothes'.[283] He also suggested that the Irish Teddy boy was in danger of being associated with crimes committed by 'ordinary tough men'.[284] The first observation by the Civic Guard suggests that emigration played a role in the transfer of the Teddy Boy subculture to Ireland. The manager of a wholesale tailoring firm in Dublin described Irish Teddy Boys as 'returned emigrants from Britain' and suggested that these young men bought their 'quaint costumes in London, Manchester or Birmingham' before returning to Ireland.[285] An Irish newspaper also reported that two Limerick brothers who were 'associates of Teddy Boys' were imprisoned in Birmingham for assaulting two police officers.[286] In the case of the Limerick gang of Teddy Boys referred to earlier it was also suggested that a number of the boys involved in starting the gang had returned from the UK and

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[278] *The Limerick Leader,* 23 March 1957
[279] Ibid
[280] *The Munster Express*, 10 February 1956
[281] *The Connacht Sentinel*, 26 March 1957
[282] *The Irish Independent*, 28 January 1956
[283] *The Irish Times,* 13 August 1955
[284] Ibid
[285] *The Irish Times,* 6 August 1955
[286] *The Irish Independent*, 2 August 1955

brought the subculture back with them.[287] This certainly points to a substantial influence from returned emigrants in introducing Teddy Boy culture to Ireland.

Acquiring Teddy Boys style in Ireland seems to have been difficult but not impossible. One article interviewed local tailors who purported that no reputable Irish tailor would undertake an Edwardian costume for a customer and generally made the price of producing Teddy-boy outfits prohibitive to the buyer.[288] In 1956, an eighteen year old Irish Teddy Boy explained that he had toned down his outfits in order to gain entry to dance halls because most of them tended to bar boys whose trouser bottoms weren't wide enough.[289] There was an attempt by Dublin Ballroom owners to keep Teddy Boys out and an unofficial agreement appeared to be in place across the city from 1955 onwards. Although mainly an urban phenomenon, Teddy Boy culture did reach some rural areas and albeit in small numbers. A report for the Connaught Telegraph from January 1957, described how an audience for a showing of *Rock Around the Clock* contained 50 per cent 'Rock'n' Roll kids' and 'a sprinkling of Teddy-boys'.[290]

In Britain the presence of Teddy Boys seems to have followed a similar pattern of confinement to the larger urban centres of London, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool and only spreading in small numbers to other areas.[291] The adoption of Teddy Boy style by Irish youths (male and female) allowed them to tap into an existent set of cultural codes and media representations that made these Irish youths more visible, more globalised and allowed them to become part of an international youth culture that operated outside of local/national discourses. While in reality the behaviour of Irish Teddy Boys was considerably more subdued than their British counterparts it is important to note that Irish youths still found a vein of identification in the attitudes and social resistance represented by Teddy Boys. The mimicking of the anti-social behaviour, reported on regularly by the press in Ireland, indicates that Irish youth were searching for modes of self expression that were immediately recognisable as subversive and disruptive. However there was a danger, as suggested by the Civic Guard above, that many cases of juvenile delinquency, particularly gang related violence, were associated with Teddy Boys when in fact they were probably just a gang of disruptive youths. This makes it somewhat difficult to fully assess if all reports, apart from those which clearly describe youths dressed in Teddy Boy attire, really related to genuine Teddy Boy culture. There is enough evidence to confirm that the

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[287] *The Limerick Leader,* 23 March 1957
[288] *The Irish Times,* 13 August 1955
[289] *The Irish Times*, 28 January 1956
[290] *The Connaught Telegraph*, 12 January 1957
[291] Adrian Horn, *Juke Box Britain: Americanisation and youth culture, 1945-1960*, (Manchester, 2009), p. 115

subculture transferred to Ireland, although the actual numbers of recognisable Teddy Boys remained relatively low and the adoption of a ducktail haircut or a pair of skinny trousers appears to have been enough to qualify. The Teddy Boy, regardless of whether he was Irish or not, certainly made a wider cultural impact in Ireland and became synonymous with bad behaviour, gang violence and outlandish style. In this way the experience of the subculture for the majority in Ireland may not have been that different to the experience for the majority of the public in Britain. The real impact of the subculture in Ireland may be best illustrated by the inclusion of a Teddy Boy character in an advert for the Cake company Gateaux's Wrapped Fruit and Cherry Slab in 1956.[292] The advert featured three canines dressed as Teddy Boys who were unwanted guests at a Teddy Bear Picnic. The appearance of this subculture character in an advert for a household food item and well known Irish brand indicates how far both the image and ideology of the Teddy Boy had traversed into mainstream Irish culture.

Bringing it Back Home: The Adoption of International Youth Style by Irish Teens

The ability of Irish youths in the 1950s to connect with and reflect aspects of international youth culture relied on a complicated stratum of situations that included geography, general economic and employment trends, class, gender, age, education, social attitudes, and family systems. In one of the case studies from Alexander J. Humphrey's study of Dublin families in the 1950s, Humphrey records how the youngest child of the Dunn family was afforded far more opportunities and choices than his elder brothers and sisters. This was directly linked to the vast improvement in family's finances once the older children began to work and were contributing to rather than drawing from the overall family budget.[293] The youngest child could consider further education including university –a luxury not afforded to his older siblings who had to work at a young age to relieve some of the financial burden on the father as the sole earner and provider to a large urban family. This case history is also reflective of the findings from Chapter 1 and 2 which show the deep impact of class and family positioning on the opportunities available to young individuals. The 1950s were years of fluctuation and transition; there were successive changes in government (four in total during the decade from 1948) and early post-war promises of change, progress and development had fallen flat by the middle of the decade.[294]

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[292] *The Irish Press*, 29 June 1956

[293] Alexander J. Humphreys, *New Dubliners: Urbanisation and the Irish Family*, (London, 1966), p.102

[294] John O'Bernie Ranelagh, *A Short History of Ireland*, (3rd edition, Cambridge, 2012), pp.273-275 outlines how in February 1948, following a General Election a Fine Gael Coalition ended a 16 year uninterrupted period of governance by Fianna Fáil and John A. Costello became the new Taoiseach. Niamh Puirséil, 'Political and party competition in post-war Ireland', in Brian Girvin and Gary Murphy, (eds), *The Lemass Era: Politics and society in the Ireland of Seán Lemass*,(Dublin, 2005), pp.12-28 outlines the political power struggles in the 1950s in

Social anxiety increased as young people abandoned traditional ways of life in the countryside which offered little by way of employment or entertainment. There were numerous forces at work in the lives of young people and many conflicting social discourses to be negotiated. Aside from local and national discourses, advances in media and technology brought international discourses relating to youth culture to Irish teens. An article from the *Sunday Review,* which interviewed a large number of Irish teenagers from both rural and urban backgrounds, displayed their interests in items as diverse as employment, dancing, government policies, atomic energy, marriage, reading, compulsory Irish in schools and gambling.[295] They mentioned a range of pastimes and interests including studying ancient civilisations, jiving, travelling, westerns, mountaineering, cycling, fashion, films, ceilís, modelling, life-saving and politics. Their choices of subject matter and interests clearly indicate the interactions in their lives between the local and the global.

Such articles again raise the issue of how to explore social change occurring along a local/global interface. As discussed earlier it would be simplistic to pitch changes in this decade in a simple equation of traditional versus modern, local versus global, young versus old, change versus stagnation, the past versus the future.[296] This approach to modernisation fails to encompass the complexities of social change which are at the same time 'profound and unsettling, on the one hand promising great change and on the other threatening to destroy everything that has gone before'.[297] Martin Halliwell in his explorations of 1950s culture in the United States has argued that it would be more precise to describe 1950s culture 'as a site of dualities, tensions and contradictions' and this appears to be the case in a wide range of other western societies, as well as Ireland, in the post-war period.[298] Young people are frequently the focus of moral and social anxieties, the barometer of how well society is functioning. In 1950s Ireland young people

Ireland. Puirséil describes how the Coalition Government formed in 1948 failed following a number of issues within the Government including the failure of the Mother and Child Scheme and a revolt by a number of independents in relation to milk prices. The Coalition lost its majority in 1951 and was replaced by a Fianna Fáil government with De Valera as Taoiseach until June 1954. A period of economic depression and austerity budgets saw Fianna Fáil defeated in the 1954 election and a second Inter-party government, which Puirséil describes as 'more cohesive' (p.19) was formed by three parties, Fine Gael, Labour and Clann na Talmhan. The improved composition of the coalition was no match for the deterioration of the economic situation in Ireland in the mid-1950s and by early 1957 the inter-party government called an election as the 'government was no longer sustainable' (p.23). Fianna Fáil returned to power and new era of Irish political and economic history began with the ascendancy of Seán Lemass as the dominant force within the party.

[295] *The Sunday Review*, 13 September 1959

[296] Luke Gibbons argues in *Transformations in Irish culture*, (Cork, 1996), p. 82-84 that the 'modernisation' of a nation is never a smooth, linear process from 'traditional/backwards past to bright/modern future'. He elaborates for the purpose of illustration that Ireland experienced a particularly dark and repressive period in the 1980s.

[297] Conor McCarthy, *Modernisation, Crisis and Culture in Ireland, 1969 – 1992*, (Dublin, 2000), p. 19

[298] Martin Halliwell, *American Culture in the 1950s¸*(Edinburgh, 2007), p. 3

appear to have been at odds with a nation that was failing to move forward and expending a great deal of its energies attempting to re-establish an idealised past. The closing quote from the documentary *Ireland: The Tear and the Smile* suggested that 'this generation have a different battle on their hands, a battle for a more abundant life'.[299] This observation placed the movement in the hands of the existent teenage generation. Similar points were raised in a discussion with students in the above documentary with one young man stating that 'patriotism is alright but you can't eat it'.[300] In the *Sunday Review* article, referred to earlier, most of the teenagers expressed similar opinions on the practicalities of their lives and the choices that were open to them. Paddy Keavaney, a 19 year old from County Meath, offered this opinion on Irishmen of his generation 'They are no longer content to sit down and just exist; they want to live and do better for themselves'.[301] He also expressed to the journalist that Irishmen 'have a wanderlust deep inside and they are always dreaming that the country far away is better than their own'.[302] It would be impossible for this study, or indeed any study, to fully represent the motivations and ideologies of an entire generation. As evidenced above in A. J. Humphrey's study of the Dunn family a wide range of socio-economic and cultural influences affected the position and choices of each individual. However, by focussing on popular culture, this study can demonstrate some of the lines of communication, lifestyle choices and cultural adaptations that this generation explored and the points of identification with their youth counterparts in other western societies.

Rock! Rock! Rock!

Rock 'n' roll was one of the most successful popular culture phenomena of the 1950s. Its ability to transcend national borders, language, race and class made it the perfect mass cultural product. Originating in the United States, rock 'n' roll was a crossover to mainstream pop culture of black rhythm and blues music. Pioneered by a small number of disc jockeys from the early 1950s, rock 'n' roll took some time to gain commercial success but was helped to advance in no small way by its appearance on the soundtracks of some of the decade's most successful films.[303] With the roots of rock 'n' roll originating from black music culture it immediately caused a degree of anxiety in some sections of American society, but its young enthusiastic fans carried the music beyond all opposition.[304] Some of these objections were overcome by the re-recording of

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[299] *Ireland: The Tear and The Smile*, (1961), (Irish Film Archives, AA450)
[300] Ibid
[301] *The Sunday Review*, 13 September 1959
[302] Ibid
[303] Thomas Doherty, *Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilization of American Movies in the 1950s*, (Philadelphia, 2002), pp. 67 - 73
[304] William H. Young, Nancy K. Young, *The 1950s*, (Westport, 2004), p. 28

rhythm and blues hits by white pop artists.[305] Scenes of screaming teenage girls swooning at Elvis' swivelling hips did little to help the moral panics and parental objections that arose about the new music form. However the popularity of rock 'n' roll continued to rise as the decade progressed in spite of and maybe also assisted by its continuous media coverage.[306]

When rock 'n' roll made its way to Irish shores and airwaves it received many of the same objections while also acquiring a few locally infused protestations. Dancing was an extremely popular pastime in Ireland and dance halls showcased both ceilí and orchestral music (which provided the soundtrack for classical ballroom dancing). An estimate from 1956 puts the number of people dancing in commercial dancehalls each night in Dublin alone at 4,500, with this number increasing to 8,000 if dances held at tennis clubs were included.[307] The nights listed as popular for dancers were Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Mondays were quiet because people were tired and Thursdays because most people were low on disposable income before payday on Fridays.[308] Dancing and rock 'n' roll were not in any way restricted to urban areas. An irate 'ceilidhe dancer' from Clifden wrote to the *Connacht Tribune* in 1957 to say that it was 'disgusting to see young lads and girls coming to their first dance and calling for rock 'n' roll'.[309] The letter went on to say that 'Even down here in Connemara rock 'n' roll has gone to their heads and I think it's time someone did something about it. Let the Irish dance their own dances.'[310] These objections to rock 'n' roll as an eroding force on traditional or folk culture were part of much larger international discourses on the influence of popular culture. In Ireland, where the government and other organisations were working hard to re-establish particular aspects of Irish culture, such as language and music, the sudden popularity of this alien music form was all the more worrying. The influence of the teenage consumer on the music played at dances is addressed in more detail in Chapter 4 including the ways in which rural dance halls had to accommodate multigenerational users and the demand for rock'n'roll.

Media coverage of rock 'n' roll was in Ireland varied from criticism to praise and acceptance in a similar fashion to other countries. Its popularity as a dance form is represented in articles and events such as the launch of the National Rock 'n' Roll Championships in February 1957, with heats taking place countrywide and local winning couples being transported to Dublin for the

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[305] Ibid
[306] Edmund Lindop, Sarah DeCapua, *America in the 1950s*, (Minneapolis, 2010), pp. 107 -110
[307] *The Irish Times*, 28 January 1956
[308] Ibid
[309] *The Connacht Tribune*, 15 June 1957
[310] *The Connacht Tribune*, 15 June 1957

grand final eight months later.[311] The same article revealed that rock 'n' roll had even reached Achill Island and dance promoters there promised to provide top notch rock 'n' roll acts every weekend over the summer months. Similar reports of dancing from around the country were found regularly in the Irish newspapers. The arrival of rock 'n' roll brought a boom to the industry nationwide. The government sought to tax dancehalls at different times over the decade. An entertainment tax was introduced in 1949 and applied to dancehalls and cinemas as well as other commercial entertainment enterprises. This tax was removed from dancing in 1952, with the minister stating that 'Dancing is the only amusement which is discriminated against by levying a tax on active participants as distinct from spectators.'[312] The tax was reintroduced in 1956 with concessions –dances organised in rural areas and dances held three miles or more from towns with populations exceeding 1,000 were exempt from the new tax.[313] Under the same law dances organised in towns with a population between 1,000 and 2,000 could receive repayment of half the duties collected. The then Minister for Finance, Gerard Sweetman, felt these concessions would ensure that entertainment options in rural areas were not affected by the reintroduction of the entertainments duty. These taxes on dances and other forms of entertainment were in place for the remainder of the decade.

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[311] *The Irish Times Pictorial*, 1 February 1957
[312] *Irish Trade Journal and Statistical Bulletin*, Vol. XXVII, No. 2, June 1952, p. 110
[313] *The Irish Times*, 9 May 1956

Figure 5: Bill Haley in Dublin

Teenage Crowds attending Bill Haley Concert outside Theatre Royal, Dublin, 1 March 1957

Regardless of taxes or other financial challenges, rock 'n' roll continued to grow in popularity with Irish teenage audiences and some major international music acts played in Ireland in the second half of the decade. **Figure 5** above shows crowds attending one of Bill Haley's concerts in Dublin in 1957.[314] Fifteen Gardaí were on duty to control the teens as they crowded under the windows of Haley's dressing room and chanted, 'We want Haley'. When Haley appeared fans cheered and sang some of his songs. Some scuffles were reported as Gardaí attempted to move crowds away from the street but no arrests were made. This illustration could be a picture of rock 'n' roll kids from any city, in any country, at that point in time. Boys sport ducktail hairstyles and rock 'n' roll style clothing with some youths in what can be identified as Teddy Boy style. The smaller numbers of girls visible are also dressed in typical rock 'n' roll style with

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[314] *The Irish Press,* 1 March 1957

accompanying coiffures. Hairstyles were a particularly cheap, easy and effective way for teenagers to adopt international youth styles. There were several very popular hairstyles for young men in the 1950s which included the crew or buzz cut, the pompadour and the ducktail or D.A. (duck's ass).[315] The pompadour style was championed by James Dean and required the hair to be swept up and back from the forehead without a parting. Probably the most iconographic haircut of the 1950s was the D.A. or ducktail which was popularised by Elvis Presley. This involved keeping hair longer at the front which was then swept back and high using hair oil to form a low point at the back which was said to resemble a ducks tail.[316] For young women the biggest crazes in hairstyles in the 1950s included the poodle-cut, the pageboy and a high ponytail.[317] Karal Ann Marling discusses the central importance of hairstyles in 1950s youth culture and the media scrutiny around Elvis and his hairstyles, especially after he entered the army in 1958 and was required to cut his hair into the standard army buzz cut.[318] Marling also suggests that hair provided a site to challenge post-war gender norms, with girls hairstyles being mainly cropped and gamine, while the boys styles were longer, wavy and required a great deal of grooming and products.[319] These hairstyles were all American in origin but were popular in Ireland and visible in many pictures of teenagers from the decade with the possible exception of the crew-cut for boys. The girl's haircuts mentioned above were popular across urban and rural areas as indicated by an advert in the *Donegal News* from late 1955 which invited customers from Gweedore to 'Have their hair done in the latest – Italian Boy, Cap Cut and Poodle Cut Perms.[320] The photographs below from the Kennelly Archive in Co.Kerry also show several girls sporting poodle-cuts, Italian boy cut and other rock'n'roll hairstyles.   These are further examples of ways Irish teens were participating in and engaging with international youth culture. Their attendance at the Haley concert and other rock'n'roll events, as well as the style of their attire and their behaviour all mirrored teenage culture across the western world at the time.

The adoption of international youth style was not just limited to the capital city and large events such as the arrival of Bill Haley. The photos below from the Kennelly archive show teenagers at dances in Co. Kerry in the late 1950s. Although their clothing may not be completely modern rock'n'roll they have clearly adopted whatever elements of the style that they could including

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[315] Alison Marie Behnke, *Dressing a Nation: The History of U.S. Fashion*, (Minneapolis, 2012), pp. 35-36

[316] Ibid

[317] Ibid

[318] Karal Ann Marling, *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s*, (Harvard, 1994), pp. 165-201

[319] Ibid, p. 167

[320] *Donegal News*, 3 December 1955

skinny ties, ducktail hair styles, and poodle style skirts for the girls.[321]   There is clearly an awareness of 1950s rock 'n' roll style among these young people and they have included in their fashion choices affordable elements of this style. This supports Helen Byrne's conclusions, from her studies of cinema audiences, that young people adopted the style of the stars they admired in the cinema in whatever small way they could.

Figure 6 The Kerry Quiff

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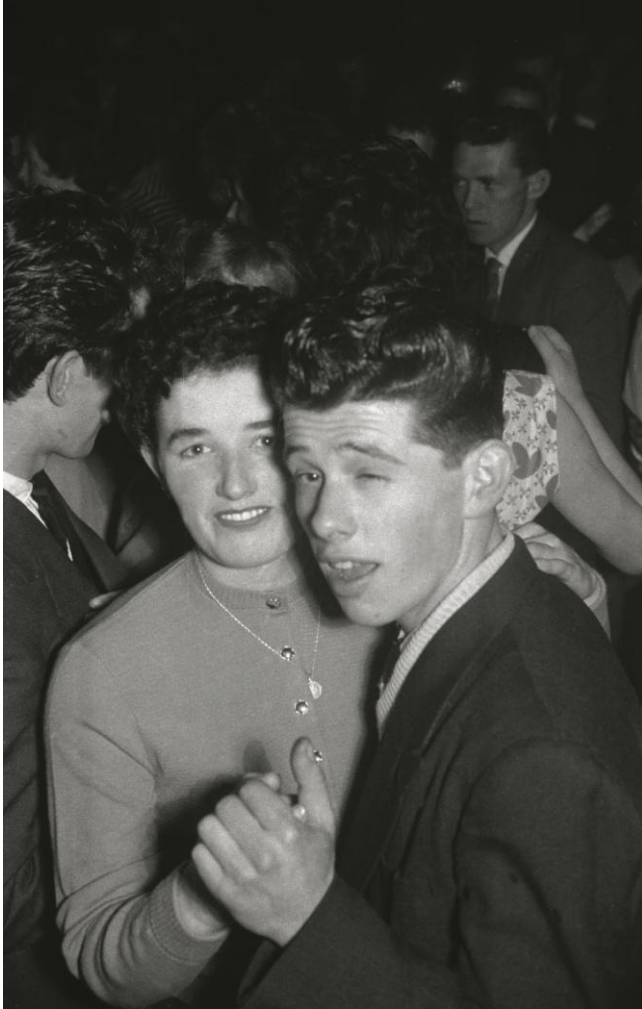
[321] See William H. Young and Nancy K. Young, *The 1950s*, (Westport, 2004), pp. 88-93 for a concise summary of the most popular American teenage styles of the 1950s

Figure 7 Rock'n'Roll Dancers, Kerry

Figure 8 Rock'n'Roll Style at Teenage Dance, Kerry

Dancing as a social pastime was extremely popular in Ireland during the 1950s for all ages but especially with young people. Many international music acts played in ballrooms in Ireland during the 1950s including Frankie Laine, Bill Hailey, Tommy Steele, Terry Dene, Johnny Ray and Vic Lewis. Teenagers in Ireland reacted to visits from these stars in a similar fashion to young enthusiastic fans worldwide. When the American star Frankie Laine arrived in Dublin in September 1953 he was greeted by hundreds of fans at Dublin airport. He had to be smuggled in through a backdoor in the Gresham Hotel after his car was mobbed by a crowd of fans in Dublin city centre.[322] British rock'n'roll singing star Terry Dene had to 'run to escape the clutching hands of his youthful admirers' following a gig in Dublin in 1958.[323] When film actor Tyrone Power came to perform for two weeks in the Olympia Theatre he had to be provided with police protection from ardent fans.[324] Although the majority of the international acts that visited Ireland played only Dublin and Belfast, some artists extended their tours to take in other cities including Cork, Waterford and Limerick. Jazz, Dixieland and rock 'n'roll were all popular forms of music to dance to in Ireland in the 1950s and both international acts and Irish groups and bands toured the country. The levels of popularity are indicated by the number of dancers that popular Irish dance bands, such as the Clipper Carltons, could attract. They were in demand around the country and had the ability to draw crowds as big as 1,500 people even in regional cities like Waterford.[325]

Besides dancehalls and ballrooms music was also available to young people through the radio and records. Radio Éireann did not provide individual programming aimed at teenagers although they did interview some of the international rock 'n' roll and jazz stars who visited Ireland or produced one-off music shows dedicated to the music stars around the time of their visit. Radio programmes produced by the BBC were also available in Ireland but their music remit was decidedly conservative, for the most part rarely playing popular or pop music.[326] The radio station that catered mainly for teenage tastes and was available on the airwaves in Ireland was Radio Luxembourg. A poll of Dublin radio listeners, conducted in 1953 on behalf of Radio Luxembourg, indicated that a higher percentage of people listened to Radio Luxembourg on a regular basis than those who tuned into Radio Éireann or the BBC radio service.[327] A smaller poll in the *Irish Times* newspaper suggested that BBC programmes were most popular with a

[322] *The Irish Independent*, 24 September 1953
[323] *The Sunday Independent*, 2 February 1958
[324] *The Irish Times*, 26 May 1956
[325] *The Munster Express*, 13 July 1956
[326] Roger Parry, *The Ascent of Media*, (London, 2011), p.220
[327] Chris Morash, *A History of the Media in Ireland*, (Cambridge, 2010), p. 159

listenership of 39% as opposed to 35% listening into Radio Luxembourg, although this may also somewhat reflect the preferences of the readership of that newspaper.[328] Radio Luxembourg's line-up was not entirely maverick and still included slots like 'Radio Bible Class', 'Back to the Bible', and other Christian programming.[329] They also had regular programmes on classical music and opera, radio plays, 'kiddies corner', quiz shows and 'music at bedtime' and this did not differ greatly from the remit of their competitors.[330] The distinction in their scheduling, from that of BBC and Radio Éireann, came in their regular inclusion of popular music, request shows, Hollywood reports and other magazine style shows. In particular for teenage listeners they broadcast shows like 'Smash Hits', 'New Releases', 'Top Twenty' and the 'Capitol Show' imported from Hollywood, California.[331] In 1957 the Radio Luxembourg show 'Jamboree' sometimes featured American disc-jockey Alan Freed, giving Irish teenagers access to music selected by the DJ hailed as the 'king of rock 'n' roll.'[332]

Hit Parade

Music was an essential component of youth culture worldwide and access to modern music and popular culture through the radio was an important binding factor for Irish teenagers to their international counterparts. Radio ownership in Irish homes appears to have been quite common. An *Irish Times* article from 1954 claimed that

> Almost every Irish home in the Republic owns at least one radio receiver these days, irrespective of whether rural electricity has reached the district or not. Modern developments in radio technique make it possible for battery receivers to give almost the same quality of reception and tone as their all-mains counterparts, while the vast variety of designs and manufacturers provides a certain choice for the most fastidious listener, bringing at the same time such a competitive market that prices of new models are well within the pocket of everyone.[333]

The prices of new radios and gramophones did not seem to vary too much over the decade and were usually priced in the range of 15 to 25 guineas depending on the size, quality and brand of the model. Sales and special offers were continually advertised making the price of electrical

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[328] *The Times Pictorial*, 10 May 1952

[329] *The Times Pictorial*, 6 June 1953

[330] For an example of their weekly programming see *Times Pictorial*, 6, June 1953

[331] *The Times Pictorial*, 20 June 1953

[332] *The Times Pictorial*, 1 February 1957

[333] *The Irish Times*, 28 September 1954

goods more affordable. A 1953 campaign from H.M.V. claimed that the company had taken the 'courageous action' of cutting their own profit to bring high quality products at low prices to the public.[334] Their new radio, which they claimed to be 'probably the most beautiful radio ever designed', had been reduced in price from £21 to 17 guineas (1 guinea = £1 pound and 1 shilling). The price of buying a radio or any other electrical good outright may have been beyond the means of the majority of Irish homes but almost every company and shop, including the ESB, selling electrical goods and products offered hire-purchase schemes to all customers making the ability to acquire electrical goods for the home much easier. Electrical goods could also be bought through the ESB and the purchase price was then spread over the customers bills for between 2 and 5 years depending on the cost and appliance in question. The H.M.V radio above, for instance, could be purchased with a deposit of £2 1s 0d and 12 payments of £1 10s 0d or 19 payments of £1.[335] The cost of purchasing a gramophone was similar to a radio and combination units that offered both a radio and a record player retailed for between 40 and 50 guineas.[336]

Purchasing a record player was only one part of the equation and it is likely that most Irish teenagers were very much dependent on their family owning a radio or record player. It is more difficult to ascertain the ability of teenagers to buy records. Certainly records were available to buy in Ireland and record shops were in business throughout the country. A crisis in the record industry in 1956 provides some insight into the business and cost of buying records in Ireland. In March 1956, Gerald Sweetman, the Minister for Industry and Commerce, introduced an imports levy to bring the trade balance under control.[337] The duty was raised to as much 60 percent in July of that year with a 40 percent preferential for goods coming from the UK and Commonwealth countries.[338] Items that were affected by the new levy included motorcars, personal clothing, citrus fruits, periodicals, newspapers and many household electrical goods.[339] The record industry in Ireland received an additional blow when the Minister evoked an Emergency Powers Order in March 1956 'freezing' the price of records to the pre-levy price.[340] This meant that the record companies could not adjust the prices in keeping with the new tax rates which meant that the company then had to absorb the additional cost created by the levy.

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[334] *The Irish Times*, 24 October 1953
[335] Ibid.
[336] For example of prices see *The Kerryman*, 21 November 1959
[337] Thomas Giblin, Kieran Kennedy and Thomas McHugh, *The Economic Development of Ireland in the Twentieth Century*, (London, 1988), p.61
[338] Ibid.
[339] *The Irish Times*, 14 March 1956
[340] *The Irish Times*, 26 May 1956

As a result, record companies who were reluctant to take on this additional trade cost slowed down their distribution waiting for the freeze to be lifted. Shops and wholesalers were left with only existent stock that the public did not want to purchase and from which they also had to deduct the additional cost of the new levy. Approximately 200 jobs were lost in the few months after the 'freeze', with shops and wholesalers laying off staff who were surplus to requirements with the slump in business.[341] Al Moore, the records correspondent for *The Irish Times,* claimed that once the crisis was over and the pricing issue resolved the Irish public would return to purchasing records with the same vigour as before.[342]

By 1957 the industry and record prices had bounced back with Moore claiming in his regular column 'Needlepoint' that record prices were cheaper than their pre-levy price and that records in general were cheaper to buy in Ireland than anywhere else this side of the Atlantic.[343] As a comparison he gave the cost of buying a classical 12 inch LP in Britain as 41s 9d while in Ireland the same record would retail at 29s 6d despite the increased custom duty. The price of these albums even at the Irish rate would probably have been prohibitive for the average Irish teen considering that the wage levels, indicated in Chapter 2, varied between 20s and 50s per week. The cost however of buying 78s was much more reasonable and were generally on a scale of between about 5s and 7s depending on the company and whether they were Irish or British pressings.[344] While it is possible that teenagers could afford to purchase records at this price it is probably unlikely that they were able to purchase them regularly. There seems to be little reference to their share of the market in Ireland which might indicate that their purchasing power was not significant. Depending on the teenager and their social circumstances there may have been many more demands on their weekly wages and the actual disposable income from their earnings may have been low. In his autobiography about growing up in the 1950s in Dublin, Gabriel Duffy dedicated an entire chapter of his memoir to the radio and the music he listened to on Radio Luxembourg and the American Forces Network (AFN). He also detailed the importance of jazz, rock'n'roll and records in his teenage years and described how

> Nobody could ban the sale of rock'n'roll records however. I duly acquired a small
> collection of shellac '78s', playing them on an old Garrard deck which needed the
> needle replacing after every four or five 'plays'. Each record cost six-and-eight
> pence in the old coinage (30p today), or a good week's pocket money in our circle.

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[341] Ibid.
[342] *The Irish Times*, 24 March 1956
[343] *The Irish Times*, 10 August 1957
[344] *The Times Pictorial*, 23 June 1956

> Boxes of needles were fortunately cheap. Long playing records were well beyond our budget, as indeed were the dual needle record players they required. A household that had both became a hot venue for group listening. Instead of comics we now swapped rock and roll records and you soon got your fill of Haley, Presley, Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard and other legends-to-be. Juke boxes in ice cream parlours and chip shops did a (truly) roaring trade.[345]

He later detailed how

> After the snooker hall, when we weren't dancing (drinking comes later), we would often hike off, three or four of us, for a music session in someone's parlour.[346]

This account indicates that, for some Irish teenagers at least, buying and playing records was a communal activity and sharing music with friends provided greater access to popular music and the necessary technology to play it on. A contributor to the Cork Folklore Project also described the importance of music as a group activity. He explained how he would meet with friends in a particular spot in the city on a regular basis and they would have a big sing-a-long of popular music tracks from the radio and the movies.[347] The communal nature of these activities suggests that teenagers were resourceful in overcoming the scarcity which might have otherwise prevented them from accessing popular culture. This is also evident in the practices of renting, sharing, swapping and exchanging comic books and magazines which will be covered in more detail in Chapter 5. Both of the above accounts relate to urban centres. There are no such accounts available for rural areas which makes it difficult to present any inference as to what the situation would have been in the countryside. It is probably safe to assume that meeting with peers in this manner and buying records was more difficult for rural teenagers.

