Accessing to Chinese Rock Music Wave from 1980s Through 1990s

Chinese rock music wave was a controversial cultural phenomenon from 1980s through 1990s, which could be regarded as a prism of social changes in contemporary China. It was usually regarded as a subversive subculture and opposite to mainstream culture. This thesis tries to rethink the cliches of Chinese rock music wave from an external sociological perspective as well as musical and textual analysis. The emergence of Chinese rock music was deeply rooted in the background of reform and opening up, in which the ideology and social structure was undergoing a holistic change. By involving in the process of globalization, cultural imports impacted Chinese contemporary cultural pattern. In the matter artistic feature, contemporary culture in China was stratified into dominant culture, elite culture, popular culture and folk culture. Chinese rock music makers adopted and responded all the cultural patterns initiatives, rather than make a voice of dissent on behalf of a certain minority. In the matter of participating groups, many individuals lost or give up their original posts during the social transformation and spill out of the social structure. They had different social status and habitus (Bourdieu) previously, and, by entering into rock music circle, facilitated the genesis of a social subfield. Conversely, as an emergent subfield, Chinese rock music wave accommodated many scattered individual during the social change. This thesis hereto conclude that the subversive figure is only a superficially commercial tag. In the overall change of social structure, the genesis of subfield of Chinese rock music actually played a role of "safety valve", reflected the flexibility and self-adjustment of social structure.

Keywords: Chinese rock music; 1980s and 1990s; reform and opening up; social change; globalization

In the 1980s and 1990s, rock music made huge waves in the music industry, cultural circles, and ordinary listeners in mainland China. Nowadays, the characters, images and stories of that era are still active in people's memory. A generally accepted viewpoint on Chinese rock music is that it is rebellious, cathartic, and different from mainstream culture. "The stated aim of rock lyricists is itself intimately linked to rock's most distinctive ideological stance: the direct, authentic expression of inner emotion and individualism in the face of an oppressive, feudalistic society." (Jones, 1992) In fact, the above features are simply picked up and highlighted labels in the process of the dialogue with mainstream discourse, foreign culture, market thinking and so on. If we review the cultural wave in a broader cultural context, which was experiencing an intense renewal, a multi-cultural fusion among different social classes and different cultural patterns will be found. According to this route, if interpreting the participants from a sociological “field” perspective, we will draw a conclusion that is different from the preceding discourse of "rebellious youth subculture" on Chinese rock music. It could be seen as a new social subfield. Under the background of the overall structural change in the
basic social field, the subfield played a role in accepting socially heterogeneous individuals, maintaining social hierarchy breaks, and maintaining social stability.

**Genesis of Chinese Rock Music: A Changing Era**

The ups and downs of Chinese rock music for decades accompanied the social transformation since China's reform and opening up. It was born out of the drastic social change, benefited from the social ideological trends and open thoughts that collided fiercely at the time of change. Finally, when the market economy continued to transform, Chinese rock music circle gradually quieted down because its obedience to old tradition.

**Table 1. Chinese Rock Music Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>figure / band</th>
<th>cultural event</th>
<th>socioeconomic background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Violet Band <em>(ziluolan yuedui)</em></td>
<td>first pop music band</td>
<td>the 11th CPC Central Committee: the start of China’s reform and opening up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Dongfang Hotel</td>
<td>first music teahouse</td>
<td>the establishment of Sino-US diplomatic relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td><em>Wanli Mawang</em> Band</td>
<td>first music group performing just like a band</td>
<td>China’s legal seat in the World Bank; nationalized enterprise autonomy expanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Cui Jian's Plywood Band <em>(qiheban yuedui)</em> and Ding Wu's Locust’s Belly Band <em>(jihuanchong yuedui)</em></td>
<td>underground Party circle in Beijing began to gather</td>
<td>economic reform: development of commodity economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Cui Jian</td>
<td>Performance of “I Have Nothing” <em>(yiwu suoyou)</em> on the stage “100 singers Concert for the year of World Peace”</td>
<td>40th Anniversary of the Victory of the World Anti-Fascist War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Almost all the mature bands in Beijing</td>
<td>Performances on large-scale stages</td>
<td>turbulence in Eastern Europe; Tiananmen Square event</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Any social subfield, including the artistic field, is subordinate to field of power, i.e. the economic and political field. This is the basic judgment of Pierre Bourdieu's field theory. According to Bourdieu, the connections of individuals and their positions in society form a "field", and there are many subfields in society because of different divisions of labor, such as literary field, scientific field and so on. Although Bourdieu acknowledges that the subfields have their own rules to a certain extent, they all need to follow the basic rule of the field of power in order to participate in the game of social operation. By the same, the emergence of Chinese rock music is not entirely the aesthetic logic of the art and music circles' own transformation, but the development of the subfield and the overall change of the external social environment mutually fitted each other, thereby constructed a legal space for the newly coming artistic symbol. From this perspective, it is the transformation of the basic field of politics and economy, and the autonomy trend of cultural subfield that constitute the fundamental power source for the birth and development of Chinese rock music.

