Rockin’ the Borders
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CHAPTER ONE

ROCKIN’ THE BORDERS:
REFLECTIONS ON ROCK MUSIC
AND IDENTITY FORMATION

BJÖRN HORGBY AND FREDRIK NILSSON

Introduction

We are all outlaws in the eyes of America
In order to survive we steal, cheat, lie, forge, fuck, hide and deal
We are obscene, lawless, hideous, dangerous, dirty, violent and young
[...] We are forces of chaos and anarchy
Everything they say we are we are
And we are very proud of ourselves
[...] Up against the wall, motherfuckers.1

“We Can Be Together” could have been written by a punk group, but is a
song by Jefferson Airplane—a group influenced by the Hippie culture and
psychedelic rock. The lyrics are in many respects typical for the rock
genre, or should we say stereotypical, since a rebellious and provocative
attitude together with a threatening chaos upholds a prominent position in
the song. At the same time the lyrics are somewhat atypical. Usually the
rebel is a young man who has chosen or been forced to live a rather lonely
life on the margins of society, but, instead of connecting to this ideal the
song emphasise a shared experience and a common identity. Even though
atypical it makes sense in relation to the specific historical context in
which the song was written. In the late 1960’s youths in the US identified
themselves as a generation with a set of ideals, values and norms that
completely differed from the older generation. Youths embodied and
negotiated identities based on the Hippie cultures habits, symbols, rituals
and aesthetics—for an example the in–formalisation and the emphasis of
equality. The phrase Peace, Love and Understanding is commonly used to
capture the spirit of the time, or at least this specific culture. Freedom is
another key element that normally is attributed to the Hippie culture. To some extent these features of the Hippie culture intersected with the ambitions of the civil rights movement, thus attributing a political dimension to rock music.²

Even though the provocative attitude in the song seems to be at some distance from peace, love and understanding,³ the conflict between generations at that time is manifest in the lyrics above.⁴ However, it would be wrong to argue that the song simply mirror a zeitgeist, in fact, music was an important cultural force that made identity formation possible among youths. Popular culture, e.g. movies, literature, and lifestyle magazines, provide youths with a set of arguments, styles and attitudes that can be used as they negotiate identities and construct meaning in everyday life.⁵ Rock music, in a broad sense, enables similar processes.⁶

Having said this, it is important to avoid a romantic narrative about the role played by rock music in the formation of identities in the 1960’s. It was mostly youths with a white, middle class and urban background that were attracted to the Hippie culture and/or the Psychedelic scene.⁷ Furthermore this culture with its habits, symbols, rituals and aesthetics had a tremendous impact in the US and partly in the UK, but soon lost in importance as a driving force in other parts of the world.⁸ It survived as a subculture and had in some sense a revival in the Czechoslovakian underground, which played an important role in the Velvet Revolution in 1989.⁹ Although it is commonly acknowledged that music can break political, geographical, psychological and cultural borders,¹⁰ state borders and cultural boundaries may still make a difference.

The main objective of this volume is to focus on what happens as rock music, with its different styles, habits, symbols, rituals, and aesthetics, transgress borders between States and becomes a local, situated practice in different European countries. To be more precise, Rockin’ the Borders investigates the role played by rock music—e.g. rock’n’roll, pop, soul, psychedelia, progressive rock, funk, punk, synth, grunge, heavy metal and hip hop—in processes of identity formation among youths in Europe. It must be stressed that identity is not considered a stable entity but something that is lived, performed, embodied, negotiated, and played out in various ways in different national settings. However, identity is not an individual affair: “They [identities] are both imposed and self–made, produced through the interplay of names and social roles foisted on us by dominant narratives together with the particular choices of families, communities, and individuals make over how to interpret, and resist, those impositions as well as how to grapple with their real historical experiences [...]” Thus, identities need to be analyzed not only in their cultural location...
but also in relation to historical epoch”.

In this volume the following countries will serve as examples of how different national settings frame and attribute social meaning to rock and identity formation: Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, GDR, Sweden, England and Wales. Why these have been chosen will be discussed later on.

At the same time as habits, symbols, rituals, and aesthetics of rock enables youths to perform identity and to establish an autonomous cultural space, norms that normally are taken for granted might be destabilized by the rebellious and provocative attitude that quite often is ascribed to rock. So when youths just try to live their lives without restrictions, this can be experiences as a cultural threatening by the so called older generation or establishment. However, rock might not always be perceived as a threat. In fact, since rock carries the message of rebelliousness as well as freedom, it may sometimes be useful or coincide with the political aims of different groups. One example of this has already been referred to. The Hippie culture and civil rights movement could intersect to some extent. Thus, another objective of this volume is to study the social meaning attached to rock in these different countries.

However, rock wasn’t the first musical genre that enabled identity formation and was imbued with social meaning, nor was the Hippie cultures of the 1960’s the first genre within rock to carry the message of rebelliousness and freedom. Although starting with jazz in the 1930s, the following section tries to outline some of the main characters and diffusion of rock music after the Second World War. Urban youths were attracted to the music since it came to represent freedom from old traditions and norms regarding sexuality, it was “wild” in a positive sense and represented a promising alternative to stuffy norms. However, the established society, priests, politicians and other “guardians of the moral”, defined jazz as a threat since traditional boundaries between class, gender, and race were destabilized. It was too wild and “uncivilized” for their liking.

**Rock music and global diffusion**

Even though jazz was of importance when it comes to formation of identities it was not until after the Second World War, as a market for popular culture emerged, that popular music became a part of the everyday life thus making possible the formation of new youthful identities. Rock music is a genre that stands out in this context.