There were many ways for teenagers to access the music and celebrities of the day. As a high percentage of the rock 'n' roll stars were also movie stars so teenagers could engage with these stars in the cinema as well as on the airwaves. An article from the *Farmers Journal* from January 1958 shows the passion Irish teenagers held for American stars. They elected Elvis Presley the top film star in a poll in the newspaper but when the resident film critic condemned his 'vulgar gyrations' the paper was flooded with letters 'from Galway, Waterford, Donegal, endorsing the

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[345] Gabriel Duffy, *Sham to Rock: Growing Up in Forties and Fifties Dublin*, (Derbyshire, 2003), p.163
[346] Ibid, p.175
[347] Cork Folklore Project, Liam Ó hÚigín, 25 August 2011, p.22

"poll" decision and advising the film critic to "drop dead!"".[348] This incident demonstrates not only the popularity of international stars but also the common use of contemporary teenage terminologies like 'drop dead'. This is a further indication that Irish teenagers were adopting teenage culture in the many ways that were accessible to them including language.

Similar patterns of speech are located in the article mentioned earlier from the *Sunday Independent* in which a teenager wrote 'we are not crazy-mixed-up kids. We will be greater crusaders than ever if the adults give us half a chance. But until they do –don't let them brand us the down beat generation because we cover up our ideals with a Hula-Hoop'.[349] By extracting the elements contained in this passage we can identify several intonations of international youth culture; firstly the assertive and confrontational nature of the article ('don't let them brand us') is very representative of the rebel teen associated with many of the juvenile films of the decade. The unification of the youth audience in the 'us' against 'them' approach is typical of teenage cultural identification, and is especially representative of American teenage culture in the 1950s, as forming something unique by defining itself against dominant adult culture.[350] Finally the use of terms like 'crazy-mixed-up kids' and 'down beat generation', as well as the cultural references to items like the Hula-Hoop all indicate a strong awareness and identification of Irish teens with their international counterparts.

A letter in support of the above article from a Roscommon teenager some weeks later further confirms this identification when the teenager argued that young people from London, Paris, Tokyo and Timbuktu were all dancing to the popular rhythms of jazz, rock 'n' roll, jive and cha-cha. The teenager closes the letter with the statement 'The world is becoming international through teenagers everywhere having like cultural interests'.[351] In respect of young people in Ireland some trends were more accessible than others and it is repeatedly evident that Irish teens adapted international trends in ways that they could; often this depended on cost rather than availability. A similar situation is identified in Britain by Adrian Horn in his book, *Juke Box Britain: Americanisation and Youth Culture 1945-1960*. He concludes that much of what can be identified as imported culture was in practice 'mediated through British social, economic and

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[348] *The Farmers Journal*, 4 January 1958
[349] *The Sunday Independent*, 14 December 1958
[350] James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s*, (New York, 1986), pp. 11- 17
[351] *The Sunday Independent*, 28 December 1958

cultural conditions' to create a version of that mass cultural trend that then became specific to British youth culture.[352]

Many Ways to Engage – Commodity Culture and Popular Crazes in Ireland

Besides music and films there were many other ways for young people in Ireland to engage with international youth culture. The aforementioned hula hoop arrived in Ireland officially in 1958 when a well known Dublin department store claimed to be the first to launch the product. The store brought in an English model trained in the art of the hula hoop to demonstrate the product and trained two Irish models and two boys who then continued the in-store demonstrations for the Irish public.[353] The hula hoop was famed as a fun sport for young people and a slimming device for women. Hula hoop competitions quickly became a popular pastime and were included in ballroom dances around the country as well as family events. The 'Monster Dancing Carnival' held at the Showground's in Ballinsloe from March 29th to April 12th 1959 included tango, reel-set and hula hoop competitions.[354] The selection of these three competitions as some of the highlights of the festival indicates the comfortable placing, even in rural areas, of new popular culture trends with the more traditional entertainment of the reel-set. Although the hula hoop was associated with women and slimming it appears to have appealed to both sexes in the younger generations. For instance, the Catholic Young Men's Society in Killorglin, Co. Kerry held a Hula Hoop Dance in December 1958.[355] There was a special prize for the best performer and the hula hoops were provided.

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[352] Adrian Horn, *Juke Box Britain: Americanisation and Youth Culture 1945-1960*, (Manchester, 2009) p. 2
[353] *The Irish Times*, 6 November 1958
[354] *The Connacht Tribune*, 14 March 1959
[355] *The Kerryman*, 13 December 1958

Figure 9 Teenage Magic   **Figure 10 Teenage Week**   **Figure 11 Miss Twilfit**

For young people around the country there were many ways to engage with their teenage idols through the arrival of mass cultural products. Irish girls could purchase American costume jewellery adorned with stars of music and film through the post.[356] Tommy Steele clip-on earrings could be purchased including postage costs for 3/6. A book brooch that opened out with 12 photographs of top singing stars could be bought including postage costs for 5/-. These products were described as 'the rage of the U.S.A.' in the advert. Fashion and beauty products were also readily available and marketed at young women and girls. As the 1950s progressed more newspapers and magazines started to include sections on teenage fashion, beauty and other interests. *The Irish Times* carried a regular column entitled 'Youth's the Thing', the *Irish Press* had a teenage beauty column and fashion journalists also started to include teenage fashion trends in their seasonal reports. Women's magazines regularly included sections aimed at teenagers that covered topics including fashion, beauty, employment and dating. Irish companies started to manufacture more products aimed solely at the teenage market as opposed to children. In the mid-1950s for instance, Clark's Ireland Ltd issued a range of shoes for the teenager with the tag line 'fit young feet and young ideas'. [357]

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[356] *The Connacht Tribune*, 9 November 1957
[357] *The Irish Times*, 8 November 1956

Individual shops catering for teenagers were unusual in Ireland, with only one identifiable shop based in Dublin called 'The Teenager Shop' that appears to have been aimed directly at the teenage market. On closer inspection, 'The Teenager Shop' specialised in evening and day dresses, suggesting it was more of a formal boutique for debutantes rather than a shop filled with the latest youth culture must-haves.[358] As the 1950s progressed, however, the large department stores did start to advertise teenage sections and styles in their regular newspaper adverts. The series of adverts (Figure 9,10,11) above show that goods designed for teenagers included coats, dresses, stockings, bras and shoes. These items became a more regular component of general fashion advertising and reflected a growing awareness of the teenage market.[359] Products from the health, beauty and cosmetics industries addressed the teenage audience with much higher frequency than fashion and clothing. Although products for adolescents clearly existed before the World War II, there was an enormous focus on the teenage market as a distinctive consumer group after 1945.[360] So while it was not entirely new that beauty creams and hair products were sold to the youth market what occurred in the post-war period was a greater concentration of products aimed solely at the youth market. There was a wide range of factors that initiated a post-war increase in consumer culture in western societies. In America these factors included the alleviation of wartime restrictions, full employment during the war that resulted in the accumulation of personal savings and the availability of new products and goods.[361] James Obelkevich argues that post-war in Britain consumer culture was less about affluence and more about the democratisation of goods.[362] He contends that although British society remained essentially unequal in many other ways consumer goods became 'more equally or less unequally distributed than wealth'.[363] He also claims that the rise of teenage culture in Britain was less about revolt and more about control over consumption and spending in a way unimaginable to previous generations. Teenagers spent their disposable income on themselves and this repositioned them both socially and economically. Oral histories provided in the book *Irish Women at Work 1930-1960* reveal that for many women the disposable income gained through

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[358] *The Irish Times*, 26 July 1950

[359] Image 4.a *The Irish Independent*, 14 October 1959
   Image 4.b *The Irish Independent*, 26 November 1957
   Image 4.c *The Connacht Tribune*, 7 December 1957

[360] James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s*, (Oxford, 1986), p.204

[361] Randal M. Miller, *Daily Life Through American History in Primary Documents*, (California, 2012), p. 8

[362] James Obelkevisch, 'Consumption' in James Obelkevisch and Peter Catterall (eds), *Understanding Post-war British Society,* (Oxon, 1994), p.149

[363] Ibid

working from an early age provided them with greater autonomy over their leisure activities and what they wore.[364]

Conclusion

In many ways the situation for Irish teenagers was quite different to their American and British counterparts. As previous chapters have demonstrated their levels of personal freedom and disposable income may have been far less than in other nations and were still deeply affected by wider social, economic and family structures. In Ireland the post-war boom was modest in comparison with most other European countries. Between the years 1949 and 1956 real national income in Ireland increased by only 8 per cent compared with approximately 40 per cent in most other Western European societies in the same time period.[365] A complex set of reasons was to blame for why Ireland did not develop economically on the same trajectory as other western countries. A conservative government and continued protectionist economic policies certainly stymied opportunities for economic expansion.[366] Bernadette Whelan surmises that 'emigration, unemployment and falling industrial output characterised much of the 1950s' and that the 'symbols of American prosperity remained elusive for most workers though still sought after'.[367] John Storey argues that 'people are not reducible to the commodities they consume' and in regard to Ireland in the 1950s it is equally important to avoid viewing people only in terms of the commodities they did not consume.[368] The slow growth of the economy and high levels of political and cultural conservatism in the post-war period in Ireland prevented people and especially teenagers from fully engaging in mass and consumer culture available elsewhere (television is the perfect example). Ireland was not such a closed society, however, that the public could be prevented completely from accessing and participating in popular culture. The media and popular culture were central to gaining a clear understanding of the modern lifestyles, goods and consumer culture available in other nations. Emigration, it could be argued, was the final option available to many who wanted to move towards a more affluent, modern life.

For the majority of the population who remained in Ireland popular culture, such as films, newspapers, magazines, radio programmes, advertisements and other publications, informed

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[364] Elizabeth Kiely and Máire Leane, *Irish women at work 1930-1960: An oral history*, (Kildare, 2012), p.131

[365] John L. Pratschke, 'Business and Labour in Irish Society', in J.J. Lee (ed), *Ireland 1945-70*, (Dublin, 1979), p. 39

[366] Kieran A. Kennedy, 'Industrial Development', in Kieran A. Kennedy, (ed), *From Famine to Feast: Economic and Social Change in Ireland 1847-1997*, (Dublin, 1998), p. 79

[367] Bernadette Whelan, *Ireland and the Marshall Plan,* (Dublin, 2000), p.358

[368] John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, (5th Edition, Essex, 2009), p.48

Irish consumers about the modern products and lifestyles that were available to them but financial hardship prevented them from purchasing. Interviews and articles very much support the hypothesis that Irish people were desirous of modern lifestyles and in particular these aspirations were expressed by women and young people. Advertising was the industry that encapsulated all these dreams and aspirations and attached them to items for consumption. Advertisements were component parts of the expanding field of communications that related to consumer goods and life choices in the 1950s. They represent, in this study, an important element of mass communication that enabled Irish consumers to engage with modern products and lifestyles that remained beyond their reach for the most part. Since there was a proliferation of publications including newspapers and magazines that were available in Ireland but generated in the UK and elsewhere it is safe to assume that Irish people had access to information about items that were either not available to them in Ireland yet or only available to those with a significant level of disposable income. The accoutrements of a modern lifestyle were therefore available on a sliding scale depending on spending power as well as interest. It is also necessary to highlight that some popular culture such as films and advertisements may have given the impression that these items were available on a much wider scale than they actually were to people in the United States. The subsequent social upheaval of the 1960s demonstrated that there were many sections of American society experiencing high levels of disadvantage during the Cold War despite the impressions created by governmental organisations and the industries surrounding mass cultural productions which presented an idealised version of American life and culture to the rest of the world.[369]

For young consumers in Ireland smaller items such as beauty creams, hair accessories, perfume and make-up were more likely to be within their meagre budgets. The collection of advertisements below reflect this conclusion as there was a concentration of adverts directly addressing the teenager in the areas of personal hygiene, sweets, cigarettes and beauty creams especially those dealing with 'problem skin'.[370] Beauty adverts that included young women and girls but address older women as the consumer (such as beauty creams promising more youthful

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[369] Martin Halliwell, *American Culture in the 1950s*, (Edinburgh, 2007), p.4

[370] Figure 12 *The Sunday Independent*, 15 November 1959
Figure 13 *The Sunday Independent*, 15 November 1959
Figure 14 *The Irish Independent*, 14 November 1956
Figure 15 *The Irish Independent*, 24 October 1952
Figure 16 *The Irish Press*, 16 December 1958
Figure 17 *The Irish Independent*, 6 September 1954
Figure 18 *The Irish Independent*, 27 August 1958
Figure 19*The Irish Independent*, 14 June 1956
Figure 20 *The Irish Independent*, 29 June 1956

skin) are not included in the adverts shown here, instead only adverts that exclusively promote products aimed at the teenage market have been selected. It is interesting to note that many of the adverts engage with the topic of dating or illustrate males and females socialising together. Aside from the adverts illustrated below other adverts promoting deodorant, make-up and also pre-made foods such as cakes regularly use the narrative of dating as a central theme. The stories were almost always wholesome in nature and promoted the notion that personal hygiene and presentation were essential to attracting a boyfriend or girlfriend and achieving happiness. This style of advert is also common in publications that would have crossed over from the UK, such as the advert from 'Practical Householder' magazine below promoting boilers for constant hot water.[371] Products and services dedicated to improving the body and personal cleanliness became an expanding market in the post-war period in Britain. Deodorant, for instance, was still only being used occasionally by 32 per cent of women in the UK by 1957 but this had increased to 50 per cent of the population using it daily by 1966.[372] Therefore, the similarity of these adverts and the products marketed in Irish publications with those in Britain indicates that Irish teenagers were interacting with the same set of codes and devices as their British counterparts.

The arrival of mass production and mass consumption was a universal development and a defining characteristic of the post-war experience of democratic western societies.[373] In many respects, people in Ireland experienced these developments to a lesser degree than citizens of Britain and the United States; the late arrival of a national television station being a very specific difference in experience. However, there was enough information available to enable Irish teens to engage with a great deal of the popular crazes, cultural changes and fashion trends in a similar way to their international counterparts. A good example of the transfer of such an international trend is the popularity of skiffle music in Ireland during the 1950s. There was an explosion of Skiffle music (an adaption of African-American folk music) in Britain in the second half of the 1950s.[374] The trend proved similarly popular in Ireland with skiffle bands touring dance halls around the country. So popular was the trend in Ireland that it caused an *Irish Times* correspondent to lament 'the air is being rent by a cacophony of Skiffle, Calypso, exaggerated Rock and Roll and harmony vocals'.[375] The trend also extended to clothing with a fashion writer

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[371] Figure 21 *The Practical Householder*, July 1959

[372] James Obelkevisch, 'Consumption' in James Obelkevisch and Peter Catterall (eds), *Understanding Post-war British Society,* (Oxon, 1994), p.148

[373] Frank Mort, 'The Commercial Domain: Advertising and the Cultural Management of Demand' in Becky Conekin, Frank Mort and Chris Waters (eds), *Moments of Modernity: Reconstructing Britain 1945 -1964,* (London, 1999), pp. 56-57

[374] James E. Perone, *Mods, Rockers and the Music of the British Invasion*, (Connecticut, 2009), pp. 7-35

[375] *The Irish Times*, 14 September 1957

for the *Sunday Independent* commenting in 1958 that 'the newest outfit seen around the coffee bars and dancehalls is the skiffle shirt-and-skirt set'.[376] The popularity of skiffle (but also its quick adoption into mainstream culture) is indicated in its inclusion in the line-up of attractions at Bray Civic Week in July 1959 where entertainment included 'open-air film shows, skiffle groups, a waiters' race, baby show, children's fancy dress competition, a variety show with Roy Croft and a dog show'.[377] The adoption of these trends in both music and fashion, on an almost identical trajectory to the UK, indicates that young people in Ireland were quickly adapting international youth culture crazes. It also presents yet another example of how teenagers in Ireland found multiple ways to access and participate in international teenage culture despite the additional economic and social challenges of everyday life in Ireland in the 1950s. The next chapter focuses on the social space as an important site for the expression of collective identities of the new teenager.

Figure 12 Colgate

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[376] *The Sunday Independent*, 19 October 1958
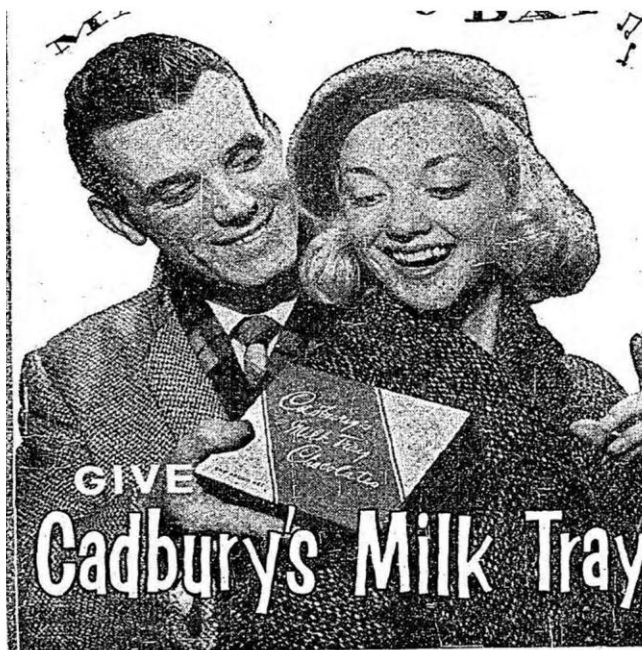[377] *The Irish Times*, 10 July 1959

Figure 13 Give Cadburys

Figure 14 Hair Removal

Figure 15 Teenage Skin Boy

Figure 16 Spots & Pimples Girl

Figure 17 Rolo Keeps you Going

Figure 18 Players

Figure 19 Knights Castle

Figure 20 Bac-Stick

Figure 21 A Girl with a Date

Chapter 4 – Closer to Home

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to identify and analyse the social spaces available to teenagers in 1950s Ireland. Some of the accessible social spaces included dancehalls, cinemas, youth clubs and youth hostels. These spaces had to be mediated through a number of factors and conditions which deeply affected the way in which the spaces were used and understood. French theorist Henri Lefebvre describes the 'hypercomplexity' of social spaces in that they embrace 'individual entities and peculiarities, relatively fixed points, movements and flows and waves – some interpenetrating, others in conflict'.[378] Social spaces naturally create multiple meanings depending on the owners, users, location and categorisation. This makes it difficult to isolate one workable definition of what is understood by or incorporated into the term 'social space'. Lefebvre argues that the social space 'cannot be reduced to the rank of a simple object' because it 'subsumes things produced, and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity'.[379] Therefore, in order to properly analyse the social spaces occupied by teenagers in Ireland during the 1950s, it is necessary to analyse each space on its own merit attempting at each juncture to understand the relationships between the intentions of those who created and designed these spaces and those using them.

The complexity of analysing youth-orientated spaces is well represented in Carole Holohan's doctoral thesis, in which she examines youth welfare work in the Archdiocese of Dublin between 1956 and 1962.[380] She carefully outlines how Church authorities attempted to control the administration of youth welfare in the city by creating peer-led sodalities connected with local parish networks. Holohan identifies a spectrum of reasons why these clubs failed in their task, including difficulties in connecting community organisations, class conflict and the availability of other more popular commercial social spaces. This indicates the multiple strata of investment in social spaces both by the creators, the users and even the intended user. Interrogating these 'interrelationships' offers an opportunity to understand more clearly the social tensions and intentions related to youth culture in 1950s Ireland.

The social construction of individual social spaces greatly influences the way in which they can be analysed. Some spaces were created with the purpose of offering teenagers vocational

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[378] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (Massachusetts, 1991), p. 88
[379] Ibid, p.73
[380] Carole Holohan, 'Every Generation has its Task: Attitudes to Irish Youth in the 1960s' (PhD thesis, University College Dublin, 2009), pp. 169-202

training, supervised leisure facilities or charitable support. Public spaces which came to be occupied by teenagers such as particular walks, town squares or meeting points grew organically through peer communication. Commercial spaces with dedicated teenage facilities were less common. Some commercial spaces were appropriated by the teenagers themselves and other spaces created events to attract teenage consumers. However, the experience for the majority of Irish teenagers, most especially those in rural areas, was that of multiple-use community-based social spaces such as the local community hall which had to accommodate a variety of events and age groups. Although there were teenage dances in rural areas they were usually not regular occasions and often formed part of annual festivals and events. The ways in which teenagers operated within these community spaces were complex and therefore not easy to analyse. Michel de Certeau's theory of tactics is most useful here –he argues that 'a tactic insinuates itself into the other's place without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance.'[381] Opportunities to operate outside the existing systems were limited in 1950s Ireland so it was necessary for teenagers to shape their own experience from inside larger social conventions and institutions. Some spaces afforded greater flexibility for individual and collective expression and this will be embedded in the analysis of youth organisations and popular culture throughout this chapter.

As discussed in the introduction, the term popular culture in this thesis extends to all of the popular activities available to teenagers in the 1950s in Ireland. This includes films, music, pastimes, reading materials and social spaces. The focus in this chapter is on spaces and activities; but there are cases when these themes overlap with the popular culture documents described in other chapters such as films and magazines. In this chapter the cinema is investigated as a social space. The cinema was a place to meet peers, to go on dates and to express individual and collective identities. The importance of cinema space, therefore, extended beyond the exhibition of teenpics; it provided teenagers with a space to participate in teenage culture both on a local and global level. This is located in the responses of Irish teenagers to Hollywood film texts and in their use of other social spaces within the cinema. The social and economic issues, described in chapters one and two, also shaped the experience of young people in Ireland and greatly impinged on and informed how they engaged with the popular cultural experiences outlined below. The place to begin, however, is with greatest area of disparity and aside from employment opportunities, the biggest difference between the experience of urban and rural youths can be seen in the availability of social spaces.

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[381] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (California, 1984), p. xix

Rural Youth

Social and economic conditions in Ireland during the 1950s ensured that all young people faced serious challenges as they grew into adults. Rural youth carried the additional burden of geographic disadvantage, living in remote areas that made finding work, meeting peers, achieving independent living and accessing popular culture more difficult for rural youth than their urban counterparts. The Limerick Rural Survey Interim Report on Migration clearly articulated this situation when it reported that

> The future of those young people who stay in the rural areas under the present
> conditions is hopelessly limited and unrewarding. Even a casual observer cannot fail
> to see the profound malaise which has stricken some rural areas.[382]

Rural isolation also reduced the opportunities for 'collective identity', which Nick Bentley specifies as central to the emergence of the teenager as a separate lifecycle during the 1950s in Britain.[383] Internationally and in Ireland young people were becoming more visible for both positive and negative reasons. There were two main components to this new focused identification of teenagers as a distinct socio-cultural cohort they emerged firstly as a new consumer group and secondly as a potential social threat.[384] Although discourses of youth in Ireland circulated around these two issues, there were particular social and economic factors, such as the lack of a post-war boom and the powerful position of the Catholic Church, which skewed some of the focus on youth-related matters.

In Ireland, the high levels of emigration among people under 25 years old drew additional attention to this cohort. Outrage at the persistent loss of young people from the countryside was one of the most consistent public discourses of the 1950s in Ireland. Finding a solution to the problem proved elusive despite the efforts of both voluntary and governmental organisations. The topics of emigration and economic stagnation have dominated academic research of the 1950s despite the fact, as Enda Delaney has pointed out, that almost every decade of the twentieth century in Ireland experienced considerable levels of emigration.[385] There has also been a tendency in academic scholarship to focus solely on the experience of the migrant, whereas the focus of this study is the cohort of young people who remained in Ireland during

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[382] Limerick Rural Survey, Interim Report, Migration, July 1960
[383] Nick Bentley, 'The Young Ones: A Reassessment of the British New Left's Representation of 1950s Youth Subcultures', in *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (2005), p.65
[384] Ibid, p.65
[385] Enda Delaney, *Irish Emigration since 1921*, (Dublin, 2002), p. 1

the 1950s. Inevitably, the issue of emigration loomed so large that it significantly affected those young people who remained in Ireland in a variety of ways. Preventing emigration was one of the primary focuses of many rural youth organisations and the issue often dominated the investment of social and governmental funding for teenagers especially in rural areas. Almost every report and commission that investigated youth related social problems during the 1950s in Ireland identified two key challenges in preventing emigration –the availability of suitable employment and the provision of entertainment opportunities. The agenda of many of the youth organisations that functioned in rural areas was to address these two problem areas. These youth organisations offered vocational training and provide opportunities for social interaction in an attempt to stem the numbers migrating to towns and cities in Ireland and larger urban centres abroad. In many cases the emphasis was placed on training in agricultural and domestic sciences. The social element of these organisations was based on the necessity for young people to work together on projects, challenges and competitions as well as entertainment activities such as drama, music, sports and trips away.

Local youth clubs, national organisations and religious groups created spaces for teenagers to meet and opportunities for them to advance their employment prospects. It was more difficult for commercial enterprises to succeed in rural areas owing to a shrinking rural population and poorly developed public amenities such as local halls and transport, and some parts of the West of Ireland were still in the process of electrification in the early 1950s. Therefore, commercial enterprises such as billiards clubs, record shops, cafes and multiple dance halls were not available in rural areas except possibly to young people who lived close enough to access the facilities of larger towns. Often amenities for young people were closely linked to local community and parish networks. Many of the spaces available to rural youth were not exclusive and had to facilitate multiple uses and users. Some religious groups such as the Legion of Mary supported junior sections as part of the overall organisation and this did allow for some separation of age cohorts.[386] However it was a far more common experience for rural youth to have to share their social spaces with older users within community networks that would have intersected family, class, education and work. The limitations of these spaces understandably altered the experiences of young people in rural areas when compared with those of many urban teens who would have had greater opportunities to meet and socialise in spaces exclusively created by and for teenagers. This is not to say that all urban teens enjoyed a plethora of open, unsupervised

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[386] *The Official Handbook of the Legion of Mary*, (Dublin, 1953), pp.113-115

spaces. It is simply by direct comparison with their rural counterparts that urban Irish teens appeared to have a wider range of uncontrolled spaces.

In comparison with their British or American counterparts young people in Ireland had far fewer opportunities to mingle freely with their peers or access cheap mass products like clothes, records and make-up. For instance, increased prosperity in the post-war period meant that many American teenagers had access to a motorcar. The pastime of 'cruising', which involved driving around in a car with friends, girlfriends or boyfriends to meet with other peers, was a type of freedom that Irish teenagers could only dream about or watch enviously on the movie screen.[387] It would also be incorrect to assume that an easy, free, prosperous life was available to all teenagers in 1950s America. Large sections of American society aside from the white, middle-class still experienced deep social and economic disadvantages during the 1950s.[388] Despite the post war boom, many families located in the inner cities and rural America continued to experience high levels of poverty.[389] However, it is unlikely that Irish teenagers were fully aware of these social difficulties in the United States, since the image of American life and teenage culture was filtered for the most part through popular culture documents such as films which presented a very polished and idealised image of American society. Stanley Cohen outlines that 'since its creation in the fifties, a mainstream of teenage entertainment culture has been conformist in character, and conspicuous for its passivity and continuity with adult values'.[390] In other words even in films which portrayed teenage rebellion or juvenile delinquency, these themes were usually resolved within traditional narrative conventions and ideologies of social order. Irish teenagers would have come into contact with the articles on teenage crime, drugs and delinquency in the United States through newspapers and magazines. Chapter 5 discusses horror comic which may have been the one area of popular culture, accessed by Irish teenagers in the 1950s, where American society was not idealised.[391] However, in general, the image of American teen life filtered through popular culture in the 1950s was glamorous, affluent and rebellious.

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[387] William H. Young, Nancy K. Young, *The 1950s*, (Connecticut, 2004), p.29

[388] Marilyn Coleman, Lawrence H. Gangong and Kelly Warzinik, *Family Life in 20th Century* America, (Connecticut, 2007), p.217

[389] Gary A. Donaldson, *The Making of Modern America*: *The Nation from 1945 to present*, (Maryland, 2012), pp. 55-57

[390] Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panic,* (3rd edition, Oxon, 2002), p.205

[391] The press in Ireland also widely reported the incidents surrounding the Little Rock Crisis in Arkansas in 1957 and the segregation of African American students at the Little Rock Central High School.

For young people in rural Ireland the lack of dedicated teenage spaces was just one of the many layers of disadvantage experienced. Shared social spaces created particular tensions and required cross community compromises. Both sides, those trying to change social practices and those trying to maintain them, encountered some resistance but new styles and ideas were incorporated sometimes simply because of economic necessity. The advert shown in **Figure 22** below indicates that teenagers in Kilruane, North Tipperary could expect to enjoy half an hour of rock'n'roll at a dance in the local hall.[392] A similar selection of music was available in Causeway, Co. Kerry as shown in **Figure 23**, where revellers were invited to 'Rock'n'Roll or Dance a grand old Irish Reel' at the Shannon Ballroom.[393] This demonstrates the commercial imperative for bands playing in rural areas to appeal to cross-community and cross-generational tastes and interests. It is important not to assume that all teenagers were interested solely in rock'n'roll and rejected traditional musical styles. Along with the examples of the uptake of popular culture products such as hula-hoops in chapter 3, the adverts do show that teenage interests and culture were making an impact on Irish society in the 1950s throughout the country. This is not to say that teenage culture was welcomed and accepted everywhere. A newspaper article from 1956 reported that a band playing to local crowds in Navan on New Year's Eve 'resisted' playing rock'n'roll despite persistent chants from a section of the crowd.[394] The article goes onto report how 'a highly vocal group consisting of young people, continued to roam the streets for about an hour' after the main crowds had cleared away.[395] The *Donegal News* reported on the concerns expressed by enthusiasts of Irish dance that rock'n'roll had surpassed traditional dance in popularity.[396] The article discussed how local G.A.A. clubs, which organised regular fundraising dances in their halls, no longer held céilís as they failed to draw the same crowds as rock'n'roll dances. Some of the cultural tensions and misunderstandings that arose from shared social spaces are well represented in the article which humorously described how 'one rather sedate gentleman was confounded on seeing a young couple lost in the abandon of the "roll" in a Gaeltacht dance hall.'[397]

Concerns around the erosion of national culture formed one of the main lines of tension in relation to imported and mass culture. This fear of what Dominic Strinati describes as the 'eclipse of folk culture' arose internationally at this time as the widespread consumption of mass

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[392] *The Nenagh Guardian*, 24 November 1956

[393] *The Kerryman,* 26 January 1957

[394] *The Meath Chronicle*, 5 January 1957

[395] Ibid

[396] *The Donegal News*, 26 January 1957

[397] *The Donegal News*, 26 January 1957

cultural products appeared to threaten older established art forms.[398] There were multiple institutions in Ireland working towards the restoration of national cultural customs and practices, including the Irish language, music, sports and dance. Though anxieties were expressed with some regularity as to the impact of imported mass cultural products it appears to have been far less of an issue in Ireland than it may have been across other European countries. Issues of anti-Americanism in European countries after 1945 are difficult to track with any sense of universality; research has indicated that anti-American sentiment in Britain was far less apparent than in France and that across Europe there were considerable regional variations in responses to the importation of American culture.[399] Although very little research has been carried out on anti-American sentiment in post-war Ireland the adverts below and many others indicate that often more traditional cultural practices and newer mass market products simply intermeshed to create a cohesive popular culture experience that did not eradicate either entity. Furthermore **Figure 24** below confirms that although access to teenage culture may have been restricted in rural areas there were nonetheless some occasions when rural teens ruled and could go to see the 'King of Rock'n'Roll...cut some real cool rugs for the cats'.[400] The king here refers to the John 'Scissors', part of a dance duo known as 'Scissors and Kay', who toured ballrooms around Ireland demonstrating rock'n'roll dance styles.[401] The dance couple undertook a successful tour of the four provinces of Ireland in 1957, bringing the essential rock'n'roll dance moves to all corners of the island.[402]

In an article for the Muintir na Tire publication *The Landmark* Richard Roche describes the significance of the country dance:

> In the country a dance is a great event of no mean importance, deserving of comparison with such all-important rural events as Confirmation Day, Pattern Day, the local point-to-point races or the Muintir na Tire Show Day.[403]

Although this article was written in 1951, and was published a few years before the arrival of rock'n'roll and the expansion of a more identifiable teenage culture, it describes clearly the established events on the social calendar of rural Ireland. Religious and community events

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[398] Dominic Strinati, *Introduction to the Theories of Popular Culture*, (New York, 1995), p.13

[399] Alexander Stephan, 'Cold War Alliances and the Emergence of Transatlantic Competition: An Introduction' in Alexander Stephan, (ed.), *The Americanisation of Europe Culture, Diplomacy and Anti-Americanism after 1945*, (New York, 2006), p.8, p.13

[400] *The Connacht Tribune*, 16 February 1957

[401] *The Limerick Leader*, 24 August 1957

[402] Ibid

[403] Richard Roche, 'Country Dance' in *The Landmark*, Vol. 7, No. 9, September 1950, p.2

punctuated the year and offered important opportunities to meet peers, which were as valuable as many other aspects of these occasions. The list of events was largely restricted to religious occasions. The early films from the Amharc Éireann Collection at the Irish Film Institute indicate that from the mid-1950s onwards there was a wide range of community events taking place across Ireland including regattas, beauty contests, fancy dress balls, motorbike racing, fashion shows, karting races, judo demonstrations, bird markets, basketball games and displays of mini-electric aeroplanes.