Emergence of Rock Music Market: Dual Logic of Politics and Economy

From the Opium War in 1840 through the Cultural Revolution in 1978, China has been in a long last revolutionary movement for national independence and class leadership. No matter the bourgeois-democratic revolution earlier or the socialist revolution later, it was the process by which one class deprived the right of speech of the other classes. Therefore, during the history of revolution, the field structure, ideological atmosphere, and discourse system of Chinese society was relatively unitary. Political demands highly restricted and regulated cultural and artistic activities. In the history of music development in modern China, the rise and popularity of school songs, worker-peasant-soldier revolutionary songs, foreign revolutionary songs, and mass songs were all related to prevailing political background. The marching style, choral form, solemn melody, and full of emotions of these types of music were adapted for arousing nationalistic emotions and patriotic enthusiasm, and thus are favored by creators and recipients.

Until 1978, the third plenary session of the 11th CPC Central Committee pointed out that the government’s main work would shift from class struggle to economic construction. The political field ceased to be the only field of power.
It had voluntarily given up its original absolute domination, and the economic field had been empowered an equal status. Therefore, the criteria for judging the value of practice have changed. Meeting the expectations of the political field or not is no longer the sole criterion for social practice, behavior and activities. The economic field has begun to play an important role in evaluating the value of cultural activities.

Therefore, in the early 1980s, when the market required diversified artistic works to meet different cultural needs, the monopoly of National Record Corporation of China was broke by diverse corporations, including Guangzhou Pacific Audio and Video Corporation, China Record Corporation Guangzhou Branch, Beijing Baihua Audio Equipment Factory, etc. The multi-company competition had replaced the one company's monopoly, and the audiovisual industry had entered into the era of marketization. But it was in the initial exploring stage. The huge market void prompted a lot of manpower and resources to swarm in this area. The number of audiovisual companies surged from a few in the first to a few hundred in just a few years. At the same time, the distribution of cassette tapes has grown significantly. The producers had the opportunities to try all types of music, and it was under this situation that rock music entered the market. Actually, Chinese music circle initially didn't know it's subcultural meaning and background “rock and roll” in western world. For many music makers, it was their first time to encounter this form of Western pop music. They were attracted purely by the music form because its natural attraction to younger groups and began to imitate in their music works. Then the circle found the great market adaptability of rock music. Just like Vera L. Zolberg mentioned: “Seeing how the new styles are created, I argue that they are better understood as part of a social process in which networks among artists and other participants become established in a broader socioeconomic context as oriented by political trends.” (Zolberg, 1990) Therefore, as a cultural commodity, the rise of economic field in China's reform and opening up period provided enough market for rock music, thereby achieving a large-scale expansion of rock music in the late 1980s and the 1990s in China.

Background of the Rise of Rock Music: Autonomy of Cultural Field

In the early 1980s, the reform of political system and economic system went hand in hand with the reform of cultural system. Before that, there are no independent music groups outside the network of nationalized song and dance troupes (gewutuan)\(^1\). From reform and opening up, along with socioeconomic transformation, gewutuan gradually began to take self-sustaining economic model, which was actually the practice on the system level of the

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\(^1\)Gewutuan was a cultural institution owned by the government. Because of its official capacity, it is always regarded as an opposite counterpart to the underground rock circle. This article will demonstrate the positive interaction between them two. The successful singers of gewutuan have many opportunities to give performances on official galas, while the rock musicians only have small gig. So they are dubbed as “gala singer” (wanhui geshou) by the rock circle.
discourse of "autonomy" that dominated the aesthetics and literary circle at that
time. That was the conquest of autonomy of the cultural field in China. Driven
by the reform of cultural system, almost all the nationalized troupes began to
be independent from the authorities, who allowed them to recruit performers,
and singers based on popular taste, arrange repertoires and determine
performance forms independently. Almost all the music performers and makers
affected by the new condition.