Rock’n’roll became a part in the everyday life of youths during the 1950’s. The habits, symbols, rituals and aesthetics of rock spread from two distinct centres, Great Britain and USA. During the process of
diffusion borders between States, as well as boundaries between different social groups were bridged. As a consequence national identities, hegemonic ideas about how to express class, gender and generation were challenged and this had repercussions on how youths experienced and interacted with society, the State and institutions such as police, school, church and family. In short, rock’n’roll gave birth to youth cultures that wouldn’t accept old norms and traditions—once again music came to mirror and propel a longing for freedom from the old stuffy society.17

This process was intensified during the 1960’s as a wave of British music swept the world, once again new cultural codes of conduct and style appeared. New clothes—but also new habits, symbols, rituals and bodily practices—were tried out, put on display and used in the formation of alternative identities. But the transformation from the centres to the periphery was by no means simple and one-dimensional. The British Mods wore sharp suits. The Swedish Mods were much more relaxed with baggy sweaters and jeans.

As a consequence, rock was experienced as a threat to the established hegemony—and perhaps even to the political system. For instance, in 1964 Mods clashed with the police and Rockers on the streets of Brighton. The attitude and lifestyle of the Mods were seen as a provocation, even though this might not always have been the intention from the youths, and the established society reacted. The Mods seemed to represent an ideal that stood in opposition to ideas about decent behaviour that characterized British society.18

The events in Brighton spread rapidly to other parts of Europe. In the mid 1960’s the cultural expression of the Mods were also seen in Copenhagen and Stockholm as well as in Tallinn and East–Berlin. Rock seemed to bridge borders, not even the Iron Curtain between East and West was able to hold stand. At the same time new and razor sharp boundaries were erected between the older and younger generation.19 In order to understand and contain the problem, thorough investigations of the so called deviant youth cultures were undertaken. Control, surveillance and sometimes prohibition were strategies deployed by the State.20

With the advent of the strongly anti–authoritarian punk movement in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, the State and the established society once again were challenged. But, the punk movement was not uniform. The political rebellion of the Clash was not the same as the nihilism of the Sex Pistols. However, the underground character of the punk movement with its explicit and critical lyrics posed a threat to the authoritarian regimes in GDR and Soviet Union,21 but also to the cultural hegemony in Great Britain and the Scandinavian welfare States.22 The Punk movement
criticized socialism, left wing politics as well as neoliberal tendencies thus making it possible for youths in the East and the West to establish a shared space of experience, or an imagined community of sorts.

The global diffusion of rock’n’roll in the 1950’s, the popular culture of mods and hippies during the 1960’s, and the punk movement of the late 1970’s and early 1980’s imply that the various shapes and forms of rock are transnational and not affected by different national, regional and local contexts. However, as stated earlier, this volume departs from another perspective on globalisation and global diffusion.

**Rock—a glocal phenomena**

The emergence of popular culture has been discussed in terms of homogenizing, commercialization and globalization, perspectives where people tend to lose their agency and become objects or even victims of forces beyond their control. However, popular culture and identity formation have also been discussed in less simplifying manners. When habits, symbols, rituals, and aesthetics from Great Britain and USA encounter the sphere of local everyday life in other parts of the world they become loaded with new social meanings. For youths in the periphery the messages from the metropolis are hegemonic, as they see themselves as subordinated to the hegemonic superiors in the metropolis. But, they can transform the messages to be counter–hegemonic when they use them in the specific hegemony of the periphery. In other words, when the beatlemania rolled around the world the signals of rebelliousness against a hegemonic grown up and bourgeois culture was interleaved with the hegemony of the ancient British Empire fertilized by the global hegemony of the American popular culture. It is no coincidence English is the rock language globally.

The processes involving these kinds of shifting cultural positions could be called glocalisation. This volume considers globalisation as a force, which is transformed through local articulations, hybrids and glocalisations. Utilising this approach it will be possible to deepen a theoretical understanding of how cultural dimensions of class, gender, ethnicity and generation affect the way global flows become local social practices.

The metropolis must not be the most “modern”. In the information flow from metropolis to periphery signals of gender and sex accompanies music and style. In the 60s the music of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones did not challenge the hegemonic norms of sex in Sweden as they did in the USA and partly in the UK. At that time the sexual revolution went further
in Sweden. But, when rock music came to Sweden it appealed to young men with big American cars, who tried to transfer to the Swedish context their opinion of masculinity and the cultural norms from the ancestral homeland of Elvis Presley. In the same time they re–constructed a patriarchal gender order. The gender order of rock music of course is ambivalent, but the trend has remained very patriarchal. Rock not only cement existing gendered order but also, often, is used as a traditionalistic tool of young men who want to re–shape earlier forms of the gendered order. The message of liberty and freedom has its limits. Until now few women can climb the walls of gender in rock.

The messages of class are even more ambivalent. In most contexts rock has been the music of rebellious youths. But, rock could easily be institutionalized. When John Lennon challenged the nobility to rattle their gems he made a counter–hegemonic remark to the hegemonic classes. The Polar Music Reward and Rock’n’roll Hall of Fame are other examples of the institutionalization processes. Today industrial entrepreneurs can listen to Bruce Springsteen’s message of freedom. At the same time their labourers can sing along and interpret differently. As a consequence we must consider the context of the interpretation.

**Previous research and volume outline**

Obviously, the results from previous research on rock and youth culture are crucial in each and every chapter of this volume, making it possible to deepen, problematize and expand the knowledge on how rock music challenge borders and establish new patterns of identity.