Although annual events and occasional dances were a welcome diversion for residents of all ages living in the countryside, they were not quite enough to sustain teenagers who harboured higher expectations of access to popular culture than previous generations. Young people who lived near towns had greater opportunity to socialise especially those who could cycle or walk the distance. Teenagers in truly remote areas suffered most. Young people in the 1950s often travelled great distances for their entertainment and in a newspaper interview 17-year-old Betty Brady from Kill, Co. Kildare detailed how she travelled once a week to Naas (7km) to go to the cinema and once a week to Dublin (27km) to attend a dance.[404] She also told the journalist that transport was her greatest problem and that she cycled everywhere, weather allowing. The cinema was the other major commercial space, after the dancehall, available to teenagers nationwide during the 1950s. It was arguably the least supervised space, thanks to arrival of the teenpic, creating a regular spot that was occupied solely by teenagers. The importance of the cinema space to both rural and urban youths is fully outlined later in the chapter.

Figure 22 Rock'n'Roll Half-Hour

Kilruane Hall—DANCE, Sunday Night, November 25th

Music by The Eamon O'Toole Orchestra, featuring Rock 'n Roll Half-hour

DANCING 8—12   ::   ADMISSION 3/6

Right of Admission Reserved

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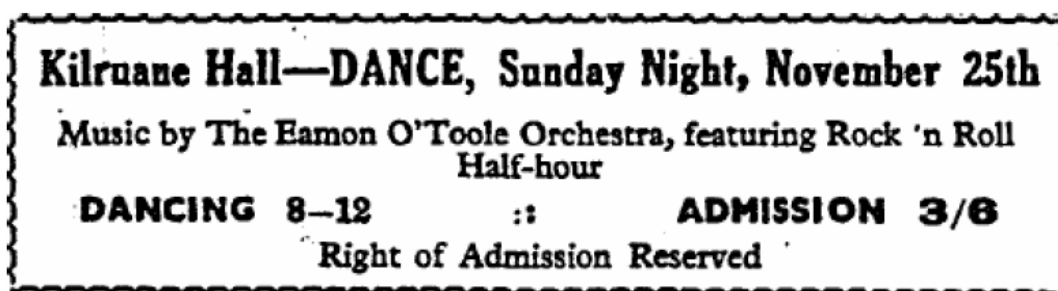
[404] *Sunday Review*, 20 September 1959

Figure 23 Shannon Ballroom

Whether you want to Rock 'n Roll or Dance a grand
old Irish Reel come along to the
SHANNON BALLROOM, Causeway
FOR THE
GRAND Re-Opening DANCE
ON SUNDAY NEXT, JANUARY 27th.
Music by — CON O'REGAN AND HIS BAND.
DANCING 8.30—12. ——— ADMISSION 2/6. 1k26

Figure 24 Scissors and Kay

esker ballroom
GLENAMADDY

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17th
DANCING
to the Music of

Rory McGuinness
AND HIS ALL-STAR ORCHESTRA
AND SHOW BAND

With the greatest sensation ever presented to Dancers in the West.
Quotation from "Pictorial" of January 25th at the Ballerina Ball-
room: "Next Monday night John 'Sissors,' King of Rock 'n Roll,
will cut some real cool rugs for the cats."
Please don't miss "Sissors and Kay," Ireland's King and Queen of
"Rock Around the Clock," who will be giving a Special Exhibition
this night.

Dancing from 9 o'clock (sharp)   Admission 6/-
MINERAL BAR
3324-16257

Rural Youth Organisations

Only a few of the youth organisations in existence in the 1950s in Ireland operated on a national
basis. The organisations that did establish themselves nationwide were often operated through
the religious orders. The Catholic Young Men's Society (CYMS), Scout Association of Ireland,
Catholic Girl Guides, An Óige and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) were the most
prominent youth organisations that were established nationwide. Many other youth clubs,
groups and organisations developed organically to attend to the needs of individual localities,
although they were usually very similar in approach, ethos and the activities they provided. By

comparison urban youth organisations often followed older models of philanthropic practice providing some vocational training, food and entertainment. Most often, however, the strongest focus was on moral guidance. A higher number of these more traditional types of youth groups/clubs were located in disadvantaged areas. Presenting young people with constructive activities in a controlled environment was the remit of almost all youth organisations in Ireland during the 1950s. The one exception to this generality was An Óige and their origins and ethos will be explored later in the chapter.

The largest organisation which focused solely on rural youth was Macra na Tuaithe (now Foróige) which was the junior branch of Macra na Feirme. The Macra na Feirme itself applied no age limit on its members; officially stating that membership was available to anyone aged from 14 to 140.[405] The main body of their members, however, consisted of young to middle-aged farmers. The central focus of Macra na Feirme was on agricultural science and education. In 1951, following some discussion of the setting up of a national youth council, Macra na Feirme initiated plans to set up a junior branch for rural youths aged between 12 and 18.[406] A sub-committee was elected to develop the proposition of a junior branch. Over the following 18 months they advanced the original proposal, reporting to the National Executive of Macra na Feirme in October 1953 on the suggested remit and parameters of the junior organisation.[407] The main principles of the organisation were:

(a) To develop a sense of responsibility through ownership
(b) To enable young boys and girls to learn by doing
(c) To train members in the keeping and interpretation of records
(d) To encourage members to improve the home and its surroundings
(e) To stimulate greater interest in rural life
(f) To develop a community spirit[408]

These principles mirrored those of the parent organisation, Macra na Feirme, which was originally developed by teachers of agricultural science. Macra na Tuaithe also modelled itself very closely on an American youth movement called the 4H Organisation (Head, Heart, Hands,

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[405] Jim Miley, *A Voice for the Country:50 Years of Macra na Feirme*, (Dublin, 1994), p. 11
[406] Minutes of Meeting held by the National Council of Macra na Feirme, Dundalk, 20 July 1951, (Private Collection, Minute Books, Macra Na Feirme, Dublin)
[407] Minutes of Meeting held by the National Council of Macra na Feirme, Dublin, 28 October 1953, (Private Collection, Minute Books, Macra Na Feirme, Dublin)
[408] Ibid

Health) which strongly promoted 'learning by doing'.[409] Several committee members travelled to the United States as part of a sponsored international farm youth exchange scheme and worked directly with the 4H initiative for up to 6 months.[410] Engagement with international organisations proved financially fruitful for Macra na Tuaithe who were awarded a Kellogg's Foundation Grant of £30,000 in April 1958.[411] Although the grant stipulated the way in which the money could be spent over a 5-year period, it secured some financial stability for the organisation beyond the decade of its foundation. The adoption of the core principles and activities of the 4H initiative into Macra na Tuaithe also indicated some correlation of experience between rural youth in the USA and Ireland. Certainly high levels of migration from rural areas to large industrial cities were a feature of post-war American demographic trends.[412]

Practical, hands-on learning was at the centre of the ethos of Macra na Tuaithe. One of the ways that they engaged members in learning was by setting up individual and group projects that simulated real-life farming practices. Teenagers were allowed to take charge of and direct the projects themselves with the support and supervision of local group leaders. Projects that were encouraged included rearing an animal for sale or growing a field of crops.[413] Girls were also encouraged to take up projects such as home furnishing and repair, bee-keeping and craftwork.[414] Individual clubs could also work on larger projects such as maintaining public spaces with flowers and other plants, local history studies and making collections and brochures of local wild plants and weeds. Instruction and support was provided by local leaders although national courses and events were also regularly organised.

The National Bank of Ireland supported a credit scheme on behalf of Macra na Tuaithe. A loan of £10 could be extended to teenage members without security to invest in approved profit-making ventures, such as rearing of a farm animal, weaving, leather-work or raising a cash crop like potatoes.[415] This scheme demonstrates the commitment of Macra na Tuaithe to fostering independent living and learning for teenagers through hands-on skill development. One of their annual events which garnered considerable levels of press coverage was the Young Farmer of the Year Competition. Regional heats around the country provided finalists who then took part in a

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[409] *Making things happen: An Exhibition of 50 years of Foróige*, (Dublin, 2002), p. 2
[410] *The Kilkenny People*, 2 August 1958
[411] Report on Special Meeting of the National Council, Dublin, 18 April 1958, (Private Collection, Minute Books, Macra Na Feirme, Dublin)
[412] Gary A. Donaldson, *The Making of Modern America*: *The Nation from 1945 to Present*, (Maryland, 2012), p.5
[413] *The Meath Chronicle*, 4 November 1958
[414] Ibid
[415] *The Irish Press*, 13 November 1958

national final. The first competition was organised in 1958 and entrants had to complete a practical project in order to qualify to represent their local club.[416] Participants were expected to draw up a plan with the help of a local leader and then keep accurate accounts of the time, money and materials required to execute the project. A balance sheet was also part of the final submission.[417] Media coverage of the event underlines some gender bias in the suggestion of projects for boys and girls; rearing of animals or growing of a cash crop were the suggestions for boys while making a dress or decorating a room were suggested for female entrants.[418] This does not mean that girls were restricted in their activities. Eilis Cooney represented Waterford in the national heats with a project that involved rearing turkeys.[419] Out of six regional finalists two were female, although ultimately neither was among final three participants.[420] The affiliation of the organisation was still predominantly male but the leadership did attempt to address this gender imbalance when they hired a 'pretty' female domestic economy instructress to tour the country in an attempt to boost membership numbers and attract more female participants.[421]

Considering the prevailing social conservatism in Ireland at the time and the fact that Macra na Tuaithe were an organisation aimed at rural Ireland they were rather progressive in its approach. Although its attitude to female members may not have been groundbreaking young women were certainly encouraged to participate and at a local level it were supported in undertaking any agricultural task they wished, ensuring some level of equality. The loan scheme and other projects allowed teenagers space to learn at their own pace and they offered a variety of other classes on disease and nutrition, land reclamation and maintenance of farm buildings.[422] Macra na Tuaithe displayed an understanding that not all young people from rural backgrounds would end up working the land and their aim was to supply young members with practical, transferable skills which would be useful in any future employment.[423] Carole Holohan outlines how Archbishop Charles McQuaid was displeased by the lack of moral and religious instruction included in the guidance and training supplied by Macra na Tuaithe.[424] She also shows how his attempts to influence their institutional framework was resisted strongly by the leaders of the

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[416] *The Tuam Herald*, 11 January 1958
[417] Ibid
[418] Ibid
[419] *The Munster Express*, 21 November 1958
[420] *Irish Farmers Journal,* 13 December 1958
[421] *The Waterford News*, 13 February 1959
   The Sunday Press, 8 March 1959
[422] *The Farmers Journal*, 24 October 1959
[423] *The Evening Press*, 2 March 1959
[424] Carole Holohan, 'Every Generation has its Task: Attitudes to Irish Youth in the 1960s' (PhD thesis, University College Dublin, 2009), pp. 222/223

organisation. Macra na Tuaithe took a far more modern approach to youth development and welfare than many other organisations in operation in Ireland during the 1950s particularly those created by the religious orders. The overall attitude and approach of the Church to rural youth and youth work more generally was to place spiritual wellbeing and moral guidance as the primary concern in the delivery of youth services. It is important prevent all contributions of welfare and support provided by the Church and religious organisations to be perceived only in light of the recent revelations into the wide scale failures of the religious orders to protect children and young people. It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate the treatment of young people and children in Church and State institutions and a strong body of work already exists and continues to develop in relation to this subject. The attitudes of the Church in relation to the provision of social spaces for teenagers will be discussed in this chapter and the involvement of the Church in attempts to censor popular culture materials aimed at teenage audiences will also be dealt with in Chapter 5.

There are many ways in which the Church provided necessary and practical assistance to young people in gaining employment and education and this will be explored in more detail in relation to the Cork Newsboys Club. However, in their overall approach to youth protection and welfare, the concerns expressed by the Church focused mainly upon the issues of moral and spiritual well being and the dangers of unsupervised and unstructured social spaces. Another theme that appeared regularly in Church discourses around youth welfare was the danger posed by popular culture and entertainment and the desire for modern lifestyles. Such sentiments were well represented in a valedictory speech by Father Hayes at the annual congress of Muintir na Tire. In his speech he discussed how young people had been put on the incorrect path and had become overly focused on 'materialism and pleasure-loving'.[425] An article covering the event stated that, 'Father Hayes felt the urgent need to give a message to the youth of Ireland, recalling them to the paths of sacrifice and service and offering them as their standard a fiery cross'.[426] This quote characterises the tone of much of the communications by the Church in relation to the youth of the day. At the centre of much of their communication was the insistence that moral guidance should be the centre of all aspects of youth development including education, employment and most importantly of all entertainment.

Catholic newspaper *The Standard* was one of the publications that most consistently dealt with the topic of young people in society. The Church was particularly vocal in relation to rural youth

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[425] *The Landmark*, Vol.6, No. 2, September 1949
[426] Ibid

and this suggests some anxiety about the loss through emigration of a generation of Catholics who would have come from traditionally conservative backgrounds. Some of these anxieties may have been fuelled by the experience of Catholic clergy in Britain engaging with Irish migrants. In a memorandum from 1953, sent to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Ireland, the Irish Embassy in London discussed how Irish migrants were less likely to engage with services 'identified too closely with clerical endeavour.'[427] Similar sentiments were expressed in a letter from the Embassy the following year resulting from discussions with Cardinal Griffin in London who offered the advice that 'young people coming over from Ireland were inclined to shy away from activities under direct clerical guidance'.[428] Assuming that this information was available to Catholic leaders in Ireland it might at least partly explain their continual insistence that rural youth give up their obsession with modern lifestyles and remain in Ireland on a path of moral rather than material comforts.

A further example of such anxieties is clearly demonstrated in **Figure 25** below which displays an advert featured in the classified pages of the *Irish Press* in the employment section in December 1956.[429] The advert insisted on the importance of discovering the Catholic services available outside of Ireland before accepting positions of employment abroad. The existence of the advert at all and its position in the employment column indicates the presence of clear anxiety among Church authorities that Irish emigrants disengaged with the practice of their faith once they stepped outside the social regulation which applied in Ireland at the time. This further supports the argument that some of the Church's vocal opposition to many forms of popular culture and their attempts to interfere with youth organisations such as Macra na Tuaithe, who provided practical training without religious or moral instruction, were related to fears about the effects on young people of exposure to modern ideas and financial independence. Aside from the misgivings of the Church, other sources such as the Commission on Emigration and Other Employment Problems suggested that although the majority of emigrants had a lived experience similar to that of their counterparts in Ireland, there was a proportion of migrants who were perceived to 'give up the practice of their religion and to fail in the matter of sexual morality' when they started new lives abroad.[430] It is necessary to mention for the purpose of balance that both the anxieties of the Church and the insinuations contained in reports such as the one above

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[427] Memorandum for Government: Appointment of a Welfare Officer at the Embassy in London, June 1953 (Department of Foreign Affairs, DFA/402/218/6, National Archives of Ireland)

[428] Letter from Irish Embassy, London to the Department of Foreign Affairs, 10 May 1954, (Department of Foreign Affairs, DFA/402/218/6, National Archives of Ireland)

[429] *The Irish Press*, 22 December 1956

[430] 'Immigration, Emigration and Internal Migration, Part 2, The Problem of Emigration', No.324, in *Commission on Emigration and other Population Problems, 1948-1954, Majority Report,* p.139

project very conservative views of what might be perceived as a lapse of faith or sexuality. It is sufficient at this juncture to suggest that there is strong evidence to validate Church and State fears that both Irish citizens at home and abroad had developed an active interest in modern commodities and lifestyles. However the perception that exposure to these commodities and lifestyles posed some sort of danger was a reflection of conservative discourses around mass culture and the beginnings of globalisation.

Figure 25 Catholic Social Welfare Bureau

EMPLOYMENT

POSITIONS OUTSIDE IRELAND. Before accepting positions of employment outside this country, readers are advised to satisfy themselves as to facilities offered to practise their religion. The Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, 18 Westland Row, Dublin, will, on request, enquire as to availability of religious facilities.

The local youth club, catering particularly to young teenagers, was an important feature of the social spaces available throughout the country and across rural and urban divides. Although they were often linked either directly or indirectly to local parish networks through the provision of financial support or facilities they were often managed by lay members of the local community. Urban clubs were more likely to be set up and supervised directly by a religious order and Maire Ni Chionnaith's booklet on the Catholic Youth Council suggests that most inner city youth clubs were supervised by members of St. Vincent de Paul and the Legion of Mary.[431] Documents relating to these types of local clubs are difficult to find outside of commemorative booklets, newspaper articles and small archival collections. The information that does still exist suggests some uniformity in their provision of services, most often focusing on entertainment and leisure rather than training or career development. The Cavan Girl's Club, founded in the early 1950s with funding donated by St. Vincent de Paul, was aimed at young teens who lacked a suitable social space and were looking for something to do.[432] Regular activities at the club included dance instruction, music nights, table-tennis, handicrafts, debates and camogie. Instruction in sewing, knitting, crochet and embroidery was also provided. The club ran regular fundraising events including flag days, jumble sales and dances. A former club member divulges how the

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[431] Marie Ni Chionnaith, *A History of the CYC 1944 – 2004*, (http://www.cyc.ie/index.php/about-us/philosophy-of-youth-work/history-of-cyc) (28 February 2013)
[432] *Cavan Girls Club Commemorative Magazine 1950-197,* (9A 1333, National Library of Ireland), p.7

some of the funds raised in 1954 were spent: 'We bought a table-tennis outfit –a great investment – and a record player – a greater investment. The greatest investment, for as long as it lasted, was the wherewithal to make chips.'[433] Other regular events on the calendar of the club included the staging of variety shows, plays, carol services and one-act comedies. The annual trip to the seaside, the zoo or to Butlins Holiday Camp was also an important feature of the local youth club.

The activities provided at Mother McAuleys Girl's Club in Drimnagh were divided into 5 sections: house craft and cookery, hand and needle craft, drama group, physical culture and games and a choral group. This indicates that local urban youth clubs provided very similar pursuits to their rural counterparts.[434] Hundreds of newspaper articles report local events and activities organised by youth clubs around the country including debates, choral festivals, dancing competitions and musical recitals. Many local youth clubs were a hive of activity and provided the opportunity to enjoy some social time with peers albeit in a supervised and highly controlled space. The clubs were often but not always divided into separate gender groups as boy's and girl's clubs. The activities in the boy's clubs were quite similar to those in the girls with the exception that they may have offered a wider variety of sports, such as boxing and a different selection of crafts, such as woodwork.[435]

Most of these clubs took place in the evenings and formed part of the overall landscape of social spaces which sought to control the leisure time of young teenagers in particular. Fears around the dangers of young people socialising in spaces without adult supervision informed debates around juvenile delinquency and moral behaviour. These debates will be examined in greater detail in chapter 5. There were other national variations on the local youth club. A girl's youth group from Limerick was described in the *Irish Press* as 'one of the most unusual groups known'; it was created by a local group of girls and they described themselves as a 'progressive' club.[436] The club was focused on writing about and discussing 'serious topics' in relation to history, politics and the arts among other subjects and also offered ju-jitsu training to its members.[437] Sports clubs were also an important part of opportunities for young people to meet. The Gaelic Athletic Association provided sports recreation activities for young people throughout Ireland.

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[433] *Ibid,* p. 22

[434] *Our Lady of Good Council Parish Messenger*, cover missing but information inside suggests it dates from early 1953, (Ir 05 m 14, National Library of Ireland), p. 6

[435] Marie Ni Chionnaith, *A History of the CYC 1944 – 2004*, (http://www.cyc.ie/index.php/about-us/philosophy-of-youth-work/history-of-cyc) (28 February 2013)

[436] *The Irish Press*, 10 February 1958

[437] *The Irish Press*, 13 February 1958

There were also a smaller number of clubs that focused on particular sports such as golf, tennis, swimming or water-sports.

Common Ground

There were only a few spaces where some uniformity of experience between the rural and urban teenagers could be seen and the most prominent of these was the cinema space. The cinema provided a space in which a range of social and cultural experiences could be performed and processed. Maltby and Stokes have suggested that in the field of screen studies some differentiation is required between what might be understood as the 'aesthetic history of textual relations between individuals and individual objects and the social history of a cultural institution.'[438] What Maltby and Stokes have alluded to here is the need in film studies to examine not just the film texts but also film audiences and the socio-cultural process of attending the cinema. This is certainly relevant to the study of film culture in the 1950s, when cinema audiences were far more interactive than now. In the context of 1950s Ireland, the cinema performed a dual role, first it provided teenagers with a relatively unsupervised social space and second it displayed popular culture texts which allowed teenagers in Ireland to engage with the same cultural texts as their international counterparts.

Chapter 3 of this thesis outlined the availability of international film texts in Ireland and indicated some of the social processes which sometimes emanated from engagement with these texts, such as the transference of modes of dress, popular music and celebrity fandom. These experiences were very important in creating some sense of the 'collective identity' so central to the emergence of the 1950s teenage phenomenon.[439] These popular culture texts allowed teenagers in Ireland to have a degree of collective identity with other teenagers on a global and on a local level. Inevitably the experience of international teenage culture was limited by the importation of particular film texts. Due to the common language and output of the Hollywood film industry the majority of films distributed in Ireland were American in origin. This situation was duplicated in Britain where the proportion of American films exhibited in the UK amounted to only 15 per cent of the overall market in 1910 but from 1926 and beyond American films accounted for almost 95 per cent of films exhibited there.[440]

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[438] Richard Maltby and Melvyn Stokes, 'Introduction' in Richard Maltby and Melvyn Stokes and Robert C. Allen, (eds), *Going to the Movies: Hollywood and the Social Experience of Cinema*, (Exeter, 2007), p.2

[439] Nick Bentley, 'The Young Ones: A Reassessment of the British New Left's Representation of 1950s Youth Subcultures', in *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (2005), p.65

[440] Adrian Horn, *Jukebox Britain: Americanisation and Youth Culture 1945-1960*, (Manchester, 2009), p. 9

The discussion of Teddy Boy culture in Chapter 3 shows how a teenage subculture which was not widely represented in film texts (although some aspects of the subculture itself may have been gleamed from films) transferred internationally through other mass media especially printed materials and photography. Nonetheless, both the popularity of the cinema as a pastime and the prevalence of American films ensured that for the most part Irish teenagers engaged with images and ideologies of the American teenager. The significance of this access is detailed in Chapter 3 and therefore the focus here will be on the cinema as a social space. However, there are some ways in which the social experience cannot be separated from the text and therefore some crossover of themes and contexts is necessary

The dominance of Hollywood film texts might very well be discussed in relation to traditional post-war narratives of mass-market consumerism, Americanisation and globalisation. Tomlinson has suggested that in relation to culture 'globalisation both has its effects and simultaneously is generated and shaped'.[441] In his study of Americanisation and youth culture Adrian Horn found that any aspects of American culture that could be deemed to have been imported or adopted by British youths were at the same time negotiated and mediated through the socio-economic conditions in Britain during the 1950s.[442] In relation to representing cinema attendance as a cultural ritual for teenagers in Ireland there is evidence to suggest that media representations of youth culture internationally, particularly in print media, were subsequently imitated by youths here. For example the ways in which Irish youths behaved at exhibitions of the film *Rock Around the Clock* were directly influenced by media coverage of similar demonstrations internationally rather than being generated by any organic response to the film in Ireland.[443] Media coverage leading up to the release of the film reported international incidents and anticipated the chances of similar scenes in Irish cinemas. Roberta Freund Schwartz has argued that the juvenile delinquency associated with *Rock Around the Clock* in Britain was 'vastly overstated by the national press' and that 'most of the rioters just wanted to dance in the aisles of the theatre'.[444] In the United States there was widespread concern about the negative effect of rock'n'roll music and the trashing of cinema lobbies and seats and other low level youth crime linked to the exhibition of *Rock Around the Clock* appeared to verify fears that the youth were getting out of control.[445]

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[441] John Tomlinson, 'Cultural Globalisation' in George Ritzer, (ed), *The Blackwell Companion to Globalisation*, (Massachusetts, 2007), p. 355

[442] Adrian Horn, *Jukebox Britain: Americanisation and Youth Culture 1945-1960,* (Manchester, 2009), p.2

[443] Kevin Rockett, *Irish Film Censorship*, (Dublin, 2004), pp. 146-147

[444] Roberta Freund Schwartz, *How Britain Got the Blues: The Transmission and Reception of American Blues Style in the United Kingdom*, (Hants, 2007), p.59

[445] Christina Lee, *Screening Generation X: The Politics and Popular Memory of Youth in Contemporary Cinema*, (Surrey, 2010), p.34

As outlined in Chapter 3, though there were a few instances of anti-social behaviour when the film was released for the most part Irish youths engaged in non-violent participation in the experience of the film as part of the cohort to whom this text was directed. So teenagers in Ireland took part in what could be deemed an international youth culture phenomenon by attending *Rock Around the Clock* and their behaviour was both influenced by international discourses and framed by socio-cultural conventions particular to Ireland.

A central component of the opportunity for social and cultural engagement in the cinema space in Ireland was created by the cultural and economic changes taking place in the film industry in the United States. The fragmentation of the previously homogeneous family film audience in the United States, as a result of competition from the rapidly expanding television industry, resulted in teenagers becoming one of the most important consumers of cinema texts during the 1950s.[446] There was a consequential increase in the production and marketing of films specifically created to capture teenage audiences. Though these films were primarily created for American teenage audiences, they were exportable mass market products which had pre-established distribution networks outside of the USA, including Ireland and Great Britain. The new market dynamics of increased production of teenage films was naturally extended through these networks. The targeting and marketing of film products to teenage audiences was also transferred. The sample of film adverts selected below from a range of Irish newspapers and from cinemas located throughout the country gives an idea of the targeting of particular films as exclusively addressing teenage audiences.[447]

In the Althusserian sense the marketing of these film texts attempted to hail or interpellate the teenage audience by immediately identifying them as 'the one who is addressed' in the title or tagline.[448] There was a proliferation of films made in the 1950s with titles like *My Teenage Daughter*, *I Was a Teenage Frankenstein*, *Teenage Rebel, I was a Teenage Werewolf*, and *Reform School Girl*. These titles pinpointed the intended consumer of these media products and subsequently narrowed the age profile of the potential audience. Taglines were also a useful device to address the subject of the film to the intended audience. The tagline for the film *Stake Out on Dope Street*, identified as one of the earliest teenpics, posed the question, 'What happens when Teenagers get their hands

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[446] Richard Maltby, *The Cinema Book*, (2nd Edition, Massachusetts, 2003), p.168/169
[447] Figure 26 *The Anglo Celt*, 14 September 1957
    Figure 27 *The Tuam Herald,* 3 October 1959
    Figure 28 *The Leitrim Observer*, 20 July 1957
    Figure 29 *The Anglo Celt*, 30 May 1959
[448] Tony Thwaites, Lloyd Davis and Warwick Mules, (eds), *Introducing Cultural and Media Studies: A Semiotic Approach*, (Hampshire, 2002), p. 163

on Dope?'[449]   The tagline for the 1959 film *Dragstrip Girl* let cinema audiences know that they could expect to see a girl on screen who was 'Car Crazy! Boy Crazy! Speed Crazy!'[450] One of the social effects of the teenpic was to provide 'a degree of implicit validation to teenagers as a subcultural group' and to secure the cinema as a site for the expression and performance of teenage culture.[451]   To this extent the creation of the teenpic contributed to the circulation of images and ideologies of the teenager in different guises, including 'well behaved rich-kids', 'troubled-teens', 'surfers' and 'juvenile delinquents'.[452]   Irish film critics and reviewers also tended to classify films as suitable mainly for teenage audiences or 'films that only a teenager would want to endure'.[453]   This targeting of teenagers across the film industry from the executive to the critic contributed to the fragmentation of the audience globally and also extended the marketing of these films to teenage audiences in Ireland.

Figure 26 My Teenage Daughter

MONDAY and TUESDAY—
Anna Neagle, Sylvia Syms, Kenneth Haigh In:
MY TEENAGE DAUGHTER
A superb drama of modern youth!

Figure 27 Skate-Out on Dope Street

FRIDAY & SATURDAY (October 9-10), 9 p.m.:
A Bomb-blast . . . What happens when Teenagers get their hands on Dope
STAKE - OUT ON DOPE STREET
YALE WEXLER,   ABBY DALTON,   MAURICE MILLER.
Also:
DECISION
CLINT WALKER,   JAMES GARNER.

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[449] *The Tuam Herald*, 3 October 1959
[450] *The Anglo Celt*, 30 May 1959
[451] Thomas Doherty, '*Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilisation of American Movies in the 1950s*, (Philadelphia, 2002), p.78
[452] Peter Lev, *The Fifties: Transforming the Screen 1950-1958,* (California, 2003), p.218
[453] Thomas Doherty, '*Teenagers and Teenpics: The Juvenilisation of American Movies in the 1950s*, (Philadelphia, 2002), p.79

Figure 28 Attention Teenagers!

THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE ARE FREE
(In Eastman Colour—in Cinemascope), starring
GORDON MacRAE, DAN DAILEY, ERNEST BORGNINE and
SHEREE NORTH.
Attention, Teenagers! Your parents condemn you for Rock-'n-Roll, but see
what they really got up to with "Black Bottom" and "Birth of the Blues"!

Figure 29 Dragstrip Girl

ARVA—Tuesday. CAVAN—Wednesday. Michael Landon in—"I WAS
A TEENAGE WEREWOLF." This is the most amazing picture
of our time. Also: Fay Spain and Steve Terrell, Hollywood's
newest Teenage Stars in — "DRAGSTRIP GIRL." Car crazy!
Boy Crazy! Speed Crazy!

One result of this change in direction and operations by the film industry internationally was to isolate a space that could be occupied exclusively by teenagers for the exhibition of particular films. A range of sources, including autobiographies, ethnographic studies, newspaper articles and government reports, all confirm the importance of the cinema in the social landscape of Irish teenagers. The social experience of the cinema space extended beyond the screening room and into other public spaces in and around the cinema itself. Helen Byrne's ethnographic study of female cinema audiences in 1940s and 1950s Waterford identified some of the other social rituals and practices that circulated around the cinema and film attendance.[454] The women she interviewed discussed how attending the cinema 'involved the camaraderie of the group activity' which included planning what to wear, meeting beforehand, buying ice-cream or sweets during the interval and walking around the cinema space, including the aisle and the foyer.[455] One contributor described how:

> You would dress up in order to attract, that's what I mean by sparking…You would
> see it as a social occasion. There would be an interval and the lights would be on
> and people would be getting up to go and get an ice-cream, and you might get up
> and be walking down the aisle

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[454] Helen Byrne, 'An Ethnographic Study of the Female Cinema Audience in 1940s/1950s Waterford', (M.A. thesis, Dublin City University, 1994)
[455] Ibid, p.29

Another description of the social rituals created through the cinema details how 'there was a cafe upstairs and all of us when we'd go [to the cinema] we always went for a cup of coffee...That was the first place I drank coffee...You'd sit there, feeling real cosmopolitan. Oh it was lovely.'[456] This clearly demonstrates that the act of attending the cinema was a multifaceted experience. It was a place to meet peers, to promenade, to flirt, to express oneself and to experience new forms of popular and material culture.

In many ways the social rituals created around the experience of attendance were just as important as the film text itself and possibly even more significant. A large number of the studies concentrated on the cinema as a social and consumptive ritual, often collected through oral histories and ethnographies, reveal that respondents weigh the social experience of attendance as more important than the exhibition of a particular film.[457] Most studies of film audiences tend to focus on ideas around the active or passive spectator, meaning making, response, pleasure and negotiated readings.[458] Studies of cinema spectatorship are most often centred on the engagement of the audience with the film text. More recently, film researchers have refocused some of their attention away from the film text itself and back on the audience.[459] This recognition of the significance of the cultural act of attending the cinema has produced a wealth of new perspectives and discourses within film and cultural studies. Audience studies, like Helen Byrne's above, provide important insights into the history of film as a cultural phenomenon as well as a cultural product.

