

**Popular Music and Identity in China:
A Qualitative Analysis of “Chineseness” in
Mandopop since the 1980s**

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Declaration

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Liverpool John Moores University. The research described here was conducted under the supervision of Professor Simone Krüger Bridge, Professor Rex Li and Doctor Emma Roberts at the Faculty of Arts Professional and Social Studies between October 2018 and December 2024. This research was reviewed and approved by the LJMU Research Ethics Committee. I hereby certify that this thesis has been composed by me and is based on my own work, to the best of my original knowledge, except where acknowledgements and references are made to previous work. No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Signature:



Date: 02/12/2023

Summary

This qualitative popular music study explores the construction of identity in Mandopop after the policy of reform and opening-up in 1978 in China. Opening Part I of the thesis, the discussions begin with the concept of identity and subsequently explore Chinese identity, especially national identity and cultural identity, and its role in Chinese music history and Mandopop history by drawing on the concept from previous works by popular music academics and from the research by ethnomusicologists and cultural sociologists, who have made significant contributions to the study of music and identity. The discussions also explain the design of the research and analytical methods from a variety of disciplines to explore research questions, including one-to-one interviews, open-ended questionnaires, music observations and textual analysis, and acknowledge the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the research design and fieldwork. Part II explores the first research theme, Mandopop in a Changing Context, to reveal the historical background and sociocultural context of Mandopop and understand the commercial genre of Mandopop to relocate the use of the term “wind” in Mandopop, and to explore the functions of Mandopop.

In Part III, three further research themes explore “Chineseness” in Mandopop based on the perspectives of fieldwork participants, with subsequent chapters based on each theme. The first theme is related to Chinese nationalism and national identity in Mandopop by discussing key terms and analyzing representative musical examples to explore the rise of nationalism in China and the construction of national identity in Mandopop. The second theme explores class identity and social stratification in Mandopop, illustrating the connection between class status and musical taste in Mandopop based on the homology and “omnivore-univore” argument, thus discussing the construction of class identity in Mandopop. The final theme is about fandom culture and idol industry in China and its impact on Mandopop, illustrating the relationship between fandom, policy and media platforms, as well as discussing how fandom (as a subcultural group) constructed its own identity in Mandopop under the strict censorship

system in China. Overall, the thesis presents multiple factors that affect the construction of Chinese identity in Mandopop as it is shaped by different ideologies and creative expressions within changing sociocultural contexts.

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Introduction

Chinese popular music is complex and changing, and there are numerous factors, such as ethnic, regional and linguistic factors, that have affected its development. From the perspective of popular music studies, Chinese popular music must be understood as multifaceted, consisting of popular music types, due to the existence of sub-genres sung in different dialects and the various musical styles of ethnic minorities. Chinese popular music emerged in a turbulent era, and its true origins are ambiguous. According to the history of modern Chinese popular music, the musical style of “contemporary song” (时代曲 Shidai Qu) that arose in the Greater Shanghai period in the 1920s is often regarded as the beginning of Chinese popular music. “Contemporary song” is a fusion of Chinese folk and European jazz music, sung in Mandarin, which is seen as a symbol of fashion and advanced culture at that time. “Contemporary song” was thereby a Westernised product created for the so-called “common” people in China. Its development coincided when Shanghai became a British Concession in 1845 that lasted until 1943. In these 100 years, Westernization in Shanghai was hugely influential. With the introduction of Western colonialism and the development of Chinese national capitalism, modern urban life in Shanghai evolved into a new lifestyle blending the ancient and modern. Then, during the turbulent times of the Chinese Revolutionary Civil War in the 1920s, morale-boosting revolutionary songs emerged with a powerful spiritual force to support the Chinese people in wartime. “Contemporary song” incorporated Chinese folk music to reflect “old” Chinese identity and European popular music at the time. Subsequently, Chinese popular music spread and was nourished by different sociocultural contexts in different regions in China, resulting in multiple musical forms and styles reflecting the identities of different regions, languages and cultures.

The critical analysis of “Chineseness” in this research will focus on Mandarin popular music, also known as Mandopop, which over the past few decades has risen to become the signature genre of Chinese popular music due to the dominant status of the

Mandarin language in China. Mandarin is the official language of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as the PRC) and was promoted by twentieth-century politicians and educators to unify the country (Tuohy, 2003: 156). With Mandarin being the standardised national language and lingua franca of mainland China, Mandarin as a commonly shared language allowed Mandopop to appeal to a broadening national audience on a scale not possible for regional music and songs in local dialects. Mandopop has thus come to occupy the most dominant cultural position compared to other Chinese music styles.

The emergence of the English term “Mandopop” can be traced back to the 1970s after the use of the term “Cantopop” was popularised. According to Joanna Ching-Yun Lee (Lee, 1992: 14), “Cantopop” refers to Cantonese popular music, which was first used by Hans Ebert in a 1978 article in the *Billboard* magazine as it was derived from “Canto-Rock” (Hong Kong’s local Cantonese rock music). By contrast, the term “Mandopop” became used to refer to Mandarin-language popular music, which differs from Cantopop in its use of Mandarin lyrics, yet it is based on Cantopop in terms of rhyme and tonal patterns and was marketed in Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan in the 1990s (Lee and Witzleben, 2002: 355; Mitchell, 2006: 218). However, the term Mandopop refers to “Huayu Liuxing Yinyue” (“Huayu” Popular Music) in Chinese, while “Huayu” does not only refer to Mandarin when this term was created. “Huayu” is a broad and ambiguous linguistic concept that was initially considered to be the common language of overseas Chinese, especially Han Chinese immigrants who had not yet been assimilated (Tian, 1994: 73-4). Broadly speaking, it includes Mandarin, Cantonese and Hokkien, as well as various dialects spoken in the overseas Chinese communities (Yang, 1990: 479, cited by Zhuang, 2005: 4). According to the official interpretation by the Chinese authority, in the 7th edition of the Contemporary Chinese Dictionary revised in 2016, the interpretation of “Huayu” is “Hanyu” (Sinitic language) (Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2016: 560), and the interpretation of “Hanyu” is the language of the Han nationality, which is the main language of China, while the standard language of modern Chinese is “Putonghua”

(Mandarin). Subsequently, the dictionary entry is directed to Putonghua (Mandarin) (ibid.: 513), which is the common language of China and the modern Han nationality. It uses the Beijing dialect for standard pronunciation, the northern dialect for basic dialect, and typical modern vernacular writings as the grammatical standard (ibid.: 1018).

Judging from the officially recognised explanation given by the Institute of Linguistics in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, it seems so easy to interchange concepts between different terms. It is precise because “Huayu” has been directed to Mandarin in modern Chinese by concept interchange that made Mandopop become effectively synonymous with “Huayu popular music” in the commercial sphere due to this conceptual linkage, thus making Mandopop fundamentally different from other genres of Chinese popular music in terms of language differences, reflecting Mandarin’s hegemonic position in the Chinese-language music industry. This exclusive use of Mandarin as the language medium has led to Mandopop taking on two nuanced but divergent meanings in the narrow sense and the broad sense. In the narrow sense, Mandopop refers only to Mainland Chinese popular songs employing Mandarin lyrics and styles, while Mandopop in the broader transnational Chinese context encompasses any popular music catering to global Mandarin-speaking audiences, including diasporic communities. It is thus valuable to research Mandopop and its identity as the most influential musical “mega genre” in Chinese popular music. However, since the boundaries between different genres of Chinese popular music are fluid, different genres and sub-genres of Chinese popular music will be further specified in Chapter 3; some genres might be even artificially demarcated, and this research will use artificially demarcated terms, such as Mandopop and Cantopop, for the purpose of analysis. Understanding these overlapping yet specialised definitions is crucial for accurately analysing the cultural significance and evolution of Mandopop.

Since the 1980s, with China’s rapid urbanization and economic opening-up policy, exposure to globalised media and markets has increased dramatically, which has

provided a large commercial market for the development of Mandopop. Meanwhile, in addition to being promoted by the Chinese branches of internationally renowned record companies such as Warner Music Group, Universal Music Group and Sony Music Entertainment, Mandopop singers tend to receive high-profile promotion through sizable state-owned record companies, such as China Record Corporation, and through television production companies, such as China International Television Corporation. The modern Mandopop industry effectively capitalizes on the prestige of Mandarin and its utility for national integration. Mass dissemination platforms like officially recommended music programmes have further amplified the influence of Mandopop among both domestic and overseas Chinese communities. Mandopop therefore has firmly cemented itself as the most influential music in contemporary Chinese popular culture, capable of generating large numbers of fans and influencing sociocultural trends in China and beyond.

Mandopop reflects Chinese identity, and its representations, characteristics, functions, meanings and values have been transformed in different contexts according to social and cultural circumstances. Notably, both Mandopop and Cantopop, or Chinese popular music more generally, were considered historically to adapt Western popular songs set to Chinese lyrics, since the tunes of many Chinese popular songs were the same as their Western counterparts (Witzleben, 1998: 472). While the musical features of songs expressing national identity bore some differences to Western popular music (Chu, 2003: 6, cited by Mitchell, 2006: 217), Mandopop reflects the extraction, absorption and localization of culture rooted in China. Also, Mandopop absorbed the cultural and musical elements deemed to be “good” and useful from both Western and Asian countries and integrated local sociocultural contexts and histories, thus forming the unique identity of Mandopop.

From a global perspective, Chinese identity has played an important role in contemporary China. In recent years, as China’s comprehensive national power has increased, its voice in the international arena has gradually become stronger. Therefore,

Chinese identity is constantly emphasised in the political, economic, social and cultural fields to reflect distinctive Chinese characteristics in international competition. The emphasis on Chinese identity became a symbol of status to demonstrate state power. The Chinese government and the Communist Party of China (hereinafter referred to as the CPC) have disseminated certain political propaganda to establish national consciousness among Chinese people and to emphasise Chinese national identity globally. The main political proposition and guiding ideology are “The Chinese Dream” (中国梦 Zhongguo Meng),¹ which is to realize “the great renewal of the Chinese nation”. The Chinese authorities hope to awaken Chinese national consciousness through “The Chinese Dream”, and at the same time enhance Chinese people’s sense of national identity. Under the influence of Chinese patriotism, Mandopop tends to have some functions that other popular music does not have, especially when it comes to reflecting national identity and promoting the nation’s status globally.

According to the popular music studies of the non-Western world by Peter Manuel (1988: 227), as a socialist country, China’s music development follows Marxist ideology, that is, China’s cultural policy directly affects music development, and music development is limited by class stratification (Manuel, 1988: 227). There is almost a consensus that the direction of Chinese music development is deeply affected by government policy, which has been affirmed by many Chinese and Western scholars and interviewees, who participated in this research. For example, Hong Kong scholar Professor Anthony Fung (2007: 425) stated that Chinese popular music has been instrumental in serving political purposes for the state, while one of my interviewees, Professor Shenshen Wang, also argued that Chinese music was developed under the impact of cultural policy to serve Chinese politics:

¹ This thesis uses and translates this term into “The Chinese Dream”, based on the definition of keywords related to China’s development on the Chinese official government website. Source available at: http://www.china.org.cn/english/china_key_words/2018-10/29/content_68861411.htm. I am also aware that this term is translated to “China Dream” in some academic literatures, for example in the publications by Peter Ferdinand and Tianyong Zhou quoted in this thesis.

Chinese art is the closest to politics in all countries of the world except North Korea. The constant change of political momentum will inevitably lead to changes in Chinese art, especially Chinese music and Mandopop. Therefore, Chinese music is deeply influenced by politics, so these years have begun to promote the national style. (Shenshen Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

In terms of cultural policy, the CPC issued “The Opinions of the CPC Central Committee on the Prosperity and Development of Socialist Literature and Art” in 2015 to indicate the significance and guiding ideology of promoting literary and artistic work, including adhering to China’s people-centred creative orientation and infusing the spirit of the Chinese nation, and to strengthen the CPC’s leadership over Chinese literary and artistic work. This further explains and reflects the promoting of confidence in Chinese culture through the political propaganda of “Four Matters of Confidence”.

In the 21st century, the CPC promotes the idea that Chinese people should not only Sinicize (i.e., to make Chinese in character or form) the Marxist view of literature and art, but also regard Chinese literature and art as the bugle of the times. The CPC’s policy intends to correct the biases created under conditions of market economy that apparently prioritise the commodity attribute of literature and art, and focus less on their aesthetic ideological attributes, and that apparently recognise the entertainment function of literature and art, but ignore their educational aesthetic function (*Xinhua News*, 2015). The CPC’s cultural policy provides, or decides, the direction of Chinese musical development. So, as the leading force in mainland China’s cultural policy, the CPC government has considerable influence on the integration of music styles into contemporary Mandopop. The types of music encouraged and promoted over decades, such as revolutionary songs and patriotic ballads, represented a particular vision of “Chineseness” that the authorities deemed acceptable or desirable. Meanwhile, musical genres deemed incompatible with national identity goals were actively discouraged. Through these selective policies of promotion and restriction, the development of today’s Mandopop industry is dynamically aligned with the political priorities of

cultural production. Therefore, the genres that currently dominate Mandopop directly reflect recognised definitions of Chinese national and cultural identity.

In the 21st century, Mandopop is endowed with a Chinese identity that reflects China's political national characteristics. Whether appealing to economic prosperity, historical heritage or nationalist sentiments, the music types constituting mainstream Mandopop have been carefully cultivated to epitomize "Chineseness" as envisioned through the state ideology lens. This research is based on this sociocultural and political background, while acknowledging the impact of the researcher's own emic perspective on Mandopop as a young Chinese national shaped by China's efforts towards constructing national identity. The researcher's positionality will be explored in the following section to illustrate both the emic insider's perspective and etic outsider's perspective.

Approaching Mandopop

As a loyal listener, Mandopop was indispensable throughout my upbringing. When I was very young, about four or five years old, my grandparents taught me to sing revolutionary songs, which they said were the most popular at the time—the wartime of the 1930s and 1940s. Later, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when karaoke was popular in China, our family, like most of wealthier Chinese families, had their own karaoke machine and VCDs (video CDs, as they were called in China) of popular music. My family often sang at home, and my childhood memories were almost all love songs from the 1980s and 1990s. When I was in primary school in the late 1990s, TV dramas from Hong Kong and Taiwan were developing rapidly in mainland China. My classmates and friends around me were watching these dramas and learning to sing the theme songs. The Mandopop market in Taiwan at that time shaped many pop idols. When these idol singers became popular in mainland China, this was also the earliest fan culture that occurred in mainland China. By the time of attending secondary school, which was in the 2000s, popular music in Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China began to become economically successful. It was also the time when the Korean Wave of music (K-pop) became popular, but I was still "addicted" to Mandopop. The most

direct reason was that I could understand the language and the meaning of the lyrics. Then, I started listening to Mandopop all the time. My perception of Mandopop and fan culture may start from there. The CD shop in front of my school became my most frequented place. Later, Chinese television stations started to broadcast some talent shows and idols and promoted K-pop. The 2000s was the most prosperous era for Mandopop. It absorbed the music cultures of different countries and nationalities and found its own direction in this cross-cultural exploration and development.