Firstly, the changes happened in performance form. A brand new
performance mode colloquially referred to as “zouxue”\(^2\) was widely accepted
by gewutuan. The primary audiences of zouxue are typical the mass, and mass
interest largely determined the content of the show, which has given a huge
impetus to the birth and development of popular music, including rock music.
Some performers of professional tripes began to hold their own bands and
cover European and American rock songs, such as Qiheban of Cui Jian and Liu
Yuan, and Cobra of Wang Fang and Xiao Nan. Some gewutuan might take
extras in zouxue, such as Cao Ping, Cao Jun, He Yong, etc., all started their
rock performances by this way and became important roles in Chinese rock
music history later. Cao Ping’s reminiscence indicated that how mass interests
influenced the performance of the gewutuan: “We were very popular in
covering Beatles’ song. Actually the audience didn't care what we sing, they
just want that lively energy.”\(^3\)

The second is the change in musical form. In order to obtain more
audiences and occupy a larger market share, popular music in the
1980s\(^4\), extracted and integrated elements of various musical forms, and
eventually formed three main musical trends.

1) Some music makers carried forward the mass ballad that was popular in
the 1950s and early 1960s. For example, "Song of Toast" (zhu jiu ge) uses
the rhythmic characteristics of Xinjiang folk songs; "The Frontier Springs
Are Pure and Pure" (bianjiang quanshui qing you qing) starts by singing
seasons and landscape, then extols the deep affection between the military

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\(^2\)Zouxue refers to a certain music practice in which the singers and musicians do work on
a free-lance basis for gewutuan, they band together with a manager to sell their musical
services by touring the nation and performing on a contractual basis for local, state-owned
cultural organizations.

\(^3\)Zhang, interview with Cao Ping.

\(^4\)Du Yufu’s article “Are Qing Yinyue, Liuxing Yinyue and Tongsu Yinyue the same
thing?” (Renmin Yinyue, 1985-08) indicates that popular music in early 1980’s in
mainland China was divided into three genres: tongsu yinyue, qing yinyue, and liuxing
yinyue. Tongsu yinyue refers to the instrumental music and songs that are easily
understood. The mass ballad in 1950s and 1960s was classified into tongsu gequ. Qing
yinyue is a kind of tongsu yinyue, which is entertaining and focus on daily life, just like
genre painting. Liuxing yinyue literally is a translation of popular music. Because its
commodity attribute, liuxing yinyue is considered as appealing to low and vulgar taste,
even pornographic song. In the author’s interview with Xiao Nan, the keyboard of Cobra
Band (the first women rock band in China), Xiao Nan thinks that their music closely
linked to qing yinyue.
and civilians.

2) Cover albums (some even all of the songs in the album is the cover of abroad popular music works) were produced in a large quantities, and main reason of this is speeding up the efficiency in production and fill market void, rather than imitating and acquiring.

3) Composing traditional and folk music in a kind of modern and popular music style was a highly influential trend. The primary method was newly writing traditional opera, matching it with symphonic arrangement and put it in a popular music structure. It was initiated with “Fight for Renascence,” (chongzheng heshan dai housheng) the theme song of TV series “Four Generations under One Roof.” (sishitongtang) Then, a concert and its same name album called “South and North Singing Together” (nanqiangbeidiao dahuichang) pushed the trend to climax. The outstanding feature is recomposing existing traditional operas with electronic instruments, and transforming them into disco music.

These attempts represented the diversified cultural needs emerging at that time, and could be regards as multi-layered social culture’s infiltration and fusion. These productions made a great success in market and at the same time shaped audiences’ reception, and offered an atmosphere for rock music circle to do deeper cultural integration afterwards.

The whole society's change from ideology to field power is the thought background and policy basis for Chinese rock music circle to adopt multiple cultural forms in music making and accommodate multiple social groups. On the one hand, since the reform and opening up, the emphasis on the solemn and exclusive One Truth has been replaced by the value of requiring diversity, self-expression, and the pursuit of consensus, which has provided chance for the artistic innovation of multiple integration. Corresponding to that, from its beginning, rock music integrates multiple musical styles and characteristics, and needs to constantly learn new musical elements to subvert and update itself. On the other hand, there are individuals having a relative looser relationship with the fundamental political field in every society. The structural adjustment of the whole social field caused them overflow from their original field, and they must reacquire a social position to obtain the survival right and identity. The emergent fields can accept these overflowers, and the rock music circle is one of them. Due to the fragmentation and reorganization of social structure, these emergent fields that accept overflowers must be composed by individuals belonging to different social classes. The above two aspects have formed the multi-cultural and multi-social integration of Chinese rock music from the artistic form to the groups of artists and supporters. The exclusive analysis is as follows.

**Musical and Textual Analysis: Fusion Music**

For every society, the social culture is constituted by multiple cultural
patterns, such as fine art, popular art, folk culture, and so on, which could be seen as cultural stratification. Although the cultural stratification is only a constructive outcome, so-called boundary between “fine art” and “popular art” is less and less convincing. But in the 1980s and 1990s’ China, the cultural stratification is widely accepted. The intellectual circle generally believes that contemporary Chinese culture was continued from ancient China, and the cultural patterns we have nowadays, include dominant culture, elite culture, popular culture, and folk culture. (wang, 2004) Integrating all of the multiple cultural patterns is one of the key features of Chinese rock music wave.