Newspaper articles and autobiographical accounts of cinema attendance by teenagers in 1950s Ireland provide a vital source of information and illustrate the interactive nature of the experience. A commentary piece 'Evelyn Boyle visits a Sunday Matinee', which appeared in the *Irish Times* in June 1959, reveals both the appropriation of the cinema space by teenagers and their creation of collective meaning-making rituals.[460] The tone of the article is acerbic and in parts clearly reveals the journalist's class distinction and cultural snobbery. However, the article gives a rare description of both attending the cinema for the first time at a screening dominated by teenagers and the journalist's culture shock at how the dynamics of the audience and the

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[456] Ibid

[457] Philippe Meers and Daniel Biltereyst, 'Film Audiences in Perspective: The Social Practices of Cinema Going', in Helena Bilandzic, Geoffroy Patriarche and Paul J. Traudt, (eds), *The Social Use of Media: Cultural and Social Scientific Perspectives on Audience Research*, (Bristol, 2012), p. 133-136

[458] Jill Nelmes, (ed), *An Introduction to Film Studies,* (3rd Edition, New York, 1996), p.105-116

[459] Richard Maltby and Melvyn Stokes, 'Introduction' in Richard Maltby and Melvyn Stokes and Robert C. Allen, (eds), *Going to the Movies: Hollywood and the Social Experience of Cinema*, (Exeter, 2007), p.1

[460] *The Irish Times*, 16 June 1959

experience had altered. She commented that, 'Before the advent of Teen-Time, minors belonged in the four-penny rush; working class people of small means occupied the parterre seats and the comfortably off found dignified relaxation in the balcony.'[461] She described her confusion at being surrounded by 13 and 14 year olds as she ascended the stairs to the more expensive seats she had booked for her family. She then characterised this young audience as 'the New Youth', who were 'a striking lot, richly and colourfully dressed and having haughty and complacent faces'.[462] She then recounted some of the scenes taking place around her, 'They kept flinging themselves out of their places to make seemingly aimless journeys about the house returning only to have a brief workout with their "date" before making another trip.' She then visits the lower sections of the cinema which she described as 'Seething masses of small-fry, fighting, jumping, wrestling, hiking, standing on their heads, walking on their hands and eating. Everybody was eating.'[463]

She expected the 'pandemonium to subside' when the film began but it didn't.[464] It continued without interruption and she detailed how 'The matinee audience was becoming extremely bored. The youths were reclining in contorted attitudes with their eyes closed and their feet on the shoulders of their companions. The girls were reading love magazines and eating.'[465] Her description, albeit patronising and dismissive, gives a very good sense of the how important the cinema space was to teenagers in the 1950s as a place for self-expression. The variety of the activities she described highlights how this space allowed teenagers to engage with a range of youth culture experiences. This account illustrates the many ways, that teenagers occupied the cinema space, not just to watch films but to take part in a social performance of attitudes and behaviours within their own peer cohort. In reference to similar patterns of participation by teenage audiences in post-war Britain, Christine Griffin suggests that 'the space of the cinema could be transformed by audience activity'.[466]

All of the studies above and the available autobiographies discuss the hierarchal nature of cinema attendance. Seat prices varied for different sections of the cinema and different times of the day. Cinemas also presented various levels of luxury and comfort and especially in relation to dating,

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[461] *The Irish Times*, 16 June 1959

[462] Ibid

[463] Ibid

[464] Ibid

[465] Ibid

[466] Christine Geraghty, 'Cinema as a Social Space: Understanding Cinema-Going in Britain, 1947-1953', in *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media*, (2000), http://www.frameworkonline.com/Issue42/42cg.html (27 March 2013)

girls expected to be taken to the nicer cinemas and the more expensive seats. Some cinemas also provided other features to attract audiences. For instance, The Savoy Cinema in Cork had an organ which rose up from under the stage during the interval; the organist then played hit songs and the lyrics were displayed on the screen so the audience could sing along.[467] Some recalled a sense of shame at walking past the people in the expensive sections on the way to the 'shilling' seats.[468] The sense of class snobbery from those in the expensive seats is also clearly articulated by Evelyn Boyle above when she stated that 'working-class people of small means occupied the parterre seats'.[469] The situation seems to have been the same in rural areas with one autobiography describing how 'It was two shillings for the soft seats and one shilling for the others. There was better *craic* in the cheaper seats.'[470] The varying price of seats in different cinemas did make attending the cinema a very affordable pastime for Irish teenagers in the 1950s. The wage levels presented in Chapter 2 indicate that most teenagers who were working fulltime earned between 20 and 40 shillings per week. Since cinema seats were available from as little as one shilling, it is clear that this pastime would have been easily affordable to most young people, even those doing part-time or casual work.

One important element of the activities which took place in the cinema space for teenage audiences was the opportunity to engage with members of the opposite sex. This could be broken into several levels of interaction including the kind of flirting or 'sparking' suggested by the quote above, dating and more explicit sexual acts or encounters. Despite a recent renewed focus on cinema audiences surprisingly few academic studies of the cinema space as a site for sexual and dating experiences have been undertaken. Available autobiographies suggest that the cinema was a place that teenagers associated with dating and sexual exploration. In his autobiographical account of growing up in the 1940s and 1950s in Dublin Gabriel Duffy reveals how 'apart from Rock and Roll, parkland and alleys, the back seat of the cinema was often the nearest we got to heavenly eroticism'.[471] He admits that most of his encounters rarely progressed beyond kissing and fondling but nonetheless the cinema provided a dark space where teenagers could bring members of the opposite sex. Helen Byrne suggests that the cinema may have been the only remotely private space –although it was still essentially a public space –available to

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[467] See oral history provided by Marie Crean, entitled 'The Organ at the Savoy' on the Cork Memory Map, http://www.ucc.ie/research/memorymap/, accessed 19 June 2013

[468] Helen Byrne, 'An Ethnographic Study of the Female Cinema Audience in 1940s/1950s Waterford', (M.A. thesis, Dublin City University, 1994), p. 30

[469] *The Irish Times*, 16 June 1959

[470] Maidhc Dainín Ó Sé, *House don't fall on me*, (Trans. Gabriel Fitzmaurice, Dublin, 2007), p. 81

[471] Gabriel Duffy, *Sham to Rock: Growing Up in Forties and Fifties Dublin*, (Derbyshire, 2003), p.167/168

courting couples as they often lived at home until they got married.[472]   Angeline Kearns Blain describes how young police men brought their dates to the cinema she worked in and hid under their trench coats in the back seats; sometimes making enough noises under the trench coats to disturb other patrons at the cinema.[473]   In his review of Lee Dunne's autobiography, *Goodbye to the Hill*, Diarmaid Ferriter praises his account for highlighting how 'most young people did not learn about their sexuality from Catholic Truth Society Pamphlets, but rather in the dark and sometimes dingy back seats of cinemas'.[474]   These examples are still limited and underline the imperative for further research in relation to film audiences and the social history of the cinema. Regrettably, very little information exists about dating in cinemas outside of urban areas and it is therefore difficult to present any arguments about how the experience of rural teenagers might have differed from that of teenagers in the cities.   It is probably safe to assume that owing to the nature of rural communities there was less opportunity for private behaviours in public spaces.

Cork Newsboys Club

Charitable boys clubs set up by the Church authorities represented the main type of club that existed in urban areas.   Although some of the clubs had different aims or objectives their basic structure and mode of operation appears to have been very similar across the various religious orders.   For some the focus was more on providing supervised entertainment options; other clubs assisted boys in finding work placements, attaining educational qualifications and training and offered family support.   Most of the clubs were a mix of all of the above.   For many of the clubs religious instruction and compelling members to attend weekly mass and the sacraments was the central component of their remit and objectives.   For instance St. Joseph's Catholic Boys' Brigade had as their list of objectives

> To crush vice and evil habits among boys; to instruct them thoroughly in the
> Catholic doctrine; to prepare them for the worthy reception of the Sacraments; to
> give them habits of obedience, discipline and self-respect; reverence and love for
> ecclesiastical authority and our holy religion; to promote their moral, physical and
> temporal well-being and to give them habits of strict sobriety.[475]

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[472] Helen Byrne, 'An Ethnographic Study of the Female Cinema Audience in 1940s/1950s Waterford', (M.A. thesis, Dublin City University, 1994), p. 31

[473] Angeline Kearns Blain, *Stealing Sunlight: Growing Up in Irishtown*, (Dublin, 2000), p.231

[474] Diarmaid Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern* Ireland, (London, 2009), p. 348

[475] Letter to An Taoiseach from St. Joseph's Catholic Boys' Brigade, 20 December 1957, (Department of An Taoiseach, TAOIS/S/2321 A, National Archives of Ireland)

In order to attract boys to the club it was essential to supply entertainment but as the list of objectives above indicates entertainment and constructive leisure time was not often the primary motivation for setting up these clubs. Although a large number of these clubs existed in all of the urban centres scant records make it difficult to give any accurate figure for the total number. A paper on juvenile delinquency from 1959 stated that there were 44 boys clubs in Dublin City aimed at members aged between 14 and 17.[476] The same paper indicates that aside from purely recreational pursuits most of the clubs offered educational opportunities and vocational training in areas such as craft-work, wood-work, shoe-repairing, leatherwork, libraries, debate, drama, touring clubs and choral training.[477] A lack of archival sources also makes it necessary to focus on the few clubs which did keep detailed records. As many of the clubs were supported through a small number of religious orders and charitable organisations it is safe to assume that there was some correlation in their provision of services.

Detailed records exist in relation to the organisation and activities of the Cork Newsboys Club.[478] Similar clubs existed in other urban centres around Ireland and they were aimed at providing care services for the boys who sold newspapers on street corners throughout the city. Boys who attended the club were generally aged between 8 and 16; they moved onto the senior part of the club at age 17. The entertainment activities of the club included table-tennis, draughts, billiards, sing-songs, jigsaws, rings, chess, boxing and painting.[479] The Brothers also set up a library where boys could read and borrow books and comics.[480] Billiards and table-tennis championships were organised at various times of the year. The boys were also fed at the club. Most evenings they received bread, jam, tea and milk but sometimes meat sandwiches were also provided. The numbers attending the club fluctuated from only 5 members some weeks to almost 50 on other occasions but generally there were more than 15 boys in attendance and fewer than 30.

The Brothers running the club regularly commented in the minutes on discipline issues. Boys who were proving especially difficult had their membership revoked for a period. Some levels of rowdy behaviour appear to have been expected and tolerated. There were evenings when the Brothers commented on the boys being especially noisy, badly behaved, impudent or irreverent. For the most part disciplinary action was not taken by the Brothers unless individual boys caused

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[476] A Paper on Juvenile Delinquency by James O'Connor, March 1959, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/83/93, National Archives of Ireland), p. 38
[477] Ibid
[478] Records of the Cork Newsboys Club 1942-1957, (IE CCCA/U612, Cork City and County Archives)
[479] Minutes of the Newsboys club openings and Executive Committee, May 1951 – April 1957, (Item 6, IE CCCA/U612, Cork City and County Archives)
[480] Ibid

continual difficulties. Punishments often just amounted to the boy in question being sent home for the evening. More serious lapses in discipline did occur. In December 1951 one of the club organisers noted that a group of boys that had arrived without cards to participate in some boxing training were refused entry to the club. The boys then staged a protest outside. For two hours they kicked the door, marched, shouted and threw stones. The Brothers eventually calmed the situation by reassuring the boys they could attend the training on another night if they renewed their membership.[481]

One of the main services provided by the club was career support and development especially around assisting members in finding more secure employment positions and better conditions. This seems to the case for a number of boys clubs. The youth club organised by Mount Argus Parish, Dublin mentioned in Chapter 2, made representations to the Joint Labour Committee on behalf of the messengers in their club and assisted them in finding work or advised them when they were not receiving their entitlements from their employers.[482] The Belvedere Newsboys Club in Dublin also described one of its central aims as providing secure employment for its members.[483] One way the Brothers assisted members was by paying the educational fees for them to attend courses and sit exams. The boys were expected to repay some or all of this money when they started working.[484] The Brothers also sought out paid positions for members with various firms in the city. The job of selling newspapers was only considered to be a temporary form of employment until boys were big enough or old enough to seek more lucrative and regular work.

The detailed notes kept by the Brothers indicate that many of their members came from homes where the father was absent, ill or unemployed and most contributed to their household financially through their work as newsboys. Charity was frequently extended to the wider family network through the boys. This often involved finding work for other family members or writing letters on behalf of the family in relation to governmental income supports such as the widow's pension. It was less common for the Brothers to provide more direct forms of charity

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[481] Entry on 3 December 1951 to the Minutes of the Newsboys club openings and Executive Committee, May 1951 – April 1957, (Item 6, IE CCCA/U612, Cork City and County Archives)

[482] Letter to T. J. Cahill, Principle, The Labour Court from Brendan Roche, Chairman of the Crusader Labour Committee, 1 February 1953, (Department of Industry and Commerce, LAB/IR60, National Archives of Ireland)

[483] Gerry Walsh, *How'ya Doc: The First Ninety Years of the Belvedere Newsboys' Club 1918-2008,* (Drogheda, 2010), p.122

[484] See various notes, Register of Members of Cork Newsboys Club, 1954-1955, (Item 1, IE CCCA/U612, Cork City and County Archives)

such as food and clothing to the families.[485]   The Brothers regularly intervened when the boys got into legal difficulties. They attended court hearings on their behalf and attempted to prevent their incarceration in industrial schools where possible. They also directly contacted the police on occasion with the intention of preventing club members from being charged with a crime in the first place by supplying character references to the Gardaí. James O'Connor, barrister at law, also commented on the effect of this representation when boys came before the courts:

> The fundamental characteristic of the boys club is the relationship between the helper and the club member. This relationship can be of great value in the prevention of delinquency and likewise in the rehabilitation of boys who have been engaged in wrongdoing and have appeared before the courts. Often a club leader gives evidence on behalf of a member, in the Children's Court. Because of his special knowledge of the boy, he is of considerable assistance to the Justice, and enables the court to decide whether it would be beneficial, in view of the supervision and guidance which the helper and the club is in a position to provide.[486]

This clearly shows not just the degree to which the club became involved in the lives of its members but also the interrelationships between the systems of power in young people's lives which expanded across recreational, educational, employment and civic spaces.   Another example of how these institutions extended beyond the provision of supervised leisure facilities is illustrated by a case relating to the breakup of the family of a boy who was part of the Newsboys Club. His mother and sisters had left Cork to live in the UK but the boy had remained at home with his father. After a period the Brothers received correspondence from the mother, who questioned the character of the father and requested that the Brothers help send the boy to her in the UK. The Brothers then visited the boy's home to find that he had already left to go and live with the mother. The father subsequently contacted the Brothers to say that his wife was living with another man in England and asked for some assistance to gain more information about the situation. The Brothers agreed to send a priest from their order in the UK to visit the mother. The priest was 'greeted rudely' when he arrived at the home of the mother and told to mind his own business. The priest did ascertain that the boy was planning to return to Ireland by Christmas.[487]   These notes indicate how deeply embedded Church

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[485] Ibid

[486] A Paper on Juvenile Delinquency by James O'Connor, March 1959, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/83/93, National Archives of Ireland), p. 38/39

[487] Register of Members of Cork Newsboys Club, 1954-1955, (Item 1, IE CCCA/U612, Cork City and County Archives)

organisations were in local family affairs but also how families utilised the services provided by the Brothers when necessary. Complex relations of power were being exercised here. On the one hand the Brothers were in a position to insert themselves into the lives of the boys and their families but on the other the community used the services of the Brothers to discipline their children, petition for social welfare, access employment opportunities, for family counselling and for free legal aid.

There were many cases in which parents contacted the Brothers with requests to intercede when their children had become difficult at home or lost their jobs due to bad behaviour. The ways in which these organisations offered charity and assistance needs to be carefully analysed. For instance, the boys were encouraged to attend mass and confession at the weekends and usually between 30 and 50 members attended. The high level of attendance at these sacraments was probably connected to the provision by the Brothers of a generous breakfast directly after mass, which included porridge, milk, bread and jam, meat and tea. Considering that most of the boys came from socially less advantaged backgrounds, the provision of warm food could be viewed as strategic charity based on relationships of power and disadvantage. Carole Holohan in her examination of sodalities argues that youth welfare work in Ireland was viewed by many members of the Church hierarchy as a 'charitable enterprise and not a professional field'.[488] She then argues that this may have prolonged imbalanced relations of power in the provision of services and supports for young people, which were extended as charity rather than entitlements. The numerous narratives of abuse and cruelty which have emerged in the last decade in relation to the protection of children and the administration of care by the holy orders in Ireland make it difficult to review the impact of these organisations.[489] Since the topic of child protection is beyond the scope of this thesis only the ways in which the Brothers interacted with the community in relation to the provision of leisure services can really be analysed here. However, it is clear that these organisations, which may in some ways appear at first glance to be insignificant beyond the provision of supervised recreation, formed real centres of power in both positive and negative ways in the lives of young people in 1950s Ireland.

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[488] Carole Holohan, 'Every Generation has its Task: Attitudes to Irish Youth in the 1960s' (PhD thesis, University College Dublin, 2009), p.206

[489] Some key texts which deal with narratives of institutional abuse in Ireland include: James M. Smith, *Irelands Magdalen Laundries and the Nations Architecture of Containment*, (Indiana, 2007); Frances Finnegan, *Do Penance or Perish: Magdalen Asylums in Ireland*, (Oxford, 2001); Mary Raftery and Eoin O'Sullivan, *Suffer the Little Children: The Inside Story of Irelands Industrial Schools,* (Dublin, 1999)

Out and about

One thing that Ireland has never been short of is outdoor spaces. Streets, roads, squares, fields, playgrounds, hills, mountains and roads were all potential meeting places for teenagers. Sports and recreational organisations provided more structured opportunities to explore the outdoors. The Gaelic Athletic Association (G.A.A.) was already well established nationally by the 1950s and it supplied sports training for children, teenagers and young men. It also supported local and national football and hurling competitions and championships, which were popular and well supported during the 1950s.[490] As the history of the organisation and its cultural influence has been covered in detail by other scholars it will not be the focus of further analysis here.[491] It is essential to note, however, that the organisation provided many opportunities for peer mingling not just through the sports training, which pertained mainly to young men, but also through the many days and nights of entertainment created through spectatorship, sports fixtures and local fundraising events. Two other national organisations, the Catholic Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, offered teenagers supervised entertainment opportunities with a focus on outdoor activities. Aside from the weekly meet-up they provided activities including weekend camps and hikes, parades, participation in religious and community festivals and annual rallies.[492] All of these activities, including trips away, were tightly structured and supervised and for the most part the sexes were segregated. They G.A.A. and the Scouts provided important spaces for socialising and self-development opportunities, especially for children and young teens.

Membership of An Óige offered socialising opportunities with less direct supervision and with far more chances to mingle with teenagers of the opposite sex and young people from outside Ireland. There were 29 An Óige youth hostels dotted around Ireland in 1950 and this had increased to 36 by 1960.[493] An Óige had a membership of about 5,000 people in Ireland but their connection to the International Youth Hostelling Federation meant that their users extended well beyond national boundaries.[494] In 1948 they hosted the 10th International Youth Hostel Conference in Kilbride.[495] The conference venue, a disused army barracks, accommodated 800 hostellers from around the world in army huts and a further 500 young

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[490] Marcus de Burca, *The GAA: A History*, (Dublin, 1999), p.188

[491] For further information of The G.A.A. see Marcus de Burca, *The GAA: A History*, (Dublin, 1999); Eoghan Corry, *An Illustrated History of the G.A.A.,* (Dublin, 2006); Mike Cronin, Mark Duncan and Paul Rouse, *The G.A.A.: A People's History*, (Cork, 2009) and Mike Cronin, Mark Duncan and Paul Rouse, *The G.A.A.: County by County,* (Cork, 2011)

[492] J Anthony Gaughan, *Scouting in Ireland*, (Dublin, 2006), p.110

[493] Terry Trench, *Fifty Years Young: The Story of An Óige*, (Dublin, 1981), p. 132

[494] Ibid

[495] Ibid, p. 74

people stayed in their own tents on the site. Apart from the Irish teenagers who participated, other nations represented at the conference included America, England, Scotland, Norway, Finland, Germany and Tunisia.[496] From the perspective of teenagers in Ireland, the facilities provided by An Óige made possible important trips away with peers and a break from home and local community surveillance. Teenagers often cycled long distances to stay at the youth hostels which were spread across 14 counties in Ireland.[497] Exploring the great outdoors and undertaking activities such as cycling, hiking and rambling were all part of the ethos of An Óige. The close involvement of the Irish branch of An Óige with the international organisation challenges some of the generalisations about Irish society as closed and xenophobic. Aside from An Óige and Macra na Tuaithe many Irish youth organisations had links to similar movements and organisations abroad. These organisations facilitated exchanges, sponsored conferences and exchanged information between youths in Ireland and their counterparts across Europe and beyond. They fostered a kind of open communication that is not usually associated with the 1950s in Ireland. Both of these organisations described themselves as non-sectarian in their constitutions.

Freedom of movement was often achieved with two wheels in 1950s Ireland. Bicycles were a very important mode of transport to teenagers in rural and urban areas. Bicycles provided practical transport to and from work and school as well as many recreational opportunities. A wide range of people and a growing section of the population in Ireland used bicycles in the 1950s. Purchasing a brand new bicycle was expensive with most bikes ranging between £10 and £20. Hire purchase schemes did provide the opportunity to pay for new bicycles over a period of time but even allowing for this purchasing a new bicycle may have been beyond the reach of many teenagers. As other chapters have indicated the wages paid to young people generally were approximately between 20 to 40 shillings per week (£1 to £2) and since most teenagers gave a portion of their wages to their parents their actual disposable income was probably much lower than their wages. Second hand bicycles would have been considerably cheaper and more affordable and some employers provided bicycles to their young employees. The provision of a free bicycle is mentioned, in a oral history provided to the Cork Folklore Archive, as one of the major attractions in taking up a position as a messenger boy.[498]

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[496] Ibid, p. 75
[497] An Óige Notes, 1 June 1956 (Office of the Secretary to the President, PRES/2005/3/119, National Archives of Ireland)
[498] Cork Folklore Project, Liam Ó hÚigín, 25 August 2011, p.2

As the 1950s progressed, scooters and small motorbikes also became popular modes of transport for teenagers and especially for young women, including housewives. In 1951 there were approximately 5,000 motorcycles and scooters in Ireland but this number had increased to over 12,000 by 1953.[499] There were a few scooter clubs in Dublin and in other cities around the country, including a Vespa Club and a Lambretta Club, both formed in 1954.[500] The Vespa Club of Ireland displayed some unique equality in the constitution of its organising committee, 3 of its 6 members being women.[501] This may be better understood in the context of scooters being widely perceived at the time as transport for women. Many newspaper articles and adverts addressed the feminisation of the scooter by either describing it's obvious appeal to female road users or by attempting to convince men that there was no need to avoid the scooter in the fear that they were driving a 'cissy bike'.[502] The scooter clubs organised day and weekend trips, rallies, dances and other parties. The scooter craze became so popular that the Church even became involved. From 1956 onwards there was an annual blessing of the scooters in Dublin held at various venues. Footage of this event is available though the Amharc Éireann newsreels and shows scooter drivers lining up for a blessing with holy water on their vehicles on O'Connell Street in Dublin.[503] Many of the attendees are young men and women and their motivation for attending may well have been connected to the high number of road accidents attached to scooters, many of them serious. Cycling, despite the freedom it offered, was also a hazardous mode of transport with a huge number of accidents per year and very high levels of theft. In October 1956 *The Irish Times* reported that almost 5,500 bicycles had been stolen in Dublin alone in the first nine months of that year.[504]

Walking was also an important part of teenage culture, particularly in the cities, and it offered teenagers a way to meet, to mingle or simply to see and be seen by members of the opposite sex. Particular spaces, streets or squares became known to teenagers as meeting points or hang-out spots. Michel de Certeau defines this appropriation of the cityscape by various users who then generated new meanings and understandings of these spaces. He described how users 'make some parts of the city disappear and exaggerate others, distorting it, fragmenting it, and diverting it from its immobile order'.[505] Garry O'Neill's recent publication *Where Were You? Dublin Youth*

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[499] *The Irish Times*, 25 May 1954
[500] *The Irish Times*, 18 December 1954
   The Irish Independent, 15 October 1954
[501] *The Irish Times*, 25 May 1954
[502] *The Irish Press*, 24 August 1955
[503] Eagrán 153, Annual Blessing of the Scooters, Amharc Éireann Collection, Irish Film Institute
[504] *The Irish Times*, 10 October 1956
[505] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (California, 1984), p.102

Culture and Street Style, 1950 – 2000, includes an interesting selection of photographs of teenagers and youth culture from various parts of the city in the 1950s.[506] The photographs provide a visual representation of the Irish teenagers enjoying the style, fashion, and culture of their generation. Many of the photographs contained in this section of the book are collected from the *Irish Walking Film Company*. This company had cameras on O'Connell Street and O'Connell Bridge in Dublin which took photographs of passersby who could then pick up a print later in the week.[507] O'Neill provides a quote which explains how some teens would go home to change after buying a new item of clothing and then race back into O'Connell Street to have their picture taken.[508] This shows the importance attached by teenagers to opportunities for self-expression, public display and visual representation. Helen Byrne's valuable ethnography also provides an insight into how teenagers occupied spaces within Waterford city. The participants described in the evening how young men and women walked in groups around the city creating a pattern of walking on certain streets on particular nights of the week to ensure bumping into other teens also involved in the practice.[509] The object of this ritual was to 'watch who else was walking, catch the eye of a young man you liked and avoid the one you didn't'.[510]

In his autobiography, Gabriel Duffy details some of the independent recreational activities and spaces available to children and teenagers in Dublin in the 1950s, including fishing in the local river, cycling around the Phoenix Park or out to the countryside, casting marbles, ice-skating and retrieving bullet casings from McKee Barracks.[511] Matthews, Limb and Percy-Smith have identified that '[a]dults may produce patterns of land use, but teenagers learn to operate within these settings to 'carve out' their own cultural locations'.[512] These researchers use the term 'micro-geographies' to describe how teenagers attempt to create 'spatial autonomy from adults' control'.[513] Their research, which relates mainly to teenagers in the 1980s and 1990s, demonstrates how this pattern of behaviour extends beyond any particular decade or generation and forms an important part of youth development. Although traces of this type of behaviour are more difficult to locate due to the fact that they occurred organically from within particular cohorts the evidence above suggests that teenagers in 1950s Ireland were actively involved in

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[506] Garry O'Neill, *Where Were You: Dublin Youth Culture and Street Style, 1950-2000*, (Dublin, 2011)

[507] Ibid, p.22

[508] Ibid

[509] Helen Byrne, 'An Ethnographic Study of the Female Cinema Audience in 1940s/1950s Waterford', (M.A. thesis, Dublin City University, 1994), p.27

[510] Ibid

[511] Gabriel Duffy, *Sham to Rock: Growing Up in Forties and Fifties Dublin*, (Derbyshire, 2003), p.67/68

[512] Hugh Matthews, Melanie Limb and Barry Percy-Smith, 'Changing Worlds: The "Microgeographies" of Young Teenagers' in *Journal of the Royal Dutch Geographical Society*, 1998, Vol. 29, No. 2, p.197

[513] Penny Travlou, 'Teenagers and Public Space Literature Review' in *OPENspace*, July, 2003

producing their own cultural experiences and boundaries. An oral history provided by a contributor who grew up on the outer edges of Cork city describes the freedom they enjoyed as a group of young people when they travelled to a nearby town on Wednesday nights to attend a teenage dance in the Emer Ballroom

> there used be dancing nine till two on Wednesday night and everyone that would be eligible off the Blarney St from me now at sixteen, Noel eighteen and there was a kind of three year gap between the oldest and the youngest, say sixteen to nineteen there was another fellow twenty and we'd all go out to the Emer on walk or bike, eh, out to Blarney. We'd walk down through the fields, the fellahs without the bikes and if someone was going out and cycling down Faggot Hill by Clogheen Church he'd give someone a crossbar and they'd go out but there was two marriages out of it then again which their brilliant today, great friends of mine and eh coming home and they're as happy as Lar[514]

The above example illustrates some of the ways that teenagers came together to create their own spaces and meanings from the environment they occupied. A similar example, contained in chapter 3, can be found in teenagers coming together in various spaces around the Dublin city to celebrate the arrival of teen screen and rock'n'roll stars. The area of Ringsend in Dublin was also associated in the press with a large Teddy-boy gang.[515] Numerous newspaper articles reported disturbances associated with teenagers coming together in various towns or city centres to dance, sing, make noise and make nuisances of themselves.

It might have been more difficult to achieve collective activities and spaces in the countryside but it was not impossible. Maidhc Dainín Ó Sé in this autobiographical record of life as a teenager in rural Co. Kerry describes how after a local dance teenagers descended on 'Cáit Sayers Boreen' which he recalled 'was like O'Connell Street with all the courting couples. You would need a ticket to get a space by the ditch'.[516] Young people interviewed as part of the Limerick Rural Survey explained that they often travelled long distances to attend dances outside their local area.[517] The principle rationale behind this behaviour was revealed to be the need to escape 'the observation of the home community'.[518] This behaviour is perfectly reflective of De Certeau's theory of tactics and strategies because it demonstrates how teenagers in 1950s Ireland

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[514] Cork Folklore Project, Sean Lane, 5th August 2010, p.23/24
[515] *The Irish Independent,* 2 February 1957
[516] Maidhc Dainín Ó Sé, *House don't fall on me,* (Trans. Gabriel Fitzmaurice, Dublin, 2007), p. 68
[517] *The Limerick Rural Survey*, 3rd Interim report, Social Structure, July 1962, p. 48
[518] Ibid

found ways to operate independently within the closed systems which shaped their daily lives. Some cases of juvenile delinquency from around the country are described in chapter 5. One incident related to teenagers in Cavan playing chicken with oncoming road vehicles. This indicates that teenagers were assembling in places and engaging in behaviour which was clearly outside normal social conventions in Ireland and was also clearly imitative of the teenage behaviour displayed in juvenile delinquency films.[519] The film writer Jim Morton identifies the film *Rebel without a Cause* (1955) as the first Hollywood film to portray the game of 'chicken'.[520] Morton argues that variations of the game of 'chicken' went on to be utilised in a 'staggering' number of feature films especially in the genre of juvenile delinquency films.[521] Public concern over teenage behaviour may not have been as widespread as imagined. The public engagement with the comics crisis will be covered in chapter 5. Detailed analysis of this crisis reveals that very few complaints about imported literature came directly from the public. One of the recommendations in the report of the Vandalism and Juvenile Delinquency Joint Committee (1957) was that '[a] well organised sustained propaganda campaign should be undertaken to bring home to the public the evils of vandalism and juvenile delinquency'.[522] This would support the argument that the public had not expressed any real concern regarding teenage behaviour and that some of the discourses surrounding juvenile delinquency merely reflected the agendas of religious and governmental organisations.

Lines of Communication

Aside from the youth organisations and commercial spaces described above there were many other spaces and activities available to teenagers in 1950s Ireland. Cafes, ice-cream bars, beauty pageants, fashion shows and other competitions provided opportunities for teenagers to meet and express themselves. Private spaces for reading, listening to music or just talking also formed an important aspect of teenage culture more generally. In their study of teenage culture in the 1990s Matthews, Limb and Percy-Smith identify four categories of 'special places' for teenagers.[523] These were, 'Places away from authority' such as the outdoors, woods, fields, streets; 'Places to be with friends' such as woods, parks, play areas, streets, local shops, sports centres, town centre, shopping mall, friend's house, own house; 'Places for adventure' like

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[519] *The Anglo-Celt*, 15 August 1959

[520] Jim Morton, 'Juvenile Delinquency Films' in *Incredibly Strange Films*, (San Francisco, 1986), p. 144

[521] Ibid

[522] Vandalism and Juvenile Delinquency: Report of the Joint Committee appointed at the request of the Lord Mayor of Dublin p. 7

[523] Hugh Matthews, Melanie Limb and Barry Percy-Smith, 'Changing Worlds: The "Microgeographies" of Young Teenagers' in *Journal of the Royal Dutch Geographical Society*, 1998, Vol. 29, No. 2, p.198

woods, local lakes, streets, back alleys, underpasses, building sites, derelict land and 'Places for solitude' including woods, bedroom, backyard, garden.[524] With the exception of shopping malls, underpasses and sports centres–although shopping mall could arguably be replaced with department stores-most of the categories and spaces identified above could easily be applied to the 1950s Irish teenager. Although class also played a role in the types of places attended by teenagers, the four principle sections would have applied to most.