Even though rock was of great importance in the everyday life of many youths in Europe surprisingly few studies exist on how rock affect identity formation in interaction with local contexts. It is foremost in the US that rock is an established field of research. The American historian Glen C. Altschuler argues that rock, during the 1950’s, expressed a growing feeling of dissatisfaction among youths thus bridging the gap between races, a process that eventually affected the civil rights movement. In Great Britain there has been a growing interest in identity formation and youth cultures, not least since the advent of Cultural Studies. Even though Cultural Studies have been important in addressing questions concerning youth cultures in new ways, these studies aren’t sufficient if we are to understand, not only how rock affected identity formation but also the impact on among other things State formation and especially undermining of earlier State formations. Furthermore, a comparative approach has seldom been used, thus creating islands of important but
limited knowledge. In the former Soviet Union, there are some minor studies of how rock was perceived, but they are often overambitious, trying to grasp the rock scene of the entire union, or just focusing on Russia. In the Nordic countries the situation is similar with only a handful of substantial studies of rock and identity formation.

Rockin’ the Borders investigates, as mentioned, the role played by rock music in processes of identity formation among youths in Europe, but also how social meaning are attached to rock in different national settings: Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, GDR, Sweden, England and Wales. These countries are chosen since they to a varying degree are situated on the peripheries of the European centre of Rock—England. But they are also chosen since, as a result of World War II, they belonged to distinct different political spheres. This is likely to have affected the approach to rock among the youths as well as the State and established society. As a musical genre and a lifestyle, rock doubtless did find its way to all these countries, but was rock attributed with the same meaning among youths in the East as in the West? And how did the State and established society react and respond?

The chapters analyze how rock materialize in everyday life and how youths, within structural limits and with access to certain repertoires of cultural artefacts and symbols, negotiate identities. Since rock is a musical genre as well as a lifestyle that affects habits and identity the most obvious path to choose is to focus on the aesthetics: What clothes did they wear and why? Why does the music sound in that way? And why do they sing about those things? Underneath these and similar questions lie more profound questions regarding the formation of identity and the relation between the individual and the collective.

The chapters do not focus solely on the practices and experiences among youths. Equally important are the hegemonic reactions and responses as rock transformed identity patterns among youths. On what did the State and society react, which norms and values were under attack? How did they respond to the threat? Which strategies were deployed by State officials and other guardians of hegemony in order to contain the threat posed by rock?

In many of the chapters the role of rock in the formation of a national identity or a “national” identity of a national minority are discussed. Brian Roberts studies the formation and transformations of Wales, which cannot be regarded without the connection to the hegemonic British Culture. An important tool in this process is the use of Welsh. Sven-Erik klinkman shows how the communication of the rockin’ Swedish-speaking minority in Finland interfaces threads of hegemonic values from the global
metropolis’ with threads of hegemonic values of the local metropolis in Sweden as well as it creates counter-hegemonic strings in Finland. But, rock goes even further. In this interplay with hegemony and counter-hegemony youths in Eastern Europe could undermine the hegemonic power of the communist parties. The formation of a national identity in Czechoslovakia, studied by Lars Berggren, is interlaced with the protest against the national and local bureaucracies of the Soviet Union using the American group the Mothers of Invention as a hammer in beating the beast. And the hammer was the aesthetics of Frank Zappa. The identities of language also played an important role—as in Wales and Finland. In a different but also similar way rock undermined the Mauer, the Berlin-Wall, between the GDR and the Western world—dominated by rock culture. Mats Greiff shows how youths from the GDR used British rock when they drilled holes in the Wall.

Another process of identity formation is examined by Björn Horgby in his discussion of the formation of American and British rock culture as a counter-hegemonic tool against the moral majority of the 1950’s and 1960’s. When this culture came to Sweden it also became a tool in the formation of a separate Swedish youth culture repelling to the culture of the welfare State. Fredrik Nilsson studies how the movie Rock Around the Clock, as it was shown in a small Swedish town, facilitated cultural crossings of borders and affected the formation of identities.

Rock music not only drills holes in a concrete wall and can be used in beating the Soviet force, Jeremy Tranmer shows how the punk movement fought nazis and racists in the 1970’s and also participated in creating a more multicultural political discourse in Great Britain. Johan Söderman proves that rock—transformed to hip hop—is an important element in the formation of identities, knowledge and cultural capital.

Rock carries a message of liberty and freedom. The message can be vague or very precise. Not always, but often, rock contributes to change the world in breaking all kinds of borders—but, these borders cannot be regarded without the interpretations of class, gender, ethnicity and generations in its local context.
Considerable changes transformed life and notions worldwide during the fifties and sixties. The third world was liberated after a hard anti–colonial struggle against the first world. The cold war polarized politics and mentalities. The Western societies developed into welfare societies. For the first time the majority of Western population could reach basic social and economic security. As another consequence of the economic growth in Western societies, the young generations of the post–war era could indulge in leisure time and create their own youth culture based on own experiences.

Youths rebelled against hegemonic moral values concerning sexuality, gender and politics. The boundaries of sexuality were abolished; the gender order changed; and so did the patterns of politics. For young people the hegemonic aspirations of material satisfaction became unsatisfactory. “There must be something more worth living for than economic security.” Well–to–do youths wanted something else.

The philosopher à la mode, Marshall McLuhan, invented the concept of “The Global Village”. New communication technologies globalized everyday life. In 1967 audiences all around the world watched a global TV–show simultaneously for the first time. The Beatles participated and sang their new song *All You Need Is Love*. The Vietnam War became the first televised war, when television brought foreign realities into the living room. Especially youths became aware of the social and political conditions in the third world.