As mentioned above, in the first half of the 1980s, popular music mixed multiple social cultures together, although at that time this attempt only remained in a primary stage of simple combo of basic cultural elements, and there were numerous flaws. For example, it continued the dominant culture while retaining its moralizing meaning. It learned from popular songs of Hong Kong, Taiwan and the west, including pop music structure and performance, and produced a large number of cover songs, but had not developed original musical language with local and individual characteristics. There is also a “new opera” (xin xiqu) model that integrated traditional or folk music elements with popular music techniques, but descended to assembly line products under the commercial chain. However, preliminary attempts had formed a music making thought and audience foundation for the further metamorphosis of Chinese popular music. Later on, rock music in China deeply integrated dominant culture, elite culture, popular culture, and folk culture, and mainly manifested itself in the following forms.

**Combining Elite Culture and Dominant Culture**

In the 1980s and 1990s, reflecting on and dispelling previous revolutionary discourses was one of the main task of the dominant discourse on one hand, meanwhile the other task was extolling the ongoing social changes, and assuring of future and hope. Such emotion also became an influential trend in rock music, and was mainly reflected in two ways.

The first one is recomposing the red songs into rock music, such as the album "Red Rock" (hongse yaogun) published by Hou Muren in 1992, and Cui Jian's song "Nanniwan". In "Red Rock" there was a rock version of “The Internationale” (guojige). Actually, there were two rock adaptions of “The Internationale” made by Chinese rock music circle almost at the same time. The other one is the work of Tang Dynasty, which became a speedy big hit and accepted by many audiences as a symbol of "rock spirit" in the history of Chinese rock.

In fact, the two adaptations are basically similar. Both of them replace the orchestral instruments with the electro-acoustic instruments, speeded up the middle plate of the original song. No changes have been made in the structure of the tune, the chords, the arrangement of the harmonies, etc. In particular, the version in "Red Rock" adopted the chorus of the original version, merged the bel canto and folk singing in the third paragraph. Therefore, the main theme of
the original vision of pursuing human happiness, inspiring communism belief and hope is retained in this adaption, but only the tone transform from solemn to excited and vehement. Such adjustment in hue makes the song more suitable for the optimistic and positive emotion of the reform period.

Similarly, Cui Jian recomposed and covered a red song called “Nanniwan” in 1987. His cover performance once caused an uproar, but could not be interpreted simply as rebellious. The reason people have such a cognition is largely because Cui Jian deleted a paragraph of lyrics at the end of the original version:

Fighting while producing
359 Brigade is a model
Let’s move forward
Present a bouquet to the model

Cui Jian’s deletion of the paragraph dispelled the obvious intention of chanting the revolutionary heroes in the original version. But as a part of a song, the audience get the theme not only in the lyrics but also the music hue. From singing technic and arrangement, this song uses the most popular music expression at the time. Cui Jian’s sound is not hoarse and irregular pronouncing, which is familiar by the audience today, but close to a popular singing technique called the “breathy voice” (qi sheng). Against the background of the beautiful and pleasing sound, the elimination of the last paragraph indeed delete the historical meaning, but the result is opposite to people’s usual cognition. It veers to an eternal topic of singing the changes in natural scenery and the improvement of living condition, which adapts to the social vision of the time. Therefore, in these recomposed red songs, what was emphasizing was not the subversion of the original song, but the re-activation of the meaning of the previous song by the re-arrangement in popular music techniques.

The second way is to explore and reorganize the motif of national belief from remote history. This style was started by Tang Dynasty Band. Their song "Dream Back to Tang Dynasty" (menghui tangchao) uses a large number of traditional Chinese poetic, and singing techniques such as throwing tunes (shuai qiang), spoken parts of Chinese opera. Other wise, in arrangement, the guitar riff is composed in traditional Chinese music syntax. In this way, the song set the classical atmosphere, and the role of Western music form in this work is to strengthen the Chinese traditional artistic mood. Later, the bands and musicians such as Acupoint (xuewei), Overload (chaozai), Zheng Jun, up to Second-hand Rose (ershou meigui), Kongzi Says (Zi Yue) in the new century, etc., all create similar musical image, or uses lots of Chinese classical or folk music elements in their works. These songs could be seen as the earliest Chinese-style popular music.