The music sub-genre of “China Wind” is also a product of that era. Under the impact of various foreign music cultures in the 2000s, Mandopop sub-genres with a unique Chinese identity began to emerge, which is the biggest feature of the success of “China Wind”. “China Wind” therefore became the research topic of my Masters’ dissertation, which also led me to approach Chinese identity in Mandopop as a research project. At that time, the content of my study was the popular music industry, and I was exposed to discourses on Chinese popular music and popular music studies in Western thinking, which led me to connect it with the genre of Mandopop. As the most representative and successful sub-genre within the genre of Mandopop, I found that “China Wind” is an intuitive expression of “Chineseness”, while I explored reflections of Chinese identity through case studies. That was also the first time I approached “Chineseness” in Mandopop, although the research was still very limited. Because of its diversity and complexity, Mandopop produces and reflects multiple identities in different sociocultural contexts, and these identities are also constantly developing. It made me more interested in it. Therefore, this doctoral project seeks to explore Chinese identity in Mandopop that is mainly informed by popular music studies, but some points sit across various musicological sub-disciplines, which is inseparable from understanding the historical and sociocultural background of Mandopop, as well as exploring people’s perspectives during fieldwork to understand the meanings and changes surrounding Mandopop.

The contrast between emic and etic approaches is an important methodological distinction in popular music studies and ethnomusicology. Firstly, the emic approach captures unique cultural viewpoints and aims to understand music from an insider's perspective - focusing on how the people within a culture perceive, experience and categorize their own musical practices and values. Growing up with and witnessing first-hand the development of Mandopop in mainland China, this research was conducted from a Chinese emic insider's perspective. Mandopop is a commercial product as well as a cultural product. I grew up where it sprouted and grew, and was inevitably affected culturally and socially through socialisation, the process by which an individual learns the norms and values of the society in which the individual is raised, which contrasts to acculturation, the process of learning the norms and values of a society different from the one in which the person is raised (Assael, 1995). As a popular music researcher, I will adopt an empathetic stance to describe musical systems, genres and meanings based on the local cultural landscape. While the emic prioritizes cultural insider knowledge, the approach shifts to an outsider's view to analyse music through more objective, systematic frameworks - looking for elements that can be compared cross-culturally. These may examine areas like musical structures, historical influences, commercial industries or patterns of cultural exchange. Yet the analysis from an etic perspective aims for objectivity, over-reliance on external frameworks also runs the risk of ignoring, misunderstanding or even violating the intrinsic principles that operate inside a culture and meanings that govern musical systems from within a society, whereby integrating ethnomusicological methods is particularly useful for mitigating such issues. An ethnomusicological perspective can indeed assist researchers to think and talk about music from the perspective of local people, thereby gaining insight into insiders' perceptions of music and other forms of cultural practice (Barz and Cooley, 2008: 50). Adopting an ethnomusicological lens emphasises gaining cultural insider knowledge through participatory research techniques like interviews and discourse analysis, as well as seeing the emic as primary for elucidating cultural dimensions on their own terms before external analysis. With its emphasis on understanding cultural practices from participants' own frames of reference, an ethnomusicological

perspective interprets music as part of broader lived cultural traditions rather than isolated artifacts, which can certainly help refine etic analyses.

As an insider, while growing up in a socialist state system, I was immersed into China's social norms and socialist values, so I was subtly influenced when constructing self-perceptions and values. Since research requires more objective, balanced in-depth understanding, studying the identity constructions in Mandopop necessitates not only to combine the historical background of its development, but also to look at its changes in the new social and cultural contexts. Therefore, it was necessary to study and research identity constructions in Mandopop outside Chinese social norms and values, even from an emic insider's perspective, and to look at the identity of Mandopop more objectively and from an etic outsider's perspective. Also, applying ethnomusicological perspectives and methods based on popular music studies was crucial in not only using an integrated approach using emic and etic stances to develop contextualised and wide-ranging interpretation but also encouraging accounting for perspectives of cultural insiders to gain deeper insight into local contexts of Mandopop.

Research Scope

When tracing the history of Mandopop, one can detect a variety of musical sub-genres in an "obvious" (i.e., to a Chinese insider) Chinese style that reflects Chinese identity, which is called "Chineseness" in this research. The notion of "Chineseness" is often thought of as a multidimensional construct that carries complex social, cultural and political connotations, especially in the fields of religion and national identity (Lu and Gao, 2018). This term also presents challenges to conventional heuristics and conveys the insistence of a sovereign demand (Christie, 2015: 343). Oakes (2000) argued that analysing "Chineseness" according to the cultural ideologies and spatial strategies illustrates problems of regionalism in China's interior. In terms of national and ethnic identity, "Chineseness" strengthens a shared sense of identity among the Chinese people and gives them a sense of belonging. "Chineseness" is thus a term to emphasise Chinese identity across different research fields, as it is widely used to explain

reflections of Chinese identity in art and design, architecture, film studies, literature studies, philology and music.

This research explores the notion of “Chineseness” in Mandopop and examines how “Chineseness” as an ideology is constructed and reflected in Mandopop. To do so, the historical background, characteristics of different genres, soundscape, identities and representations of “Chineseness” will be discussed. This research mainly focuses on the period after the policy of reform and opening up, which became the economic policy officially implemented by the PRC in 1978 and was a significant turning point in mainland China. Representative music sub-genres within Mandopop that express “Chineseness” will be illustrated, including “China Wind”, “Northwest Wind” and “Ancient Wind”, which brought new Chinese-style concepts into Mandopop. Moreover, the thesis will redefine the term “wind”, since it is a literal translation from Chinese and is vague in its literal meaning. In relation to the textual analysis and structure of “Chineseness” in Mandopop, linguistics, soundscape, instrumentation and visuals in the music will be discussed. Concrete music case study examples and musical analysis will support the analysis of the constructions of “Chineseness” in Mandopop. Informed by the perspective of popular music studies, this research considers the national attributes of music culture and explores the role of music in and as culture. This research thus ranges from discussions of the historical background to textual sounds, while “Chineseness” will be studied and analysed through qualitative analytical and fieldwork methods.

The notion of “Chineseness” is an evolving and non-essential theory of the construction of identity due to its malleable and unfixed characteristics (Ang, 1994: 74), so my research participants’ perceptions depended on different sociocultural contexts. The sampling prior to fieldwork involved “snowball” sampling, a non-probability sampling method where research participants helped recruit future subjects for a study, so that participants from different industries, regions, identities and genders could be selected and included. The subsequent fieldwork included unstructured face-to-face interviews,

online questionnaires and observations of music activities to investigate the cultural role of music in China and peoples' perspectives of "Chineseness" in Mandopop. The data collection provided rich material for analysing "Chineseness" in Mandopop by determining the specific themes of research and textual and musical analysis. As the interviewees came from different age groups, fields of work and regions, their understanding of music also varied. Not surprisingly, participants' differences in thinking resulted from the differing sociocultural environments in which they live. Of course, there are also some commonalities in their thinking, and these commonalities reflect the unity of Chinese identity in their thinking, which informed some research themes, specifically in definitions of "China Wind", the functions of Mandopop, national identity and nationalism, class identity and social stratification in Mandopop, as well as fandom and the direction of the Mandopop market. When research participants expressed their views, whether in interviews or in questionnaires, they often used musical examples to support their views, some of which are not so popular, while others are most popular and iconic. Most of the musical analysis in this thesis was chosen from these musical examples.

Thesis Structure

Following this Introduction, the thesis is divided into three parts: Part I: Literature, Theoretical Framework and Methodology; Part II: Mandopop in a Changing Context; and Part III: Exploring "Chineseness" in Mandopop: Themes and Issues, and followed by the Conclusion and Appendices. Having outlined the general background of this research, introduced the emergence of Mandopop and my personal experience of approaching Mandopop, and illustrated the research scope of this thesis, the following section will explain how this thesis is structured, and introduce the research themes that have emerged during the research, and how each chapter is structured around those themes.

Part I consists of two chapters that will provide the theoretical framework for the overarching theme of "Chinese identity" and explain the methods of the research.

Chinese identity will be related to the theoretical perspectives on identity more widely, and the importance and functional role of “Chineseness” in Mandopop will be discussed. Chapter 1 “Literature Review” will provide the research context to the thesis by exploring existing discourses on identity and Chinese identity, and discussions on the construction of Chinese identity and its theoretical relevance to Mandopop, while reviewing the existing key literature on identity, Chinese identity especially national identity and cultural identity in Chinese music and Mandopop. Surveying the key literature on the topic, the chapter will show what has been said by other researchers on the issue of identity in Mandopop, and how this research fills a gap in existing knowledge. The subsequent Chapter 2 “Research Design” in Part I of the thesis will introduce the key research questions, research aims and objectives, and provide the main methodology of this research. Overall, the research is guided by three key questions: What is the extent of “Chineseness” in Mandopop music?; What is the meaning of “Chineseness” in Mandopop?; and What is the correlation between “Chineseness”, society and the music market? In terms of the research methodology, this chapter will focus on the sampling method, research site, data collection and data analysis, as well as the research timeline.

Part II of the thesis consists of one contextualising chapter, that will introduce the changing context of Mandopop. Mandopop has developed in a turbulent historical context, with numerous historical and political factors influencing its trajectory. Since China is a multi-ethnic country consisting of the Han nationality and 55 ethnic minorities, Mandopop has absorbed multiple identities in this multi-ethnic cultural context, and these identities have also changed with their changing sociocultural contexts. Chapter 3, “The Sociocultural and Historical Context of Mandopop”, will also introduce the Western notion of “genre” and explore whether Mandopop may be regarded as a commercial genre in the Western sense of the term, while juxtaposing Mandopop with different genres of Chinese popular music that have developed historically. The term “wind” in the “China Wind” sub-genre of Mandopop music will be considered by providing selected musical examples to analyse the characteristics of

soundscape, linguistics, instrumentation and visual elements. Subsequently, this chapter will discuss the educational, aesthetic, sociocultural and political functions of Mandopop.

Part III consists of three chapters that will explore emerging themes in discussions of “Chineseness” in Mandopop from Chinese peoples’ perspectives. These themes will be drawn from the commonly shared perspectives raised by the research participants in China, which appear to be highly unified, and which have assimilated commonly shared ideas about the identity of Chinese people into their own cognitions. Chapter 4, “Expressing National Identity and Nationalism in Mandopop”, will explain the key terms used in the thesis, including state, nation and nationalism, explore the expressions of nationalism in contemporary China and in the context of globalization, and illustrate how nationalism is expressed in Mandopop by analysing two musical case studies. When Chinese national identity, or “Chineseness”, is reflected in music, my research participants, including interviewees and questionnaire participants, often connected “Chineseness” with nationalism. However, nationalism in China is complex with multiple overlapping sub-identities and hybrid identities. China is a united multi-ethnic state founded to bring together people from all its ethnic groups. As most of the population belongs to the Han ethnic group, China’s other 55 ethnic groups are customarily referred to as “minorities”. There are thus some differences in the reflections on nationalism by different ethnic groups. Thus, to understand national identity and nationalism in Mandopop, it is important to understand multinationalism in China first.

Chapter 5, “Class Identity and Social Stratification in Mandopop”, will relate to discussions of class and social stratification in China. These two terms developed according to different theoretical frameworks, so my reflections on class identity in Chinese society will be relevant in specific national contexts and changes in these contexts. Contemporary social classes and stratifications are fluid, so this chapter will explore the evolution of class identity under China’s “one country, two systems” policy

in conjunction with the historical background of the development of social class and social stratification in China, especially in the new social stratification system represented by the younger generation. Subsequently, this chapter will focus on class identity in Mandopop to discuss the role played by class identity in different groups of audiences in Mandopop. The discussions will be combined with the data collected from fieldwork to understand Chinese participants' perspectives.

Chapter 6, "Fandom and its Impact on the Mandopop Market", will explore fan culture in Mandopop and how it impacts on the Mandopop market. It will firstly discuss the status of Chinese fandom and its emergence and development, which was impacted by Japanese and Korean fan culture, including television programmes and music products released for and reliant on fandom. However, there are concerns that Chinese fandom activities increasingly trend towards fanaticism and seem to be starting to go "off track" in terms of the government's cultural policy, so under the censorship and supervision of the state, cultural and artistic activities are inevitably restricted, and fan activities affected. The chapter will thus outline a series of contradictions between fandom and government policy, as well as the relationship between fandoms and the music streaming platforms and social media platforms, which is a provider of virtual gatherings for fan activities that promotes the close communication and activities of fans, but is also restricted by the government in terms of regulatory and operational rules. These issues will be discussed detail in this chapter, while concluding the new direction of the Mandopop market under the influence of fandom culture.

The main purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between Chinese popular music and Chinese identity by connecting and exploring the concept of "Chineseness", to analyse the significance of "Chineseness" in Mandopop and to determine its expressions and reflections via Mandopop in relation to Chinese identity and national ideology. The challenges of this research relate to understanding differences related to linguistic, historical background and social and cultural contexts. The literature on Mandopop is inadequately explored to date, while the research

literature from emic insiders to provide first-hand research materials is also limited. The original contribution of this research is to connect the concept of Chinese identity with Chinese popular music to explore people's perceptions through engaging with music professionals and audiences and discover how "Chineseness" is theorised and constructed in Mandopop, as well as how "Chineseness" spreads in the music market to widely promote "Chineseness" in Mandopop to popular music audiences in China and beyond. Therefore, it is necessary to understand Chinese social norms and values from an emic insider's perspective, which provides the basic ideology for the formation and development of Mandopop, as well as to understand academic perceptions of Mandopop and "Chineseness" and the perceptions of local people in combination with fieldwork data to view the identity constructions surrounding Mandopop more objectively from an etic outsider's perspective, thereby filling the gap in the literature on Chinese identity and Chinese popular culture.