The first world treated the third world in a racist way. The anti–colonial movements reacted both against Western racism and against the imperialistic ambitions of the leading capitalistic States. The struggle against apartheid in South Africa mobilized young people. In the USA the civil rights movement won fights against racism. These echoed all around the world.1

American and British rock culture in 1955–69 developed in this context.
The meetings between rock music, youth and the hegemony affected the patterns of notions and values. The purpose of this chapter is to study how youths used the rock culture as counter-hegemonic actions.

A theoretical approach

These transformations in systems of values were not realized without resistance. To understand these struggles and negotiations I use the concept of hegemony. The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci created the concept when he tried to explain why the working class in Italy did not revolt against the fascists. His conclusion was simple. The fascistic bourgeoisie succeeded to develop the hegemony—as a norm for acts and values—which also included the working class and other subordinated groups.

According to my understanding of the concept of hegemony it consists of two parts: a common content and a hegemonic relation. The hegemonic relation includes at least two parties, one superior and one subordinated. Together they develop an unwritten “contract” about the rules of the game and common values—the common content. The superior party cannot dictate the conditions, but governs the interpretation of the contract. The relation between the superior and the subordinated parties is restricted, but both try to maintain the contract. Otherwise circumstances can be unpredictable and can create a massive and destructive clash. Anyway, the dissatisfaction with the limited possibilities to act and to express oneself creates a climate of constant negotiations and resistance within the limits of the contract.

The worldview of the superior party in the mid-fifties was very one-dimensional. That’s why the superior party often overreacted to new rebellious challenges. Rock music was dangerous. There were reactions against the repeated riots at rock concerts. Sometimes concerts were forbidden. In San Antonio, Texas, rock music was prohibited in jukeboxes. The dangerous rock music was also considered as crap—“the music of niggers”—threatening the ethnic order as a threat against American values. During the sixties some pop groups were denied hotel rooms because of their long hair. The Rolling Stones were compared to apes. When John Lennon declared the Beatles to be more famous than Jesus, religious Americans burned the Beatles’ records.

The leading American TV-show during the fifties and the sixties was the Ed Sullivan Show. Nearly every famous rock or pop star appeared at the Ed Sullivan Show. The Ed Sullivan Show reacted against the rock rebellion by censoring the appearances. In October 1964 the Rolling
Stones played for the first time in the Ed Sullivan Show. The negative hegemonic reactions made Sullivan ban the group. But, the successes of the Stones led to many more appearances. In January 1967 the Stones released their new single *Let’s Spend the Night Together*. Several Radio Stations immediately banned the song. But, when Mick Jagger changed the lyrics from “Let’s Spend the Night Together” to “Let’s Spend Some Time Together” the Stones passed the moral censorship.3

Based on these kinds of reactions I have formulated some rules (not laws) of hegemonic behavior. When the challenges were new they could provoke hegemonic reactions. These reactions could easily become overreactions and trigger a traditionalistic behavior. After a while these reactions diminished and disappeared, because of understanding of the content of the challenge. Commercial success could change the view on what was acceptable. In 1956 Elvis Presley made a big success in the USA, but some of his TV–appearances were censored, because of the sexually provocative way in which he moved his hips. So the TV–shows only showed him from the waist up. In one show he sang his new song *Hound Dog*. To withdraw the sexual challenge, he cuddled with a dog, and so he changed from rebel to entertainer. Finally, the last rule of mine: Hegemonic reactions (and overreactions) only appear when the challenge is widely broadcasted. When an unknown folk singer sang about the revolution in a small coffee shop in Greenwich Village nobody cared, but when the Beatles sang about The Revolution the bourgeoisie got hiccups. In the context of a sub–culture it was possible to be much more challenging than in the highly visible mainstream context.4

The breakthrough of rock music

You can’t tell when rock music was born or even how it was born. It depends of how you define *rock music*. Rock music as a style developed in the USA between 1949 and 1954. In 1951 Ike Turner recorded the first rock tune, *Rocket 88*. When black and white music mixed in the segregated USA the result was the rock’n’roll music. Rock music merged blues, country & Western, gospel, jazz, rockabilly and rhythm & blues. In the mid fifties the black rhythm & blues broke through commercially among white youths. As a result, the new rock music was adapted to the taste of the white audience.

The FM–Radio stations played rhythm & blues and rock. The black channels gained a white audience and the white channels began to play black music. Minor, local record companies, as Sun in Memphis, realised the commercial potentials of rock music. Soon, the major companies also
discovered that rock music could sell records. The creation of a mass consumer market made it possible for the massive breakthrough of Elvis Presley. In 1956 the major company RCA bought him from Sun, and soon he got his first number one record *Heartbreak Hotel*—the first of many.

The rock’n’roll music was the music of youth—music with sexual appeal and identification; music that defined the youth culture. That’s why the hegemony branded Elvis Presley and the rock music as dangerous, which, by the way, still cling to rock music. Rock music was created in a race and class context—it became the music of the working class. It also had a gender bias. Rock music became the music of men. Few female rock stars reached the top.