Breathy voice is first adopted in mainland China by a “gala singer”, Li Guyi, who learned the singing method from Taiwan popular music, especially a very famous singer Deng Lijun. Breathy voice is accused of decadent music at first, then is widely accepted.
At that time, Chinese rock music, just like the dominant culture, expressed the praise of the new situation of reform and the history and future of China. However, while rock music accepts the dominant culture as one of its themes, the optimistic praise and idealized depiction does not overwhelm the unavoidable doubts and the cultural reflection standing at a kind of elite position. Therefore, many rock songs show the fusion of the elite culture and dominant culture. Cui Jian's "A Piece of Red Cloth" (yikuai hongbu) is one of them.

In this song, two images are portrayed by Cui Jian in different instruments, one is a strong collectivity in a dominant position expressed by a bright trumpet texture, and the other is a fragile individual in a subordinate position expressed by a vocal texture. The vocal and trumpet form a contrasting polyphony, and the intimate and complex relationship between "I" and "You" is appeared in the multi-line musical texture. The relationship is not simply master and slave, control and being controlled, but in a complex state of addiction, attachment, contradiction and pain. The red symbols and political elements often become the object of deconstruction in Cui Jian's works. However, after deconstruction, Cui Jian usually does not leave a ruin of value, but reconstructs a new value system about ideals, hopes, and self-realization in the ruin.

Similarly, a large number of works describe collective ideals appeared in Chinese rock music in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Zang Tianshu’s "The Sun, the Children, and the World," (taiyang, haizi, shijie) the Breathing Band (huxi yuedui)’s “Walk Through the Brilliant World,” (zouguo renjian huihuang) Black Panther Band (heibao yuedui)’s “The Light of Love,” (ai de guangmang) etc. These songs try to give a cure for the confusion and anxiety of the groups that have been left on the edge of various fields in the process of rapid development and change. The medicinal material of this prescription comes from the dominant culture, that is the firm confidence in the future, while using the new musical form, and trying different means of expression, combining the themes of the dominant culture with the reflection of the elite culture. Whether reconstructing national beliefs from revolutionary history or gaining identity from traditional culture, they all end up on the theme of a vision for the future of the nation, which was consistent with the dominant culture.
Combining Mass Culture and Elite Culture

Since western enlightenment was the most influential theoretical presupposition of intellectual discourse in the 1980s, one of the inherent requirements of literary and artistic creation was to use the elite discourse to inspire the public. Therefore, the elite culture and mass culture were isolated from each other at that time. However, under normal circumstances, many specific art works contain elements of elite culture and popular culture. The barriers between the two are to a great extent derived from the artificial construction of cultural and artistic practices in the historical context. For Chinese rock music in the 1980s and 1990s, because of its dual attributes of elite culture and commodity culture, it presented the themes of enlightenment from the beginning, and at the same time, with the pace of reform and opening up, it began the mass culture producing experiment in the market economy. If we interpret this phenomenon aesthetically, the dual attributes of Chinese rock music could be understood. Elite cultural characteristics of it, such as subjectivity, critical reflection, and innovation, are all formed and distributed in the mass cultural production chain. Zhang Chu is one of the most prominent representatives.

In Zhang Chu's work, lyric is the key element that constitutes its artistic characteristic. However, as a musical work, the lyrics must be matched by appropriate musical language. “Lonely Man is Shameful (gudu de ren shi kechi de)” and “Plant Making Factory (zao feiji de gongchang)” were two albums published by Zhang Chu during he affiliated with Magic Rock Culture Ltd.. They are the products of personal writing and teamwork. Zhang Chu writes the lyric and melody, which could be seen as the principal carrier of elite consciousness of the songs; and the arrangement is completed by Jia Minshu and his team, which is pleasing and easy to be accepted by the public. Therefore, in Zhang Chu's works, there are contrasts between oral poetry-style lyrics, plain melody and delicate arrangement. For example, the song “Ant, Ant (mayi, mayi)” in the first album shapes a nobody who takes things as they are. The world is so big and he is a humble ant, dreaming empty (lyrics: Think about neighbor’s daughter/listen to radio/Look at my dream/It is buried in soil). He feels that life is always less satisfactory (lyrics: Watermelons and beans are planted in winter/But get empty glad in summer). He envies the legs of locusts, the eyes of dragonflies, and the wings of butterflies, however he can only accept the slender limbs and dark skin he was born with, and goes through the journey of life with hardships and dreams (lyrics: 365 days in one year divided into four seasons/my grains are peanuts, red dates, tears and millet). Zhang Chu takes ant as a metaphor to express his general sense of life for ordinary beings. Consistent with the characteristics of most of his songs, this work is also full of poetry but has simple and free melody. The arranger team integrates the scattered notes into the rhythmic pattern of the reggae music, making the song overall pleasant to the public ear.