PART I

LITERATURE, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Chapter 1

Literature Review

Dr Yuan Wang (2019: 134), one of my interviewees during the fieldwork, stated that Western popular music studies can be summarised into four categories: cultural industry criticism, textual attention, social and cultural studies and popular musicology. With the evolution of the music industry in the West, the concept of “popular music” became more widely accepted, and its attributes gradually highlighted and explored across different academic research fields. This research similarly understands Chinese popular music from a multidimensional perspective and multidisciplinary context, akin to polyphonic research with multiple intersecting voices. At the same time, it is undeniable that sociologists and literary theorists have always been more enthusiastic about popular music than musicologists. For instance, the Frankfurt School, which was known for its critical theory of modern industrial society in the 1930s and 1940s, and Adorno’s research (1941) on popular music’s observation believes that popular music, as a cultural industrial product, is no different from other industrial consumer goods, and has the characteristics of “standardization” and “pseudo-individuality”. Different disciplines provide new ideas and perspectives for popular music studies, and scholars have pointed out that traditional musicological methods are sometimes ineffective for popular music studies in analysing music “text” (Tagg, 1982; Middleton, 1990; Middleton, 1993; Moore, 2003; Longhurst, 2007) mainly due to ideological differences, expansion of musical concepts, incompatibility between traditional music analysis methods and popular music texts. As the research horizons of popular music studies have expanded and more researchers from different ideologies and professional backgrounds have joined in recent years, issues such as music text, consumption, culture, audience and production in popular music studies are increasingly relevant in discussions on gender, class, age and multicultural differences across sociology and cultural studies. Subsequent attention to popular music studies is more about the study of “music phenomena” and “context” than the music “text” only. While revealing its

own uniqueness in multiple disciplines, popular music studies are also placed within broader interdisciplinary discussions.

Therefore, before discussing Chinese popular music and its identity issues, this research firstly locates Western academic titles to explore how music reflects the identities in their respective countries, such as the research on renewing European music and nationalism that connecting nationalism to understanding European music and exploring how city culture is crucial to European identities (Bohlman, 2009; Bohlman, 2011); research on Paraguayan music and identity to understand how Paraguayan music creates an official identification to achieve identity transposition (Colman, 2015; Krüger Bridge, 2022); and research on “Cubanidad” and national identity that music becomes a useful marker for theorizing local and regional differences, and the interplay of national identities beyond the official discourse of “Cubanidad” (Pérez-Firmat, 1997; Bodenheimer, 2015). Reviewing this literature helps to understand Chinese popular music and its identity by connecting western theoretical framework to an Asian context. In this theoretical understanding, issues of identity in Chinese popular music are inseparably related to historical background, sociocultural context and official discourses.

Chinese popular music emerged within a complicated historical and sociocultural background. It was influenced by Western music and gradually commercialised due to the development of the phonograph and record industries. In this context, a variety of musical sub-genres of Chinese popular music were produced accordingly with obvious Chinese characteristics and uniquely Chinese style. During the process of localization and commercialization of Chinese popular music, its representations, characteristics, functions, meanings and values have subsequently been transformed in different contexts. This also triggered scholars’ interest in identity issues surrounding Chinese popular music and the sociocultural discussions associated with it. To understand the notion of “Chineseness” in Mandopop, this research will focus on the historical background, characteristics, soundscape, identities and representations of “Chineseness”

in Mandopop. This research is rooted in and contributes to four fields of research concerning: (1) the issue of identity and how it was constructed and theorised in popular music; (2) connecting Chinese identity with the concept of "Chineseness"; (3) how Chinese identity is reflected in music in particular; and (4) how Chinese identity impacts on the Chinese popular music industry.

Numerous scholars have debated the concept of "identity" in political science, international relations and political theory, and in the late 1990s, scholars in social science and humanities disciplines were intensely concerned with the question of identity (Fearon, 1999: 1). Accordingly, this chapter reviews previous literature on the concept of identity and Chinese identity in Mandopop, thus providing the theoretical framework for this research. This chapter is divided into four sections as follows. The first section will discuss the concept of identity more broadly, including its emergence, development and importance in the establishment of a nation. To understand what kind of identity or ideological expression "Chineseness" is, the discussions first seek to understand how "identity" is constructed and theorised as well as the positioning of identity in the humanities, and then explore identity in popular music in order to examine how this is understood as an ideological concept in the disciplines of Popular Music Studies, Ethnomusicology, Music Sociology and Historical Musicology. Since music has long conveyed Chinese cultural heritage and ideals of nationhood, the second section will analyse how Chinese national identity was formed during wartime and how post-1949 mainland China has strategically developed Chinese music and music education to both promote national cohesion. In the third section, there will be an understanding of "Chineseness" in the construction of cultural identity in mainland China, and an exploration of being culturally "Chinese", examining academic frameworks that shed light on Chinese identity's diversity and fluidity. The last section will discuss the official Mandopop content and the interplay between commercial and ideological goals around notions of "Chineseness" promoted to youth audiences, and explore how popular genres represent and negotiate cultural identities, with a focus on how government policies influence this process.

Popular Music and Identity

The term “identity” refers to the distinguishing features and characteristics that define an individual or group, which covers aspects of personal experience, beliefs, values, culture, gender, race and social roles. Identity can be formed and influenced by internal factors, such as personal beliefs and values, and external factors, such as social norms and cultural influences. It shapes how individuals or groups perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others, thus contributing to their self-consciousness construction and relating themselves to the world around them. Identity discourse is helpful to explore “how individuals identify themselves in relation to the presence, perception and action of others” (Li, 2018: 49). This section will explore literature in relation to popular music and identity, including notions of identity through the cultural symbols, values and connections it expresses for audiences that popular music both reflects and shapes.

The Issue of Identity

The emergence of the term “identity” in public parlance was attributed to and can be traced to the research on ego identity by psychologist Erik Homburger Erikson in 1956 (Fearon, 1999; Waterman, 1999: 591). Erikson (1956: 56) adopted this term from the psychosocial connotation of Freud, when an “inner identity” was described to formulate the relationship between Judaism and Freud himself, while Erikson related this term to the adolescent identity crisis that linked identity with an individual’s unique value. Based on Erikson’s identity theory, Marcia (1964, cited in Waterman, 1999: 592) took further steps on the ego analytic perspective of identity in his dissertation and focused his attention on the development of a person’s sense of identity, which he would call “exploration” and “commitment” (Waterman, 1999: 594). The identity status theory, as a multiple theoretical approach, was integrated into self-realization theories within psychology and philosophy by Waterman (1999: 594). He predicted identity statuses by measuring the multitude of variables, such as identity achievement status,

moratorium status, foreclosure status and identity diffusion status to reflect different patterns in the nomological net of his identity theory (Waterman, 1999: 601).

Identity reflects a process of identification to explore “who’s who” and “what’s what”, rather than a thing that one does, or one can have (Jenkins, 1996: 6). In social psychology, identity is considered as “a particular form of social representation that mediates the relationship between the individual and the social world” by the process of “self-knowledge, claims and recognition” (Chrysochoou, 2003: 225). Moreover, social psychology also claims that, for the behaviour, identification might be connected to motives in social identity theory, which was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (Jenkins, 1996: 7), and based on this perspective, Ashforth and Mael (1989: 20) applied it to organizational behaviour concerning socialization, role conflict and intergroup relations. Applied to the form of social identity, the use of identity, besides areas of logic and mathematics, “never signifies anything static, unchanging, or substantial, but rather always an element situated in the flow of time, ever changing, something involved in a process” (Wodak et al., 2009: 11). Identity theory looks more at individual identities and roles, while social identity theory focuses on group dynamics and intergroup relations. Bringing these two theories together could provide more holistic understandings of how individual and group identities intersect and influence each other. Although the origin, language, orientation and coverage of identity theory and social identity theory are different, the merging of these two theories will proceed a more powerful social psychology that is reflected particularly in attending to “macro-, meso-, and micro-level social processes” (Stets and Burke, 2000: 233-34). Therefore, merging identity theory and social identity theory would ideally draw out the synergies between micro and macro perspectives and account for identity-relevant phenomena across multiple analytical levels of society, groups and individuals simultaneously.

While the notion of an integral, original and unified identity was discussed within a variety of disciplinary area, the question of identity was still present throughout

modernity (Kellner 1992, cited in Bauman, 1996: 18). To explore “identity” in philosophy, philosophers have long debated that a thing itself will be something different due to the change of properties and qualities that are associated with identity of this thing (Fearon, 1999: 12). In the humanities and social sciences, the term “identity”, as scholars use it, was usually referred to a social category and/or socially distinguishing features, which reflected two linked senses: “social” and “personal” (Fearon, 1999: 2). Among these two different senses of identity, the societal/group level has dominated much of the analysis in fields like music studies since the nineteenth century. The post-war decades of the 1950s and 1960s were a time of immense social change in Western societies, within academia, traditional humanistic research models faced increasing scepticism as artists and intellectuals sought new lenses to make sense of these transforming cultural dynamics, and music studies also were among the fields impacted. While much early sociological and anthropological work in music studies focused on Western art music traditions, musicologists began to apply these perspectives to other genres that had long been marginalised or excluded from serious academic analysis. Music scholars began investigating music’s relationship to identities, economies, politics and everyday life and applying methodologies from social sciences of music to topics such as ethnographic fieldwork on folk practices and the role of mass media in diffusing commercial styles, as well as critically situating music as a cultural product entangled in webs of power and social stratification. Interdisciplinary tools from fields like sociology, anthropology and social theory enriched the examination of music’s role in social dynamics, which also highlighted music as continuously (re)negotiated through social relations of power and demonstrated music’s imbrication in frameworks of intersecting identities such as class, gender, ethnicity, rather than belonging to monolithic communities.

Identity Discourse in Popular Music Studies

When the term “popular” emerged historically, it was defined as a normative or negative term that meant “low”, “base”, “vulgar” and “of the common people”, and

then shifted to represent “widespread” in the late nineteenth century (Kassabian, 1999: 113-4; Krüger Bridge, 2009: 155). Frith (2001: 94-5) referred to popular music as a slippery concept, which comes from folk music, is distinguished from classical or art music, but may include all contemporary popular forms of music, such as rock, country, reggae and rap. In popular music studies, Rojek overturned Frith’s suggestion on the definition of the popular but expanded the implication of “pop” to include more things “popular”, even everything “popular”, due to the “tectonic shift” of production, distribution and consumption (Bickford, 2012: 374). Indeed, music, especially popular music, possesses a social function that is “a catalyst for social change, a means for political communication and an expression democratic citizenship” (Krüger Bridge, 2018: 230). For instance, nineteenth century British composers sought to idealize rural life, folk music, landscape painting, as well as the special moments in history, music and literature to portray the nation in sound and express national identity in music (Revill, 2000: 598). In the early twentieth century, popular music was considered as “commercial music that is disseminated through the mass media and is urban in provenance, while its purpose is for secular entertainment” (Krüger Bridge, 2009: 155), but it “can also have a more politicised meaning, in uses where it verges close in sense to populist” (Kassabian, 1999: 116). After popular music as a legitimate object of academic research in the 1960s and 1970s, the focus of music disciplines in the 1980s also subsequently changed, turning to “how music is socially shaped, and how its production, distribution and consumption is mediated by the contexts in which these activities take place” (Krüger Bridge, 2022: 5).

Furthermore, there was also a focus in music studies on how music shapes or expresses group identities like national, cultural and ethnic identities. Frith (1996: 108-9) claims that popular music studies, which is closely related to music sociology, has been limited by the idea that music must “reflect” or “represent” people to some extent. Music and identity are closely intertwined, as the following quote shows: “Music is a primary means for people in cultures around the world to construct, express and transmit their identity, along with their cultural and social values, belief systems, norms and

behaviours” (Krüger Bridge, 2022: 4). In the sociology of music, anthropology, ethnomusicology and popular music studies, the role of music in the formation and expression of identity can be understood and applied at the level of constructing individual self-identity and social group identity. According to Cohen (1993: 135), individuals’ musical experience, the use of music, and the meaning they construct through music are closely related to these particularities and their interconnectedness. This highlights the important role of music in people’s lives, especially in culture and society, and research that inspects musical practice and discourse in cross-environments and networks to explore the meaning obtained through music in a specific environment. Music can not only reflect the belief of social groups but also serve as the aesthetic practice of social groups. Music itself is “an understanding of both group relations and individuality”, which means that making music is also a way of living them (Frith, 1996: 111). Ethnomusicologists, music sociologists and popular music studies regard social practice as an integral part of “the music itself” (Leach, 2009: 189-90).

Additionally, identity and music has become an important element in most ethnomusicology studies published in English (Rice, 2007: 19). In ethnomusicology which emphasises “some kind of relationship between the concepts of music and of culture as central” (Nettl, 2015: 231), music is generally considered as a “critical identity marker” that identifies “who you are (and who you are not), the people with whom you identify, and where you come from”, but the meaning of music itself might shift due to the context change (Stobart, 2009: 109-15). In music studies, more generally, music has often been regarded as the medium of communication practices rather than the mode of communication itself. It has a mediation function to configure space and identity and adjust the space of imagination and expression (Leyshon, 2004: 230; Revill, 2000: 597). The meaning of today’s popular music is reflected in the social product produced by the interaction between people, while people as social participants together create collective meanings, including musical meanings (Krüger Bridge, 2022: 4). Popular music has been researched from many different disciplinary perspectives, such as sociology, cultural studies and musicology (Leach, 2009: 188). Popular music

is an essential component of popular culture and is often seen by music scholars as “an umbrella term to cover the people’s music as a whole” (Bickford, 2012: 373; Rojek, 2001: 1), whereby the reason why it is popular is that it is “produced and/or consumed appreciatively” by the people (Leach, 2009: 189). Popular music is often understood as an ideological concept, since popular music exists in the social world and relates to the use and value of music in society (Green, 1999: 6).

The understanding of aesthetics in popular music studies might be through “taking on both a subjective and a collective identity” to explore how the musical and aesthetic experiences were created and constructed (Frith, 1996: 108-9). In music sociology, the relationship between music and individuals, social groups and social structures is considered the main content of academic study. However, in globalised culture or classless society, the studies of musical taste and its impact on constructing social differences also played an important role in the issue of music and identity, which will be further explored in Chapter 5. William Weber (1975) and Pierre Bourdieu’s (1979) seminal works highlighted how musical preferences could serve as markers of social and cultural capital within hierarchical class systems. This stimulated further inquiries into the complex interplay between inclusion, exclusion and identification around music. Scholars examined how gender, ethnicity and nationhood intersected with class in forging taste-based affiliations and divisions. Music preference can concern issues relating to social identity and status (Ellis, 2009: 44-53; Krüger Bridge, 2022: 5), and music, or musical taste, sometimes reflects the personalities of people and connects with the way people express themselves. From this perspective, Ruud (1997: 3) claims that “listening to, performing and talking about music is not as much a reflection of identity as a way of performing our sense of ourselves, our identity”, and the constitution of this sense of identity is different. Music cannot describe, but encode the dimensions of “identities, social formations, ideologies or private value systems”, and the “feelingful rememberings” of musical experience may reflect things that happened in people’s lives in remarkable ways due to its emotional quality. (Ruud, 1997: 6). Furthermore, by questioning the “univore” model and highlighting how class is not the

sole factor defining musical preferences, US-based sociologist Timothy Dowd (2007) broadened the research lens to argue that high-status groups differentiate themselves by displaying “omnivorous” tastes distinct from mainstream or lower-class preferences. This opened new perspectives for more nuanced understanding of music’s complex roles in identity construction processes. Both models of “univorous” taste and “omnivorous” taste provided theoretical frameworks for the exploration of class identity in Mandopop.