The late fifties were the golden era of rock’n’roll. But, in 1958 Elvis Presley did his military service. The same year Jerry Lee Lewis ruined his career, when he married a thirteen–year–old cousin, without properly divorcing his former wife. Many radio stations banned him. In 1959 Buddy Holly was killed in an airplane crash. Furthermore, Little Richard deserted rock to become a preacher.5

### The British Invasion

Rock music spread rapidly all over the English–speaking and English–influenced world—not least to Great Britain and Sweden. Initially, artists just imitated, but soon the Beatles broke through and changed the sound of rock music. In 1964 Great Britain became the centre of rock music. “Swingin’ London” became the centre of pop with its clubs, record companies and fashion shops. In London the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Animals, The Kinks and other groups resided. And the Beatlemania started in the USA. In April that year 60 percent of all singles sold in the USA were made by the Beatles.

The Beatles defined the taste of a generation. They also were the prime innovators. *Rubber Soul* in 1965 and *Revolver* in 1966 were fast–selling albums, which marked a change from single to LP and a transition from hits to more ambitious musical expressions. In the mid–sixties drugs began to affect the rock culture. In the USA musicians like Bob Dylan, the Byrds and the Lovin’ Spoonful began to smoke marijuana. From 1965–66 they also took LSD (acid). Dylan introduced marijuana to the Beatles. The experiences of drugs and an experimental approach to music led the Beatles and other groups to seek new expressions. They were inspired by classical music, arty music and the music of the East. In 1965 the Beatles used the Indian instrument sitar for the first time, in *Norwegian Wood*. The Rolling Stones followed with *Paint It Black*. In the USA and Great Britain
a new psychedelic style of music developed. The Hippies

The acid–impregnated hippies saw the beatniks from the fifties as their predecessors. The beatniks belonged to the cultural avant–garde movement. They were white, male artists and authors, who wanted to become like the members of the “cool” black, masculine ghetto culture. According to them “the black man” was raw, primitive, sexual and free. The black man had been a slave, who was liberating himself. The beatniks also wanted to throw away the slave shackles and live without any restrictions. Their inspiration came from India, Nepal and Tibet. They were against materialism and conformism. Freedom meant that is was permissible to use drugs and take advantage of the free sexuality.

The San Francisco region was one of the beatnik main residences. The author Ken Kesey governed the collective Merry Pranksters, who used experiences of LSD to create their own style—the hippies. One of the members was the LSD–manufacturer Owsley Stanley III, who wanted to spread the gospel of acid worldwide. He supported the Grateful Dead—the founders of the psychedelic rock music.

The hippies felt different and considered ordinary people to be “egg–heads”. They created a culture for the initiated, a culture without any moral restrictions. They also renounced all authorities and shared the philosophical beliefs of the beatniks. Those influences they combined with their psychedelic experiences to a spiritual mysticism, where the experiences of “other worlds” were central. They wanted to save the world with LSD. The renouncement of authorities led to the ambition to live outside society—in a counter–culture. According to Kesey it was pointless to play the same game as The Power and care about the Vietnam War. Hippies did not have any close connections to the anti–war movement.

The ambition to save the world with LSD led to the organizing of trip tests with LSD, psychedelic music and multi–media shows. The Grateful Dead and other psychedelic groups played at the trip tests. As a result of the success of the trip test, the promoter Bill Graham arranged trip festivals every week. The commercialisation created an opportunity for this very limited subculture to grow. First it dominated the San Francisco district Haight–Asbury—where among others the Grateful Dead, Big Brother & the Holding Company and the Jefferson Airplane lived and played music—and then the youth culture in London and other European major cities. Records, bookshops, galleries, clubs and underground papers spread the message from a relative small initiated audience to a wider
The psychedelic movement led to a change in pop music. Especially the Beatles contributed to these changes. Those who could understand the codes could already in late 1965 identify the psychedelic influences in the song *Day Tripper*. *Revolver* from 1966 also contained examples of influences of LSD—for example *Tomorrow never knows*. The LP *Sergeant Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band* became a psychedelic landmark.

The experiences of LSD affected both lyrics and music. Groups like the Grateful Dead began to experiment and improvise. Some songs just contained strange sounds. The Beatles’ *Strawberry Fields Forever* is an example of the use of a floating cosmic sound.

The hippies emerged from the American west coast—especially from San Francisco and Los Angeles. The Byrds, the Doors, the Grateful Dead, the Jefferson Airplane, Love, Big Brother & the Holding Company, Crosby, Stills & Nash and Country Joe & the Fish were all west coast bands. The commercial break—through of the hippies was the Monterey Pop Festival in June 1967 during The Summer of Love. Monterey Pop was the first major pop festival. Janis Joplin, the Who and Jimi Hendrix Experience played at the festival together with many other groups.

Monterey Pop was a happening, a carnavalesque LSD–fuelled party for hippies who wanted to make an inner revolution. The hippie revolution took place inside the heads. This divided them from the student–dominated left–wing movement. Ecology, “new age”, the protection of an “original” way of life and the experiments characterized the hippies’ ongoing party. The hippies also distanced themselves from the ideas of Development and Enlightenment, which were guiding the capitalistic society. The taming of nature aimed at making mankind more and more civilized and wealthy. According to the hippies, this kind of materialism destroyed life. The alternative was the simple, natural life in the countryside. When the hippies talked about “peace, love and understanding”, they intended “fuck for peace”.