Reading magazines, comics, romance novels and westerns was a pastime enjoyed by most young people in Ireland in the 1950s. This pastime would have been confined for the most part to private spaces although teenagers tended to exchange these documents with friends and at swap shops. In his book, *The Teenage Consumer,* Mark Abhrams details the expanding market of teenage magazines in the UK including *Reveille, Week-end, Titbits* and *Picturegoer*[525]. The Register of Prohibited Periodicals from 1950-1955 complied by the Censorship Board of Publications (CPB) is contained in chapter 5 and shows that three of the four magazines listed above were available in Ireland.[526] *Reveille, Week-end,* and *Picturegoer* were all banned for a period between 1955 and 1956. Abhrams also explains that female teenagers in the UK were avid readers of *Woman* and *Woman's Way*.[527] The popularity of all these publications with teenage readers in Ireland is difficult to ascertain. Figures that might indicate their general circulation do not exist and even if some estimate was possible it may still not be reflective of the actual readership since magazines and comics were shared, swapped, traded and exchange privately and through shops and newsagents.

One trace of evidence that Irish teenagers were certainly engaged in patterns of behaviour similar to those of their British counterparts is the content of the problem pages of two Irish women's magazines, *Woman's Life* and *Woman's Mirror.* Both publications had a considerable number of letters published in the advice columns from teenage readers through the 1950s. *Woman's Mirror,* a monthly magazine whose content indicated that it was pitched at a slightly younger readership, featured regular articles on beauty, the home, actresses, actors, music stars (mainly musical, classical, opera), fashion, sport, cooking, fictional stories and hairstyles, as well as a horoscope page. The advice column, 'In Reply to Yours' frequently included letters from Irish teenage girls asking questions about love, dating, fashion, beauty and family matters. The magazine also had a

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[524] Ibid
[525] Mark Abrams, *The Teenage Consumer,* (London, 1959), p.15
[526] Register of Prohibited Periodical Publications as on the 31st December 1955, (Department of Justice, JUS/102/90/20, National Archives of Ireland)
[527] Mark Abrams, *The Teenage Consumer,* (London, 1959), p.15

section called 'Salute to Youth' which contained stories and articles about children and teenagers. Another section called 'Passing Pageant' focused on stories about young women aged 25 and under, but often on girls in their teens, who were high achievers in sports, the arts, modelling and education. These two sections were quite possibly a nod to their teenage readership. The Limerick Rural Survey also mentioned in passing that rural girls were more avid readers than boys, owing to the more limited social spaces available to them.[528] It also stated that their reading materials were 'confined to romances and women's magazines'.[529]

Woman's Life employed the agony aunt Mrs Wyse, who supplied 'Replies to your Personal Problems'. Frequent enquiries from teenagers on dating, friendship, work and family also appeared here, although on a slightly smaller scale than in *Women's Mirror*. Since the letters published were selected by the agony aunt herself it is impossible to estimate the full extent of teenage enquires but it is safe to assume that there were enough to warrant their regular publication. One teenage contributor wrote to Mrs Wyse to ask for advice about going out with boys.[530] She was advised to forward a stamped, addressed envelope so Mrs Wyse could send in return a book called 'Growing Up' and a booklet called 'Preparing our Daughters for Life'.[531] This indicates that even in this open, commercial, anonymous space the advice supplied to teenage girls was conservative and reinforced pre-existing conventions of female behaviour. Another reader enquired what she should do in relation to her daughter who was about to marry a poor farmer despite the fact that she already had a comfortable life and a good career as a teacher. The columnist replied that the daughter would be 'happier living a life of hard work among this farming family than she ever would be in a schoolroom'.[532] Angela McRobbie highlights the structures of power embedded in problem pages of women's magazines.[533] She argues that these pages are designed to police discourses on female sexuality and behaviour by 'attempting to separate the normal from the abnormal, the acceptable from the unacceptable.'[534] The replies above and numerous other letters and answers suggest that in 1950s Ireland the private lives of young women were continuously regulated within the domestic sphere and by conservative ideologies of sexuality. Equally restrictive ideologies were located in the 'Topical Teen Page' which became a regular feature of *Woman's Life* from September 1958. The page was designed to address health and social issues particular to teenage girls but it was conservative and

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[528] *The Limerick Rural Survey*, 3rd Interim report, Social Structure, July 1962, p. 48
[529] Ibid
[530] *Woman's Life,* 12 August 1950, Vol. 27, No. 4
[531] Ibid
[532] *Woman's Life,* 7 October 1950, Vol. 27, No. 8
[533] Angela McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture: From Jackie to Just Seventeen,* (London, 1991), p. 164/165
[534] Ibid

condescending in its tone and delivery. This is best illustrated by a piece from the first 'Topical Teen Page' which instructed young girls that

> The beautiful teenager DOESN'T ...cut her hair herself ...bite her nails ...read late in bed –it shows next morning ...borrow other peoples combs, brushes, powder puff, lipsticks or headscarves ...go to bed without washing teeth and face.

> The beautiful teenager DOES ...wear warm night things, and throws the windows wide for complexions sake ...Walks a little at lunch time ...drinks milk instead of tea or coffee ...eats some raw fruit or vegetable everyday[535]

An interesting anomaly is the apparent teenage readership of the rather traditional and old-fashioned publication, 'Ireland's Own'. Their readership is reflected in the 'Pen Friends' page which contained high levels of teenage contributions every month. Although the page itself is a bit of an oddity, the way in which entries to the 'Pen Friends' page was constructed and framed offers some interesting insights into both teenage behaviour and social change in 1950s Ireland. The 'Pen friends' page from January 1950 contained 35 personal adverts from teenagers who were looking for friends to correspond with and the adverts were predominantly entered by young women, although there were a number of personal adverts placed by young men also.[536] The details supplied in the adverts include sex, age, interests and some information about who they are seeking to connect with. Most of the teenagers were looking for correspondents who were similar in age and America was the country most frequently listed. Dancing and films were the most popular pastimes and football, swimming, swing music, jazz music, cycling and walking were included in some of the other activities listed.

The tone of the page had altered considerably by 1955.[537] On this occasion there were 37 entries but only 7 included any reference to personal interests, whereas in 1950 25 out of the 32 personal adverts contained information on interests. The majority of the 'Pen Friends' listings from 1950 requested letters from either sex or just included the general term 'readers'. The entries from 1955 were far more specific and most of the adverts were looking for correspondents of the opposite sex. The terminology had also changed, with several of the entries using phrases like 'nice girls', 'pretty girls', 'lads', 'boy pen friends', 'sincere lads', 'sincere

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[535] *Woman's Life*, 27 September 1958, Vol. 43, No.7, p.5
[536] *Ireland's Own,* 28 January 1950
[537] *Ireland's Own,* 1 January 1955

girls', and one female correspondent specified that she 'would prefer college boys'.[538] By 1959 many of the adverts were explicitly stating that they were looking for 'attractive boys' and 'handsome lads'.[539] The inclusion of any interests or hobbies still remained low but interestingly the term 'Roman Catholic' or 'RC' appeared in 13 of the 33 adverts listed by teenagers. This seems at odds with the fact that most of the adverts were more open about the fact that they were looking for a love interest when compared with the more conservative adverts from earlier in the decade. It was common throughout the decade for the adverts to request 'snaps' from potential pen friends, so it would appear that even when 'handsome' or 'attractive' was not listed it was desired. There are many aspects of these 'Pen friends' pages which require more detailed reading across the decade in order to gain a deeper understanding of how these pages functioned in relation to meeting people and dating.

Rapid advances in communications technology over the past 20 years make it easy to forget the significance of written correspondence for previous generations. An RTE newsreel from 1962 in which a journalist chatted to members of the public about the final edition of the *Evening Mail* demonstrates the importance of written forms of communication.[540] When the journalist asked passersby about what they would miss about the *Evening Mail* now that it was going out of circulation, a large proportion of them mentioned the letters section; it is also interesting to note that all of the commenter's were male.[541] The journalist also highlighted this section in his closing comments when he discussed a letter in the final edition sent by a woman who was hoping to reconnect with a gentleman she had met the previous week at the Cleary's Ballroom.[542] These types of pages provided a space for social interactions and underline the importance of written correspondence through various print media in the 1950s. For instance, there were regular personal adverts in the *Ireland's Own* 'Pen friends' page that carried strong homosexual overtones. The word 'gay' was still used in common speech in the 1950s to describe a person or thing that was happy or delightful or a person with a friendly disposition and there were many adverts from boys looking for gay girls. But there were also adverts like the following from the January, 1950 issue which seems to indicate that the pages of *Ireland's Own* may have facilitated correspondence between homosexual men

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[538] Ibid

[539] *Ireland's Own,* 10 January 1959

[540] 'The Final Evening Mail', http://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/1406-newspapers/364933-last-edition-of-evening-mail/, accessed 19 June 2013

[541] Ibid

[542] Ibid

Bachelor Gay: Young man requests letter from others with similar tastes (which he does not state!), aged 20-30 years. Various Interests

Will Always Be True Young man, aged 25 years, is interested in country life, games, and dancing and he wishes to hear from BOYS 18 – 25 years

Always Smiling Young gentleman aged 22 years wishes to hear from MALE pen friends in any part of the world, Is interested in everything. Snap please, but not necessary[543]

For the moment this remains beyond the scope of this study. There were certainly enough teenage entries in the 'Pen Friends' pages of *Ireland's Own* to suggest that Irish teenagers were becoming more confident as the decade progressed in expressing themselves in public forums, though admittedly, these forums offered a high degree of anonymity. The changes in language and approach indicate that they had internalised teenage modes of behaviour more in line with the ideologies of rebellious youth which were developing worldwide during the 1950s.

Conclusion

Applying De Certeau's theory of tactics and strategies to how young people operated within the dominant social, cultural and political structures of the 1950s in Ireland offers a way to connect diverse spaces and experiences like attending a rural dance and reading women's magazines. His argument that 'a tactic insinuates itself into the other's place without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance' presents a clear framework for investigating how teenagers found ways to express their individual and collective identities in the limited social landscape available to them.[544] This chapter has illustrated how difficult it was for rural teenagers in 1950s Ireland to isolate spaces for self expression and interactions with other teenagers. However, the example garnered from the Limerick Rural Survey which suggested that rural teenagers were prepared to travel to dances in other towns in order to find a space outside the social regulation of the local dance hall underlines the presence of two important processes. First this example is indicative of some of the ways teenagers chose to challenge the closed social networks of their rural communities and second it highlights the importance to this cohort of free spaces for self expression. Relationships between spaces and their users and producers are complex but examining these structures allows for a better understanding of the dynamics of

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[543] All three of the above personal adverts are taken from *Ireland's Own*, 28 January 1950. The adverts are reproduced exactly as they were written in the original publication. The capital letters for the words BOYS and MALE and the phrase (which he does not state!) are all as per their original inclusion in *Ireland's Own*.

[544] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (California, 1984), p. xix

power they facilitate. Sometimes the existence of a space or the impetus for setting up particular types of organisations is reflective of the ideological or political approach of the society in which these spaces were created. In this chapter this has been represented in the construction of the rural youth organisations. Social anxieties and concerns about migration dominated the formation of these groups in 1950s Ireland and subsequently the spaces available to teenagers.

The intrusion of Church authorities into the operations of non-denominational organisations, such as Macra na Tuaithe, the social spaces they created for migrants in the UK and their wide scale provision of youth clubs and youth services points to the ways in which these superstructures sought to control the leisure activities of teenagers in Ireland. Chapter 5 will investigate some more specific international manifestations of youth culture in the Irish context. It further illuminates how Church authorities in Ireland attempted to extend their control beyond the physical and into the ideological and cultural spaces occupied by youths. Chapter 4 also demonstrated how some commercial spaces such as the cinema, dancehalls, streets, the media, letters pages and personal pages provided young people with opportunities to interact with other teenagers and participate in teenage culture. Many more public and private spaces including cafes, bars, tennis hops and other clubs existed but the scarcity of archival materials and records in relation to these spaces makes it impossible to include them in any great detail. Angeline Kearns Blain has detailed the intimacies among female colleagues in factories and other places she worked in as a teenager.[545] She related how she learned from an early age about topics such as sex, menstruation, sexually-transmitted diseases and dating from the other women she worked with.[546] She also discussed how she regularly socialised with girls from her workplace outside of their appointed hours. The nature of these types of intimacies and relationships makes it difficult to trace their existence outside of published sources such as oral histories, ethnographic studies and autobiographies. The valuable records which do exist, like the autobiography by Kearns Blain mentioned above and Helen Byrne's ethnographic study of female cinemagoers, provide a wealth of information not just on the social spaces that existed for teenagers in the 1950s but also on how these spaces were occupied and utilised by Irish youths.

The analysis in Chapter 2 indicates that the majority of young people in Ireland were working by the age of 14. Employment provided youths with greater personal freedom and some disposable income (although most youths were expected to contribute financially to their families once they started working.) Employment provided young people with greater control over how they spent

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[545] Angeline Kearns Blain, *Stealing Sunlight: Growing Up in Irishtown*, (Dublin, 2000)
[546] Ibid, pp. 213-214

their leisure time and also over how they dressed, what they listened to and their reading materials. The economic pressure to work, therefore, was linked not only to the finances of the family unit but also to the desire for a degree of personal independence. In this sense the need to work or emigrate could be seen to be linked to what Enda Delaney refers to as greater 'economic expectations' in Ireland during the 1950s.[547] The workspaces focused on in Chapter 2 and the leisure spaces highlighted in this chapter further underline the social limbo in which teenagers in 1950s Ireland operated. The levels of responsibility teenagers were expected to manage in the workplace were not reflected, for the most part, in how their leisure activities and spaces were constructed by youth and other voluntary organisations. However, it is clear in both these areas of their lives, wherever it was possible, Irish teenagers attempted to impose their own agendas on to the limited social and cultural spaces available to them.

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[547] Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000), p.198

Chapter 5 – Visibility

Introduction

The ability to support and protect future generations is a measuring stick by which most societies assess their viability and functionality. The scale of the Second World War created so many social ruptures that no nation was left untouched; this applied to the direct conflict which many countries experienced but also to the subsequent social upheaval heralded by the war. More recent studies of Ireland in the mid-twentieth century including Clair Wills' *That Neutral Island: a Cultural History of Ireland during the Second World War* and Michael G. Cronin's *Impure Thoughts: Sexuality, Catholicism and Literature in Twentieth Century Ireland* demonstrate that much more social fragmentation and stratification existed in Irish society during and after the Second World War than earlier research had indicated.[548] There is a strong case for a reinvestigation of some previous assumptions regarding the closed and cohesive nature of Irish society before 1960. After the Second World War many nations, but most especially the United States, attempted to manufacture a sense of unity and national consensus that rested on uneasy and unstable foundations.[549] Rising levels of anxiety around some of the serious social and economic issues in post-war Ireland began to undermine any attempts to manufacture a sense of national consensus. Concern for the youth of the nation was at the centre of many of the social and ideological problems that drew public attention. As the 1950s progressed there was a steady increase in the numbers of people seeking an interrogation of the values and policies which the nation had traditionally championed but were no longer working (and had possibly never worked) to safeguard Irish society for future generations.

The necessity for social change was being vocalised in a number of areas throughout the 1950s long before new economic strategies and fiscal policies were unveiled at the end of the decade. Key areas for concern in relation to young people in Ireland included emigration, migration, unemployment, education, and the low marriage rate. As previous chapters outlined, much debate circulated around these subjects and the approaches that Irish social and governmental institutions should undertake in order to prevent the continuation and escalation of these grave issues. Aside from the social problems more specific to Ireland there were international concerns connected to young people and the effect that shifting social norms might have on

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[548] Clair Wills, *The Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland during the Second World War*, (London, 2007)
Michael G. Cronin, *Impure Thoughts: Sexuality, Catholicism and Literature in Twentieth Century Ireland*, (Manchester, 2012)
[549] Matthew Costello, *Secret Identity Crisis: Comic Books and the Unmasking of Cold War America*, (New York, 2009), p.2

their well-being and behaviour. The number of films produced in the 1950s that dealt with the subject of juvenile delinquency, as well as teenage romance and sexuality, represents not just an attempt by the film industry to appeal to youth audiences but also a processing of social anxieties around the regulation of young people.

It is not surprising then to see a series of moral panics emerge in the 1950s with particular attacks on the negative influence of popular culture. Moral panics of this nature can be located in almost every decade and represent an attempt by moral guardians to control areas of perceived threat to the wellbeing of teenagers and young people.[550] The 1950s, however, was a decade especially marked by moral outrages relating to teenagers –the parallel rise of teenage culture and the mass media furnished some with deep concerns about the items that might have led to these frightening changes in adolescents.[551] Post-war social anxieties associated with youth cultures in the United States were testament to a rising belief that the nation was 'producing a generation of juvenile delinquents'.[552] The disruption of the family unit created by the war (many fathers and mothers were absent –either working fulltime to support the war effort or taking up places in the armed forces) was heavily linked to the deepening crisis around young people. In the Irish context we can trace some reverberations of the international focus on juvenile delinquency to events like the setting up of a Joint Committee on Juvenile Delinquency by the Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1957.[553] The two largest international moral outcries of the 1950s were related to juvenile delinquency and horror comics. This chapter will trace the impact of these two specific moral outcries in Ireland and show how media coverage of these issues lead to an increased visibility of the new teenager in Ireland during the 1950s.

In Ireland, fears around the influence of mass and popular culture were often contained in more general references to the attraction of modern, urban lifestyles. Cities and large towns in Ireland and elsewhere offered young people better-paid jobs, more social outlets, unsupervised spaces to mix with their peers and a higher degree of personal independence. The disposable income earned through paid work was also an essential link to the opportunities for greater personal freedom and the ability to access popular culture. The oral histories provided by women who were teenagers in the 1950s in the book *Irish Women at Work 1930-1960* referred frequently to the

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[550] Ulf Boethius, 'Youth Media and Moral Panics', in Johan Fornas and Goran Bolin, (eds), *Youth Culture in late Modernity*, (London, 1995), p. 39

[551] James Gilbert, *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s*, (Oxford, 1986), p. 23

[552] John A. Lent, 'The Comics Debate Internationally: Their Genesis, Issues and Commonalities', in John A. Lent, (ed) *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Post-war Anti-Comics Campaign*, (1999, New Jersey), p.12

[553] *The Irish Press*, 14 November 1958

sense of freedom they associated with engaging with popular culture including dances and fashion.[554] One participant who worked as a ward maid in the mid-1950s described how she had 'a very, very hard day down on your knees, scrubbing and polishing and you went out then and you danced your heart out...Modern dancing. Rock'n'roll, everything, jiving, you name it. It was brilliant because it gave you a great boost up for the morning'.[555] Social commentators alternated between sympathising with and complaining about young people in 1950s Ireland, their rejection of traditional lifestyles and their need to engage with modern culture, music and entertainment. The portrayal of violence, more open sexuality and other perceived unsavoury material in popular culture were other areas identified as contributing negatively to the behaviour and attitude of youths in the 1950s. Fears related to juvenile delinquency and comic books in the United States subsequently took on a global dimension with Martin Baker later identifying that the horror comic's campaign eventually spread to 17 countries and led to the introduction of legislation in five.[556]

This chapter will investigate the response in Ireland to the issue of the censorship of reading materials for children and teenagers which represented one of the largest international moral panics of the decade. This topic will be considered alongside juvenile delinquency which was inextricably linked with the above issue world-wide during the post-war period. There were aspects of these moral panics in Ireland which ran parallel to (or possibly mimicked) the international experience but other dimensions to these crises were created by the particular political and institutional structures in Ireland. Focused investigation of these moral panics reveals not just the existent power structures, but also the emerging lines of resistance. This chapter examines the visibility of young people and youth culture in Ireland during the 1950s. It maps the topics that received the greatest attention from the government, youth organisations and the national press as well as the youth themselves. Some topics such as unemployment and emigration have already been covered to some extent in earlier chapters so they will be explored to a lesser degree here –in many cases the interplay between anxieties around these subjects and other representations are so complex that it becomes difficult to separate one issue from another.

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[554] Elizabeth Kiely and Máire Leane, *Irish women at work 1930-1960: An oral history*, (Kildare, 2012), pp. 127-130

[555] Ibid, p. 130

[556] Martin Baker, 'Getting a Conviction: Or, How the British Comic Book Campaign only *just* Succeeded' in John A. Lent, (ed), *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Post-war Anti-Comics Campaign*, (1999, New Jersey) p. 69

Figure 30 Make the Most of it Boys

Censorship of Popular Culture in Ireland

The rapid development of mass communication brought new concerns to parents, educationalists and other moral guardians as to the nature of the reading materials available to young people. The campaign against horror comics originated in the United States and pre-dated the Second World War. The campaign was re-invigorated in the post-war period following numerous protests and the publication of a book on the topic by Fredric Wertham called *Seduction of the Innocent*. Ireland was not immune to the international post-war moral campaign against horror comics. In fact the suitability of much of the foreign literature available to children and teenagers was the source of many heated debates involving Church authorities, government offices, youth organisations, the media and the Censorship of Publications Board (CPB). The political wrangling behind the campaigns against comics and other foreign publications has been alluded to by Michael Adams in his book *Censorship: The Irish Experience*.[557] Adams mainly confines his examination of these events to their overall effect on the Censorship

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[557] Michael Adams, *Censorship: The Irish Experience*, (Dublin, 1968)

of Publications Board in Ireland without really examining many of the materials relating to the campaigns themselves. This may be partly due to the lack of access to some governmental files as the book was published just a decade after the campaigns took place. This proximity to the events may also have led Adams to underestimate the wealth of insights to be deduced from the social and cultural discourses surrounding the campaigns. This chapter re-examines the campaigns and the complaints stemming from them by extracting important information about the availability and circulation of popular culture in Ireland.

These campaigns and complaints allow for some assessment of the levels of engagement with popular culture by the general public in Ireland -with a special focus on comics and the teenage audience. By concentrating on these issues, levels of public alarm around teenage behaviour, sexuality and social change in Ireland can be compared to the rise of similar crises internationally. A solid body of publications exists in relation to the censorship of literature in Ireland including the book by Adams referred to above.[558] The censorship of periodicals and magazines has, however, received very little academic attention to date. This chapter will focus on the censorship of periodicals aimed at the youth market including horror comics but there is room for more work to be carried out in relation to the circulation and cultural impact of periodicals in Ireland that remains beyond the scope of this study.

Censorship of film and literature in Ireland during the 1950s was vigorous but also increasingly 'porous and ineffectual'.[559] There were two separate boards appointed to control the circulation of films and printed material. The Censorship of Publications Board (CPB) experienced its most stable and prolific period of prohibitions in the early years of the 1950s before serious political and ideological issues marred its performance for the second half of the decade.[560] In fact, discordance related to the composition of the board meant that it didn't function at all in certain periods during the mid-1950s.[561] The prolific nature of the prohibitions by the Censorship of Publications Board in the post-war period, especially in relation to the works of Irish authors,

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[558] For further information on censorship in Ireland see Julia Carlson, *Banned in Ireland: Censorship and the Irish Writer*, (Athens, 1990); Donal Ó Drisceoil, *Censorship in Ireland, 1939-1945*, (Cork, 1996); Joan Fitzpatrick Dean, *Riot and Great Anger: Stage Censorship in Twentieth-Century Ireland*, (Madison, 2004); Kevin Rockett, *Irish Film Censorship: A Cultural Journey from Silent Cinema to Internet Pornography*, (Dublin, 2004) and Peter Martin, *Censorship in the Two Irelands, 1922-1939*, (Dublin, 2006)

[559] Brian Fallon, 'Reflecting on Ireland in the 1950s', in Keogh, D., O'Shea, F., and Quinlan C., (eds), *Ireland in the 1950s: The Lost Decade*, (Cork, 2004), p.34

[560] Donal Ó Drisceoil, '"The Best Banned in the Land": Censorship and Irish Writing Since 1950', in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 2005, Vol. 35, pp. 150-151

[561] See various articles and letters of complaint contained in JUS/90/102/20, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/102/20, National Archives of Ireland)

was considered to be unnecessary and culturally detrimental both by the general public and social commentators at the time.[562] The stability of the board and ideological cohesion of its members from the late 1940s resulted in a dramatic increase in annual prohibitions from 285 books banned in 1946 to a peak of 1023 by 1953.[563] Furthermore, there was concern regarding the methodology of the Board who assessed books by marking offensive passages rather than reviewing the merit of the work as a whole – the sheer volume of the prohibitions in the early 1950s suggests that very little time was being spent by Board members considering the artistic merit of individual books.[564] Some further insights into the lack of any real engagement or consideration of the texts reviewed by the Board are revealed in James Kelly's study of the notebooks of C.J. O'Reilly, an active member of the Censorship Board between 1951 and 1955. The number of texts that O'Reilly was required to review on an annual basis steadily increased during his tenure from 73 in the first five months after he took up the position in 1951 to 305 titles in 1952, 267 in 1953 and 481 titles in 1954.[565] It is doubtful that any real consideration could have been given to individual texts when the level of publications submitted for examination to each member numbered between 20 and 40 per month.

The prohibition of periodicals presented additional challenges to the Censorship of Publications Board and their control of the circulation of popular printed materials was far less effective for that reason. One of the major limitations included their own terms and conditions which stipulated that at least three consecutive issues of a publication had to be shown to be indecent before it could be banned. The nature in which periodicals circulated and were imported also created special conditions which made the regulation of periodicals more difficult than books of fiction and non-fiction. Although books and publications had to be processed through customs, many magazines and periodicals could be ordered by mail order and sent directly to private homes which made them more difficult to control. As will be demonstrated later in this chapter magazines, comics and other periodicals were often sent by relations and friends in other nations to Ireland as gifts or to be sold in shops. These unofficial networks of circulation made it more difficult to censor foreign publications in Ireland.

Many companies in the magazine and comic industry regularly altered the names of their publications; when one title had been banned in a number of countries they published the same

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[562] Michael Adams, *Censorship: The Irish Experience*, (Dublin, 1968), p.118
[563] Ibid, p. 119
[564] Ibid, p.118
[565] James Kelly, 'The Operation of the Censorship of Publications Board: The Notebooks of C.J. O'Reilly, 1951-1955', in *Analecta Hibernica*, No. 38, (2004), p. 226

material under a slightly different title to get around the censors which meant that it was a huge task for national censors to stay abreast of these multiple publications. A further operational weakness of the Irish Censorship of Publications Board was their poor record of extending information to businesses and the general public on which publications had been selected for prohibition. A letter from Eason and Son Limited in 1958 indicated the difficulties encountered by booksellers in obtaining up-to-date information on items that had been banned by the censor.[566] The letter stated that

> Our difficulty arises from the fact that there is no censorship list giving all the titles banned to, say, the end of 1957 and indeed there is no printed list at all of the books banned during the past two years. For these we have to compile ourselves from the various Censorship Orders, as issued, and in addition to this we have to make reference to the four Official Printed Lists – one original register covering up to the end of 1950 and three supplementary registers covering first three years 1951/52/53, then the year 1954 and again the year 1955.

This letter clearly outlines the failure of the Board to extend information to those importing and distributing printed materials in Ireland. Eason and Son Ltd were a large national company whose main business was the sale of books, magazines and other periodicals. However, many local newsagents and grocers sold newspapers, comics and periodicals along with a huge range of other goods throughout cities and counties in Ireland. It is unlikely that they applied as much effort as a large retailer such as Eason and Son Ltd to verify the status of the publications they supplied with the Board.[567] There was a large market in Ireland for imported newspapers and magazines; available statistics show that for example the *Daily Express*, *Daily Mail* and *News of the World* continued to have high circulation figures in Ireland after Independence with an estimated figure for all English newspapers of somewhere between 180,000 and 200,000 per week in the 1930s.[568] Irish government trade statistics for 1950 indicate that books and periodicals to the value of £825,116 were imported in that year, equalling a purchasing contribution of 5/6d per

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[566] Letter to Minister for Justice from Eason & Son Ltd, 11 February 1958, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/102/20, National Archives of Ireland)

[567] L.M. Cullen's suggests in his book *Eason & Son: A history*, (Dublin, 1989), pp. 246-283 that the firm operated a high level of self-censorship by refusing to stock books and periodicals that were perceived to be in any way indecent or immoral. He also highlights a number of particular occasions when *Eason & Son* took it upon themselves to recall periodicals and books and to remove offensive pages.

[568] Chris Morash, *A History of the Media in Ireland*, (Cambridge, 2010), p. 139

head of population; a further breakdown of those figures show that £126,985 was spent annually on Sunday newspapers and £254,587 on magazines.[569]

The difficulty with these statistics, especially in relation to periodicals, is that it is unlikely they give more than an indication of the actual circulation figures of printed materials. A report issued by An Garda Síochána in December 1954 on the seizure of magazines from a Dublin grocery store demonstrates not just the manner in which some newsagents obtained periodicals and comics but also the way these publications were sold, rented and exchanged.[570] Eight magazines were seized by the Gardaí and sent to Mr Thomas J. Coyne, Secretary to the then Minister for Justice, Mr James Everett and the Censorship of Publications Board for inspection. The titles and dates of publication for the eight magazines are listed as follows: *Tales of Horror*, No. 3, November 1952; *Tomb of Terror*, Vol. 1, No.16, July 1954; *This Magazine is Haunted,* Vol. 2, No. 10, April 1953; *Eerie*, Vol.1, No. 17, August/September 1954; *Beware,* Vol. 1, No.11, September 1954; *Astonishing*, (cover torn); *Mysteries*, No. 8, July, 1954; *The Black Knight*, No.1, May 1953.

The shopkeeper is reported as stating to Gardaí that he received parcels of second-hand magazines from his sisters in America from time to time that he then sold in his shop. The owner also bought and exchanged magazines from customers in the shop; the report specifies that the comics which were seized as an illustrative sample by the Guards retailed for 1/- each but the shopkeeper refunded the customer 9d if the comic book was returned. While the shopkeeper assured the Gardaí that it was mostly adults purchasing the publications, it is far more probable that titles such as *Tomb of Terror* were bought and exchanged by teenagers and children, and that this statement was made by the shopkeeper to protect his own interests. The practice of the exchange and/or rental of comics in local newsagents was also described by Gabriel Duffy in his autobiography *Sham to rock: Growing up in Forties and Fifties Dublin* and again by a woman interviewed by Helen Byrne in her ethnographic study of female movie-goers in Waterford in the 1950s.[571] If the exchange of magazines and comics in this manner was common place, as the above report and accounts strongly indicate, then it is impossible to ascertain the true extent of access by children and teenagers to international periodicals. The

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[569] *Irish Independent*, 2 June 1952

[570] An Garda Síochána Report to Minister of Justice, December 1954, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/102/239-240, National Archives of Ireland)

[571] Gabriel Duffy, *Sham to Rock: Growing Up in Forties and Fifties Dublin*, (Derbyshire, 2003), p. 54/55

Helen Byrne, *An Ethnographic Study of the Female Cinema Audience in 1940s/1950s Waterford*, (M.A. thesis, Dublin City University, 1994), p. 28

information above also suggests that purchasing and exchanging magazines and comics was one of the most affordable pastimes available to Irish teenagers. Even those with a very small amount of disposable income or pocket money should have been able to buy and trade popular reading materials.

The scaremongering claims by campaigners that the country was flooded with evil literature were clearly influenced by the moral positioning of those groups. Nonetheless, the evidence presented in the chapter strongly suggests that popular culture periodicals were freely available throughout the country. In a 1952 response to questions from Deputy Thomas A. Kyne in the Dáil, the Minister for Justice, Mr Gerald Boland, commissioned Gardaí to report on the extent of the circulation of materials considered unsuitable for juveniles throughout the country.[572] **Table 15** below lists the details of the 17 samples collected by the Gardaí and submitted to the Minister. The report shows the widespread availability of teenage comics and magazines and the variety of titles in existence. The report mentions that many of the magazines were acquired through the Irish American News Company on Kildare Street, Dublin but also names two other companies (Eason and Son Ltd and E. McG. Walsh Ltd) as engaging in the circulation of magazines aimed at the teenage market. It is also noteworthy that in the case of sample no.10, seized in Mayo, the proprietor states that the magazine in question was received by post from a relative in America, further supporting the evidence above that magazines and comics available in Ireland during the 1950s arrived through both official and unofficial channels. This obviously made the control and censorship of periodicals very difficult for the authorities. The report also supports the hypothesis that magazines and comics aimed at teenagers were available and affordable to teenagers in both rural and urban areas in Ireland during the 1950s.