In the album "Lonely Man is Shameful (gudu de ren shi kechi de)”, the arranger team deeply understands Zhang Chu's characteristics and matches it
with a relatively personalized and free arrangement method, while using simple
and clear instruments, which highlights Zhang Chu's unobtrusive voice and
poetic lyrics against the background of the chords and instruments. The first
half of the 1990s was the honeymoon of mass culture productive chain and
elite culture’s coordination, such as Black Panther Band, Wang Feng and No.
43 Baojia Street Band, and campus folk songs as a remarkable music trend,
showed the possibility of cultural works of artistic value orientation to achieve
commercial value.

Combining Folk Culture and Popular Culture

Folk culture in the traditional sense refers to the cultural form
spontaneously formed by the folks at the bottom of a community for the
purpose of self-entertainment. At the moment when the mass media is covering
social behavior and interaction, due to the fragmentation of community on
which folk culture roots in, the folk culture is gradually disappearing.
However, some scholars believe that popular culture can become a
contemporary continuation of folk culture in a certain sense, because popular
culture and folk culture are not two separate cultural forms, but “coexistence
and continuity coexist. What is broken is the cultural context, the mode of
production, the specific cultural form, the mode of consumption, and the mode
of reproduction of meaning; what continues is the eternal pursuit of mankind
for vitality and freedom. Their commonality lies in the same resources, the
common spiritual needs of different cultural subjects, and the similar value
orientation when enjoying different products.” (Zhu, 2005) Popular culture in
the era of cultural industry could be seen as the new folk culture. As Fredric
Jameson convinces, “the works of mass culture, even if their function lies in
the legitimation of the existing order - or some worse one - cannot do their job
without deflecting in the latter’s service the deepest and most fundamental
hopes and fantasies of the collectivity, to which they can therefore, no matter in
how distorted a fashion, be found to have given voice.” (Jameson, 1992[1979])
Therefore, in many popular cultural texts, the support from folk culture is
common. Some of these works can enable the public to obtain alternative
gratifications about vitality, freedom, and rebirth in the imagination in
nowadays’s daily life. In the 1980s and 1990s, the integration and use of folk
music elements in Chinese rock music, and the desire to return to the
community expressed in the music works showed that they were in the same
strain as folk culture to a certain extent.

These musicians and their works have a clear folk music tradition. Many
rock musicians such as He Yong, Liu Xiaosong, Wu Tong, Wang Yong, etc.
come from the folk music families or are majors of Chinese traditional music
instruments performance. They also tend to use Chinese traditional instruments
in their works to create a contemporary echo of traditional mood. There are
Sanxian (a three-stringed plucked instrument) in He Yong's song of Bell and
Drum Tower, bamboo flute in Zhang Chu's Ants, Ants, and Guzheng in Cui
Jian's “Let Me be Wild in the Snow (rang wo zai xuedili sadianye).”
Nevertheless, the simple collage of musical elements cannot achieve the deep cultural meaning and textual transformation of these works from a kind of popular culture to new folk culture. In this conversion, what's more important is whether the musician expressed his desire to return to the community and the collective appeal of being part of the community. Another musical trend born at about the same time as Chinese rock music was the "Northwest Wind" (xibeifen g gequ). "Northwest Wind" also adopts folk accompaniment, vocalization, and melody. Even when Chinese rock music was born, it was unified into the "Northwest Wind" trend because they have similar musical elements. However, the "Northwest Wind" cannot be regarded as a new folk culture, but a type of mass culture enriched with folk art characteristics and produced by cultural elites, who were seeking status rising in the process of social transformation. Therefore, contradictions can be found in "'Northwest Wind" songs both in music and lyrics.

On one hand, the songs pursue rural atmosphere by traditional instruments and tonality, which offer the song a desolate, sad, and pathetic tone. On the other hand, it also runs through a disco rhythm full of joy and movement. In the lyrics, "Northwest Wind" songs often choose farmers in northern China as narrators to directly present their daily life, pointing out the hardship and barrenness, by which the songs seem as the megaphone of the community. Then, in the latter part of the chorus, the songs usually turn to present the pervasive confidence and hope of the future, and the narrator’s attachment to the collective image of the country or the authority, which is in harmony with the mainstream ideology. Because “music makers behind the "Northwest Wind" are not in a minority, but a group of people who were about to enter into the circle of elite and mainstream at the time. It sang the thinking of this group in an era of diversified transformation in economic, political and cultural fields in the 1980s.” (Qian, 2011) In contrast, only when realizing the anxiety of the collapsing state of community in the rapid social process, the collage application of the elements of rural music really meant the meaning of folk culture. In the process of urbanization and industrialization, there must be a large number of groups that cannot enter the urbanization process. They were the marginal population in labor division and mass media, and their voices are covered.