The Woodstock Festival in 1969 was the climax of the hippie movement. The hippies were mostly white students from the middle classes. They were not racists. They liked the civil rights movement, but did not take part in it. They were not even opposed to more radical black movements as the Black Panther Party. The hippies did not change gender relations, but brought a potential for change. Like other groups of “saved” members, the members of the very tight hippie communities were equals as they were initiated in the hippie culture. In this environment women could change their subordination and expand their gender roles. Janis Joplin, for example, did not fit into the traditional norms of gender. On
stage she behaved in a way that would have been impossible for her predecessors. Off stage she also showed the possibilities of new gender relations.8

**Sexuality**

In the fifties the official view of morals and sexuality in the USA was puritan. The Christian religion played an active part in everyday life and Hollywood used a conservative moral codex. According to the religious puritans, sexuality outside matrimony was a sin and also a threat against the stability of society. So, the hegemony tried to defeat premarital sex by all means. The gap between the hegemonic morals of sexuality and the sexual habits of youths was wide. The American Kinsey report showed how frequent premarital sexual relations were—also in the USA. Just a small minority made their sexual debut when they got married.

The Sexual Revolution in the sixties changed the hegemonic morals of sexuality in the USA and Great Britain. Rebellious behaviour in the fifties was treated as normal at the end of the sixties. The birth control pills diminished the risk of undesired pregnancies. The family values changed—especially in Sweden, where cohabitation became accepted. Pornography became a field of liberty—especially for men.9

**The USA**

The black rhythm & blues of the fifties was sexually forward. You would not have any problems to understand that Fats Domino’s *Blueberry Hill* did not narrate the picking of blueberries, but having sex. Elvis Presley was not as challenging as his predecessors. He was recognized as a rebel and a sex object. He moved his hips rhythmically and the female audience screamed. His early records often had ambiguous lyrics. They were both about sex and dancing. The censorship of the record company forced him to change the lyrics in *One Night*. Originally the text began with “One Night of Sin”. It was changed to “One Night with you”. He also diminished the sexual challenges by promising sex followed by marriage.

Common themes were love, as in *All Shook Up*, and heart–grief, as in *Heartbreak Hotel*. In *Don’t Be Cruel* he was waiting for the girl to call. She was the one for him. He wanted her to come and make love to him and then they could get married.10

The hippie groups of the late sixties distanced themselves from Elvis Presley as they did not use code when talking about sex. Sexuality had become public. One example is the interplay between the British
mainstream–artist Tom Jones and his female audience. At his shows women throw panties on the stage. The hippies went even further. There were no taboos against nudity—on the contrary—or public sex. The views about free sex and nudity resulted in de–sexualization of the female body. Janis Joplin, Grace Slick and other female singers in the hippie generation did not emphasise their breasts, thighs or legs. If anything, they covered their bodies.

Lyrics dealt with physical and mental love. When Country Joe & the Fish sang: “I hunger for your porpoise mouth/And stand erect for love” you could not miss the message. The concept of free love made love a human need. The demand changed from being male to human and from private to public. This was the message in the Jefferson Airplane’s hit song *Somebody To Love*. Light My Fire by the Doors was also a sex song.

Free love also meant experiments with new ways of living. David Crosby’s *Triad* talked about three persons—one man and two women—living together instead of the couple relation. When Grace Slick sang the song it was about one woman and two men. The line “Your mother’s ghost stands at your shoulder saying to you ‘you can not do that, it breaks all the rules you learned in school’” referred to the restricted moral of the hegemony.11

**Great Britain**

Great Britain was less puritan than the USA. The Beatles were moderately rebellious and did not exceed the moral limitations. They were accepted both by the hegemonic power and by the young generation. By no coincidence they received an order from Prime Minister Harold Wilson. They also appeared before the royal family. When John Lennon dropped his famous words that the audience at the cheaper seats could clap their hands and that the honorariores could rattle their jewellery, the British royal family was the direct target.

The Rolling Stones also had great commercial success, but with another image. The manager of the group, Andrew Loog Oldham, actively constructed their wild and anti–social image. One of his slogans was “Do you allow your daughter to marry a Rolling Stone?”. Like Elvis Presley the Beatles often used soft sexual allusions, paraphrases and codes. But, they did not promise marriage after sex—as Elvis Presley did. The public image of the Beatles was based on conscientiousness. The Stones represented a different kind of masculinity—based on values of the working class and an accentuated male supremacy. They also sang many songs about sex, for example *She Said Yeah*.12
Even the British groups were “hippiefied”. The typical message connected sexual freedom and physical love with a drug–related metaphysical, cosmic love. Several texts of the Beatles extended this message, for example George Harrison's *Love You To*. *All You Need Is Love* is one of the classic songs about hippie love. At this time it was possible even for the Beatles to write sex lyrics like “*Why Don’t We Do It In The Road?*”.

**Gender**

In the fifties and the first half of the sixties gender relations in the USA and Great Britain were very patriarchal. The woman’s place was in her kitchen and the man ought to be the supreme breadwinner. In 1963 Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*, which inspired the growing feminist movement, which primarily was anchored in the well–educated, female, white middle–class. Outside the student left movement the importance of feminism was very limited.

During the sixties the gender order changed. The room and freedom of women expanded. In the late sixties women could be seen on the barricades. The norm of the man as the single provider changed to a norm including women. Married women with minor children began to work outside the family and gender relations became a little bit more equal.

This transformation opened up possibilities for several kinds of masculinity. The classic masculinity was the patriarchal family father. In the fifties, popular culture created a new masculinity—the rebellious macho man—the man who treated women as sex objects. In the cinema Marlon Brando was one of the first rebellious macho men. In the sixties, changes made a new kind of masculinity possible—a more equal man, who did not like the macho men. The conflicts in the rock culture between “rockers” and “mod”—especially in Great Britain and Sweden—can be described as conflicts between separate masculinities.

**The USA**

Young Elvis Presley was the prototype of a rebellious, young macho man. His clothes were typical—jeans, shirt and boots. His hairstyle also indicated youth and the belonging to the new rock culture.