Moreover, power and politics are vital to the meaning of music, and music often plays a central role in nation construction and political environments that construct and maintain national identity along with other national symbols, such as national art traditions, national music policies and others (Connell and Gibson, 2003: 118; Stobart, 2009: 115). In a conversation between ethnomusicologist and anthropologist Dr Ana Hofman and music sociologist Professor Rosa Reitsamer (2017: 149), Hofman considered popular music to play a significant and ambivalent role for transmitting dominant ideology, but also for expressing various interests between different social groups in the political system, particularly in the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Popular music as a cultural carrier can often be given different identities due to the influence of mainstream ideologies, and even sometimes become a functional product in some contexts. The term “Chineseness” in Chinese popular music, in this context, may also play the role of spreading mainstream ideologies and expressing the voices of different social groups. It is not a special case; similar research has also occurred in discussions of popular music and identity in other countries. Between 1982 to 2006, there were 17 articles related to “identity” published in *Ethnomusicology* to explore “the theme of music’s role in creating, constructing, articulating, negotiating, and reflecting social identities” in specific areas around the world, including Africa, Latin America, Europe, North America, East Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia (Rice, 2007: 36-7). In addition to the aforementioned research on European music and nationalism (Bohlman, 2009; Bohlman, 2011), Paraguayan music and identity (Colman, 2015; Krüger Bridge, 2022), Cubanidad and national identity

(Pérez-Firmat, 1997; Bodenheimer, 2015), for instance, in K-pop (South Korean popular music), music symbolised the cultural transformation of South Korea building a national brand leading to commercialism, rather than inheriting traditions of both folk culture and Confucian culture (Lie, 2012: 362). Furthermore, in Austropop (Austrian popular music) research, popular music “filters out popular music practices and innovations abroad; domestic popular culture influences the accumulation of symbolic values” to achieve national identity (Larkey, 1992: 183), and it was given a “name” connected to its nation to represent specific popular music with national characteristics.

In the light of the above discussions, this research thus adopts newer perspectives on the identity of Chinese popular music and the meaning of “Chineseness” in Chinese popular music, while exploring national identity, cultural identity and class identity in Chinese popular music as it is constructed in different contexts. The next sections will discuss how musical styles convey patriotism and express national identity during wartime periods, and how post-1949 mainland China systematically cultivated genres and strengthened music education to promote ideological messages of nationalism, diversity and socialist values as part of its efforts in constructing national identity.

National Identity in Mainland China and Chinese Music

Besides self-identity and group identity, national identity is also a significant part of identity discourse, both in existing writings and in this research. The issue of identity plays a crucial role in the establishment of a nation, and a strong national identity is crucial in gaining international recognition as a legitimate nation of sovereignty. Chinese music is shaped by, and in turn seeks to shape, conceptions of national cultural identity sanctioned by the mainland Chinese government. Therefore, in this section, I will review literature related to national identity and explore how national identity is constructed in Chinese music.

National Identity and Its Role in Mainland China

National identity, as a form of collective identity, is defined by internal cohesion and external relationship, and might be created for the interests of individuals or the particular functions of groups (Li, 2018: 48-9). According to research on the role of national and religious identity, these identities were constructed to reflect “the majority group’s norms and values” socially and historically (Bilali, Iqbal and Çelik, 2018: 74). McCrone and Bechhofer (2008, cited in McCrone and Bechhofer, 2010: 921) claimed that people ascribe national identity to others and are affected by the judgement they make on others’ claims. The term “national identity” is usually reflected in three constructs, which are the nation, state and nation-state, all involving a system of symbols evoking the national essence (Hao, 2010: 11). Nationhood is an imagined political community, as Benedict Anderson argued, defined more by shared ideas and narratives than ethnic and linguistic commonality. Rather than viewing nation formation through the lens of ethnic nationalism, Anderson’s model downplayed ethnicity in favour of political and administrative boundaries. When this concept was introduced in the discourse of “behavioural revolution in political science”, it was considered in relation to “the problem of development, integration, international relations” as well as “political culture” (Dittmer and Kim, 1993: 1). Developing national identity involves defining the characteristics that distinguish one nation from other nations, such as shared cultural traditions, history, language, religion and political ideals, thus enhancing pride and loyalty to the country.

Moreover, national identity expresses the different concerns and connections between social, political and cultural experiences (Cubitt, 1998). National cultures are often artificial constructions that selectively include or exclude certain groups, traditions and languages to forge a singular narrative. However, national borders and the composition of peoples within them are historically contingent, with much fluidity, rather than natural divisions. Diasporic populations challenge the notion of neatly bounded national cultures, as identities become hybridised through migration and globalization. National identity also exists in relation to material interests, such as economic and security interests, and history plays an indispensable role in the construction of national

identity, which means a positive national identity is more beneficial for the development of the nation (Li, 2018: 65-7). At the same time, nations also depend on continued prosperity and security to maintain credibility of their national identity narratives over time. National identity and material interests engage in a reciprocal dynamic, with each reinforcing the other in driving a nation's political trajectory and international posture. Therefore, national identity intertwines with core material interests and priorities of the nation-state system, and this interaction also applies to Chinese national identity discourses.

The concept of the Chinese nation, from ancient disputes over territory and sovereignty among various ethnic groups to the modern founding of New China as a multi-ethnic country, has always existed and played an important role in Chinese history, and has always been emphasized and instigated by governments. In the early Republic of China (known as “中华民国 Zhonghua Minguo”, which was established on 1 January 1912; later, due to revolutionary factors and political factors, this name was no longer used in mainland China since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949), the discourse of “the Chinese nation” (known as “中华民族 Zhonghua Minzu”) usually expressed the meaning of “Chinese race” or “Chinese people” and constructed the idea of “warning the Chinese people of the danger of annihilation under Western invasion at the turn of the twentieth century” (Wu, 1991: 161; Zhao, 2020: 4).

Hugely influential was Chinese philologist and philosopher Taiyan Zhang (also known as Binglin Zhang) (1907, cited by Wu, 1991: 161), who considered China as a “nation-state”, “race” and “geographic location”, and whose argument symbolised “the beginning of a modern concept of Chinese national identity”. Based on Zhang's nationalistic perspective, intellectuals and governments gradually constructed Chinese identity on these principles. Although many ethnic minorities claim that their identities differ from the sovereign nationality (Huang, Liu and Chang, 2004: 149), the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as the PRC), as a multinational country, expects its citizens to treat all ethnic groups as equals, live in friendship, respect and

help each other in social life and communication, as stipulated in PRC's constitution and ethnic policy (The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2006b). The autonomous minorities have been assigned ethnic labels and identities by the state, along with their legitimate expressions for achieving their own benefits (Gladney, 1996: 298-9). In a multinational country like China with multiple ethnic minorities, national identity plays an important but complex role, that not only seeks to cultivate a common identity to unite different ethnic groups under one large nation-state and provide stability, but also recognises the unique identities and rights of different ethnic groups to prevent separatism. Therefore, China as a nation-state of multiple ethnic identities relies on a carefully crafted and negotiated national identity that balances unity with diversity.

Historically, due to the War of Resistance Against Japan, the civil war, and a series of unequal treaties signed during the war, the past political and historical elements inevitably had a "deleterious" impact on the construction of national identity in China. For example, the limitations on China's political, judicial and administrative freedom and the inequality of the principle of extraterritoriality put the Chinese government and Chinese people in a weak position (Fung, 1987: 795-8). Chinese nationalism and national identity have experienced various stages of change since 1949 when the PRC was established. Due to domestic internal contradictions arising from the state's political, economic and cultural system, traditional Chinese culture and philosophy was criticised during the Cultural Revolution, while contradictions between the large population and low labour productivity led to changes in social and family relations. At the same time, the political agenda consolidating the nascent regime of Mao Zedong's leadership was constructed. The instability of this complex environment had a considerable and negative impact on China's political economy and culture at the time, especially in terms of culture (Li, 2009: 33-5). Much of China's "national essence", such as national symbols and traditional cultures, was attacked and destroyed from the 1950s to the 1970s, and was only restored and reconstructed after the policy of reform and opening-up in 1978 (Li, 2009: 33).

However, Chinese nationalism has its historical origin much earlier. At the end of the 19th century, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao expressed their views on China's national consciousness and national character. Since then, Chinese thinkers such as Cai Yuanpei, Lu Xun, Chen Duxiu, Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong attempted to collect and analyse the national traditions of China to establish a national consciousness and national character in line with modern socialist requirements and promote the modernization of Chinese society (Tu, 2007:154-6). Although there are differences among their claims, their discussions all have a common tacit promise, namely an abstract Chinese national character covering the entire Chinese culture, and on this basis, to realize their ideals of rejuvenating the nation and renewing the country (Tu, 2007:156). Chinese nationalism that advocates "Chineseness" flourished in the late 1980s and the 1990s with the purpose of inciting "anti-foreign and nationalistic sentiments" among the Chinese population, while protecting China's sovereignty from external interference and sabotage, and maintaining the "authoritarian control" of the Chinese nationalist government, as well as sustaining economic growth and preserving social and political stability (Chen, 2006: 30-1; Li, 2009: 36). In this context, any international conflicts and territorial disputes are described domestically as threats to China's sovereignty, while inciting nationalist sentiments. Moreover, the Chinese government launched a patriotic education campaign in 1991 aimed at Chinese people, particularly Chinese youth, to promote Chinese history, culture and traditions, while emphasizing the importance of national pride, national unity and territorial integrity (Li, 2009: 36). The CPC constructed national identity aimed at the younger generation through films and songs that celebrate historical events, emphasizing patriotism, reinforcing national symbols such as traditional culture, and promoting cultural products that express national pride and themes of progress.

Constructing National Identity in Chinese Music

Focusing on the representation and reflection of "Chineseness" in China's music after the policy of reform and opening-up in 1978, the expression of Chinese national identity

in Chinese music reflects China's economic rise and increasing global cultural influence while maintaining political control over the cultural sphere. Thus, the literature review on Chinese national identity is informed by the musical historiography of modern and contemporary China, which is closely connected with the trajectory of modern China's music. China's music has long suffered the unpleasant stereotype of racism, and it struggled with racial insults when it was performed abroad in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Saffle, 2017: 88-9). During this period, there was hardly any "authentic" Chinese music on Western stages, and although Chinese melodies were quoted in Western works, traditional Chinese music always had its own "distinctive sound" (Saffle, 2017: 107). Such distinctive Chinese sound was an expression of national identity and continued in the development of Chinese popular music.

In the period of the May Fourth Movement (1919), intellectual thought could be freely developed, and Chinese tradition revalued (Liu, 2010: 79). In the music field, the most direct and obvious reaction was to produce workers' and peasants'² revolutionary songs with proletarian revolutionary ideological content, which is a political phenomenon of revolution rather than an art phenomenon (Wang, 2009: 62). Moreover, this new cultural movement promoted the development of various new cultures and arts throughout China (Wang, 2009: 330). Besides, revolutionary folk songs and songs of the workers' and peasants' Red Army reflected the revolutionary struggle as well as people's love and praise for the revolution, leaders and the Red Army (Wang, 2009: 128). Chinese music at this stage was mostly related to the revolution, so attempting to construct Chinese identity to awaken the national identity of the Chinese people and

² The term "peasant" is a literal translation from Chinese to describe a person engaged in agricultural production. Although this term is rather derogatory, this translation was used in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China when illustrating the nature of the country, that is, "the People's Republic of China is a socialist country under the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants" (the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, 2018). Source: Official Website of The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, available at:

<http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/constitution2019/201911/1f65146fb6104dd3a2793875d19b5b29.shtml>, accessed on 17/03/2022.

stimulate the fighting spirit of the Chinese people. This is also one of the ways the government uses cultural products to incite national sentiment.

As China's music developed on the Chinese mainland, the New Music Movement since the 1930s actively engaged the masses to regard music as "a weapon in the struggle to liberate the masses and a medium to convey and reflect their lives, ideas and emotions". This new music possessed the function to explore "the truth about society as it really is" (Lyu 1936, cited by Liu, 2010: 7-8). In this way, Chinese music has been functional socially and politically since its early development, as it became a tool for Chinese people in the struggle for liberation. Based on Lyu's theory of China's new music, Ling Li (1940, cited by Liu, 2010: 7-8) identified three characteristics of new music that (1) reflects the content of "the anti-feudal revolution"; (2) practices across "the board the policy of developing and creating music for each nationality"; and (3) regards the masses as "the only true heirs and cultivator of the musical and artistic heritage". Moreover, in Ling Li's theory, new music developed based on "national musical heritage". Chinese music has become a channel to express emotions and feelings by constructing national identity among people.

China's "new" music emerged for the purpose of "raising backward Chinese music to a new musical art at a high level" and serve the revolution effectively, and it ought to inherit and develop Chinese traditional folk music. In the early twentieth century, although China's music was composed based on the tonality, harmony and forms of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western music, its melodies and rhythms followed Chinese traditions (Liu, 2010: 9-10). According to Kuttner (1964: 125-6), the scale and pitch structure of China's music has two essential characteristics that dominate: "(1) the tone system is usually based on "Pythagorean" intonation (a circle of 12 perfect fifths subdividing the octave into 12 semitones); (2) out of the total of 12 available tones only to build scales and modes". These characteristics in Chinese music do reflect its development, but its purpose is to serve the revolution, and the construction of political and national identity became the focus of the development of Chinese music.