Table 15 Garda sample of imported comics on sale in cities and larger provincial towns, January 1952

Division from which received	Particulars of Comics
1. Dublin Metropolitan Division	"Sam Hill" "Private Eye", No.2 , price 10c, published by Close-Up Inc., 420 De Soto Avenue, St. Louis 7
2. Dublin Metropolitan Division	"Archie" comics (British Edition No.5) price 6d., which appears to be published by Gerald G. Swan Ltd., Edgware House, Burne Street, Marylebone, London N.W. 1 (see 3)

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[572] Report to Minister for Justice from An Garda Síochána, 9 January 1952, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/102/139, National Archives)

3. Dublin Metropolitan Division	"Pep" comics, July issue, No.86, published bi-monthly by Archie Comic Publications Inc., 420 De Soto Avenue, St. Louis 7, price 10c
4. Dublin Metropolitan Division	"Sweethearts", August edition, No.102, published monthly by Fawcett Publications Inc., Fawcett Place, Greenwich, Conn. Price 10c
5. Dublin Metropolitan Division	"Secret Lover", November 1949 issue, No.1, published bi-monthly by Comic Magazines, 8 Lord Street, Buffalo, N.Y> Price 10c
6. Dublin Metropolitan Division	"Wild Bill Hickok", May 1951 issue, Vol.1. No.7. Published quarterly by Avon Periodicals Inc., 119 W. 57th Street, NY, Price 10c
7. Dublin Metropolitan Division	"Billy the Kid", August-Sept 1951 issue, No. 6. Published by monthly by Toby Press Inc., 17 East 45th Street, NY, 17 price 10c
8. Dublin Metropolitan Division	"Motion Picture Comics" "Code of the Silver Sage", January 1951 issue, Vol.17, No, 102, Published bi-monthly by Fawcett Publications Inc., Fawcett Place, Greenwich, Conn. Price 10c
9. Dublin Metropolitan Division	"Gabby Hayes Western" No 51, Published monthly and distributed by L. Miller and Son Ltd, 342-344 hackney Road, London, E.2 – copyright by Fawcett Publications Inc., in the U.S. price 6d
10. Mayo	"Lowell Sunday Telegraph", dated Sunday 20th May, 1951 published in the USA. evidently by King Features Syndicate, Inc. Believed to have been received by post from USA by friend or relative in Ireland
11. Leix-Offaly	"Crime Does Not Pay", No. 96, published monthly by Lev Gleason Publications Inc., 114 East 32nd Street., NY, NY price 10c
12. Limerick	"King Solomon's Mines", No.1, published Avon Periodicals Inc, 575 Madison Ave., NY 22, NY Jos Meyers, President: Sol Cohen, Editor and general Manager. Price 10c
13. Clare	"The Perfect Crime", No.1, published by Pemberton's (of Manchester) Ltd., and distributed by World Distributors Ltd. Price 6d
14. Clare	"Real Clue" "Crime Stores", published by the United Angle-American Book Co. Ltd., 363, Holloway Road, London, N.7, England, Price 6d
15. Kerry	"Detective Comics", No 173, July 1951 issue, published monthly by National Comics Publications, Inc., 480 Lexington Ave., NY 17, NY Price 10c

16. Kerry	"Jesse James" – "Bandit Chieftain of the Wild West", No.4, Vol.1, July 1951, published quarterly by Avon Periodicals Inc., 575 Madison Avenue, NY 22, NY Price 10c
17. Kerry	"The Gunhawk", No.15, June 1951, published by Marvel Comics Inc., Office of Publication; 350 5th Avenue, NY 1, NY price 10c

The list of periodicals banned by the Censorship of Publications Board from 1950 to 1955 is provided in Appendix B. The table of banned publications raises a series of interesting questions as to the operations of the board and the proliferation of certain types of periodicals on the banned list especially detective and crime stories. From January of 1954 the Board also began to place a date of expiration on the censorship of most prohibited materials. No documented explanation appears to be available as to why the Board began to operate in this way. It certainly added further complications for agents and booksellers in keeping track of which publications were banned. All of the prohibited periodicals originated from outside of Ireland –mainly from the United States but also Great Britain, Canada, Australia and France. In fact, many of the periodicals appear to have come from the same areas, publishing houses and distributers in the United States and elsewhere. In a letter to the Department of Justice in 1955, the Garda Commissioner stated that there had only been one case brought to the attention of Gardaí in relation to the printing of horror comics in Ireland. This case related to a firm in Bray who were found to be printing thousands of horror style comics. On further investigation the police found that the comics were destined for Scotland and that a company there had commissioned the Irish firm to undertake the printing.[573] The letter also relates that few complaints about obscene materials had been brought to the attention of the Gardaí by the public. The letter further elaborated that any indecent items that had been seized by Gardaí, such as nude pictures and indecent materials, were usually brought back to Ireland from abroad by individuals or ordered through mail-order and delivered to Ireland. Both tables indicate the popularity of westerns, horror comics, crime stories, movie magazines and romance comics with teenage audiences in Ireland.[574]

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[573] Letter from An Leas Commissioner of An Garda Síochána to Thomas Coyne, Secretary, Department of Justice, regarding the Draft Obscene Publications Bill, 1955, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/102/239-240, National Archives of Ireland)

[574] True-crime comics appear in large numbers on the list of prohibited periodicals with titles like 'Famous Police Cases', 'True Crime Cases' and 'True Police Cases'. Ron Goulart, *Comic Book Culture: An Illustrated History*, (Oregon, 2000),p.197, indicates that true-crime comics originated in the early 1940s with the publisher Lev Gleason, but it was not until after the Second World War that other publishers began to produce this style of comic following a slump in superhero comics. Just over 30 per cent of the periodicals banned in Ireland between 1950 and 1955 were crime comics. 20 per cent of those crime comics had titles which suggested that

Evil Literature

There were regular letters of complaint to the Minister for Justice and the CPB during the 1950s in Ireland related to children, young people and their reading material.[575] There were several instances where the frequency of these letters and the accompanying press coverage suggest more organised campaigns targeting comics and movie magazines. On the surface, these campaigns appear to mirror perfectly the patterns of similar moral outcries internationally. However, a more detailed examination of the complaints reveals a very particular set of political motivations behind at least one campaign which took place in 1957. Varying levels of complaints against the importation of foreign press and periodicals were received by the CPB from the beginning of the 1950s and a high proportion of these complaints refer to juvenile reading materials.[576] Church authorities nationwide regularly raised the issue of the effect of evil literature on young people in Ireland. Speeches made by priests and other ecclesiastical figures in relation to this topic were frequently reported in the local and national press and given high priority in Catholic publications such as *The Standard*. The flavour of these admonishments is well represented in a speech by Father V. J. Dinan at a prize-giving day at the Blackrock College in 1952 also attended by Archbishop McQuaid, a former past pupil.[577] Fr. Dinan laments that the 'indelicacies, improprieties, and moral risks which were considered exceptional 20 years ago are being accepted as normal patterns of so-called teen-age behaviour'.[578] He attests that the underlying cause of much of these unhappy changes was 'the pagan vision of life inculcated by many of the foreign periodicals and other literature at present available for the young'.[579]

In the second half of 1954 and early 1955, Mr James Everett, the Minster for Justice, received a series of complaints from city and county councils nationwide, as well as several Vocational Educational Committees, urging him to take immediate steps to eradicate the threat of evil

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they would be categorised as true-crime comics indicating the popularity of those titles in Ireland and reflecting the overall trends in the comic industry. John Lind and Philip Simon, (eds), *Blackjacked and pistol-whipped: Crime does not pay*, (Oregon, 2011), p.18, state that detective and crime comics were so popular in the USA directly after W.W. II that, 'By 1948, one in seven comic books sold were crime comics. There were thirty new crime-comics titles released in 1948 alone.'

[575] The topic of evil literature was not by any means specific to the 1950s. Diarmaid Ferriter outlines in *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000*, (), pp. 341-343 how the 1929 Censorship of Publications Act grew out of the 1926 Committee on Evil Literature. He also details how it was 1941 before an amendment was made to the Act requiring the CPB to take the artistic and literary merit of the book into account as well as its more general cultural significance or value.

[576] Michael Adams, *Censorship: The Irish Experience*, (Dublin, 1968), p.163/164

[577] *The Irish Independent*, 2 June 1952

[578] Ibid.

[579] Ibid

literature.[580]   A draft letter of reply from the Minister, following the spate of complaints, suggested that concerned parties should submit any evidence of illicit materials to the Gardaí who would then follow-up with the appropriate action.[581]   The police were often used as a method of deflection by the Minster when engaging with organisations and sustained complaints. In a standard letter of reply to a complaint in 1956 the Minister stated

> In reply, I am to say that the Garda Síochána are as ready now as they have always been to undertake the prosecution of the sellers of obscene publications provided there is evidence of the commission of an offence.   But the fact is that little or no evidence has come under the notice of the Garda Síochána and little or none has been supplied to them by members of the public from whom there have been very few specific complaints.[582]

This approach was also utilised by the Taoiseach, Mr Eamon DeValera, in his dealings with the Irish League of Decency when he suggested that without evidence their complaints could not be processed in any way but any evidence that they furnished would be considered by the CPB and Gardaí.   The letter of response submitted by the League contained copies of 33 periodicals which they considered to be indecent.[583]   The persistence of these organisations and the Minister's frustration in dealing with their frequent complaints is conveyed in a letter to the Taoiseach from the Minister for Justice in relation to the Irish League of Decency in 1957; the letter relayed that the minister did not wish to concede to a meeting requested by the secretary of the League, and revealed that

> It is apparent from communications received from their secretary over a number of years that the League have very exaggerated notions of what is indecent and any discussions with them could not fail to be embarrassing.[584]

Internal memorandums, letters and other circulars between the Minister for Justice, the Censorship Board and the Taoiseach show that, for a variety of reasons, they considered the

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[580] See various letters of complaint addressed to the Minister for Justice from July 1954 to May 1995, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/102/139, National Archives of Ireland)
[581] Draft letter from the Minster for Justice, May 1955 (Department of Justice, JUS/90/102/139, National Archives of Ireland)
[582] Draft letter of reply from Minister of Justice, 1956 (Department of An Taoiseach, TAOIS/S 2321 A, National Archives of Ireland)
[583] Letter to An Taoiseach Eamon De Valera dated 1-12-1957 from the Irish League of Decency (Department of An Taoiseach, TAOIS/S 2321 A and B, National Archives of Ireland)
[584] Letter to the Rúnaí Príobháideach don Taoiseach, 18 November 1957, (Department of An Taoiseach, TAOIS/S/3231/A & B, National Archives of Ireland)

introduction of legislation to control the circulation of materials considered unsuitable for teenagers unnecessary and untenable. One of the main difficulties they outlined was the difficulty in framing legislation to control printed materials available to teenagers without affecting the reading materials for adults.[585] There was increased pressure on the issue of legislation following debates around the introduction of bills to control the circulation of harmful reading materials and horror comics in the United States, Australia, New Zealand and, in particular, in Great Britain in the mid-1950s.[586]

Ultimately in the United States, following reports by several well funded committees on the negative effect of comics, the industry was forced to introduce a set of strict self-regulatory codes.[587] The focus of the enquiries in the United States was very much around linking the portrayal of violence in these comics and magazines to the perceived increase in juvenile delinquency. The publication of *The Seduction of the Innocent* in 1953 by the eminent paediatric psychologist Fredric Wertham seemed to establish that link and this reinvigorated the campaign against horror comics despite the fact that many other investigations of the issue had produced inconclusive results.[588] Amy Kiste Nyberg comments that the focus on the link between juvenile delinquency and comics became 'a self-fulfilling prophecy as greater emphasis was placed on identifying delinquent behaviour and apprehending juvenile offenders'. Nyberg also observes that the increased media coverage of the issues further convinced the American public that delinquency amounted to a new and widespread social crisis.[589] The severity of the legislation and its application varied greatly from country to country. In Australia, where the industry was required to apply a high degree of self-regulation, guns were removed from the hands of cowboys and characters repainted to make embraces between males and females appear less suggestive.[590] Department of Justice files contain copies of international legislation as well as correspondence with similar departments and officials around the world indicating the profile of the issue internationally placed it more firmly on the government agenda in Ireland.

It was the introduction of legislation in Great Britain that brought the greatest pressure to bear on Irish authorities to take similar action. There was consistent press coverage in Irish

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[585] Proposed Bill for checking the circulation of Horror Comics and Obscene Literature in general, 5/12/1955, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/102/239-240)
[586] *The Irish Independent*, 26 March 1955
[587] Amy Kiste Nyberg, 'Comic Book Censorship in the United States', in John A. Lent, (ed), *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Post-war Anti-comics Campaign*, (1999, New Jersey), pp. 42-69
[588] Ibid, pp.48-50
[589] Ibid, p.43
[590] John A. Lent, 'The Comics Debate internationally: their Genesis, Issues and Commonalities', in John A. Lent (ed), *Pulp Demons: International Dimensions of the Post-war Anti-Comics Campaign*, (1999, New Jersey), p.28

newspapers around the progression of the Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act, 1955 in Britain for many months before and after its introduction. Most articles queried whether Irish teens were engaging with similar materials to their British counterparts and whether similar legislation should be adopted in Ireland. Many more articles took a more sensational angle claiming that Irish children and teens were exposed to dangerous levels of immoral and suggestive materials through foreign publications. The topic was also covered heavily in the British newspapers which were widely read in Ireland and this would have added to public awareness of the issue. The Department of Justice produced a memorandum on the subject of introducing an Irish bill in response to the introduction of the British bill and sustained pressure from representatives of the Catholic Church, educationalists, voluntary organisations, and youth clubs. Although the matter was thoroughly investigated by the Department of Justice, no bill was introduced in Ireland during the 1950s. A paper on the proposed bill suggested that

> The problem of horror comics strictly so called does not seem acute in this country at the moment in view of the Children and Young Persons (Harmful Publications) Act, 1955 in England and the forming of the Comics Magazine Association of America (under Mr. Murphy) in 1954, which ensures that the principal sources of the worst kind of production have been dried up.[591]

In many ways, this assumption was correct. Following the introduction of the Comics Code in America many comics companies went out of business and those that remained were forced to produce storylines where good always triumphed over evil, authority figures deserved respect and admiration and superheroes never died.[592] In Ireland, violence and superheroes were often of far less concern to campaigners than scantily clad women and stories covering the love lives of movie stars. **Figure 31** shows the cover of a comic book called *Moon Girl* which was submitted to the CPB during the 1950s. The complaint by the person who submitted the publication is represented in a hand-written note on the cover with an arrow leading to Moon Girl's breasts. The note reads 'almost every illustration inside, in which the girl appears, has this more or less prominently' –the particular objection is the painting in of Moon Girl's nipples in most representations of her in the periodical.[593] The illustration in **Figure 30** above, printed in

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[591] Proposed Bill for checking circulation of Horror Comics and Obscene Literature in general, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/102/239-240, National Archives of Ireland)

[592] Matthew Costello, *Secret Identity Crisis: Comic Books and the Unmasking of Cold War America*, (New York, 2009), p. 8

[593] *Moon Girl*, No.4 (Department of Justice, JUS/2006/148/13, National Archives of Ireland)

The Standard in 1954, displays a similar focus with a scantily clad busty woman represented on the cover of the comic being perused by the young boys and the caption 'Make the most of it lads – when we're grown-up our reading matter will be censored'. [594] The preoccupation with salacious materials is also represented in a list of periodicals submitted by the Irish League of Decency to the Department of An Taoiseach in 1957.[595] Only five of the titles represent either crime or horror comics –the rest are mainly movie, romance and photography magazines such as *Movie World, Fabulous Females, Popular Photography*, and *Young Love.*

Figure 31 Moon Girl

As a secondary line of defence, the Minister for Justice attempted to deflect concerns over the matter of inappropriate materials consumed by teenagers by suggesting that teachers, parents and other guardians could play a frontline role in controlling the circulation of comics and magazines. The Minister's proposal is represented more clearly in a letter to L. Ó Muirthe, Secretary of the Department of Education, in 1954.[596] Rather than introduce specific legislation in relation to comics and other magazines, the department requested support from the Department of

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[594] *The Standard*, 15 October 1954

[595] Letter to An Taoiseach Eamon DeValera dated 1-12-1957 from the Irish League of Decency (Department of An Taoiseach, TAOIS/S 2321 A and B, National Archives of Ireland)

[596] Letter to L.Ó Muirthe, Úas., M.A., Secretary, Department of Education from Thomas J. Coyne, November 1954, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/102/239-240, National Archives of Ireland)

Education to introduce a ban on the circulation of comics and magazines in the schools. The letter reveals the ideological positioning of the department, their genuine assessment of the actual dangers posed by comics and other publications and their interactions with some of the materials available for teenagers to read in Ireland. For that reason the letter is reproduced in its entirety here in order to convey quite precisely the sentiments expressed by the Minister for Justice on the topic of reading material and Irish teenagers. The Minister wrote:

> I wonder if your Department could, with propriety, send a circular to teachers asking them to forbid children from bringing "comics" and other such magazines to school. You will, no doubt, have noticed from press reports that more and more people, particularly those specially concerned for the moral welfare of children and young persons, are becoming seriously worried about these magazines and it appears to me that one effective step towards countering their distribution would be a ban on them in the schools. It would stop them being "swapped" at school – a common practice I understand – and it would help in some way to bring home to parents that they should keep an eye on what the children are reading.

> I think there can be no doubt that there are some good grounds for complaint. I have examined a few "comics" which are on sale here: they were not specially selected. One is called "Diary Secrets". On the cover, there are two well-developed young girls in closely-fitting frocks which certainly are no more than adequate. One of the girls – the text inside reveals that she has reached the mature age of fifteen – is being warned that a young man, Curt, is 'kind of fast'. Her reaction, as shown in a 'bubble' over her head is, "I'll do anything to make Curt my steady...anything! And tonight's my only chance!" The contents of this copy include: "That One Wild Night" and "False Infatuation". In the latter story, we get such gems as this; "As if to prove his point, Kip crushed me roughly to him! He was pitting his youthful and fiery passion against what he thought was my infatuation for Brandon". Apparently the infatuation did not last, for the final words in the story are: "And when Kip drew me to him, his youthful fiery passion was equalled by my own". These remarks are of course fully illustrated. I need only add that the 'Brandon' mentioned was the flame of the girl's mother (a widow).

> Another 'comic', "Romantic Marriage" has the inevitable well-developed girl on the cover plus, for good measure, the following: "THAT DANGEROUS FIRST

187

YEAR: Facts of life that every young bride should know." The relevant text inside must, I am afraid, have disappointed many readers.

"Confessions of Love" has the same type of material as the other and includes the following advertisement: "<u>SECRETS OF LOVE</u>" The art of kissing. In every kiss burns the chance for everlasting love and happiness. One false step and you may have lost your heart's desire. Kissing is the art that you can learn! Act now...

"My Secret Marriage" advertises on its cover a story inside entitled "Part-time wife". Once again the stories are true to type and this particular issue contains the following letter in the "Personal Heart Problems" column. 'Dear Miss Drake. I'm 14 years of age and in love with a boy who is 11, but old for his age. Everyone says he is too young for me, but if you are in love the age doesn't matter...My boy told me he loves me and says he always will. My problem is this: is he really too young or does the age matter?

So much for that type of comic. There are two other types, namely the "horror comic" and the "crime comic". The "horror comic" depicts supernatural monsters (the most foul and loathsome creatures the mind of the artist can conjure up); the following is taken form one: "Look out for...a further selection of real blood-chilling stories from the vault of horror guaranteed to thrill and chill and send you screaming for more. You'll shudder and love our new album of chiller tales."

The "crime comic" depicts all kinds of savagery and brutality, including torture. It will not give a child nightmares (the "horror comic" may well do so) but the glorification of violence and the constant depiction of scenes of the upmost brutality cannot but be harmful to children.

The "film fan" magazine is the mental food of perhaps thousands of girls in the thirteen-eighteen age group and of many outside this group. I quote from *The Standard* of 5th October:

"The front cover of Hollywood 'film fan' magazine, which might be bought by any teen-age girl over the counter in a Dublin newsagents shop this week read: 'What I learned from Divorce'; 'Bob Taylor – Ready for Love?'; 'Debra Paget – a new kind of sexiness'; 'Movie Pin-Ups – Hollywood Sexy Sirens and Swoon Guys'. Some

further stories referred to in *The Standard* are entitled: 'The real low-down on Rita's morals!'; 'The revelations of some of Errol Flynn's Ex-Wives'; 'I want to be sexy – Jeanne Crain'."

It is possible that some of these magazines would be banned under the Censorship of Publications Acts if it were possible to get them in a regular series. But, for trade reasons, the publishers apparently change the titles very frequently and accordingly it is difficult to get the necessary 'recent issues' which the Board must examine before they can ban any particular periodical and, even if they do ban any particular one, there will be dozens of others on the market the following week. An amendment of the Act to close that so-called 'loop-hole' would be extraordinarily difficult to frame if one were to avoid perhaps greater evils. Moreover, the introduction of a censorship based on the standards of a fourteen year old child would be open to strong objection. Accordingly, successive Ministers for Justice have tried to steer clear of any such amendment of the law and have taken the stand that the control of reading matter for children is primarily a matter for parents and teachers. I myself believe that if parents banned these magazines in the home and teachers banned them in the schools it would go a long way towards remedying problem. But apparently parents cannot or will not do this. Even so, as I said earlier, I think a ban by teachers would be a considerable help.'

The position of the department was made abundantly clear in this letter; it illustrated the difficulties encountered when attempting to prohibit such materials and also in drafting any form of legislation that could be applied narrowly to teenage periodicals. The Minister had clearly examined the periodicals preferred by teenage audiences in Ireland. Despite the issue of the horror comic being at the centre of the controversy both in Ireland and internationally, the majority of the Minister's letter focused on the dangers of female romance, film and gossip magazines. A similar bias appeared on the list of prohibited periodicals between 1950 and 1955 which featured far more movie and romance periodicals than horror comics. Banned titles include *Picturegoer, Movie Stars Parade, Paris-Hollywood, Movieworld, True Love Stories, Teenage Love and Teenage Romances* among others. The popularity of romance comics in Ireland is reflective of wider international trends. Romance comics were an important part of girls' culture from the

1940s through to the 1970s but their peak period of popularity was in the 1950s when they were outselling superhero comics in the USA.[597]

The contents of the magazine *Movieworld* were critiqued by a dismayed reader of the *Irish Farmers Journal* in June 1959.[598] His description listed some of the articles contained in the magazine including coverage of the marriage difficulties of Elvis, 'open-mouthed, vacant blondes', a picture of a gentleman singer who was a 'cool, cool, cool cat', and an 'MGM filly who is regarded thus by the Movie World caption writer, "She's out, way, way out! Wow!"'.[599] The contributor was also offended by the levels of advertising in the magazine that told girls 'how to have better figures and faces'. The dissection of the content of this magazine (American in origin) offers a further insight into the reading materials purchased by Irish teenagers.

While none of the above material would fall into the category of obscene or indecent, the open and casual approach to relationships and sexuality represented in these magazines would have been objectionable to many social and religious groups in Ireland who campaigned for moral purity, particularly in relation to teenagers and teenage sexuality. The lines of contempt highlighted here around the representations of female sexuality and its potential to corrupt teenage readers sits comfortably alongside wider social narratives of sexuality in mid-twentieth century Ireland. Diarmaid Ferriter describes 'the notion of foreign contamination' as 'one of the greatest myths' found in discourses of sexuality in modern Ireland.[600] The idea that foreign contamination could corrupt the morally pure Irish was located at the centre of the comic crisis and this further reflects the agenda of the creators of the campaigns and crisis in Ireland. While most of the international campaigns hinged on the idea that horror comics might produce a generation of violent delinquents, Irish campaigns focused on obscenity and the moral damage that these publications might cause. This also clearly echoes the approach of the film censor as previously discussed in chapter 3.

Whose Fault is it Anyway?

The issue of who was ultimately responsible for the censorship of the reading materials of children and teenagers is another regular topic in discussions of teenage behaviour in the 1950s. The issue is raised in the above letter between the Department of Justice and Department of

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[597] Claudia A. Mitchell and Jacqueline Reid-Walsh, *Girl Culture: An Encyclopaedia*, (Connecticut, 2008), p.508
[598] *Irish Farmers Journal*, 27 June 1959
[599] Ibid
[600] Diarmaid Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern* Ireland, (London, 2009), p.258

Education. Having outlined their own difficulties in introducing any effective legislation in this area, the letter proposes that parents, with the support of teachers, must supervise what their children are engaging with. This position was held by many others who felt it was not for the state to interfere in these types of family matters and that parents were best placed to protect the moral well-being of their own children.

The dialogue of a meeting of the West Meath Vocational Educational Committee in relation to the seizure of American magazines circulating in the school deemed to contain 'unsuitable' literature reflects very much the national discourses in respect of magazines being consumed by teenagers in Ireland. A motion of protest against the circulation of imported literature was proposed by a Mr A. Faulkner who felt that these publications were deliberately designed to 'undermine the morals and education of young people'.[601] In response to the motion, the Rev. Bro. Basil stated that it was up to parents to ensure that their children did not purchase such literature and a Mr. F. J. Waters said that while he was not against the proposal he felt that he saw nothing worse portrayed in the literature than what could be viewed by youth 'on the screen or at the swimming pool'.[602] Regular newspaper articles also posed the question of who was responsible for censoring these publications. A Cork newspaper agent interviewed in 1953 claimed that 'it wouldn't pay to refuse the stuff' describing how the sale of American magazines to teenagers made up an important part of his daily business.[603] Although he agreed that it would be worthwhile for newsagents to join together and ban the most dangerous literature, the only gesture that he made towards censoring the material at that time of the interview was to get his 12 year old son to what assess was or was not suitable.[604]

One way that the Church attempted to counteract the effect of foreign literature was to produce their own publications aimed at young people. This idea may have transferred to Ireland from the UK[605]; Reverend Marcus Morris edited a hugely successful comic book for boys from the

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[601] *The Irish Times*, 10 April 1951

[602] Ibid

[603] *Times Pictorial*, 8 March 1953

[604] Ibid

[605] There were a number of other publications produced by the Catholic authorities which were aimed at boys and girls of a primary school age. The most significant of these was the publication *Our Boys* which had been in circulation since 1914. Michael Flanagan's essay '"To Enlighten and Entertain": Adventure narrative in the *Our Boys* Paper', *Irish Communications Review*, Vol. 12, (2010), pp.88-103 defines *Our Boys* as a paper rather than a comic and describes its creation by the Christian Brothers in Ireland as a reaction to similar boys papers produced in Britain from the turn of the century which heavily promoted empiricist ideologies in their content. Flanagan describes how the Christian Brothers created Irish adventures characters including cowboys, detectives and space explorers. He posits that this is one of the few examples where young Irish readers had the chance to engage with Irish focused fictional heroes through popular culture. Since Flanagan clearly

early 1950s called *Eagle* which sold approximately 800,000 copies a week.[606] The printers swiftly added a comic for teenage girls named *Girl* which ran from 1951 to 1964.[607] Both comics were available to buy in Ireland also.[608] The Irish Catholic publication *Youth and Truth* very much mimicked the style of other teenage magazines including articles on work, films, pets, travel, school holidays, sports, art appreciation and party recipes. Content that could be identified as overtly Catholic in content was restricted to stories on missionary nuns and priests, confirmations and a comic strip depicting such stories as 'The Story of St. Bernard de Menthon'. The film appreciation section was written by the Rev. J. A. V. Burke, Hon. Secretary of the Catholic Film Institute in London. The magazine attempted to maintain a more light-touch approach to religious content with the film critic above claiming in response to a letter from a reader in relation to 'evil films' that he did not 'propose to spend valuable time and space condemning bad films. It is much more important and in line with the Holy Father's attitude to the cinema to promote good motion pictures'.[609] Many articles, however, contained obviously Catholic moral undertones especially in relation to behaviour, dating, exposure to foreign culture and self-regulation. The tone of the magazine may be best encapsulated in quotes such as 'There is a grave danger in denying youth its opportunity as there is always the temptation for youth to create its own opportunity'.[610] The popularity of the magazine with teenagers is impossible to surmise but its existence underlines the deep concern of the Church with the content of imported materials as well as their attempts to control not just the real spaces but also the ideological and creative spaces available to teenagers. Another publication, *The Irish Schoolgirl*, was first issued in 1957 by New Ireland Publications in Dublin and espoused strong Catholic values in its overall ethos and content selection.[611] Again the publication utilised a standard magazine content layout with fiction stories, fashion pages, a letters page and sports. The following extract from an article entitled 'When You Leave School', gives a very clear illustration of just how concerned some sections of the Catholic Church were about the disengagement of young people from their faith

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identifies this paper as being directed at young boys as opposed to teenagers the publication has not been included in more detail in this thesis.

[606] David Roach, 'The History of British Comic Art', in George A. Khoury, (ed), *True Brit: Celebrating the Comic Book Artists of England*, (Canada, 2006), p.12

[607] Ibid.

[608] Gabriel Duffy, *Sham to Rock: Growing Up in Forties and Fifties Dublin*, (Derbyshire, 2003), p. 52-54

[609] *Truth and Youth Magazine*, September 1956, Vol. 1 No. 5, p.3

[610] *Truth and Youth Magazine*, February 1957, Issue Vol. 2, No.1

[611] *The Irish Schoolgirl*, Vol.1 No. 1, April 1957 (Department of Foreign Affairs, DFA/5/316/1/159, National Archives of Ireland)

What I want you to do is this. I want you to realise that your Faith is the most real thing you could possess. The Catholic Church is no killjoy. You can have plenty of fun in life. You can see films, play games, go on journeys abroad, mix with all sorts of people, in fact lead an ordinary normal life and at the same time never forget that you are a member of the Church, and that you have duties and responsibilities as well as pleasures.[612]

Church and state authorities and the national press often portrayed parents as unconcerned and/or unaware of the dangers posed to their children by their engagement with popular culture. Letters of complaint forwarded to the CPB and Minister for Justice come primarily from youth organisations and church authorities as opposed to parents or other citizens. In fact, a member of the public was far more likely to complain about the banning of their favourite periodical rather than voice their concern about teen magazines. The Minister received quite a few irate letters following the banning of the magazines *Woman* and *Woman's Own* in 1955.[613] Letters of complaint also appeared in many of the daily newspapers including this letter from a reader under the name 'Eighteen' featured in the *Evening Mail*

Sir- I have been reading "Woman" and "Woman's Own" for the past two or three years and never have I found anything in the least way objectionable in them. I should think our brothers and sisters are sailing across the water for more reasons than want of a job. What were we given a conscience for? Was it not so that each individual could distinguish for himself the difference between right and wrong? But seemingly in this country the conscience of a few people can deprive a whole nation of the use of theirs.[614]

Another letter in the same publication speaks of the 'wave of popular indignation against the sudden banning of so many popular periodicals'. The files of the Censorship of Publications Board contain few independent letters of complaint from the public that are not connected to either a religious organisation or a campaign organised by a religious organisation. The greatest number of letters received from members of the public by the Minister for Justice and CPB are associated with the campaign against comics and other foreign literature that took place in the last few months of 1957. However, multiple sources indicate that this campaign was a thinly

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[612] Ibid., p.6
[613] See various letters addressed to Minister for Justice circa November, 1955, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/102/139, National Archives of Ireland)
[614] *The Evening Mail*, 31 November 1955

veiled and highly organised attack on the Censorship of Publications Board rather than a genuine campaign against evil literature. The focus on youth publications was probably chosen owing to its international profile and as a subject that could easily garner press attention and sensational headlines. Appendix C shows the dates, organisations and government departments contacted in the months between November 1957 and March 1958 in relation to the importation of foreign literature and its corruptive influence on the youth of the day and the moral fabric of the country. There were a further 16 letters from individuals also sent to either the Minister for Justice or the Taoiseach during the same period. The majority of these letters were sent from the Dublin city areas of Drumcondra or Ballyfermot. John Charles McQuaid had his residence in Drumcondra throughout his tenure as Archbishop of Dublin.[615]

This campaign was part of the bitter fallout following a series of resignations from the CPB in September 1957.[616] The Board, which was made up of five voluntary members, had functioned very smoothly, up until mid-1956 when one member resigned and another died.[617] The Minister took some time over his selection of new members in what was viewed to be a move to create more balance on the Board and slow the rate of prohibitions.[618] Several months later the Minster appointed two new members with more liberal dispositions than the existing three members.[619] The functioning of the new Board quickly broke down and the Chairman, Professor Piggott, suspended all meetings and sent an ultimatum to the Minister that either the two new members be removed or he would tender his own resignation.