Before the seventies a stereotyped, predominating view of the “Worker” was a male blacksmith or a steelworker. He was proud, sweaty, dirty and muscular. At stage, Elvis Presley also was proud and sweaty, but not very muscular. He used his body as an instrument and moved his body
to the music. The working class identity was strengthened by visible sexual signals when he stood, legs astride and moved his hips. These sexual signals were male coded—not female—which was very important in the fifties, when homosexuality was still taboo.¹⁵

In the lyrics also, the young Elvis Presley expressed his manliness. He handled the gender order in a traditionalistic way. The male sexuality was pure instinct and had to be satisfied. As men were slaves of their sexual instincts, the relation between men and women became problematic. Women could use this love power to subordinate men, especially when many men were emotionally dependent on female partners, who gave emotional closeness and security. So, the female love power was a common topic in the lyrics. *Hard Headed Woman* is about the relation between a hard–bitten woman and a dependent, subordinated man, who could not manage the struggle of power:

I heard about a king
who was doin’ swell
till he started playing
with that evil Jezebel.
Oh yeah, ever since the world began
a hard headed woman been a
thorn in the side of man.¹⁶

The moral of the story was: Don’t play with women. They can use love–power resources men can’t handle, which subordinated them emotionally. The theme “don’t play with my feelings” reappeared in many songs. In *I Beg Of You*, one line was: "I don’t want my heart to be broken/ Cause it’s the only one I’ve got/ So darling please be careful/ You know I care a lot". When the woman played on the strings of feelings the man was hit. When the woman left him the world fell apart. Then he grieved. And when he fell in love he became shaky and dumb. The accentuation of love power can be seen as a male strategy of power, as the woman was treated as the problem. It was a way of conserving a patriarchal gender order. *Baby, Let’s Play House* referred directly to the gender order. The girl chose to go to college instead of maintaining her relationship with the local boy. Presley wanted her to come back to him and his simple life.

Elvis Presley did not represent macho masculinity only, but also other kinds of masculinity. He could both be tender and amorous and a typical macho man, who was hard, tough and dangerous. The macho man drank, partied and had wild sex. "My name should be trouble", Presley sang in *Danny*. Macho masculinity can be characterized by the sentence “a man’s got to do what a man’s got to do”. A real man can control his life. The
prototype song with this message is My Way by Paul Anka. Frank Sinatra used this song as his signature. Presley also sang My Way, about the man who was closing the book of his life. He had some regrets, but he had done what he had to do.17

Elvis Presley represented the identity of a male worker. The hippies represented a less obvious class and gender identity. Men and women dressed rather similar and both sexes had long hair. Beards or moustaches marked male identity, see for example the sleeve of Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band. Jim Morrison in the Doors and Jimi Hendrix did not follow the dress codes as they both dressed in a very sexually challenging way. Morrison often had tight leather pants. On stage they also behaved in a sexually challenging way—contrary to other hippie groups. Morrison was arrested by the police twice for acting too obscenely—making love to the microphone stand. Hendrix used his guitar as a phallus. The lyrics of the Doors also diverged as they were pleading for male supremacy and a traditional gender order.

The love power of women was of no interest to the hippies. Now, not only the female way of living but also the male way of living could be problematic. The lyrics of the Jefferson Airplane song Coming Back To Me dealt with that. The woman left her man when she needed to live her own life. The woman left the man who fenced in their relation by marriage or built the relation on a male, patriarchal supremacy. Men could not continue to insist on superiority or right to interpret the relation. The ideals of freedom made it possible even for women to do what they wanted to do and live their lives according to their own rules. “It’s time for growing and time for knowing love” the Jefferson Airplane sang in Won’t You Try/Saturday Afternoon.

Jealousy was not a common topic. In the time of free love and free relations, jealousy was not the kind of feeling you were supposed to have. One exception was the classical hippie song Hey Joe, which among others the Byrds, Love and Jimi Hendrix Experience played. Hey Joe was about a man who killed his unfaithful woman. The rebellious macho masculinity as well a more equal masculinity was possible in the hippie culture. Jim Morrison represented the macho masculinity. He often sang about potency. In Back Door Man, he sang “You men eat your dinner/ Eat your pork and beans/ I eat more chicken/ Than any man ever seen”. In this context “chicken” can be translated with “young women”.

The Grateful Dead distanced themselves from the patriarchal masculinity and from the macho men. In one song the children got the chance to grow after the death of the patriarch. Especially Country Joe & the Fish and Crosby, Stills & Nash resisted the patriarchal power. The
anti-war song *I feel like I'm fixin' to die*, about the Vietnam war, made fun of different forms of masculine use of power, for example the "big strong men", who became soldiers, and rather fought than thought.\textsuperscript{18}

The hippies made it possible to transform gender relations, but the gender order was far from equal. Janis Joplin testified to that. The queen of the hippies began to sing in the hippie group Big Brother & the Holding Company. Later she went her own way and started own groups. Compared to male musicians she seldom sang about sex. Her songs often discussed the problems with the gender order. The black blues singer Big Mama Thornton’s song *Ball and Chain* talked about the feeling of captivity in a relationship. *Piece of My Heart* described the tough girl, who could defend herself. But that was not enough, when the man took a piece of her heart. Janis Joplin was uncomfortable in the patriarchal gender order. In *Turtle Blues* she argued that women had to be tough, if they would manage themselves in the male dominated gender order. So her female sex defined the rebellion of Janis Joplin.\textsuperscript{19}

**Great Britain**

When the Beatles broke through in 1963–64 they sent signals of young sexuality. This was crucial for the hysterical reactions of the female audience. The noise of the audience drowned the music. After the show the members of the group had to run to save themselves from the screaming girls. The Beatles represented the partly equal relations of the mod generation. The Rolling Stones represented a very different kind of masculinity. They dressed more challenging. Especially Brian Jones distinguished himself. He could wear tight velvet trousers, sharp boots, a feather boa, a flickering kerchief and on top a big hat. Mick Jagger developed the posturing stage style acting like a prima donna, self-confidently taking up different rock postures. In the seventies the rouge singer gained followers like the androgenic David Bowie.