Since the founding of New China in 1949, Western music has been further developed in China under the CPC's regime, while also reviving ancient music traditions with an emphasis on indigenous folk art and folk operas. Both Western music and Chinese traditional music were strongly encouraged and promoted in China during this period, so (Kuttner, 1964: 127) believed that "the emergence of a new Chinese musical civilization, or the development of a complex synthesis of Sino-Western music, are both among the possibilities of the future". Numerous representative musicians from music education, such as Youmei Xiao, stated that China's music should develop by learning Western music, taking its essence and combining it with Chinese culture (Wang, 2009: 335). However, the CPC rule after 1949 promoted the standardization and localization of music. The government attempted to foster a uniquely Chinese style by banning Western influence and incorporating elements of folk traditions. Revolutionary songs praising Mao Zedong and socialism became popular. Besides, when anti-civil wars and anti-Kuomintang movements, and music itself was used for mass singing for political purposes during the wartime, such as creating revolutionary songs, and for the purpose of stimulating people's motivation at work thereby increasing agricultural and industrial production and encouraging thrift, such as creating work songs (劳动号子 Laodong Haozi). Different from the music which was to inspire the Chinese people to rise and resist during the period of the anti-Japanese salvation campaign, the music created during the period of anti-civil wars and anti-Kuomintang movements was to help the Communist Party establish and grow in its power, so its artistic standard was relatively low (Liu, 2010: 287). The development of Chinese music in the early stage of the PRC was almost all in the service of the regime, so, under the guise of constructing national identity, the construction of its political identity and the utilization of its political functions has reached unprecedented heights.

After an initial period of banning Western influence, mainland China's government recognised the importance of preserving and promoting traditional Chinese folk music as part of cultural heritage and national identity, starting to attach great importance to long-established traditional music and reviving outstanding folk musicians and their

works, thereby expanding the influence of folk music towards musical workers and young students. These musicians recorded and organised folk art in ethnic minority regions through in-depth fieldwork (Wang, 2012: 211-3). At the same time, music education grew in interest, and several major cities in China, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, established conservatories of music, while other regions established art schools and music departments. There was also a rapid growth of professional music performance agencies and their performers (Wang, 2012: 220-2). Chinese music in this period had an educational function, which played a crucial role in the development and inheritance of Chinese traditional music and folk music. The emphasis on the educational function of Chinese music was conducive to the construction of national identity among the youth of the time.

During the period from 1957 to 1966, China's economy, art and culture made great progress. However, during the socialist reforms of people's political and economic lives, conflict grew between adventurism and anti-adventurism in China, or the struggle between left-leaning adventurism and right-leaning conservatism (Wang, 2012: 243). The cultural revolution from 1966, a left-leaning cultural movement, destroyed China's traditional culture to some extent. While banning Western cultures, some classical Chinese traditions were severely discouraged as remnants of feudalism. Indeed, the revolutionary way was regarded as "the most iconoclastic reformers of the early twentieth century", during which traditional art was replaced by "socialist images executed in a uniform style" (Andrews, 2010: 30). In January 1967, the Chinese Artists' Association was "smashed", and subsequently, on 23 May 1967, the Literature and Arts Groups were established by the Cultural Revolution Small Group, which led to many young artists actively engaging in political activities, such as establishing Visual Art of the Cultural Revolution, rather than dedicating themselves to art (Andrews, 2010: 34-8). During that period, national identity in Chinese music was strongly influenced by Maoist socialist ideology and propaganda. Some small-size performance teams, consisting of professional and amateur artists, called Mao Zedong Thought Performance Teams, began performing songs, dances, music and dramas worthy of the

CPC's propaganda to convey pure Mao Zedong ideology to the masses, and to meet the requirement that "art must serve the masses" and "art must serve politics" (Jian, Song and Zhou, 2009: 177). In addition, eight performing art and music compositions, including five Peking operas, two ballets and one symphony, became models for revolutionary art and literature during the cultural revolution era (Wang, 2010: 260-71), using simple language and melodies to spread Communist messages. Despite claims of "art must serve the masses" and "art must serve politics", the eight performing art and music compositions promoted by the CPC are musical and cultural forms that conform to the prevailing mainstream ideology. The iconic status of these eight pieces reflected "the dictatorial and repressive policies" imposed by the "Gang of Four" (*Siren Bang*)³, which were the main reasons for the resultant "paleness of Chinese art" (Jian, Song and Zhou, 2009: 99).

The Cultural Revolution comprehensively denied the music traditions of revolutionary cultural thought from the 1930s and all historical contributions of socialist culture and art since the founding of the new China (Wang, 2012: 268). National identity in Chinese music during that time was closely tied to loyalty to Mao's socialism. A lot of traditional music and folk music was threatened or even disappeared entirely because they represented local identity rather than national unity under party leadership and were regarded as disrupted revival efforts by the CPC governments. Chinese music was still purposed to construct its national identity but under the premise of serving politics and became an important tool in political indoctrination. In the view of Richard King and Jan Walls (2020: 20), the cultural products during Mao's era were generally "short-lived kitsch", however, the music of the Cultural Revolution era "seems to have had more staying power". Music content strictly adheres to revolutionary speech and

³ The "Gang of Four" was a political faction composed of four Communist Party officials, who were Qing Jiang, Chunqiao Zhang, Wenyuan Yao and Hongwen Wang. They came to prominence during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) and controlled the power organs of the CPC during the later stages of the Cultural Revolution. Since they were regarded as counter-revolutionary forces of the Cultural Revolution, who persecuted people and usurped state power and party leadership, they were later, in 1981, charged with a series of treasonous crimes, resulting in the Gang of Four being dismantled.

propaganda to demonstrate “correct” political ideas alongside mainstream ideology. The impact of cultural products during the Cultural Revolution continued into the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

After the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, China’s music entered the period of “bringing order out of chaos” (Wang, 2010: 276). The music education system was restored, music ideas and theoretical publishing were improved, and various musical performances, music composition and exchanges between Chinese and foreign music culture were developed (Wang, 2010: 277-8). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the policy of reform and opening-up further promoted the composition of mass and children’s music, and musical exchanges between China and the world. Under the trend of globalization, Chinese authorities began to pay attention to the significance of music-cultural communication with other countries and the construction of cultural identity within Chinese music. While the cultural identity in Chinese music was initially constructed in the early to mid-20th century and politically solidified during the Maoist era, the traditional instruments and forms at that time were promoted as patriotic expressions of Chinese culture to be distinct from Western influences. The reform and opening-up was a crucial turning point for the development of Chinese music, as the government emphasized protecting traditional culture while encouraging global exposure and style fusion. Chinese music presents a unique and modern image of China on the world stage. It not only promoted cultural and musical exchanges between China and other countries but also allowed Chinese music to have access to more diverse musical elements. The emergence of new fusion styles of pop, rock and classical provides the possibility for the exploration of modern Chinese identity to construct Chinese identity in Chinese music more comprehensively. And China's market economy at this time also provided a platform for the commercialization of Chinese music, especially Chinese popular music. During the same period, the “Northwest Wind” (西北风 Xibei Feng) style of popular music, which is representative of Chinese rock music, received wide attention, and with the development of Karaoke, more Chinese popular songs were produced during the 1990s (Wang, 2010: 291-2). The development

of Chinese music since the 1990s is one of burgeoning exploration and hybridization in representations of modern Chinese identity through popular music. The market economy commercially supported such experimental styles, facilitating their wider reach to shape public discourse on national identity. This opened possibilities for Chinese identity to be articulated in more hybrid and dynamic terms engaged with global trends. Meanwhile, while building national identity, the Chinese communist government has gradually shown its emphasis on the construction of cultural identity.

Cultural identity is an integral part of constructing modern Chinese identity in Chinese music. Chinese music has a rich cultural heritage to reflect the diverse regional traditions, historical influences, and ethnic diversity within China. Cultural identity in Chinese music is a dynamic and evolving concept that reflects the rich history, diverse regional influences, and global interactions of Chinese society. After the policy of reform and opening-up, the construction and development of Chinese identity in Chinese music and culture were significant for constructing China's socialism during the following two decades. Thus, in the following section, cultural identity and music in mainland China will be further explored through the theoretical frameworks of cultural identity, "Chineseness" and "Cultural China".

Understanding "Chineseness" in the Construction of Cultural Identity

The concept of "Chineseness" is complex and varied, and it plays an important role in the construction of the cultural identity of Chinese music. Cultural identity provides psychological and political importance for individuals and communities globally. This section will first understand cultural identity theoretically through cultural theorist Stuart Hall's perspectives, who regarded cultural identity as a complex and dynamic process that is constantly evolving rather than being fixed or predetermined (Hall, 1996). Hall's concept emphasized that cultural identity is constructed through ongoing negotiations and interactions with various social, historical and cultural factors, and it is not innate or essential but is rather formed through a combination of external influences and individual agency. Hall (1996) emphasized the processual, constructed

nature of cultural identities and their fluid relationships to history, power, representation and other cultural positions over time, which also applies to examining Chinese music's articulation within historical power dynamics. As cultural globalization blurs borders and local-global dynamics interpenetrate identities in complex ways, Hall (1996) challenged fixed and essentialist understandings of cultural identity and moved towards a more fluid view. Hall's non-essentialist, constructionist perspective provides an analytical framework for understanding the dynamic and relational nature of Chinese music's evolving cultural identity formation, applying these to an understanding of how Chinese music cultural identity is reflected in evolving representations. This understanding of cultural identity as changeable in representation and engagement with "others" and culture as fluid rather than fixed, embracing diversity and change within continuity, is useful for an understanding of the concept of "Cultural China", which also plays an important role in exploring cultural identity in Chinese music.

Connecting with the Concept of "Cultural China"

Among many studies on "Chineseness", Tu Weiming, Harvard-Yenching Professor of Chinese History and Philosophy, innovatively proposed the concept of "Cultural China", which transcends political and geographical boundaries to challenge the essentialist concept of Chinese identity based on ancestry or territory (Tu, 1991: 22). Professor Tu (1991) proposes a broad, pluralistic and philosophically grounded conception of "Chineseness" that emphasises shared cultural roots and continuities in change and recognises how "Chineseness" is negotiated and reinterpreted in different contexts. Professor Tu (1991: 2-3) believes that the question of "Chineseness" emerged "in the axial age half a millennium prior to the birth of Confucius in 551 B.C.", and this term has always played a strong and continuing role in Chinese consciousness. In Tu's concept, "Chineseness" involves both geopolitical and cultural perspectives (1991: 2), and the reason why he constructed the concept of "Cultural China" is to distinguish itself from geopolitical China, and this concept has made a great contribution to the

definition of being Chinese and “Chineseness”. Professor Tu believes that “Cultural China” can be examined from the continuous interaction between three symbolic universes:

The first consists of mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore—that is, the societies populated predominantly by cultural and ethnic Chinese. The second consists of Chinese communities throughout the world...These Chinese, estimated to number from twenty to thirty million, are often referred to by the political authorities in Beijing and Taipei as *huaqiao* (overseas Chinese)...The third symbolic universe consists of individuals, such as scholars, teachers, journalists, industrialists, traders, entrepreneurs, and writers, who try to understand China intellectually and bring their conceptions of China to their own linguistic communities. (Tu, 1991: 12-3)

Among these three symbolic universes, Professor Tu locates the second and third symbolic universes plus the Chinese groups in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore from the first symbolic universe as the periphery, and argues that while they seem powerless in reality to affect any fundamental shifts in mainland China, the “centre”, i.e., the mainland China, “no longer has the ability, insight, or legitimate authority to dictate the agenda for cultural China” (Tu, 1991: 27-8). Professor Tu’s “Cultural China” concept does illustrate what was happened with “Cultural China” in the era before 1990s, a reality in which the potential for change in the periphery was so great that it seemed inevitable that it would significantly influence the intellectual discourse of “Cultural China” in the years to come. In terms of mainland China, which is considered as the “centre”, its cultural discourse power was undermined more when emphasising the role of “geopolitical China”. In addition, Professor Tu argued that even if overseas Chinese, who symbolize the second universe, are on the edge of being Chinese, they can still play an effective role in constructing a new Chinese image that is more in line with Chinese cultural resonance; and those individuals from this third symbolic universe who are not proficient in Chinese or without Chinese ancestry can also greatly shape

intellectual discourse by contributing to the interpretation of Chinese culture. This theory makes the concept of “Cultural China” richer, generalising and broadening the concept of “Chineseness” in cultural discourse, rather than limiting it to citizenship. Indeed, as Professor Tu stated, citizenship in the Chinese national state does not guarantee a person’s “Chineseness” (Tu, 1991:28-9).

Reflecting on the idea of “Cultural China”, Professor David Der-Wei Wang from Harvard University argued that regardless of changes in the mainland regime or China’s trajectory, cultural inheritors must maintain a belief that “China” as a cultural tradition is alive, endless and continuous for the Chinese people. In addition, this “Cultural China” is not a political China, sovereign China or even historical China, but represents a belief of belonging for all Chinese and non-Chinese interested in Chinese culture (Wang, 2014: 8). Moreover, Gungwu Wang (2014: 8) observed that many scholars have begun to think about the issue of “Chineseness” according to their own lived experiences overseas, emphasising the possibility of “a” Chineseness that is local and practical. This overseas Chinese experience maintains Chinese cultural beliefs and negotiates local factors simultaneously, instead of insisting on a “Cultural China” through a grand narrative (Wang, 1991, Wang, 2014: 8). In addition, Professor Gungwu Wang believes that “Huaren” is the word closest to “Chinese people”, although it cannot fully reflect the meaning of ethnic Chinese people around the world, so “Huahua” carries cultural self-awareness for overseas Chinese, helping them to maintain their identities by defending and perpetuating Chinese culture, whether through a business network, custom, social group or religious group; maintaining Chinese culture depends on this cultural awareness (Wang, 2011: 1-3). Professor Gungwu Wang claims that the essence of “Chineseness” is a kind of extraordinary continuity that makes the characteristics of civilization more and more prominent as the generations go by (Wang, 1991: 1-2). A related concept was coined in the 1990s by Professor Leo Ou-Fan Lee, “Wandering Chineseness”, which means “Chineseness” is not endorsed or practised by a regime, society, region or belief (Wang, 2014: 8), while Professor Ling-chi Wang used the notion of “the structure of dual domination”, referring to Chinese people maintaining

their “Chineseness” in the diaspora while striking a balance between their dual Chinese/American identities (Wang, 2014: 8).