The Minister claimed that he no legal recourse to remove the new members and accepted Prof. Piggott's resignation in October 1957; the two remaining original members resigned immediately afterwards in sympathy.[620] Less than two months, later the campaign against evil literature was launched. It included the issuing of a letter from the Secretaries of the Hierarchy in February 1958 which called for something to be done about the 'great increase of evil publications' and insisted that the Gardaí would be enabled to act against the 'importation and sale of crime and sex fiction'.[621] Although the campaign garnered some additional press coverage on the issue of teenagers and the availability of foreign printed materials it failed to achieve anything in respect

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[615] John Cooney, *John Charles McQuaid: Ruler of Catholic Ireland*, (Dublin, 1999), p. 16
[616] Michael Adams, *Censorship: The Irish Experience*, (Dublin, 1968), pp. 120-121
[617] Ibid, p.120
[618] Ibid
[619] Donal Ó Drisceoil, 'The Best Banned in the Land: Censorship and Irish Writing since 1950', in *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 35, (2005), p.
[620] Michael Adams, *Censorship: The Irish Experience*, (Dublin, 1968), pp.121-122
[621] Letter from the Secretaries of the Hierarchy, 30th January 1958, (Department of An Taoiseach, TAOIS/S 2321B, National Archives of Ireland)

of regulating either the importation or circulation of periodicals. This was because in reality, although it was the largest of its kind during the 1950s, the campaign was not really about evil literature at all and the government decided to take a stand against the political pressure that was being exerted by Archbishop McQuaid and the Catholic Hierarchy. A letter from Oscar Traynor, Minister for Justice, to Eamon De Valera in February 1958 clearly laid out the government position on the whole affair:[622]

> This campaign started off by a public statement by the Archbishop of Dublin with reference to the "foul books" that were on sale in the city and it was spearheaded by the Knights of Columbanus, an organisation in which the two members of the Board who resigned with Professor Piggott are prominent and of which he himself is almost certainly a member. And I am sure that the campaign would never have been started at all but for the fact that His Grace was not consulted by the former Taoiseach or by me about the recent appointments to the Board

The letter goes on to say that

> [t]he present campaign will do some damage to the Government and the Party if it is not handled with some courage. I think you ought to make an effort to spike the guns of this type of opposition and to rally the responsible members of the various parties in the Dáil to the support of the institutions of the State so that the Hierarchy may be led to see at the outset that this Government and those which preceded it were carrying out their duties faithfully in accordance with the powers conferred on them.

This letter exposes a greater vein of resistance to the imposition of the Church into State affairs than may previously have been represented. It also exposes that the vitriolic campaign against the floods of evil literature was for the most part a calculated power play against the Government and the CPB and contained little genuine concern for the youth of Ireland or the standards of public morality. It further reveals that much of the moral panic around comics, magazines and young people in Ireland lacked any real substance and very little support from the general public. Public concerns around young people tended to circle around the more concrete social issues of emigration, education and unemployment as illustrated in earlier chapters and not around popular culture. There was a tendency in the discourses around youth and imported

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[622] Letter from the Office of the Minister for Justice, Oscar Traynor to An Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera, 4th February 1958, (Department of An Taoiseach, TAOIS/S/2321, National Archives of Ireland)

literature to concentrate on morality in relation to sexuality rather than violence and juvenile delinquency although the next section shows that there was some concern about the perceived increase in levels of juvenile crime in Ireland during the 1950s.

The comics and magazines were described as 'amoral', 'dirty', 'suggestive', 'slimy', 'evil', 'filthy', 'a menace' and 'harmful'. In the Catholic press, film-fan magazines were often singled out for the coverage they gave to the private lives of Hollywood stars including multiple love affairs and divorces. Irish censors may have been able to cut or ban films that mentioned divorce or extra-marital affairs but it was far more difficult to control the circulation of magazines or to cut their content. In his assessment of the crisis around comics and young people in France during the 1950s, Richard I. Jobs proposed that debates around the topic 'brought young people to the forefront of social and political discussions'.[623] Despite a lack of substance to much of the moral outrages in Ireland, the series of campaigns relating to the reading materials of teenagers and children did achieve some repositioning of young people in political discussions and concerns, as well as drawing attention to some associated topics such as juvenile crime and sexuality.

The Good, the Bad and the Beautiful

Regular images and articles concerning teenagers appeared in Irish newspapers and magazines for a variety of reasons. The representations were both positive and negative and related to diverse areas like entertainment, crime, social change and cultural events. For instance there were regular photographs in the local and national press of teenage beauty queens –the photos were usually restricted to beauty shots of the head and shoulders and a description of the personality and personal achievements of the girl. Other national and international teenage events and competitions also received plenty of press coverage including sewing contests, dance and sports competitions, youth group shows and individual achievements and social outings. National competitions like 'Young Farmer of the Year', which is discussed in the previous chapter, received a lot of attention in both the local and national press including photographs and profiles of the competitors as well as articles on the regional heats, the national final and the overall winner. There were also frequent articles in the Irish press on teenagers from around the world with a particular interest in American teens and the topic of juvenile delinquency. The phenomenon of the Teddy-boy attracted plenty of media attention as indicated in Chapter 3 but the media in Ireland also reported frequently on youth violence in other cities and parts of the

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[623] Richard I. Jobs, 'Tarzan Under Attack: Youth, Comics and Cultural Reconstruction in Post-war France', in *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4, (Fall, 2003), pp. 627-725

world. Articles were published on youth crimes that involved individuals but there appears to have been a particular focus on gangs, rallies, youth protests and demonstrations. Reports on youth violence in places as widely dispersed as Korea, Miami, Amsterdam, Zurich, Brighton, New York and Stockholm appeared in Irish newspapers, suggesting that youth related violence was of interest to the Irish media and public.

Articles on American teenagers formed the largest section of articles on non-Irish teens. The subject matter of these articles tended to relate either to teenage crime or the freedom and affluence enjoyed by American teenagers. Quite a few newspaper and journal articles also appeared on the infatuation of Irish teenagers with American film and music stars as well as the adoption of American slang.[624] In debates around the importation of foreign literature outlined above, there appears to be less of a tendency to isolate American produced mass culture for criticism than there was in other European countries such as Britain and France. This may be due to the continued presence of the American armed forces in many European countries in the post-war period. Richard I. Jobs also highlights how nations like France found it difficult to balance the 'competing conceptions of how to reconstruct citizenship in the wake of Nazi occupation and in the midst of American ascendancy.'[625] That is not to say that there was no critique of the attraction of American popular culture products like films, music and magazines in Ireland. Discussions of Americanisation often criticised Irish teenagers for their wholesale adoption of American mass culture and popular styles. As outlined in the earlier chapters, the preference of Irish teens for American rock'n'roll over traditional Irish music appeared as a regular discourse.

Irish teenagers tended to be represented favourably when compared with teenagers of other nationalities in terms of violence and crime. Little concern was expressed that juvenile delinquency had the potential to spread to Irish youths, certainly in relation to mass demonstrations and gang violence. Besides some rather harmless parading outside concerts and the more popular youth films, Irish youths were fairly tame when compared with some of their international counterparts in the same decade. The Gardaí were confident enough to write to an American inquiry about youth behaviour in Ireland sent in 1958 that 'there is, of course, no

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[624] For some examples of articles on American youth slang or lingo see 'Dublin's answer to rock n'roll craze', in *Times Pictorial,* 29 September 1956, p. 20; 'Where on Earth is the strangest slang', in *Irish Independent*, 3 September 1953, p.6 and 'Theatre vs Pictures', in *The Southern Star*, 26 March 1955, p.4; Many allusions to the adoption of American slang by Irish youths are contained in reviews of popular films and music. Chapter 3 also contains some references to the use of 1950s slang by Irish youths.
[625] Richard I. Jobs, 'Tarzan Under Attack: Youth, Comics and Cultural Reconstruction in Post-war France', in *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4, (Fall, 2003), p.1

youth problems in this country in connection with liquor, dope or narcotics.'[626] However, there were numerous articles criticising the Gardaí for not dealing more effectively with anti-social behaviour by youths in urban centres and some even suggesting that Gardaí were afraid to deal with large gangs of Teddy boys and other ill-behaved teenagers.

In the second half of the decade, there was an increase in public discussions around juvenile crime and delinquency. In January 1957 the Lord Mayor of Dublin set up a Joint Committee to report on vandalism and juvenile delinquency. The Committee delivered their report in November 1958 following 22 meetings which examined the extent of the problem in the Dublin metropolitan area.[627] Concerns expressed by the Streets Committee of Dublin Corporation over a perceived rise in the levels of vandalism and juvenile delinquency was the only the rationale offered in the report in respect to the setting up of the committee.[628] Representatives from various organisations including the Catholic Social Welfare Bureau, the Irish National Teachers Organisation, the Legion of Mary, St. Vincent De Paul, Primary Schools League, the Catholic Boys Scouts of Ireland and a member of the Social Studies department in UCD made up the committee of 20 members.

Following 18 months of investigations and critical examination of the issue the committee concluded that there was 'no evidence that there was a high proportion of either vandalism or juvenile delinquency in Dublin'.[629] They agreed, however, that some measures and coherence of approach on the issue was necessary because of the 'dangerous tendencies towards an increase'.[630] The report went on to outline what it deemed to be the underlying causes of juvenile delinquency. A long list of social disadvantages were proffered by the Committee including 'poverty', 'breakdown in family', 'bad parents', 'mental sub-normality', 'lack of suitable employment' and 'housing conditions' which deflected most of the responsibility back to families and communities.[631] An extensive list of remedies followed but there was no real sense of how the Board envisioned those remedies should be applied or supported. This lack of pragmatism is represented in the first suggestion on the list of remedies which stated that 'religion is the main

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[626] Letter to Garda Síochána from Dorothy Munro, 711 Camellia Way, Vacaville, California, 11 December 1958, (Department of Justice, DFA 398/37, National Archives)
[627] Vandalism and Juvenile Delinquency: Report of the Joint Committee appointed at the request of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, p.2
[628] Ibid., p. 2
[629] Vandalism and Juvenile Delinquency: Report of the Joint Committee appointed at the request of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, p.3
[630] Ibid
[631] Ibid, p.5

remedy for juvenile delinquency'.[632] This conclusion no doubt reflected the high percentage of Board members with affiliations to Catholic organisations. The four other categories of remedies outlined by the Board were public opinion, education of parents, education of children and family welfare. The document only made one really practical suggestion which was the setting up of a Dublin City Youth Board, which they hoped would bring together the governmental institutions and voluntary organisations which operated in the city area.[633] It was also recommended that the first duty of the newly established Board should be to undertake a continuous study of vandalism and juvenile delinquency in the city which was especially extraneous in light of the fact that the conclusion of their own study was that no great problem existed.

Despite the fact that the Joint Committee found little evidence of any increase in juvenile delinquency in Ireland, the subject was taken up again by the Barrister James O'Connor when he produced a paper on juvenile delinquency, a portion of which was presented to the organisation Tuairim[634] in March, 1959.[635] His paper was far more sensationalist and he identified juvenile delinquency worldwide as 'one of the major contemporary social problems'.[636] He commented further on the underlying causes identified by the report above and attached four additional categories –bad companions, truancy, modern craving for pleasure and temptations placed too readily in the way of young boys. Mr O'Connor claimed throughout the paper that juvenile delinquency was becoming a serious problem in Ireland and crime involving juveniles was increasing yearly. Although he supplied some statistics to support his argument, overall figures provided by the annual Commissioners Reports do not show any increase in juvenile crime during the 1950s. **Table 16** below shows the number of male and female offenders aged between 12 and 18 years of age from 1945 to 1957 (after 1957 the figures are given only for persons aged 21 years and under so the teenage figures are more difficult to extrapolate).[637] The figures supplied in **Table 16** show the number of juvenile offenders nationally and clearly reveal that there was no rise in crime levels during the 1950s, in fact 1945 had the highest number of

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[632] Ibid, p.6
[633] Ibid, p.14
[634] Tuairim were an intellectual organisation who debated social, cultural and political issues in Ireland between 1954 and 1975. Tomás Finn has recently produced a book entitled *Tuairim, Intellectual Debate and Policy Formation: Rethinking Ireland 1954-1975*, (Manchester, 2012), which explores the impact and contribution of this organisation especially to the areas of public policy and social change.
[635] A Paper on Juvenile Delinquency by James O'Connor, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/93/83, National Archives of Ireland)
[636] Ibid., p.1
[637] All figures are taken from the *Report of the Commissioner of the Gárda Síochána on Crime* for years 1945 through to 1957

offenders of all the years provided. Further figures supplied by the Gárdaí for the Dublin Metropolitan area reveal, as would be expected, that the majority of offenders came from the largest urban area. The figures also show that there was no linear progression of juvenile crime in the 1950s. The highest numbers of offenders appeared earlier in the decade -in the year 1950 when 3,335 juveniles had proceedings instituted against them. From this figure only 1,104 cases proceeded.[638] Of the original 3,335 cases 1,318 were offences involving larcenies in which the value of the goods taken did not exceed £5.00. Only 290 of those cases actually proceeded to a charge. Another 226 youths were charged with theft of a pedal cycle but only 121 of those cases proceeded. The other years for which statistics are available show that in 1953 charges were initiated against 3,461 youths and charges were brought against 1,371 young persons.[639] In 1954 2,715 juveniles had proceedings instituted against them with 1,035 cases progressing and in 1955 994 cases out of 2,503 proceeded to court.[640] The level of dismissals in juvenile cases was very high. Of the 1,104 youths charged in 1950, 703 of the cases were dismissed in court. A further 20 cases were recognisances, 86 offenders were released on probation and 35 youths were committed to industrial schools. Only 159 young persons were convicted and sentenced; places of detention for youths were prison, borstals or reformatory schools. It was still legal to send a youth to be whipped during the 1950s and the category is listed in the reports of juvenile crime supplied by the Gárdaí for the 1950s. The Minister for Justice last approved an order to whip a boy in 1948 but no whippings were ordered in the 1950s.[641]

Table 16 Male and female offenders aged between 12 and 18 years, 1945-1957

Year	Number of Offenders
1945	2,200
1946	1,798
1947	2,046
1948	1,985
1949	1,782
1950	1,904
1951	2,154
1952	1,888
1953	1,961

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[638] Juvenile Offenders – Dublin Metropolitan Area, 1950 (Department of Justice, JUS/90/93/51, National Archives of Ireland)

[639] Juvenile Offenders – Dublin Metropolitan Area, 1953 (Department of Justice, JUS/90/93/51, National Archives of Ireland)

[640] Juvenile Offenders – Dublin Metropolitan Area, 1954 (Department of Justice, JUS/90/93/51, National Archives of Ireland); Juvenile Offenders – Dublin Metropolitan Area, 1955 (Department of Justice, JUS/90/93/51, National Archives of Ireland)

[641] A Paper on Juvenile Delinquency by James O'Connor, (Department of Justice, JUS/90/93/83, National Archives of Ireland), p.17

1954	1,680
1955	1,764
1956	2,038
1957	1,870

Reports of juvenile delinquency associated with teenagers in regional areas indicated common forms of anti-social behaviour. Newspapers reports often sensationalised these events such as the 'wave of destruction' reported as taking place in Clones in 1958 that included 'breaking of public seats, shooting of cats, raiding of orchards, ringing door bells, and now the latest is squib-throwing and the exploding of carbide in tins.'[642] A newspaper report covering the proceedings of the Cavan Urban Council in 1959 detailed complaints by one council member that teenagers were mimicking their American counterparts by playing 'chicken' with vehicles travelling on local roads and as a result posed a serious danger to motorists.[643] He further commented on the lack of manners displayed by modern teenagers saying that 'twenty years ago the teenagers of that time would hardly dare to speak to you, but now they would abuse the Lord Bishop and think nothing of it'. The Bishop of Galway also lamented that even 'really tough and wicked boys' who initiated gangs were in a position to 'assure recruits' that even if they got into trouble nothing would happen to them.'[644] As the 1950s progressed there was a steady increase in the number of reports, articles, committees and debates pertaining to the issue of juvenile crime and delinquency in Ireland. Since the statistics do not show any real increase in the actual levels of crime committed by young people it would follow that commentators in Ireland were being influenced by the greater attention given to subject internationally. In the case of the United States, Amy Kiste Nyberg has suggested that the increased focus on juvenile crime led to greater levels of detection, media analysis and public discourse which then further supported the belief that the problem was growing. All of the reports outlined above do indicate that there was some level of public disorder associated with teenagers in Ireland. However, the public perception of such incidents becoming more frequent is not supported by the statistics or the findings of the committee on vandalism and juvenile delinquency in Dublin.

Conclusion

A wide variety of issues including emigration, unemployment, juvenile delinquency and popular culture positioned teenagers at the centre of many social discourses during the 1950s in Ireland. The validity of some of these debates has been outlined in this chapter. These explorations

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[642] *The Anglo-Celt*, 11 October 1958
[643] *The Anglo-Celt*, 15 August 1959
[644] *The Connacht Tribune*, 19 September 1959

suggest that a number of these crises emanated from the power struggles connected to the structures and organisations which had a vested interest in monitoring and controlling social practices and processes in Ireland. Teenagers and their apparent vulnerability sometimes merely offered a convenient vehicle to focus public dialogue around the perceived erosion of moral and spiritual wellbeing in Ireland. Regardless of the legitimacy of some of the campaigns about youth culture, their existence increased the focus on teenage issues by the general public. In many cases, representations of teenage culture in the popular press and in political discourses mimicked the rise of youth culture more generally across the western world. The areas of representations map very clearly onto many of the trajectories experienced in the UK and USA including juvenile delinquency, subcultures and their relationship to popular and consumer cultures including fashion, music and films. The most prominent discourse, both internationally and domestically was teenagers being posited as a new social grouping which required 'special handling'. This highlights the fact that ideologies of the modern teenager were not being absorbed, considered and expressed just by teenagers themselves but also by wider society.

The evidence supplied throughout this thesis suggests that the moral outcries around issues like horror comics and the dangers of modern, urban societies amounted to a conscious manoeuvre of power or a flex of muscles by a range of social agencies and actors who recognised that their authority was being slowly eroded from below. The political battle surrounding the CPB suggests that an uneasy status-quo existed between government and Church authorities and these embedded practices and relationships of power could not be changed overnight. A protracted, limping transition to a more secularised society took place over a number of decades in Ireland and these processes have been discussed in detail by other scholars including Gibbons, Inglis and Keohane.[645] This chapter and thesis argues, however, that the roots of these social transitions began in the 1950s and that this generation of teenagers were central to initiating social change. Their increased visibility through an international focus on teen culture and the specific social issues pertaining to young people in Ireland placed this cohort at the core of the debate on how Ireland would progress as a nation.

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[645] Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, (Cork, 1996); Kieran Keohane and Carmen Kuhling, *Collision culture: Transformations in everyday life in Ireland*, (Dublin, 2004); Tom Inglis, *Moral monopoly: The rise and fall of the Catholic church in modern Ireland*, (Dublin, 1998); Tom Inglis, *Global Ireland: Same difference*, (London, 2008)

Conclusion

Not So Popular

The themes of everyday life and popular culture were chosen to establish the parameters of this thesis in order to facilitate new perspectives on youth culture in Ireland during the post-war period. From the outset, the intention of this research has been to present a study which was representative of the experience of the majority of teenagers in Ireland during the 1950s rather than a focused study on a small number of youth subcultures. Popular culture, therefore, offered a clear route to tracing the socio-cultural experience of this cohort. There has been a considerable absence of examinations of popular culture in Irish academic study which has only recently been addressed by a small body of scholars. Within this field there has also been a tendency to focus on Irish produced popular culture such as music, films, periodicals, newspapers and television; academic examinations of imported popular culture in Ireland are especially rare. This seems particularly inexplicable in a nation that has created little home-grown popular entertainment (with the exception of music). This study has indicated that imported popular culture including films, comics, magazines, material culture and music played a central role in the construction of teenage culture and identity in Ireland after the Second World War. The thesis also shows the local impact and mediation of the rise of teenage culture internationally at this time. This is reflected in the altering attitudes to leisure time, greater levels of anxiety around the issues like juvenile delinquency and a renewed focus on the behaviour of Irish teenagers. Many of these discourses were prompted by and linked to the establishment of this cohort within other western societies at this time.

The 1950s in Ireland, and the post war period more generally, have also been marginalised in studies of 'modern' Ireland. In fact, they have been carefully constructed in the Irish popular imagination as the darkest hour of the twentieth century. Luke Gibbons has commented on this phenomenon stating that

> It is generally held that Irish society had to await the end of the de Valera era to awake from its nostalgic slumbers. With revisionist hindsight, 1959 is taken as the annus mirabilis of modern Ireland, the year in which God said 'Let Lemass be!' –

and there was light, dispelling the mists of traditionalism which had obscured the path to progress and industrialisation. [646]

This perspective on the 1950s may be linked to economic studies of the period which have understandably focused on Ireland's slow fiscal progress and high levels of emigration in the post-war period in comparison with other nations. The dominant role of the Catholic Church in Irish political and cultural life in this decade has also led to blanket assumptions around the nature of Irish society, marking it as dark, dull and xenophobic. The evidence presented in this thesis which points to the considerable interest in popular culture, entertainment, and consumer culture in Ireland clearly disrupts these established theories. Other academic studies such as Clair Wills' *That Neutral Island* or Paul Ryan's *Asking Angela McNamara: An Intimate History of Irish Lives*, have demonstrated that there has been far more continuity in social processes than examinations of modernisation often allow.[647] This study has therefore attempted to negotiate the pitfalls of linear interpretations of the traditional versus the modern. It has been much more useful to approach the decade and the topic within the framework of social transition and to reflect on the dominant discourses which pertained to young people at this time. This approach then allowed for links to be created between the difficult economic and social realities of the decade and social and cultural dimensions of the lived experience for young people in 1950s Ireland.

A range of scholars have created an extensive body of work on emigration in Ireland but at times this has resulted in a dearth of studies into everyday life for the people who remained.[648] The particularly high levels of emigration in the 1950s have probably led to an even greater imbalance in representations of that decade. The first two chapters of this thesis focused on education, employment, opportunity and emigration in order to address the dominant social issues and structures of the 1950s. These chapters also built on the existing body of research by concentrating on the young people who did not emigrate. The purpose of constructing the thesis in this way was to underpin the relevance of popular culture to social change by linking it to wider social discourses. In other words, popular culture, like almost all other aspects of society, did not exist in a vacuum and therefore it was very important not to research it in that way. The intention of this thesis was always to connect access to and participation with popular

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[646] Luke Gibbons, *Transformations in Irish Culture*, (Cork, 1996), p.83

[647] Clair Wills, *The Neutral Island: A Cultural History of Ireland during the Second World War*, (London, 2007); Paul Ryan, *Asking Angela McNamara: An Intimate History of Irish Lives*, (Dublin, 2011)

[648] The following two publications deal most extensively with the issue of emigration in Ireland in the post-war period: Enda Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000) and Mary E. Daly, *The slow failure: Population decline and independent Ireland 1920-1973*, (London, 2006)

culture to other social practices and processes such as employment, disposable income, class, gender, economics, family structures and political policies. The importance of this approach is demonstrated in Chapter 5 which shows how discourses surrounding teenage culture in Ireland could act as a conduit for wider political power struggles. The inclusion of popular culture and media offers an important counter-balance to political documents and policies which tend to be very limited in their social representation. The concerns of the political elite can be quite different to those of the general public. This is represented in the lack of public engagement with government initiatives including the promotion of domestic science, agricultural science and to some extent the promotion of national culture and the Gaelic language, as discussed in Chapter 1. This is also related to the apparently easy integration of national and global mass culture at a local level which suggests that popular culture functioned as a welcome part of everyday life in Ireland during the 1950s. The lack of response by parents and the public to crises and issues whipped up by moral guardians and Church authorities indicates that the public were free enough to interpret for themselves the issues which they considered most important in relation to teenagers, principal among them the issue of unemployment. This presents a strong case for utilising popular culture as a framework to examine social tensions and transition.

The Youth of Today

In September 1956 the Oliver Plunkett Boys' Club was opened on Trinity Street in Drogheda. A sum of £2,000 had been spent renovating the building which was attached to the local Christian Brothers School.[649] Facilities at the club included 'a billiards room, a reading room, a basketball court and an assembly hall' which could be converted into a fully equipped gym.[650] One church representative who was present at the opening ceremony commented on the importance of the club as a 'powerful antidote to juvenile delinquency'.[651] Another Christian Brother stated that

> The two boys clubs in the town could form a bulwark against the disease which is rotting the youth of today. For want of a better word he would call it 'teenism'. They had "Teddy boys" and now they had rock'n'roll. The herd instinct could be responsible for untold damage provided there was a leader. The herd instinct could become a "teen" instinct given the conditions[652]

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[649] *The Irish Press,* 17 September 1956
[650] Ibid
[651] Ibid
[652] Ibid

The Brother communicated that he felt something new and dangerous was happening to teenagers in the town which had started with Teddy boys and rock'n'roll. The investment of £2,000 in a new youth club in the hope that it would act as a 'bulwark' against the disease of 'teenism' and an 'antidote to juvenile delinquency' demonstrates the many ways in which international ideologies of the teenager had perfectly penetrated Irish society. In this article the Christian Brothers have linked new forms of popular culture and subcultures with collective identities and fears around juvenile crime and youth culture. The article itself also presents an interesting snapshot into some of the local and global dynamics raised in this thesis in connection to popular culture in mid-twentieth century Ireland. First the article shows that, even outside of the major urban centres, discourses surrounding international teenager culture had made some impact. It is impossible to ascertain whether the comments of the Brothers reflect actual local engagement with rock'n'roll and Teddy boys or simply a fear of the influence of these prominent popular cultural forms by local authorities. Either way, the discourses in this article clearly represent the nuances of the rise of teenage culture in the post-war period internationally, including the anxieties communicated by moral guardians in respect of teenagers and popular culture.

Outside of the many themes and links to the material in this thesis raised in the quote from Brother Mullen above, it is worth considering the irony of the construction of a brand new basketball court in the boys club as one of the main attractions. Previous historiographies of lost, conservative, stagnant Ireland in the 1950s have not referred to the rise in popularity of the American sport of basketball. Few have mentioned the All-Ireland Basketball Championships or the 309 clubs scattered throughout the country (the main concentration in Cork and Kerry), or the 3,000 plus club players active in Ireland by 1958.[653] Little attention has been paid to the visit of the Harlem Globetrotters to Ireland in June 1959 and the 15,000 strong crowds that turned out to see them despite heavy rain and poor conditions on the day.[654] The Harlem Globetrotters starred in two films during in the 1950s, *The Harlem Globetrotters* (1951) and *Go, Man, Go!* (1954).[655] Both films received Irish film certificates and were shown in cinemas throughout the country. Although it is difficult to gauge if these films contributed to the increased popularity of basketball in Ireland in the 1950s, the Harlem Globetrotters certainly seem to have inspired some local teams. One team in Castleblaney called 'The Globetrotters' kept a framed good luck message from the Harlem team in their clubrooms following correspondence with the New

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[653] *The Irish Independent*, 19 November 1958

[654] *The Irish Press*, 1 June 1959; *The Irish Independent*, 1 June 1959

[655] William Young and Nancy Young, *The* 1950s, p. 128

York based team.[656]   The objections expressed by the Brothers were therefore particularly linked to youth culture, as opposed to foreign or mass culture, since the foreign sport of basketball appears to have been integrated without any difficulty. A report in the 'Louisburgh Notes' section of the *Connaught Telegraph* in 1952 displayed a similarly unproblematic approach to the adoption to the new sport locally and stated that 'Basketball, which proved so popular in Louisburgh on its inception last winter, has again attracted the youth of the town during the last few weeks'.[657]   Tom Inglis pointed to a similar contradiction in the fact that American football games had been facilitated by the GAA at Croke Park despite the sustained prohibition of soccer up until 2007.[658] Inglis attributed this to the 'close affinity to America' expressed by many Irish people.[659]

But the suggestion of a close affinity or special relationship does little to illuminate the interactions at a local or everyday level in Ireland with international or global culture. This thesis has demonstrated that many of the international youth and popular culture products and crazes of the 1950s, including hula-hoops, rock'n'roll, teenpics, scooters, skiffle, comics, Teddy boys and romance magazines, were all present in Ireland. Not all of those phenomena were American in origin and many of the rock'n'roll stars who enjoyed widespread popularity in Ireland, including Tommy Steele, were British. Since British print media was readily available in Ireland popular culture was mediated through a number of filters. Add to this the huge number of young people who emigrated in the post-war period and the idea of a closed-off and provincial nation seems to be particularly untenable. A disjointed sense of national identity must have been created through emigration, not just for those who emigrated but also for those who remained in Ireland. A number of scholars have pointed to the tensions which surrounded the returned migrant as a symbolic figure of modern, urban affluence and consumer culture particularly after the Second World War.[660] In this study the desire for the higher standards of living and consumer culture (sometimes embodied by the returned migrant) are connected to understandings of the modern, material lifestyles available outside of Ireland. It is argued here

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[656] *The Anglo-Celt*, 22 March 1958
[657] *The Connaught Tribune*, 20 September 1952
[658] Tom Inglis. *Global Ireland Same Difference*, (New York, 2008), p.23
[659] Ibid
[660] A recent article by Ann Scholfield investigates the reports of the Folklore Commission questionnaire in relation to returned yanks. She argues that 'The significance of these memories of watches, stylish dresses, and boastful Yanks is less in their accuracy and more in their ability to allow the Irish to define themselves as authentically rural, communal, and old fashioned by contrast to the synthetic modern, urban, and materialistic Yanks'. Ann Schofield, 'The Returned Yank as a Site of Memory in Irish Popular Culture' in *The Journal of American Studies*, *Firstview* Article, September 2013, pp.1-21, p.9; Enda Delaneys' book, *Demography, State and Society*, (Québec, 2000), also considers the impact of the returned migrant both as a disseminator of information on wages and lifestyles and as a figure of social tension in Ireland.

that this knowledge was mostly garnered through imported popular culture. This type of engagement allowed young people in Ireland to compare their lives to their counterparts in other nations and may have altered their sense of belonging in respect of national boundaries and collective identities. In other words, popular culture texts gave this generation the opportunity to identify with a community which existed outside of their immediate national experience.

In Chapter 3 specific examples of this type of engagement are investigated. This chapter focused on the ways that Irish youths integrated some of the iconography of international youth culture into their own lives and the wide range of examples point to the adoption of cheaper modes of expression through style and fashion like haircuts, clothes and make-up. The cinema played a central role in communicating ideologies of the new teenager in Ireland. However, in relation to the development of youth culture in the United States, Peter Lev commented that

> Though the movies may claim some credit (or blame) for spreading this idea of the teenager, Hollywood films were largely reacting to a new youth culture made possible by a booming economy, technological advances (from inexpensive automobiles to the 45rpm record player), and cultural blending (like the mixture of popular music of both black and white culture, which produced rock and roll).[661]

In Ireland the authenticity of the youth culture portrayed in the movies mattered less since the 'booming economy' and 'inexpensive automobiles' referred to by Lev above were as imaginary as the aliens and the spacecraft from films like *The Beast with 1 Million Eyes*. Nonetheless the adoption of modes of dress, style and also to some extent behaviour from American films suggests that Irish teenagers sought to participate in what they viewed as a global movement that pertained to them. The lack of cars, drive-in theatres and burger-joints in Ireland was a reflection of the local economic and cultural conventions and not an indication of whether or not teenagers in Ireland were engaged with and interested in teenage culture. The visibility of teenage culture in Ireland can be traced to the popularity of teenpics, the inclusion of rock'n'roll at rural dances and the coverage of teenage culture in the media. Considering the limited social and cultural spaces available to young people and the lack of economic wherewithal, this level of engagement is significant.