Unlike the observation perspective of "Northwest Wind" musicians, who stand outside the ruins of urbanization, rock musicians do not separate themselves from the ruins of society. The main creators of Chinese rock can be divided into three groups, i.e. institutional marginalists, wanderers, and cross-border artists. All of them were part of the urban ruins in the process of modernization and urbanization. As Wu Hong regarded, people have two different ways to remember and describe urban ruin. One is taking the city as an aesthetic subject, that is saying taking the city as an external object of thinking and longing; the other is putting yourself in it and constantly experiencing the disappearance of the city with your own experience. (Wu, 2012) In the 1990s, rock music often showed frustration and indignation for the metropolis and the cultural industry. They had to grow in there but they did not
trust the modern reality. Nowadays, the urban folk differentiated from Chinese rock music. These music makers walk in the same path with the older generation, longing for the rural community, and still rely on the traditional oral distribution method. But in these works, such longing is not presented as a cynical curse or a back-step avoidance any more, but a possibility of understanding with peaceful mind, which exists in the urban space transformed by modern culture.

Sociological Analysis: Three Marginal Groups and A Stably Emergent Subfield

From the 1980s through the 1990s, multiple cultural forms merged into Chinese rock music. To some extent, this fusion comes from the diversity of the music making group. The group here including all the core members who influenced the musical form and musical industrial ecology then, such as the composers, lyricists, band members, producers, brokers and so on. Borrowing from Bourdieu's notions of habitus and field, the music makers can be divided into three groups according to their different positions in the social field for their different institutional affiliation, family environment, and educational background. Under the background of the overall transformation of the social structure, these three groups separated from their original social positions and re-organized into a new subfield of rock music.

The first group is the marginalists of the nationalized song and dance troupes (gewutuan). Most of them are members or children of members gewutuan. Because of the work and family environment, this group was the first one who encountered Western pop and rock music in mainland China. As a result, they became the earliest makers of Chinese rock music and formed the most important territory of early Chinese rock. For example, Cui Jian and Liu Yuan once served as the trumpet player and saxophonist in the Beijing Symphony Orchestra; Zang Tianshuo served as a keyboard player in the Beijing Musical Drama Ensemble; Liu Xiaosong and Zhang Yongguang were percussionists in the Peking Opera Theatre; and Dou Wei also obtained the Shijingshanqing Young Music Ensemble. He Yong, Gao Qi, Chang Kuan, Wu Ke, Yu Jin, Wang Feng and other musicians were born in the orchestra family.

At the beginning of the reform and opening up, the change of the system wrapped these musicians who were walking on the edge of the system into the wave of marketization. They gradually have a clearer understanding of the cultural market and the public need during zouxue. It can be said that within the first few years of the reform of the cultural system, there was no clear boundary between gewutuan and the marginalized music groups. They mutually supported and recognized each other. The former approved the latter's study of western popular music and the breakthroughs in performance forms. The latter also benefited from the support of the former's stages, equipments, and learning materials, and even to a certain extent, gewutuan played a role of asylum to the marginalized music groups. Only with the permission of Wang Kun, the head of the Oriental Musical Drama Troupe, Cui Jian was able to sing
“I Have Nothing” at the “A Hundred Stars Concert” in 1986. Li Guyi’s acquiescence maintained the creation and performance of the Cobra Band. Wang Jian publicly endorsed Zhang Chu’s music works. It was only in the later acceptance and recoding process, the relationship between them and its influence was ignored, which led to a long-term one-sided understanding of Chinese rock music. When we talk about Chinese rock music as well as the cultural and artistic creation at that time, the huge impact of social reforms and rethinking of the old political system promoted by official discourse in the post-revolutionary period could not be overlooked. Therefore, it was partial to discuss only the rebellious, revolutionary, or emotional venting effect of Chinese rock music.

The second group could be named as “city wanderers”. Most of them are free musicians or young private entrepreneurs who are immersed in the rock music circle, and some of them are non-native musicians who come to Beijing with their music dreams. Their family, education, and political background could not provide them with sufficient cultural or political capital. Therefore, they benefit from the changing social structure, the rise of the economic field, and the impact of urbanization. This group acquires positions and exerts influence in the subfield through acquired musical skills and market sensitivity gained during their urban wandering. For example, Liu Yijun, who failed the college entrance examination, practiced guitar for more than ten hours a day, and found out how to use electric guitars to simulate the syntactic characteristics of traditional Chinese musical instruments such as lutes and zithers, and the he participate Tang Dynasty. His guitar skill is the key cultural capital. The market success of the two popular rock bands, Black Panther and Compass, is largely due to their managers Guo Chuanlin and Wang Xiaojing, whose keen grasp of market trends impact the bands’ musical form and performance style.