While “China” as a geopolitical concept differs from, but intertwines with, “being Chinese” and Chinese identity, i.e., identities other than national identity such as cultural identity, the “dilemma” of “double identity” exists in both Chinese communities of the post-colonial era and in the Chinese diaspora (Huang, Liu and Chang, 2004: 167; Tu, 1991: 6-7). Associate Professor of Modern Chinese Literature at Washington University Lingchei Letty Chen (2006: 6) argues that the key point of claiming “Chineseness” is: (1) what constructs “Chineseness”; (2) how to identify yourself or be recognised as “Chinese”; and (3) who constructs Chinese identity in a changing society. According to a conversation between Chen and Professor Aihwa Ong (Chen, 2006: 5-6), Professor Ong deemed that,

Claiming Chineseness is important only to those who see themselves as situated in the cultural centre, like people in China and Taiwan. To those Chinese living in Hong Kong, Singapore, or Malaysia, the matter is much less serious. To them, cultural hybridity is an integral part of their reality and identity. “Being Chinese”, or being able to claim one’s “Chineseness”, is therefore assuming for oneself a kind of cultural capital. (Chen, 2006: 5-6)

For Chinese diasporans, Chinese culture is imaginary, but for those who are experiencing Chinese culture, cultural identity is constructed from personal experiences. Chen thus agrees with Professor Ong that “being Chinese” or “claiming Chineseness” can be a way of asserting cultural capital and gaining cultural authority or power (Chen, 2006: 6). Chen (2006:4) argues that diaspora can enhance people’s historical and cultural roots with “a sense of pride and legitimacy” and enhance a sense “authenticity” that makes cultural identity more unequivocal. This sense of “authenticity” is brought about by cultural heritage, tradition, country, nationality and lineage. As Chen states, the most important thing about a person’s cultural identity is relating it to cultural experience. Therefore, Chen’s cultural identity resembles personal identity rather than

a collective identity due to her Chinese, Taiwanese and American cultural experiences (Chen, 2006: 4). Chen's arguments stem from her experiences of multiple cultures and societies: the imprint of Chinese culture and the experience of growing up in Taiwan shape her imagined and spiritual cultural identity, while daily life in the American Chinese community gave her real and present cultural identity. Thus, the unique experiences of overseas Chinese and Chinese diasporans lends "authenticity" to their formation of cultural identities within the sociocultural and historical contexts.

The Debate on "Cultural China"

As Professor Tu's stated, overseas Chinese, based on their identity, can also understand "Chineseness" and other discourses of China by constructing a more sympathetic resonant Chinese cultural consciousness (Tu, 1991: 20-21). Professor Tu's argument led to strong opposition and protest from some overseas Chinese scholars in the Chinese diaspora, represented by Ien Ang, Rey Chow, David Yen-ho Wu and Allen Chun. Their sharp criticism is reflected in the concept of "Cultural China" and how it impacts on the construction of Chinese cultural identity among not only Chinese citizens but also overseas Chinese more generally. "Chineseness" evokes an intense debate and subjective experience, and its construction, reflection and expression represent cultural and political significance. Although Ang (1998: 226-7) agrees the idea of "Chineseness" is shaped by different sociocultural contexts and geo-cultural spaces, she argues that "the notion of cultural China seems to be designed precisely to exalt and enlarge the global significance of Chineseness, raising its importance by imbuing it with new, modernised meanings and heightening its relevance by expanding its field of application far beyond the given of spatial China" (Ang, 1998: 232). According to Ang (1998: 240), "Chineseness" exists in the social constitution, and operates as a practice in different "political, economic, and cultural circumstances" within the context of racial belonging and biological ethnicity. For Chinese diasporans, "Chineseness" means "an externally imposed identity" through discriminatory behaviour that marginalizes the non-dominant culture to effectively intensify "a territorializing power"

and shape Chinese identity as “a curse” (Ang, 1998: 224-7). Ang also claims in her conversation between English literature and cultural studies scholar Professor Sharmani Patricia Gabriel and herself that for most overseas Chinese, “being Chinese” is referred to as a label or “a legacy of the past”, who evince a sense of separateness by “erasing as many traces of Chineseness as possible” to assimilate into local communities (Gabriel, 2011: 123-4).

Following Ang’s conceptualization of “Chineseness” (1998: 225), Rey Chow argued that this concept can no longer be understood in relation to the mythical homeland, but instead as “an open and indeterminate signifier” that is renegotiating and rearticulating its different meanings. Chow (1998: 6) continued that “in the habitual obsession with “Chineseness”, what we often encounter is a kind of cultural essentialism - in this case, Sinocentrism - that draws an imaginary boundary between China and the rest of the world”, thus regarding “Chineseness” as “an ongoing history of dispersal” rather than “a traceable origin”. Moreover, “Chineseness” has not only been examined simply as “the act of pluralizing” but also in terms of “progressivism” and “anti-essentialism” (Chow, 1998: 24). Chow (1998: 18-9) argues that, due to the conscious politicization and nationalization of historical issues in modern China, a kind of “coerced mimeticism” and “collective linguistic/stylistic mandate” for the purpose of political cohesion began to emerge in Chinese literature to stylize and standardize Chinese writing, such as attempts to modernize fiction and poetry in Chinese literature in the 1970s and 1980s, by reflectively describing national reality. Since the 1980s, the increasing variance between Chinese literary studies and reality led to a situation whereby Chinese scholars turned their attention to non-literary and non-China-related publications, including “a considerable range of discourses that are not Chinese by tradition, language or discipline”, and allowed the influx of foreign elements, which influenced the study of Chinese literature and Chinese cultural studies (Chow, 1998: 22-3). Moreover, the notion of “Chineseness” was coined in the early 1990s for the constitution of Chinese cultural and historical identity due to the impact of Western global domination and its pervasive hegemonic culture (Chow, 1998: 4; Han, 2017: 59). Chinese authorities have

adopted control over cultural discourse to emphasise and protect Chinese identity. This led to discussions on the disciplinary boundary between Chinese and non-Chinese, which Chow (1998: 23) explained via the concept of “Chineseness” in the context of Chinese literary studies. In addition, the concept of “Chineseness” has been deconstructed and criticised, either explicitly or implicitly, and has increasingly become seen as a kind of decomposition, significance and non-arbitrariness (Chow, 1998: 24).

In David Yen-ho Wu’s view, “Chineseness” means to create “a modern identity to cope with conditions created by China’s confrontation with the Western world”, representative of the state, nation, sovereignty, citizenship and race, and possessing Chinese cultural and ethnic characteristics (Wu, 1991: 159). There exist two ideas of belonging to a “great civilization” that reflects Chinese identity, namely to express, on the one hand, “modern patriotism or nationalism” associated with “a sense of fulfilment” and “a culturalist sentiment”, and, on the other hand, the sentiment of being a member of the Chinese nation (e.g., “a close but inadequate English translation would be ‘the Chinese race’ or ‘the Chinese people’” (Wu, 1991: 160-1)). However, Wu (1991: 161-7) believes that since ancient times, the Chinese regard themselves as the centre surrounded by “barbarians” with “low” culture, and this ethnocentrism is especially manifested in the Han nationality. As the most populous ethnic group, the Han people have absorbed various languages, customs, races and ethnic origins, yet Wu’s view suggests Chinese identity composed of Han nationality only, without “the meanings of being Chinese in the sense of ethnicity, culture, citizenship, or residence”. Wu further argues that the Chinese nation and people should represent an identity based on cultural and historical achievements, rather than the more traditional and/or modern concept of ethnicity or citizenship (1991: 161). Wu further points out that for ethnic Chinese, i.e., “those living in the frontier of China”, living “within China official policies alone can label acculturated Chinese as non-Chinese”, while the identity of overseas Chinese is inseparable from China-oriented nationalist sentiments (Wu, 1991: 177). Although “Chineseness” is related to culture and history rather than politics or geography, this argument compares the extent of “acculturation” between China’s ethnic minorities:

“those living in the frontier of China living”, as Wu stated, and overseas Chinese, and critically regard the Han to be at the “centre” of Chineseness. This ethnocentric understanding is clearly debatable.

Among these views on “Chineseness”, Allen Chun (1996) further stresses the notion of “Chineseness” to highlight the dominant role of power:

In my opinion, the notion of ‘Chineseness’ suffers less from its intrinsic ‘absence’ (as though denied by an Orientalist authority) than from the presence of too many discussions, internal as well as external. First, it is possible to show how notions of ‘Chineseness’ have changed throughout history as reflections from a sinocentric core to the evolution of the nation-state, and these notions Contrast with the way they may be conceived by different communities of Chinese as a function of their geographic removal (Hong Kong, overseas) or sociopolitical disposition (class, gender). At the level of discourse (ethnicity as culture), there is much reason to believe that these communities represent different discursive universes precisely because they are grounded in locally specific contexts of meaning and power.”
(Chun, 1996: 131-2)

Chun’s anti-essentialist stance and the commentators’ open attitudes reveal the different viewpoints and perspectives. These critical voices are worthy reflection to understand the Chinese identity of ethnic minorities and explore the “Chineseness” of overseas Chinese groups, including political aspects and boundaries between Chinese and “non-Chinese”, while considering the influence of different sociocultural backgrounds on scholars’ perspectives. A good example is literature published prior to and after the handover of Hong Kong, since the contradictions in discussions of identity during this period are particularly prominent.

The Sinophone: Understanding Chinese Language Cultures beyond the Borders

Voices critical of “Chineseness” have also sparked new geopolitical discussions on China’s literature, language, culture and identity, and regard “Chineseness” as “the hegemonic call” and “colonial impositions or arbiters of identity” (Shih, 2011: 710). To confront and criticize “the hegemony and homogeneity of Chineseness”, Professor Shu-Mei Shih (2011) discussed the concept of Sinophone, proposing the following three theories: First, differing to the modern European empires that established overseas colonies, the Qing Dynasty’s rule covered Xinjiang, Tibet, Central Asia, Southwest and other places, which resembles an inland colonial empire. Shih believes the history from the Qing Dynasty reflects a form of “continental colonialism”, which is particularly prominent since the Manchu rule of the Qing Dynasty to its Sinicization, whereby this “colonial phenomenon”, such as the issues surrounding Xinjiang and Tibet, is still unsolved until today (Shih, 2011:711-3). Second, Shih criticized “settler colonialism”, suggesting that overseas Chinese immigrants belong to a discrete ethnic group using individual or collective power and resources to squeeze the original, more vulnerable local residents to take root in the foreign land, and this “stealing” and “usurping” behaviour reflects the colonialism of a hegemonic country. An example includes Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia controlling the lifeblood of local commercial industries. Settler colonialism also uses the concept of Chinese diaspora as a linguistic framework to cover up current colonialism (Shih, 2011:713-4). Third, Shih used the concept of “(im)migration” to illustrate that Sinophone culture should be a place-based local construct. Sinophone thereby means rather than talking about leaving home and returning to one’s roots, it is more conducive to think of seeking the possibility of starting again and settling in the place one has moved to. Shih claims that Chinese integration into the new culture means Sinophone identity becoming place-based, e.g., “Sinophone American culture is American culture”, whereby “Sinitic languages spoken in the United States are American languages” (Shih, 2011:714-5). According to this point of view, Chinese culture and language may disappear completely in the diaspora. Shih’s argument is based in positioning China as an empire and regarding overseas Chinese, who agree with the signifier of “Chinese” or literary writers or critics on “Chinese diaspora”, as the objects of the “Chineseness” of “imperial China” and the

result of “re-Sinicization”. The premise of this argument is not comprehensive and does not consider the epigenetic nature of China’s history and structure within the modern nation state system. It is therefore questionable whether Shih’s viewpoint is “against diaspora” and the “place-making” of her host country, or about “re-diaspora” to construct Sinophone American culture within that “place”.

By contrast, Professor Jing Tsu from the University of Yale proposed a different analysis of Sinophone, pointing out Chinese-speaking societies inside and outside China, although the political systems are different and cultural differences have become increasingly obvious, and exploring the possibility of forming a linguistic community. “Sinophone writing does not appear to belong to a particular space or national language. Its individuation depends on the intersection between location and language in constructing a sense of nativity that can be as powerful as it is dividing” (Tsu, 2010:17). Tsu does not regard the Chinese language/script as a bargaining chip in political strategy, but as a cultural medium or even cultural capital. Due to the extremely frequent interaction between China and other countries, Professor Tsu, starting with deconstruction, proposed Sinophone governance to manage and discuss the politics of mutual relations in Sinophone culture (2010: 12). Tsu’s theory therefore regards the endless potential of a linguistic family as necessary, whether Chinese language or Mandarin in China or overseas, not simply as a carrier of political consciousness, but as a social and cultural resource of agency (Tsu, 2010:232-7).

In this sense, Wang claims that Shih’s use of the Sinophone as a strategy for political criticism is far greater than her concern for the ebb and flow of ethnic culture (Wang, 2014:11). Reflecting on Tsu’s point of view, Wang (2014:11-3) agrees that language is the greatest common means for communication in a relationship, while acknowledging that vertical and horizontal relationships convey various motives. Wang also believes (2014:13) believes that both studies need to strengthen the historical context, rather than just focusing on modern times, because the matching, restriction and circulation of language has never stopped for thousands of years, and history has already proven

successful language dispersion and divergence, negotiation and centralization, which has significance for today's Chinese language/Sinophone debate. In Wang's argument (2014:13-4), rather than being conservative to only focus on the representativeness of the regime, the concept of Sinophone, when extended beyond mainland China, needs to seriously consider the kind of Hanyu (or, if possible, non-Hanyu) that is inspired by creators and readers in different regions, dialects, ethnic groups and cultures. Wang insists that Hanyu in mainland China is part of the Sinophone linguistic family, and Hanyu itself is inclusive to the extent that accents and dialects in Southern and Northern areas alone do not suffice to explain all the complex differences. Meanwhile, standard Mandarin is the result of negotiation for communication between different regions and ethnic minorities.

In terms of defining Hanyu, Huayu, Putonghua (Mandarin), Chinese language and Sinophone linguistic family, there has been no clear boundary, and it is still in continuous debate. The Chinese character "Hua" (Simplified Chinese: 华) is complex, involving concepts of nationality, race, language, culture and even geopolitics. It is precisely because of the dominance of the Han nationality that the entire concept of Huayu (Chinese language) is simply equated with Hanyu (Sinitic language), Guoyu (Chinese national language) and even Putonghua (Mandarin) by the ruling class, although Putonghua is also the result of negotiation for communication, ignoring the significance of Chinese history and different cultures of ethnic groups. While the boundaries between Hanyu, Huayu, Putonghua and Guoyu are fluid and debatable, their definitions should be differentiated and related to their historical contexts. The question whether the accents and dialects from various ethnic groups and regions belong to Huayu is relevant here, whereby Wang's understanding of the Sinophone viewed from a more inclusive perspective provide an answer. Accordingly, the concept of Sinophone should be placed in the broader Chinese linguistic context. In turn, this understanding of Huayu impacts on understandings of Huayu popular music, which is called "Mandopop" in this thesis. This perspective will be discussed in Chapter 3.