The Beatles did not change the gender order, but did not reinforce it either. The norm still was the male Bread Winner. In *A Hard Day’s Night* the Bread Winner drags himself home after a day of hard labour, but when he came home “I’ll find the things that you do/ Will make me feel all right.” Other songs talked about problematic relations leading to sorrow, pain or jealousy. The Beatles represented the gender order of the time. The Rolling Stones tried to take one or more steps backwards. The woman should nurse the man and then keep a low profile, as she otherwise could limit the necessary space of the man. The images of women were stereotypes. The “My Way”–view was common in early Beatles’ songs.
*I’ll Follow the Sun* talked about the man who broke the relationship and went away. The same perspective suited the Rolling Stones. Spiced with machismo Mick Jagger in *Get Off Of My Cloud* could tell other men to go to hell and let him live his own life.

In the mid sixties John Lennon questioned his manliness. *I’m A Loser* talked of the man who believed he behind the masque was a loser. “I’m not what I appear to be.” In *Help!* the weak insecure man, who lacked self-confidence cried for help. The image of the Rolling Stones did not permit that kind of doubt. But they reacted against the futilities of their life style. *Satisfaction* can be interpreted in this direction.20

In the second half of the sixties the sexism in the lyrics of the Rolling Stones increased. In the song *Yesterday’s Paper* Mick Jagger asked “Who wants yesterday’s papers/ Who wants yesterday’s girls” and answered “Nobody in the world”. *Under My Thumb* described the gender relation as a war between sexes. The man changed the subordination to domination and treated the woman as a toy.

Simultaneously the Beatles headed for a more equal gender order. They continued to problematize manliness. *Getting Better* described the young, frustrated working class man, who was prevented by the teachers and the rules in school to grow. He used to be “cruel to my woman/ I beat her and kept her apart from the things that she loved”. The moral of the story is that he could change his life, when his self-confidence grew. The Beatles also sang about relatively equal women as *Lovely Rita*.21

### The political revolt

The sixties are viewed as the decennium of political revolt. Politics played an important role for Western youths. The Civil Rights Movement and the student protests against the war in Vietnam mobilized young people. The rock culture did not belong to this political mobilization, which only had an indirect influence on it. Country Joe & the Fish and Crosby, Stills & Nash were two of the few groups who were influenced by the left wing.

The rock culture did not revolt, but was very rebellious. Elvis Presley was a rebel of the fifties. Above all he tried to change the moral order. His position as a rebel strengthened him as a protagonist of the working class. Intermittently he referred to the hard labour of men. The Rolling Stones also belonged to this rebellious group. For a short time they were affected by the counter culture of the hippies and then accidentally by the left wing. Even The Beatles started as a rebellious rock group. From the second half of the sixties they were, together with the American hippie groups, the leading forerunners of the counter culture.
The counter culture was a community based on mutual understanding and honesty. “Turned on eyes can’t tell lies” the Byrds sang in *I See You*. David Crosby in CSN sang in *Long Time Gone* about the necessity of listening to the people, with other words, the community of the counter culture.

Speak out, you got to speak out against the madness,  
you got to speak your mind, if you dare.  
But don’t know don’t now try go get yourself elected  
If you do you had better cut your hair.

According to the counter culture it was pointless to work inside “the system”. Then you had to acclimatise and compromise your life style. One of the few “system”-based questions for the hippies was the struggle against nuclear weapons. The Grateful Dead sang in *Morning Dew* about the consequences of nuclear war. The counter culture revulsion of society was especially directed against The Power or The System, and to a lesser degree against The Capitalism or The Imperialism—concepts familiar to the left wing movement. A vague anti-capitalism played an important role in the counter culture. When this distance to society was mixed with the anti-capitalistic criticism, the left wing began to influence the counter culture. “All your private property is target for your enemy/ And the enemy is we”, the Jefferson Airplane sang during the group’s most left-wing phase in the song *We Can Be Together* (1969). While the American hippies heckled the parental generation’s middle age, middle class and middle-gifted habits, the Beatles were less aggressive in their criticism. But, especially George Harrison preached the message of the counter culture. The others, who don’t embody the message of the counter culture, don’t understand that they have to search for the truth in their souls, he sang in *Within You Without You*.

1967 and The Summer of Love was the climax of the counter culture. The following year, the left wing movement grew stronger. In May 68 the students and workers in Paris began to strike and riot. All around the world the protests against the war in Vietnam grew. This influenced the Beatles. In June 68 the group recorded the song *Revolution*. The answer of John Lennon was to keep the distance from the Maoists, the violence, the hate and the simple solutions. Instead he talked about the inner revolution and peaceful changes. Love was the weapon—not Mao’s Little Red Book. But, he was ambivalent about the external revolution. As he sang “Count me out”, he also sang “in”. The Rolling Stones’ answer to the riots was *Street Fighting Man*. But the group did not participate. What can a man do except to sing in a rock band and stand besides and watch the riots? So,