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[661] Peter Lev, *The Fifties: Transforming the Screen 1950-1959*, (California, 2003), p. 218

A Sensitive Eye

Tom Inglis suggests in his study of the Catholic Church in Ireland that 'we need to develop a sensitive eye' in order to better understand what the practice of religion meant in the daily lives of Irish people.[662] In a very similar way 'a sensitive eye' is also required to map the meaning of popular culture in the lives of young people in Ireland during the 1950s. Irish society in the 1950s was culturally, economically and politically quite different to the United States, Britain and most other nations in Western Europe. It should be expected then that there would be no simple transference of teenage culture in its original packaging to young people in Ireland. In fact, Adrian Horn discusses in his book *Juke box Britain: Americanisation and Youth Culture 1945-1960* that the influence of American mass culture was always 'mediated through British social, economic and cultural conditions'.[663] This suggests that Ireland was not unique; mediation between the local and the global was taking place in almost every society after the Second World War. Irish teenage culture would never have been exactly the same as American teenage culture and so looking for markers of modernity in this way would provide little insight into how teenage culture in Ireland developed in the 1950s.

The 'sensitive eye' required to investigate youth culture in the 1950s fits well with De Certeau's theory of tactics and strategies. This theoretical framework was employed to investigate how teenagers functioned within the limits of the conservative parent culture of 1950s Ireland. The particular limits of Irish society in the 1950s were or are strongly linked to the conservative approach of political organisations and Church authorities and in terms of rural Ireland in the social regulation of small, reasonably isolated communities. Yet, as has been already suggested throughout this thesis, the modus operandi of the political and cultural elite should not be extended as a representation of the mindset of the entire nation. For instance, one of the indicators of social progress regularly associated with the 1960s in Ireland was the reform of the education system. This thesis has indicted that many social organisations and a large proportion of the public in Ireland had been calling for this reform since the late 1940s. This suggests that in relation to education it was the government and not the Irish people that were slow to request change and reform. Similarly studies of the heavy handed censorship of the 1950s have failed to include contemporary public responses to these state controls. Chapter 5 of this chapter suggests that in relation to popular literature and media, the public were more concerned with

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[662] Tom Inglis, *Moral Monopoly: The Rise and Fall of the Catholic Church in Modern Ireland*, (2nd edition, Dublin, 1998), p. 9

[663] Adrian Horn, *Juke Box Britain: Americanisation and Youth Culture 1945-1960*, (Manchester, 2009) p. 2

the prohibition of their favourite periodical than they were with the cultural and moral impact of imported literature.

Chapter 4 brings under closer inspection the production of social spaces and leisure activities for young people in Ireland in the 1950s. Here the structures of state control and social regulation became visible and yet there were still ways this generation found to act outside these conventions. In the same way that it is necessary to separate the intentions and policies of the political elite from those of the general public, it is also necessary to separate the intentions of the producers of spaces from those of the users. Lefebvre has highlighted the complexity in relationships to and within social spaces and the ways in which these spaces can incorporate a range of agendas and inter-relationships.[664] Each space therefore had to be evaluated on its own merit. The evidence suggests that many youth organisations had similar approaches and aims and reducing migration dominated much of the investment in rural clubs and societies. Anxieties around unsupervised leisure time, unemployment and juvenile delinquency informed the creation of urban youth spaces. Commercial spaces, such as dance halls and cinemas, offered young people greater opportunities to express individual and collective identities. Each space required some negotiation between those who created the space and the intended users. Therefore, as the article on the youth club in Drogheda above suggests, those who wished to control the leisure time of Irish youths had to provide interesting and appealing activities in order for the youths to attend. Certainly in rural areas the options for young people were more limited. However it appears that some teenagers were prepared to travel outside of their local area in order to circumnavigate the limited and heavily regulated social opportunities available to them.

In real terms of course these activities took place on a small scale and for the most part did not represent any form of collective movement. Bishop Lucey lamented in the 1958 that if only the 200,394 migrants who had left Ireland in the previous 5 years had remained (rather than leave for work and better conditions in Britain) they could have formed a powerful lobby group and campaigned for change.[665] However their mass exodus probably represented in part their desire for social change in Ireland and this eventually prompted the government to alter their economic and social policies. The overt forms of social change which emerged from the late 1950s were a direct result of public dissatisfaction with Irish society in the period after the Second World War. This was reflected in the high levels of emigration but also in the numerous changes in government, changes in the approach to censorship and a public desire for higher standards of

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[664] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (Massachusetts, 1991)
[665] *University Review*, Vol. 1, No. 12, (1958), p.9

living and modern entertainments. Young people were at the centre of the 'battle for a more abundant life' and their movement towards this goal effected social change.[666] In the absence of any official campaign or movement to vocalise this need for change it has been necessary in this thesis to trace these relationships and desires through numerous sources and accounts including newspapers, magazines, documentaries, photographs, autobiographies, ethnographic studies and political papers. Recontextualising popular culture within the more prominent national narratives of the decade such as emigration, unemployment and economic stagnation has revealed the range of discourses which circulated around teenagers in Ireland as an important subsection of society but also as 'new' life stage. Almost all of the examples presented in this thesis display how frequently approaches to teenage culture in Ireland were in sync with international trends despite the particular socio-cultural conventions in operation. This underlines the need for further studies of youth and popular culture by researchers in Ireland, especially in relation to imported popular culture. This study also strongly suggests that the 1950s should to be included in future discussions and explorations of 'modern' Ireland. This investigation of popular culture and everyday life in Ireland illuminates not just the widespread access to and engagement with global, mass culture but also the ability of this generation to resist social conventions in Ireland and initiate social change, albeit that these rebels without a cause were only visible to the most sensitive eye.

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[666] *Ireland: The Tear and the Smile*, (1961), (Irish Film Archives, AA450)

Appendices

Appendix A

Teenpics in Ireland 1950 - 1960

No.	Film Title	Category	Released USA	Released ROI	Released UK
1	The Alligator People	W	July 1959	July 1959	Oct 1959
2	The Amazing Colossal Man	W	March 1957	Dec 1957	Jan 1958
3	April Love	CT	Feb 1957	Dec 1957	Feb 1958
4	The Astounding She-Monster	W	1958	No Record	
5	Attack of the Crab Monsters	W	Feb 1957	June 1957	July 1957
6	Attack of the 50ft Woman	W	May 1958	No Record	March 1959
7	Attack of the Puppet People	W	April 1958	No Record	
8	The Beast with 1,000,000 Eyes	W	June 1955	June 1956	June 1956
9	The Beat Generation	V	July 1959	Rejected by Censor	Sept 1959
10	Because They're Young	CT	April 1960	July 1960	Aug 1960
11	Bernadine	CT	Nov 1957	Aug 1957	Oct 1957
12	The Big Beat	R&R	Feb 1958	Dec 1958	
13	Blackboard Jungle	JD	March 1955	July 1955 *(released with cuts)*	Oct 1955
14	The Blob	W	Sept 1958	Feb 1959	March 1959
15	Blood of Dracula	W	Nov 1957	No Record	
16	Blue Denim (USA) AKA Blue Jeans (GB)	M	Oct 1959	Rejected by Censor	Oct 1959
17	Bop Girl Goes Calypso (USA) AKA Bop Girl (GB)	R&R	July 1957	Oct 1957	Nov 1957
18	The Brain Eaters	W	Sept 1958	March 1959	March 1959
19	The Brain from Planet Arous	W	Oct 1957	No Record	June 1959
20	A Bucket of Blood	W	Oct 1959	Reserved by Censor	Jan 1960
21	Calypso Heat Wave	R&R	June 1957	June 1957	Oct 1957
22	Calypso Joe	R&R	June 1957	Aug 1957	Sept 1957
23	The Careless Years	CT	Sept 1957	Rejected by Censor	Jan 1958
24	Carnival Rock	R&R	1957	No Record	
25	City Across the River	JD	Oct 1949	Oct 1949	Aug 1949
26	College Confidential	V	1960	No Record	

27	Compulsion	M	May 1959	April 1959 *(one cut from censor)*	April 1959
28	The Cool and The Crazy	JD	March 1958	No Record	
29	The Quatermass Xperiment AKA The Creeping Unknown	W	June 1956	Oct 1955 on limited cert	Oct 1955
30	Crime in the Streets	JD	June 1956	*Rejected by Censor*	Aug 1957
31	The Cry-Baby Killer	JD	August 1958	July 1959	March 1959
32	The Curse of Frankenstein	W	June 1957	Rejected by Censor July 1957 – Certified with cuts October 1958	
33	Cyclops	W	July 1957	March 1957	April 1957
34	Daddy-O	M-M	March 1958	No Record	
35	Dangerous Youth AKA These Dangerous Years (UK Film)	JD	June 1958 (1959)	Nov 1957 with cuts	
36	Date Bait	V	November 1960	No Record	
37	Daughter of Dr Jekyll	W	July 1957	Nov 1957	Nov 1957
38	The Day the World Ended	W	Dec 1955 (1956)	Rejected by Censor – Certified in 1965 to persons over 18	
39	The Delicate Delinquent	M	June 1957	Oct 1957	Sept 1957
40	The Delinquents	JD	March 1957	No Record	
41	Diary of a High School Bride	JD	July 1959	June 1960	
42	Dino AKA Killer Dino	JD	July 1957	July 1958	May 1958
43	Don't Knock the Rock	R&R	Dec 1956	Jan 1957 with cuts	March 1957
44	Dragstrip Girl	M-M	April 1957	Aug 1957	Aug 1957
45	Dragstrip Riot	M-M	March 1958	No Record	
46	Eighteen and Anxious	JD	Nov 1957	Rejected by Censor	June 1959
47	Fear Strikes Out	M	Aug 1957	March 1957	May 1957
48	The Fiend Who Walked the West	W	Aug 1958	Sept 1958 with cuts	Oct 1958
49	The Fly	M	1958	Aug 1958	Sept 1958
50	Frankenstein 1970	W	July 1958	Nov 1958	Sept 1958
51	Ghost of Dragstrip Hollow	W	July 1959	March 1962	
52	Gidget	CT	April 1959	Rejected by Censor	June 1959
53	The Girl Can't Help It	M/R&R	Dec 1956	March 1957 *(passed with minor cuts)*	March 1957
54	Girls Town	V	Oct 1959	Aug 1960	Aug1960
55	Going Steady	CT	Feb 1958	April 1958 with cuts	May 1958

56	Go, Johnny, Go!	R&R	June 1959	No Record	
57	High School Big Shot	JD	Oct 1959 (1958)	No Record	
58	High School Caesar	JD	Nov 1960	Sept 1961	
59	High School Confidential	V	June 1958	Nov 1959	March 1959
60	High School Hellcats	JD	June 1958	No Record	
61	Horror of Dracula	W	May 1958	No Record	
62	Horrors of the Black Museum (GB)	W	Nov 1959	Rejected by Censor	May 1959
63	Hot Car Girl	M-M	Aug 1958	No Record	
64	Hot Rod Gang	M-M	June 1958	No Record	
65	Hot Rod Girl	M-M	July 1956	Aug 1956	Sept 1956
66	Hot Rod Rumble	M-M	June 1957	No Record	Aug 1957
67	Hound Dog Man	CT	Nov 1959	Dec 1959	May 1960
68	House on Haunted Hill	W	Feb 1959 (1958)	Jan 1960 to persons over 16 years	
69	How to Make a Monster	W	July 1958	Jan 1959	Feb 1959
70	I Married a Monster from Outer Space	W	Oct 1958	Feb 1959	March 1959
71	It Conquered the World	W	July 1956	Oct 1956	Nov 1956
72	It! The Terror from Beyond Space	W	Aug 1958	Sept 1958	Oct 1957
73	I was a Teenage Frankenstein	W	Nov 1957	Feb 1958	
74	I was a Teenage Werewolf	W	June 1957	March 1958 *(passed without cuts)* *August 1957*	Aug 1957
75	Jailhouse Rock	R&R	Nov 1957	March 1958 *(passed with minor cuts)*	Feb 1958
76	Jamboree AKA Disc Jockey Jamboree (UK)	R&R	1957	Feb 1958	
77	Joy Ride	M-M	Nov 1958	No Record	
78	Juke Box Rhythm	R&R	April 1959	July 1959	Sept 1959
79	Juvenile Jungle	JD	April 1958	Aug 1959	Jan 1959
80	King Creole	R&R/JD	July 1958	*Initially cut heavily by censor. When appealed by the renter to Appeals Board, the Appeals Board banned the film. Certificate issued 1961*	Sept 1958
81	Let's Rock AKA Keep it Cool	R&R	June 1958	Oct 1958	
82	Life Begins at 17	CT	July 1958	Rejected by Censor	Oct 1957
83	Live Fast, Die Young	JD	April 1958	Rejected by	

				Censor	
84	Love Me Tender	M/R&R	Nov 1956	Dec 1956 *(passed with minor cuts)*	Jan 1957
85	Loving You	R&R	July 1957	Sept 1957	Sept 1957
86	Macabre	W	Oct 1958	Rejected by Censor	
87	Mister Rock and Roll	R&R	1957	Nov 1957	Dec 1957
88	Monster on Campus	W	1958	Dec 1958	May 1959
89	Motorcycle Gang	M-M	Oct 1957	March 1958	
90	The Mummy (GB)	W	Dec 1959	Dec 1959	Sept 1959
91	My Teenage Daughter (British Film)	M	UK Release 1956	May 1956 Premiere in Cork - General cinema from July 1956	July 1956
92	No Time to be Young	JD	Aug 1957	June 1957	
93	The Party Crashers	JD	Sept 1958	No Record	
94	The Phantom of 10,000 Leagues	W	Dec 1955	March 1956	April 1956
95	Platinum High School	JD	May 1960	No Record	
96	The Plunderers	JD	Nov 1960	Dec 1960	
97	The Rebel Set	JD	June 1959	Jan 1960	Oct 1959
98	Rebel without a Cause	M	Oct 1955	March 1956	Feb 1956
99	Reform School Girl	JD	Aug 1957	March 1958 with cuts	
100	The Restless Years	CT	Dec 1958	No Record	
101	The Return of the Fly	W	July 1959	Aug 1959 with cuts	Oct 1959
102	The Revenge of Frankenstein	W	June 1958	Sept 1958 with cuts	
103	Riot in Juvenile Prison	JD	April 1959	Rejected by Censor	June 1959
104	Rock all Night	R&R	April 1957	Oct 1957	June 1957
105	Rock Around the Clock	R&R	March 1956	May 1956 *(passed without cuts)*	Aug 1956
106	Rock Around the World	R&R	Aug 1957	No Record	
107	Rock, Baby, Rock It	R&R	1957	No Record	
108	Rock Pretty Baby	R&R	Dec 1956	Jan 1957 *with minor cuts*	April 1957
109	Rock, Rock, Rock!	R&R	Dec 1956	March 1957	Feb 1957
110	Rockabilly Baby	R&R	Oct 1957	Nov 1957	Jan 1958
111	Rockin' the Blues	R&R	1956	No Record	
112	Rumble on the Docks	JD	Dec 1956	Jan 1957 with cuts	Aug 1957
113	Runaway Daughters	JD	Nov 1956	Rejected by Censor	
114	Running Wild	JD	Dec 1955	Oct 1955	
115	Satellite in the Sky	W	July 1956	Nov 1956	
116	Shake, Rattle, Rock!	R&R	Nov 1956	Dec 1956	Jan 1957
117	Sing, Boy, Sing!	CT	May 1958	April 1958 with cuts	April 1958
118	Sorority Girl	JD	Oct 1957	No Record	

119	Speed Crazy	M-M	June 1959	Jan 1960 with cuts	Nov 1959
120	The Spider	W	Sept 1958	Feb 1959	March 1959
121	Summer Love	CT	March 1958	Jan 1958	Jan 1958
122	Tammy AKA Tammy and the Bachelor	CT/M	May 1957	March 1957 with cuts	April 1957
123	T-Bird Gang	JD	October 1959	No Record	
124	Teenage Bad Girl AKA My Teenage Daughter	JD	1957	April 1957	
125	Teenage Caveman	W	July 1958	No Record	
126	Teenage Crime Wave	JD	Nov 1955	No Record	
127	Teenage Doll	JD	Sept 1957	No Record	
128	Teenage Monster	W	Jan 1958	No Record	
129	Teenage Rebel	M	Nov 1956	Dec 1956	Dec 1956
130	Teenagers from Outer Space	W	June 1959	No Record	
131	Teenage Thunder	M-M	1957	No Record	
132	Teenage Wolfpack	JD	1956	No Record	
133	Teenage Zombies	W	1957	Nov 1960	March 1960
134	Terror from the Year 5,000	W	Jan 1958	No Record	
135	The Tingler	W	July 1959	Rejected by Censor	Dec 1960
136	Too Soon to Love (USA) AKA Teenage Lovers (GB)	JD	Feb 1960	No Record	July 1960
137	The Unguarded Moment	M	Nov 1956	Sept 1956	
138	Untamed Youth	JD	July 1957	Rejected by Censor	October 1957
139	War of the Colossal Beast	W	June 1958	No Record	
140	War of the Satellites	W	May 1958	July 1963	
141	The Wild One	M-M/JD	Feb 1954 (1953)	April 1955 *Initially Banned by censor but a revised version (different ending) subsequently passed*	June 1955
142	The Wild Ride	M-M	June 1960	No Record	
143	Young and Dangerous	JD	Oct 1957	Jan 1958 with cuts	Jan 1958
144	The Young Captives	JD	Feb 1959	March 1960	Sept 1959
145	The Young Don't Cry	JD	1957	June 1957	Aug 1957
146	The Young Stranger	JD	Feb 1957	July 1957	June 1957

Appendix B

Register of Prohibited Periodical Publications 1950-1955

Name of Publication	Name of Proprietor	Name of Publisher	Date of Prohibition Order	Date of Expiration (if any) of Prohibition Order
See		See Publishing, NY	10 March 1950	
Lucky Star		C. Arthur Pearson, London	12 May 1950	
The Man		Ken G. Murray, Sydney	6 Oct 1950	
The Naturist		The Naturist Ltd, London	6 Oct 1950	
Esquire		Esquire Ltd, NY	15 Dec 1950	
The Exchange and Mart		The Bazaar Exchange and Mart Ltd, London	15 Dec 1950	
Blighty		City Magazines Ltd, London	9 March 1951	
True Crime Cases		Transatlantic Book Agency, Glasgow	11 May 1951	
Pageant		Hillman Periodicals Inc., Chicago	11 May 1951	
True Experiences		MacFadden Publications, NY	11 May 1951	
Modern Romances		Dell Publishing Company Inc., New Jersey	11 May 1951	
Paris Tabou			11 May 1951	
Detective World		Detective World Inc., NY	11 May 1951	
Crime Detective		Crime Detective Inc., Dunellen, New Jersey	8 June 1951	
Uncensored Detective		Uncensored Detective Inc., Dunellen, NJ	8 June 1951	
True Detective		McFadden Publications, NY	24 July 1951	
Daring Detective		L. Miller & Son Ltd, London	1 Oct 1951	
Startling Detective		Fawcett Publications Inc., Greenwich & L. Miller & Son Ltd London	1 Oct 1951	
Headquarter Detective		Headquarter Detective Inc, Dunellen, NJ	1 Oct 1951	
Famous Police Cases		Mr. Magazines, NY	1 Oct 1951	
Underworld detective		Underworld Detective Inc, NY	9 Nov 1951	

Best True fact Detective		Newsbook Publishing Corp., NY	9 Nov 1951	
True Police Cases		Fawcett Publications Inc., Greenwich	9 Nov 1951	
Paris-Hollywood			9 Nov 1951	
True Love Stories		McFadden Publications Inc., NY	9 Nov 1951	
Stars et Vedettes		C.P.C., Paris	9 Nov 1951	
Real Story		Real Story Inc., Dunellen, N.J.	9 Nov 1951	
Complete Detective Cases		Postal Publications Inc	9 May 1952	
Sir!		Volitant Publishing Corporation, NY	9 May 1952	
Personal Romances		Ideal Publishing Corp., Dunellen, NJ	9 May 1952	
True Confessions		L. Miller and Son Ltd, London	9 May 1952	
True Story		McFadden Publications Inc., NY	13 June 1952	
Police Detective Cases		Magazine Village Inc., NY	25 July 1952	
Man to Man		Volitant Publishing Corp., NY	25 July 1952	
Laff		Volitant Publishing Corp., NY	25 July 1952	
Master Detective	The Illustrated Publications Co. Ltd., London	The Argus Press Ltd., London	3 Oct 1952	
You've Had It	Jasmit Publications, Burnley, Lancs.		13th March 1952	
This is It	Jasmit Publications, Burnley, Lancs.		13 March 1952	
Basinful Of Fun		F. Youngman Ltd., Leeds	13 March 1953	
True-Life Crime Stories		Hamilton & Co. (Stafford) Ltd., London	13 March 1953	
Clubman		Bayard Production Ltd., London	10 April 1953	
Argosy		The Amalgamated Press Ltd., London	10 April 1953	
Reveille for the Weekend		Reveille Newspapers Ltd., London	12 June 1953	
Psychology		Psychology Magazine	12 June 1953	

		Ltd., Cheshire		
Silver Star and Golden Star	C. Arthur Pearson Ltd, London	C. Arthur Pearson Ltd, London	18 Sept 1953	
Man Senior	Man Magazine Pty., Sydney	Ken G. Murray	18 Sept 1953	
I Confess		Mutual Magazine Corp., NY	18 Sept 1953	
Pic		Wagner Publications Inc., Mount Morris, Ill.	18 Sept 1953	
All True Fact Crime Cases		Publishers Productions Inc., Purchase, NY	18 Sept 1953	
True cases of Women in Crime		Special magazines Inc., Purchase, NY	18 Sept 1953	
True Police Cases – British Edition		L. Miller & Son Ltd., London	18 Sept 1953	
Daring Romances		Periodical House Inc., Canton, Ohio	15 Jan 1954	
Fourire			15 Jan 1954	
Police Detective		Magazine Village Inc., Purchase, NY	15 Jan 1954	
Special Detective		Special Magazines Inc., NY	15 Jan 1954	
Detective Police Cases		H.B.K. Hislop Ltd., Auckland, NZ	19 Feb 1954	
True Crime		Your Guide Publications, Purchase, NY	19 Feb 1954	
Filmland		Red Circle Magazines Inc, NY	19 Feb 1954	
Movie Life		Ideal Publishing Corp., Ossining, NY	19 Feb 1954	
Stag		Official Magazine Corp., NY	19 Feb 1954	
Movie World		Interstate Publishing Corp., NY	19 Feb 1954	
Weekend Mail		Associated Newspapers Ltd., London	12 March 1954	
Real Police Stories		Fawcett Publications Inc., Greenwich, Conn.	12 March 1954	
Confidential		Confidential Inc., NY	9 April 1954	
Lilliput	Hulton Press Ltd London	Hulton Press Ltd London	18 June 1954	
Man's Life		Crestwood Publishing Co., Canton., Ohio	18 June 1954	
Teen-age Temptations		St. John Publishing Company, NY	18 June 1954	
Man Junior	Man Junior Magazine Pty. Ltd., Sydney	K.G. Murray Publishing Company Pty. Ltd. Sydney	9 July 1954	

Teenage Romances		St. John Publishing Corp., NY	9 July 1954	
Teenage Love		Barmor Publications Pty Ltd., Sydney	9 July 1954	
Love Illustrated		Barmor Publications Pty Ltd., Sydney	9 July 1954	
Love Secrets		Barmor Publications Pty Ltd., Sydney	9 July 1954	
Modern Experiences		L.Miller & Son Ltd, London	9 July 1954	
Romance Story		Transport Publishing Company, Sydney	9 July 1954	
Revealing Confessions		The Malian Press Ltd	9 July 1854	
Intimate Romances		L. Miller & Son Ltd, London	9 July 1954	
Crime Police Cases		Westridge Publishing Corp., Canton, Ohio	15 Oct 1954	
Amazing Detective Cases		Foto Parade Inc, NY	15 Oct 1954	
Rare Detective		Fireside Publications Ltd, Toronto, Canada	15 Oct 1954	
Inside Detective		World Distributors (Manchester) Ltd	15 Oct 1954	
Real Detective		Streamline Books Ltd, London	15 Oct 1954	
Detective Weekly		L. Miller & Son Ltd, London	15 Oct 1954	
Headquarters Detective		Streamline Books Ltd, London	15 Oct 1954	
Photoplay	The Illustrated Publications Co. Ltd, London	Argus Press Ltd, London	15 Oct 1954	
Eros		Eros Magazine, Nottingham	15 Oct 1954	
Esquire		Strato Publications Ltd, London	15 Oct 1954	
Brief		Mutual Magazine corp., NY	22 Oct 1954	
Crime Suspense Stories		L.L. Publishing Co Inc., NY	15 Oct 1954	
Men Only and London Opinion	C. Arthur Pearson Ltd, London	C. Arthur Pearson Ltd, London	12 Nov 1954	
Whoopee	Jasmit Publications		12 Nov 1954	
Suppressed		Suppressed, NYC	12 Nov 1954	

Tab		Carnival Magazine Corp., NY	12 Nov 1954	
Peep		American-Australasian Magazines Pty Ltd., Sydney	12 Nov 1954	
Weird Horrors		St. John Publishing Co., NY	12 Nov 1954	
Adventures into Weird Worlds		Animirth Comics Inc., NY	12 Nov 1954	
Black magic Comics (British Edition)			14 Dec 1954	
The Monster of Frankenstein (British Edition)		The Arnold Book Company, London	14 Dec 1954	
Terror Tales from the Crypt		Arnold Book Company, London	14 Dec 1954	
True Mystery		Astro Distributing Corp, Purchase, NY or Skye Publishing Co Inc., NY	14 Jan 1955	20 Jan 1956
'Nuff Said	Jasmit Publications, Burnley		11 Feb 1955	17 Feb 1956
My Story		Dell Publishing Company, Inc, NY	11 Feb 1955	17 Feb 1956
Fifteen Detective stories		Popular Publications Inc, Ohio	11 Feb 1955	17 Feb 1956
True Detective cases from Police Files		Brookside Enterprises Inc., NY	11 Feb 1955	17 Feb 1956
Real Crime Detective		Detective House Inc., NY	11 Feb 1955	17 Feb 1956
Beauty Parade		Beauty Parade Inc., NY	11 March 1955	17 March 1956
Official Detective Stories combined with Actual Detective		Thorpe & Porter Ltd, Oadby, Leicester	6 May 1955	
Top Secret		The Picture Detective Publishing Co., Derby, Conn.	10 June 1955	16 June 1956
Glamour	C. Arthur Pearson	C. Arthur Pearson Ltd,	14 Oct 1955	

	Ltd, London	London		
Foto		Axtell Publications Ltd., London	14 Oct 1955	20 April 1956
Men Only and London Opinion	C. Arthur Pearson Ltd, London	C. Arthur Pearson Ltd, London	14 Oct 1955	
Laugh A Minnit!		Toby Press Inc., NY	14 Oct 1955	20 April 1956
Midweek Reveille		Reveille Newspapers Ltd	14 Oct 1955	20 Jan 1956
Movieland		Movieland Inc, Dunellen, NJ	14 Oct 1955	20 April 1956
The Oracle		The Amalgamated Press Ltd, London	14 Oct 1955	
Esquire		Strato Publications Ltd	14 Oct 1955	
Picturegoer		Odhams Press Ltd	14 Oct 1955	
Movie Stars Parade		Ideal Publishing Corp., Ossining, NY	11 Nov 1955	

Appendix C

Letters of Complaint received by Government Departments in relation to Importation of Foreign Literature November 1957 to March 1958

Date	Organisation	Government Department
27-11-1957	Conference of Convent Secondary Schools, Cabra	An Taoiseach
27-11-1957	Cumann na nGairm Mhuinteoirí	Justice & An Taoiseach
30-11-1957	Catholic Social Service Conference	An Taoiseach
03-12-1957	Father Aloysius Girls Club	An Taoiseach
04-12-1957	Catholic Youth Council	Justice
04-12-1957	Catholic Youth Council, Soccer Leagues	Justice
04-12-1957	Catholic Youth Council, Gaelic Football Leagues	Justice
04-12-1957	Catholic Social Service Conference	Justice
04-12-1957	Christ the King's Girls Club, Mountjoy Sq., Dublin	An Taoiseach
04-12-1957	Dominican Convent, Ballyfermot	An Taoiseach
06-12-1957	Irish League of Decency	An Taoiseach
09-12-1957	CYMS, Dublin Headquarters	Justice
08-12-1957	Loretto National School, North Great Georges Street, Dublin	Justice
09-12-1957	Our Lady of Dublin Girls' Club, York St., Dublin	Justice
10-12-57	Women's Branch of the Holy Family Confraternity, Co. Wexford	Sean Browne, TD to Taoiseach and Justice
11-12-1957	St Bernadette's Girls Club, Leeson Street	Justice
11-12-1957	Society of St John Bosco	Justice
11-12-1957	Guild of St Francis De Sales, Baldoyle	Justice
11-12-1957	St Philomena's Girls Club	An Taoiseach
12-12-1957	Catholic Girl Guides, Pro-Cathedral Parish	Justice
13-12-1957	Dominican College Past Pupils' Union, Eccles St.	Justice & An Taoiseach
14-12-1957	Dominican Convent Cabra Past Pupils' Union	An Taoiseach
14-12-1957	St Dominic Savio Boy's Club, Glasnevin, Dublin	Justice
15-12-1957	St. Mary's Ursuline Union, Waterford	Justice
16-12-1957	Monaghan Urban District Council	Justice
16-12-1957	Society of St. John Bosco, Lower Abbey St., Dublin	An Taoiseach
16-12-1957	St Vincent de Paul, Carnew, Co. Wicklow	Justice
16-12-1957	Catholic Girl Guides of the Diocese of Dublin, Harrington St.,	External Affairs
17-12-1957	Catholic Girl Guides of the Diocese of Dublin, Ardee St.	Justice
18-12-1957	Legion of Mary, Drumcondra	Justice
18-12-1957	Legion of Mary, Drogheda	An Taoiseach

19-12-1957	County Dublin Libraries Committee	Justice
20-12-1957	Convent of Marie-Auxiliatrice, Lower Mount St., Dublin	An Taoiseach
20-12-1957	Our Lady of Mount Carmel Girls Club, Lower Dominick St., Dublin	Justice
20-12-1957	St Joseph's Catholic Boys Brigade	An Taoiseach
28-12-1957	Corporation of Limerick	Justice
30-12-1957	Cumann Lúith-Chleas Gael	Justice
30-12-1957	Ursuline Convent Thurles Past Pupils Union (Dublin Branch)	Justice
31-12-1957	Tipperary County Council	Justice
02-01-1958	CYMS, Drumcondra	An Taoiseach
08-01-1958	CYMS, Sligo	An Taoiseach
15-01-1958	CYMS, Wexford	An Taoiseach
16-01-1958	Cumann na nÓgáach gCaitiliceach, Galway	An Taoiseach
16-01-1958	Dublin City Council	An Taoiseach
18-01-1958	Conference of Convent Primary Schools	Justice
20-01-1958	CYMS, North Fredrick St., Dublin	Justice & An Taoiseach
20-01-1958	St Vincent De Paul, Castlebar, Co. Mayo	Justice
21-01-1958	Co. Tipperary VEC	Justice
24-01-1958	Belvedere Newsboys' Club	Justice & An Taoiseach
28-01-1958	Brugh Mhuire Boys Club	Justice
29-01-1958	Cumann Arm Poblachta Éireann	Justice
29-01-1958	CYMS, Youghal, Co. Cork	Dick Barry TD
03-02-1958	Maria Mater Youth Centre, Blackrock, Co. Dublin	Justice
04-02-1958	CYMS, Holy Family Branch, Dublin	Justice & An Taoiseach
06-02-1958	Dominican Convent, Blackrock, Co. Dublin	An Taoiseach
06-02-1958	CYMS, Bray	An Taoiseach & James O'Toole TD
13-02-1958	Galway Corporation	Justice
12-02-1958	Ceanannus Mór Handball Club, Co. Meath	Justice
14-02-1958	Birr Urban District Council	Justice
14-02-1958	Limerick County Council	Justice
19-02-1958	St Vincent De Paul, Kells	Justice
08-03-1958	Clare County Council	Justice

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