“Chineseness” as a Cultural Expression

In the debate on “Chineseness”, there exist numerous discussions about geopolitics, nations and cultures, however Weiming’s “Cultural China” and Wang’s conception of Sinophone are closely in line with the analysis of “Chineseness” in Mandopop in this thesis, in which the geopolitical element is not the only concern, but also the deconstruction and construction of “Chineseness” by the culture and language of each ethnic group, including the influence of dialects and accents. According to research from the late 1990s, Chinese culture continues to integrate, reorganise, reshape and reinterpret itself, and “the seemingly static Chinese culture” has been constantly changing to assign new meanings and new values of being Chinese (Wu, 1998: 162). However, at that time, the Chinese did not realize the importance and influence of cultural construction and always marginalised it. Chinese people, including those in non-Chinese communities, have subsequently begun to participate in the protection of Chinese civilization and the reconstruction of Chinese identity (Wu, 1998: 162-3). Therefore, claiming “Chineseness” is a reflection to assert “cultural capital” and “cultural authority” (Chen, 2006: 6).

After experiencing the reconstruction of cultural identity since the late 1970s, the Chinese government has paid unprecedented attention to the status of Chinese culture, and cultural identity is not limited to Chinese people within mainland China but exists even broader. Chinese culture, which symbolizes history, contributes to the formation of a unique Chinese identity, and the rise of Chinese cultural awareness plays a prominent role in defining “Chineseness” that is arousing people’s national pride through culture and civilization (Tu, 1991: 147), which theoretically helps to understand cultural identity in Mandopop and the concept of “Chineseness” in Mandopop in this research. Chinese culture is not created by any government or any party but jointly created by the people of different ethnic groups during its long history. It, to a certain extent, represents national consensus and contains the characteristic culture of ethnic groups. The Chinese authority attempts to use cultural and national

consensus as the spiritual bond to unite the Chinese nation, thus enhancing cultural identity and cultivating Chinese cultural awareness. It is also a way to solidify the construction of national identity from a governmental perspective.

Mandopop, as a form of cultural expression, although having been affected by geopolitics and national policies and even been suspected of being a political tool, still has the commercial attributes of popular music and acts as a carrier for the cultural connotation of music itself. This sense of Chinese cultural awareness is passed on to younger generations through the additional cultural attributes in Mandopop. However, it is worth noting that the embodiment of “Chineseness” in Mandopop is not a sort of “cultural hegemony”, but a manifestation of various Chinese identities, including cultural identity. It is not imposed on individuals but constructed among the audiences who recognise Chinese identity and connect with it to a certain extent, to echo the symbolic universes of “Cultural China” in Tu’s theory. The cultural expression of “Chineseness” in Mandopop is inclusive, fluid and adaptable to different environments over time, with cultural traditions originating from, but not limited to, history.

In this research it is recognised that, in addition to the impact of the Western theories, China’s party rhetoric has inevitably had an influence on the phenomena under analysis. At the same time, Mandopop’s development, especially within mainland China, is inevitably affected and limited by policies and market rules because of the requirements of commercialization. However, the restrictions given by the makers of market rules - in China, they are those in power - became a kind of “guidance” for its development, and even the basic rule for Mandopop to survive. Therefore, it is unrealistic to talk about Chinese identity in Mandopop without considering China’s party rhetoric and political perspective. From China’s party rhetoric, the discourse of Chinese culture plays an important role in the constitution of the Chinese ethnic label, at least within mainland China, and radiate to a wider Chinese community. This influence appears in the construction of cultural identity in Mandopop, which is often closely related to national identity.

Therefore, in the next section, the focus will be on how official discourse impacts the construction of Chinese identity in popular music, exploring how popular genres represent and negotiate cultural identities with a focus on how government policies influence this process. Particular attention will be paid to the political goals and social functions of officially supported Chinese musical forms in different eras of conflict and regime change in forging a strong sense of shared Chinese identity and culture. When discussing the political propaganda called “The Chinese Dream” proposed by the Chinese government and the CPC, the aim is to indicate how Chinese leaders and policy elites attempt to exert political influence on the discourse of Chinese culture and the construction of China’s national identity. However, while there is a danger to valorise Chinese party rhetoric, especially “The Chinese Dream”, in this research due to the researcher’s own insider’s position, it must be emphasised that in the fieldwork interviews and analysis, this study’s views on “The Chinese Dream” and “Four Matters of Confidence” are neutral and do not valorise any political stance. The discussions show, on the one hand, the Chinese government’s idealised blueprint that gives traditional culture a space to be spread and inherited, and, on the other hand, a desire and ambition to construct national identity and cultural identity among people in mainland China.

Official Discourse and Chinese Identity Construction in Mandopop

In recent years, China has intensively constructed a national identity, which not only requires re-evaluating its self-identity and the identities of its “perceived rivals”, but also reflects a challenge to its own identity formation (Li, 2018: 48). After the global financial crisis in 2009, China gradually emerged as a powerful country and its national identity was consequently changed due to the influences of both domestic politics and external factors. The forces that shaped the changes in Chinese national identity come from China’s rapid economic rise and Chinese leaders’ changing assessment of the international environment, as well as Western countries’ increasing intolerance of a Chinese identity based on a greater global ambition and a more assertive foreign policy

(Li, 2018: 63-5). Politically, the most significant factor in shaping the construction of China's national identity was the realization of the status of great power and the "rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" (Li, 2018: 55). From an economic perspective, the Chinese government created a kind of "socialist capitalism in the context of global capitalism" to achieve a market economy with Chinese characteristics (Chen, 2006: 31). Whether viewed from a cultural, economic or political perspective, the construction of Chinese identity became one of the ways to consolidate and strengthen power for the Chinese government and the CPC.

The CPC Cultural Propaganda in "The Chinese Dream"

The General Secretary of the CPC, President Xi Jinping first proposed his guiding ideology of "The Chinese Dream" on 29 November 2012 and stated that "to realize the great renewal of the Chinese nation is the greatest dream for the Chinese nation in modern history" (Wang, 2013: 1-2; Ferdinand, 2016: 942-3). President Xi Jinping emphasised that Chinese people must make persistent efforts, press ahead with indomitable will, continue to push forward the "great cause" of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and strive to achieve "The Chinese Dream" of the "great rejuvenation" of the Chinese nation (Wang, 2013: 1). This guiding ideology was not only political propaganda, but also a reflection of how Chinese identity is nowadays constructed officially. The purpose of "The Chinese Dream", to some extent, is to emphasise Chinese people's sense of identity and awaken national consciousness. Undoubtedly, the concept of "The Chinese Dream" became a highly discussed goal since the 18th National Congress of the CPC, and Xi emphasized this theme in most of his public speeches (Wang, 2013: 1-2). It is also evidence of the aim to construct China's national identity that reflects its power aspirations.

President Xi further pointed out that the realization of "The Chinese Dream" relies on the establishment of "Four Matters of Confidence": "confidence in its path, confidence

in its theory, confidence in its system, and confidence in its culture”⁴ (China.org.cn, 2018), thus pushing forward the “great cause” of Chinese socialism. Thus, “The Chinese Dream” and the “Four Matters of Confidence” are essentially the same with a common goal and subject, while “the confidence in its path” provides development direction for the PRC, “the confidence in its theory” provides action guidance, “the confidence in its system” provides fundamental political guarantee and “the confidence in its culture” provides motivity of spiritual strength (Zhou, 2017: 30-1; Zhu and Zhang, 2017: 316). According to Ferdinand (2016: 942-5), “The Chinese Dream” is the dream of a successful modern China, rather than the dream of success for individual Chinese. But since “The Chinese Dream” is in line with the CPC’s requirement of catering to the material expectations and ideal aspirations of the people, President Xi began to promote it as his ideological goal. Although Ferdinand (2016: 942-5) critically comments on the political function of “The Chinese Dream” and the aspirations and hopes of the people, he argued that the idea of “The Chinese Dream” had indeed acquired a life of its own, not only in relation to the awakening of Chinese national consciousness but also due to having spread into several aspects, such as culture.

Among the “Four Matters of Confidence”, “confidence in its culture” was President Xi’s new guiding ideology based on Hu Jintao’s “Three Matters of Confidence” theory, which shows that official discourse attaches great importance to culture construction and urgent move towards cultural identity construction. On 30 December 2016, CPC General Secretary Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech on “confidence in its culture” during the opening ceremony of the 10th Congress of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and the 9th Congress of the Chinese Writers Association. He pointed out that to create outstanding works with vivid national characteristics and unique personal style, one must have a profound understanding of Chinese culture and a high

⁴ The specific translation and meanings of “Four Matters of Confidence” originate from China International Publishing Group, China Academy of Translation and Translators Association of China. The translation of specific terms may lose meaning in English, but it reflects their use and recognition by Chinese authorities. Source available at: http://www.china.org.cn/english/china_key_words/2018-10/29/content_68862614.htm.

level of confidence in its culture, while Chinese culture and Chinese spirit are the source of “confidence in its culture” (Hu, 2017: 20). In the context of the new era, “confidence in its culture” became a major issue related to the rise and fall of the nation, cultural security and the independence of the national spirit (Fan, 2018: 40). The idea of “confidence in its culture” therefore highlights the cultural foundation, essence and ideal of Chinese socialism. It highlights the cultural foundation, essence and ideal of Chinese socialism, since the CPC has a clearer and more open cultural construction in developing socialism with Chinese characteristics (Feng, 2016: 16). Official discourse promotes optimism that, with robust cultural policy guidance, Chinese culture can confidently spread its unique influence globally, and project an image of a proud and culturally powerful China reinvigorating itself while standing firm against perceived foreign threats.

As the basis of the other three types of confidence, “confidence in its culture” reflects China’s determination to become a cultural power (Zhou, 2015: 107). In its historical trajectory, the Chinese nation has relied on its “confidence in its culture” and cultural self-consciousness to maintain the nation’s goals, such as during the New Culture Movement in 1915 and the May Fourth Movement in 1919. Thus, Pengzhi Feng (2016: 16), the Director of the Philosophy Department of the Central Party School, in his article on the meaning of cultural confidence, illustrated that the “culture” that makes Chinese people “confident” includes not only Chinese traditional culture, but also revolutionary and socialist culture nurtured throughout the recent past, which, combined, emphasise the spiritual pursuit of the Chinese nation and represent the unique symbolism of the Chinese nation. Moreover, the Chinese people have produced many cultural products during different historical stages (Luo, 2017: 10), which is also a crucial reflection of “confidence in its culture”. Besides, “confidence in its culture” also indicates that individuals strongly identify with their culture, which shows the functionality of culture in people’s daily life (Pan, Xu, Lu and Gursoy, 2021: 156-7). This allows Chinese culture to be portrayed as flourishing and ever evolving, adapting to the modern world while drawing on its roots through reform and opening up. And,

while open to external ideas, the discourse of constructing Chinese cultural identity stresses the need to resist supposedly “decadent” foreign influences that apparently threaten the harmonic society of socialism. Meanwhile, cultural products are subtly affected, reflected in influences on awareness, patriotic themes and strict censorship. As mentioned above, cultural products with the theme of promoting national spirit and patriotism are strongly promoted by the government and establish ideological orientation among the people that the official considers to be “harmonic”. Mandopop has also gone through the same process of Chinese identity construction in this cultural context, which is intricately connected to its historical background.

The Construction of Chinese Identity in Different Historical Stages of Mandopop

Mandopop has inevitably become a political tool and victim. The evolution of Chinese identity in Mandopop is reflected in the historical development of Mandopop. During the different stages of Mandopop’s development, Chinese identity changed, or new identities have been constructed, relevant to the historical background and social and cultural contexts. This section will explore the brief history of Mandopop to discuss the construction of Chinese identity in different historical stages. Chinese popular music developed since the 1900s for around a hundred years and is understood as “mass music” (Fu, 2003: 1). An early example of Chinese popular music, called “school song” (学堂乐歌 Xuetang Yuege), is the first “authentic” Chinese popular song ‘Drizzle’ (毛毛雨 ‘Maomao Yu’) composed by Chinese musician Jinhui Li, which drew on melodic features of Western music and Chinese lyrics, and its popularity represented the beginning of China’s “new” music and inspired early Chinese popular music (Liu, 2010: 181; You, 2008: 3-5). Most of the earliest popular music in China is based on popular songs imported from Europe and America. Mandopop, specifically, merged the Western popular music system and Chinese local musical ideas, and reflected the newly emerging Chinese identity at the time. This is a manifestation of Mandopop trying to construct Chinese identity in the embryonic stage, aiming to realize the localization of Mandopop creation by drawing on Western popular music and then develop new ways

for creative production in China's own popular music. After that, "contemporary song" (时代曲 Shidai Qu) emerged in Shanghai, representing modern and fashionable songs that were popular and likeable with the masses (You, 2008: 7). However, since music creation was incompatible with the social hardship in the country at the time, the songs were criticised by many progressive people. Chinese popular music was therefore considered to be decadent music (You, 2008: 23). In 1931, the war of resistance against Japan began to break out in northeast China (BBC News, 2017), Chinese popular music witnessed its first peak, forming a prosperous scene in Shanghai. The patriotic national sentiment during wartime informed Mandopop's expressions and representations of social identity and national identity, as well as the functions of expressing and adjusting people's moods.

From the 1930s to 1940s, Shanghai-centred popular music was still influenced by Western musical elements and a traditional Chinese style; some popular songs were recomposed and rearranged directly based on Chinese folk ditties, opera and folk-art forms, while music arrangers incorporated popular music rhythms or jazz band accompaniments (Chen, 2005: 113-4; You, 2008: 34-6), after which the official Shanghai period of Chinese popular music ended. At this stage, the application of traditional musical elements in Mandopop allowed Mandopop to construct its cultural identity through localization, while paying attention to the role and use of traditional Chinese culture in Mandopop. However, due to advanced music recording technology and equipment brought by Western popular music, the creation and production of Mandopop was dependent on these Western products, thus impacting the Chinese identity construction in Mandopop. During the subsequent period after the establishment of the PRC in 1949, due to the influence of China's civil war, the artistic centre of Chinese popular music transferred from Shanghai to Hong Kong, which began the Hong Kong-era (You, 2007: 425-6). During the 1960s, "contemporary song" absorbed the popular song traditions of the Shanghai-era and Chinese opera elements (Moskowitz, 2010: 1; You, 2008: 92-3). However, while the Hong Kong government established borders between Hong Kong and mainland China, Hong Kong gradually

decreased the influence of mainland culture and instead absorbed Western culture. Under the impact of Western rock music, Taiwanese popular music and Cantonese popular music (Cantopop), popular music sung in Mandarin (Mandopop) in Hong Kong gradually lost its mainstream status in mainland China, from whose perspective its creative power was gradually depleted (You, 2007: 427-8). As a British colony at that time, Hong Kong was far more influenced by Western culture than Chinese culture, and due to the use of dialects, Cantonese songs were naturally more favoured by the audiences than Mandopop. Therefore, the cultural identity of Chinese popular music during this period was hybrid and complex, while the development of Mandopop was almost stagnant.