The third group could be named as “cross-border participants”, which refers to the music makers who cross the border from the original “post” and entered the rock music circle. Firstly, this group included the college students who participated in music activities during school, such as Xu Xiaofeng, Chen Ge, Shen Lihui, Song Ke, Gao Xiaosong, Luo Bing, etc. They were interested in music making at first, and some of them later turned their attention to expanding the rock music market, and built industrial chain. The music labels such as Strawberry Music Festival, Maitian Audiovisual, and Ali Music all have the participation of these cross-border participants. Secondly, there are some music college students who organized rock bands, performed and published albums. Most of their majors are classical or traditional music performance, so they can be termed as "academism" in the rock music industry, such as Wang Feng and his No. 43 Baojia Street, Again, etc.. With professionally trained musical knowledge and performance skills, the academism band expanded the relatively plain and typed musical expression mode of Chinese rock music at the time. Thirdly, some visual artists began their rock music

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6. Private entrepreneur, colloquially referred to as getihu, has relative low social status at that time, who is unemployed and outside the system of state-owned economy.
making attempts, including Chen Dili and his Acupoint, Zuo Xiao Zuzhou who was one of the primary artist residents in Beijing East Village, etc. Their rock music activities were non-stereotypes, usually synchronized with the practice of other types of art, including performance art, conceptual art, and so on.

The above three groups of Chinese rock music circle were located in different positions in the social field due to different growth environments, family backgrounds, and education levels. They undoubtedly hold different musical ideas and styles, which reflecting the long-term life experience given by the social stratum where the individuals are located and the habitus they have accumulated in their living conditions. They chose to blend in a completely foreign and unfamiliar music category, rock music, and are committed to veer to a coding principle that is different from the mainstream cultural field under the control of the political field. Thus, a new social subfield emerged.

Exactly as Yu Changjiang pointed out, a sociologists, inspected the “Yuanmingyuan artists community”. He pointed out that since the reform and opening up, especially since the end of the 1980s, due to changes in social structure, economic system, and ideology, Beijing and other large cities naturally went through a trend of diversification and pluralism. These areas (here refers to the artists community emerged around late 1980s and the 1990s, such as Summer Palace Artists Village and Beijing East Village) appeared as spaces of urbanism and heterogeneity, and the previously invisible non-mainstream groups had begun to emerge and become marginal groups in society. (Yu, 2005) As the above analysis shows, as a newly emerged fringe field, Beijing rock music actually accommodated many different non-mainstream groups. Including the marginal groups that were “spilled out” of the system during the social change, the wanderers who separated themselves from the in-system organizations and faced the whole society by individual, and also the college students scattered in a relatively independent and unique environment of the university campus. Although these groups were different from each other in basic social conditions, in a newly emerged fringe field, they found their identity. The previously dispersed individuals are accommodated in a social field, thereby entering the social structure as a whole. Just as Bourdieu believes, “Two distinct class fractions converge on this site in pursuit of employment.” (McRobbie, 2009).

Of course, the law of society commonly understood in critical sociology is that social contradictions trigger political movements. Bourdieu analyzes another possibility beyond this clue, namely that changes in social field structure such as labor market will lead to uncertainty of future, which will evoke anxiety. However, the direct result of this anxiety is not the impulse to reshape the field through movement, but first to avoid disruption and discourage critical consciousness, that means the subgroups inventing new titles, positions, jobs, and so on in the new field structure gap. Therefore, what they hold and transmit is still the mainstream ideology and value or its variants, thus forming a new social bond and avoiding division and instability. This is the resilience of the social structure itself to accommodate change. This notion precisely explains why the cultural and art
circles in the 1980s seemed to trigger off a radical subversion, but they eventually were digested smoothly by the society and even maintained a social balance.

In summary, since the reform and opening up, the drastic and holistic changes of social field system was not initiated from the bottom up by emergent subfields or subcultural actors, but a top-down movement initiated by the political field that was absolutely the dominant field in China. It empowered the economic field and makes it a parallel field of power to itself. For other fields, such as cultural field, artistic field, and academic field, the rule of the political field was no longer the only code of conduct. The economic field started to play a role of value assignment, and in the background of dual logics, the social rules begin to loosen. Under the drastic social transformation, the subversiveness from the genesis of the field of rock music has been eliminated by the overall change of the field system. During the radical change of a society from homogeneous to decentralized, rock music as an emergent fringe field integrates different non-mainstream groups and scattered individuals, thus acting as a "safety valve" similar to the middle class of society.

References


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