In the 1970s, the Mandopop industry spread to and developed in Taiwan (Moskowitz, 2010: 1), with the rise of Taiwanese popular music becoming a part of Mandopop during the mid-1970s (You, 2008: 127). To encourage the youth to compose and sing popular songs that belonged to them, the Folk Song Movement emerged in Taiwan to rouse the national and local identity of the Taiwanese youth (You, 2008: 137). The Folk Song Movement in Taiwan set off the trend of composing folk songs with poetry, which expressed the literary background of the songs, and even turned Mandopop into a powerful expression of intellectuals, laying the foundation for Mandopop's cultural identity construction. Since the late 1970s, Gang-Tai pop, the popular music from Hong Kong and Taiwan, developed rapidly and spread back to mainland China as it coincided with the beginning of the policy of reform and opening-up, which represented a revival of Mandopop in mainland China (Fu, 2003: 10-1). During that period, Mandopop became "a musically rebellious, more Western-influenced genre containing lyrics critical of the status quo", which was regarded as "newer value" Chinese popular music (Friedlander, 1991: 67). According to Fung (2013: 80), to nourish the music industry, China's government "legitimised this pop music and allowed its emergence", although with continuing censorship. The growing presence of Mandopop began to be supported and officially recognised by Chinese authorities, even if limited, as it represented people's preferences and gradually the official attitude toward Chinese popular culture.

In 1986, the song ‘Nothing to My Name’ (一无所有 ‘Yiwu Suoyou’) was released by Jian Cui, who was a pioneering Chinese rock musician known as “The Father of Chinese Rock”. The song introduced Chinese rock music officially to society, even though the song was regarded as “an anthem to the Tiananman incident – an indication of the potency of music in this controlled territory” (Fung, 2013: 80). Since the Tiananmen incident meant for Jian Cui’s music to be politically coloured, the rise of “newer value” popular music and its public consumption was actively limited through state suppression and China’s political climate (Fu, 2003: 7; Friedlander, 1991: 79). Even so, Jian Cui made a great contribution to promote Chinese rock music. Nevertheless, Chinese rock music was not recognised widely and stayed underground due to the “the critical nature of the cultural text”, which provided the space for imported popular music from the Gang-Tai region (Jin 2008, cited by Fung, 2013: 80). In the two years that followed, the popular genre of rock, which combined the northwest folk style and Western rock, had already gained momentum. While many rock artists did not admit to absorbing northwest folk elements in their music, many songs undeniably reflected north-western musical characteristics. In 1988, the “Northwest Wind” sub-genre emerged as the most successful sub-genre of Mandopop, which reflected a rich Chinese influence based on disco rhythm and elements from folk songs in the northwest region (You, 2008: 200-3).

It is important to mention that, throughout the 1980s until the early 1990s, the commercialization of Mandopop was influenced by Western neoliberalism. Neoliberalism means “thoroughgoing economism”, which implies “strong private property rights, free markets and trade, privatization of public services and assets, and deregulation” (Krüger Bridge, 2018: 86). In contemporary China, since the reform and opening-up, especially since the 1990s, and with the recognition of the market economy by official ideology and the deepening of market-oriented reforms, neoliberalism has a certain empirical similarity with economic reform and social transformation, so to a certain extent affected China’s economic development at that time (Luo, 2012: 60-1). It has brought unprecedented economic prosperity and civil progress to China and

greatly improved the overall living standards of the Chinese people. Neoliberalism in China has changed from the development of traditional individualism to new individualism, emphasizing the importance of people's sociality and cooperation, and paying attention to and respecting the rights, interests, rationality and values of individuals (Bai and Xu, 2015: 283). Although this individualism is not in line with China's mainstream ideology and sociocultural context, "it is influenced by neoliberalism within the context of internal Chinese politics and identity tensions" (Marshall, 2016: 33). However, neoliberalism also presents the widening gap between the rich and the poor and serious social injustice, while exploitation and inequality caused by neoliberalism are also increasing globally, not just in China (Krüger Bridge, 2018: 86). Chinese researcher Yongpei Chen (2017: 10) from the School of Marxism at Peking University believes that China does not embrace neoliberalism that much because neoliberalism criticizes Marxism, socialism and communism, which is embraced by the Chinese government and CPC, so the individual freedom it preaches is demagogic and inflammatory to the Chinese people, thus weakening the consensus on core socialist values. Even so, neoliberalism has impacted on Chinese culture and the strong commodification of cultural products, driven by China's market-oriented economy, and has indeed played an important role in the commercialization of Mandopop as well. While neoliberalism allows Mandopop creators to achieve individualism through music, the high degree of commercialization in Mandopop under neoliberalism also allows it to absorb musical elements from different countries and regions to enrich Mandopop's content, thereby impacting on its cultural identity.

From the influences of Hong Kong and Taiwanese songs to the absorption of European and American music, Chinese popular music has evolved over the decades, and in the mid-1990s, there emerged a different style of music marked by individualised singing styles, in which folk songs, ballads and rock had a huge impact, while the genres of hip-hop, reggae and jazz were also developed on a small scale (Fu, 2003: 55; You, 2008: 212). At that time, due to political and economic reasons, people were not free to encounter new forms of Western popular music in China's domestic market. The illegal

introduction of a “CD with a cut” (打口 *Dakou*) satisfied the demand of Chinese youth and musicians and brought inspiration to Chinese bands and audiences, which also promoted the establishment of many new independent recording companies in Beijing (de Kloet, 2010: 16). During this time, Mandopop had a strong national identity in mainland China due to its localization of popular music, reflecting the blending of Chinese local popular music due to the popularity of Hong Kong and Taiwanese popular music and Western popular music. Since the late 1990s, media platforms have gradually expanded to provide a wider promotional channel for music, such as the creation of Mandopop charts and radio station playlists (Fu, 2003: 110; Fung, 2013: 80).

In the 21st century, with the arrival of the digital information age, online media have played an important role in the promotion of music, and online music has become hugely popular (You, 2008: 216). Since the 2000s, Mandopop has become entertainment-oriented, and after the success of the talent show *Super Girl*, an endless stream of various talent shows has emerged, which also accelerated the popularization of Mandopop (You, 2008: 217). Besides embodying the values and cultural forms of Western popular music, the talent show, along with a “new wave” of Chinese popular music, reflects “a strong implication for the state’s acceptance of cultural globalisation” (Fung, 2013: 81). In 2000, a song called ‘Lady’ (娘子 *Niangzi*) was released on Taiwanese popular singer Jay Chou’s album, and subsequently, a new sub-genre called “China Wind” (中国风 *Zhongguo Feng*) emerged in the Mandopop industry. This song established Jay Chou as the “Father of China Wind” (Cao 2006, cited by Chow and de Kloet, 2010: 60). As for the definition of “China Wind”,

it can be defined musically by its juxtaposition of classical Chinese melody and/or instruments with trendy global pop styles, particularly R’n’B and hip-hop. It can also be defined lyrically by its mobilization of “traditional” Chinese cultural elements such as legends, classics and language, implicitly or explicitly in contemporary contexts. While songs with distinct Chinese characteristics, whether

musical or lyrical, have always been part of local pop history, the China Wind catchphrase is a novel phenomenon. (Chow and de Kloet, 2010: 60)

The popularity of “China Wind” reflects self-awareness in Chinese popular music, which shows the maturity of the Chinese popular music concept. Many Chinese musicians began to value the essence of Chinese native music elements, and that through using the combination of Chinese and Western, including western musical genres, they can achieve China’s own musical path (You, 2008: 218). The emergence of “China Wind” is an unprecedented trend, and the Chinese popular music market has witnessed an incredible Chinese cultural trend (Lan 2007, cited by Chow and de Kloet, 2010: 60). The popularity of “China Wind” has indeed made Mandopop greatly developing in the 2000s as a commercialised form of ethnic music celebrating Chinese roots while appealing to the younger generation. “China Wind” has had a great impact on the construction of national and cultural identity in Mandopop, since state officials highlighted it at large patriotic events during national anniversaries projecting an image of ethnic revival. Through both the promotion and regulation of “China Wind” popular music, state authorities tightened ideological control in recent years, discouraging politically risky independent styles in favour of safe commercial releases. In the following years, state authorities have also crafted “China Wind” as a new symbol of Chinese cultural identity and soft power globally, as well as promoting cultural confidence.

With a continued open attitude, official discourse began to change its attitude towards popular music. The trajectory of Chinese popular music shows the attitude of the state authorities, who have moved away from passive acceptance and aversion to spreading popular music via positive and flexible attitudes. Mandopop has gradually absorbed Western popular music culture, transforming it into China’s own model, and strived to attract people’s hearts and public culture (Fung, 2007: 435). “China Wind” has brought Mandopop a new development in its popularity. Using traditional elements, Chinese identity is continuously emphasised in “China Wind”, which also laid the foundation

for wider expressions of Chinese culture and the emergence of diverse sub-genres in Mandopop. Meanwhile, Mandopop became functional because of its Chinese identity constructed in the context of communism and socialism, and manifested in different expressions in historical and sociocultural contexts, which will be discussed in later chapters.

Conclusion

Popular music plays a role in constructing cultural identities by reflecting and shaping ideology, values and traditions. It engages youth and can express national pride and, sometimes, dissent. Connecting the concept of “identity” with popular music, this chapter focused on how national identity has been constructed in Chinese music by reviewing the historical background. Chinese music promotes national identity by blending tradition and innovation, promoting ethnic diversity and unity, and conveying political messages. The Chinese government has strategically developed genres to build pride while regulating content for ideological control and soft power goals. In addition, based on Stuart Hall’s cultural identity theory and Tu Weiming’s concept of “Cultural China”, which rejects essentialist definitions of cultural identity, the third section viewed Chinese cultural identity as pluralistic and negotiated, drawing on shared traditions in unique local-global contexts. This allows “Chineseness” to evolve inclusively while maintaining continuity with cultural roots. With the continuous impact of official state discourses, Mandopop reflects and reconstructs Chinese cultural identity through the promotion and censorship by authorities. Strict ideological messaging combined with commercialization shapes Chinese national and cultural identity and spreads soft power abroad. While Mandopop embraces change, the government ensures that official discourses of ethnicity, nationalism and social values remain dominant. Therefore, Chinese popular music genres and their identity representations are shaped complexly by cultural, economic and political forces in mainland China, and the commercial meanings and state ideologies are constantly negotiated in how “Chineseness” is framed and positioned globally through music.

Mandopop is representative of Chinese popular culture, which historically lacked wider recognition due to political and historical contexts. The literature that connects Chinese identity and Chinese popular music are limited to date, including English-language literature on Chinese popular music, while Chinese literature is often influenced by political orientations that are of limited value for objective academic enquiry. This research presents a rare combination of the researcher's emic insider perspective and an etic outsider perspective, while conducting an objective academic analysis and obtaining first-hand resources. The themes related to Chinese identity discussed in this research stem from academic literatures and fieldwork. Thus, this research contributes to the literature on Chinese identity, with a particular view on "Chineseness" in Mandopop. The main purpose of the next chapter is to articulate the research problem and methodology, and to illustrate the research design based on fieldwork according to the research aims and objectives, including sampling, data collection, analytical methods, ethical consideration and research timeframe. Due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in December 2019, fieldwork was moved online, and some interviews and observations of music performances were cancelled. The next chapter will thus also outline how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on the research design and methods.

Chapter 2

Research Design

Popular music studies as an interdisciplinary field requires multi-channel and multi-perspectival methodologies. Moreover, the interplay between popular music and identity necessitates multiple perspectives and methods, such as analysing the text of music works of music creation, analysing historical backgrounds and social and cultural contexts of music from the perspective of cultural musicology and sociology of music, discussing class identity and music preference from the perspective of music aesthetics, and conducting fieldwork from the perspective of ethnomusicology. Although this research is not a strictly interdisciplinary study, as a research project in popular music studies, it thereby explores Chinese popular music and Chinese identity from multiple perspectives and research methods. The research focuses on Chinese identity in Mandopop since the 1980s, and ways in which the representations, characteristics, functions, meanings and values of Mandopop have been transformed in different sociocultural contexts. The research focuses on a variety of musical genres with obvious Chinese cultural qualities and in unique musical formats and styles, which provides a broader sense and inclusive definition of Mandopop. It will also connect the notion of “Chineseness” with the identity discourse in Mandopop in relation to the historical background, characteristics of different genres, soundscapes and sociocultural context in Mandopop, thus adopting interdisciplinary approaches to mapping the evolving representations of “Chineseness” through Mandopop. Following the previous Literature Review chapter that established the research context, this chapter outlines the research design underpinning the data collection and analysis, which includes the following sections: statement of the research problem, research questions and objectives, research methodology, methods of analysis, ethical considerations, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the research.

Statement of the Problem

The research focuses on Chinese identity in Mandopop after the policy of reform and opening-up in 1978 was introduced in China. The trajectory of music in China has experienced varied historical stages, thus the formation of music genres has been influenced by different social, cultural and historical contexts. With the introduction of the policy of reform and opening-up, which represented a significant turning point in mainland China in the late 1970s, there was closer cultural communication between mainland China and western countries, which led to the formation of a hybrid sense of Chinese identity. During this era, China's economy and culture developed rapidly, and Chinese popular music also developed greatly. However, to prevent the excessive influence of western culture in China, Chinese leaders insisted on protecting and carrying forward Chinese national culture and maintaining views that were in their favour (Birtles, 2018). In this context, Mandopop developed locally with Chinese characteristics, such as the most notable genre "Northwest Wind" in the late 1980s (Fung, 2013: 79) and "China Wind" in the 2000s that are distinguishable from other popular music and reflect "local pop history" as a "novel phenomenon" (Chow and de Kloet, 2011: 60). Undoubtedly, the success of "China Wind" popular music stimulated the Chinese popular music market, with it becoming one of the most important genres since the 2000s, which in turn triggered discussions about Chinese identity reflected in Chinese popular music. Since the term "Chineseness" was used in academic and social discussions to conceptualize and describe the characteristics, values, beliefs and cultural practices that are commonly associated with or form part of Chinese cultural identity, it has become widely accepted to refer collectively to both self-identified elements of Chinese culture and ascriptions by others which together shape recognition of this fluid identity. This research connects this term with Mandopop and examines what "Chineseness" reflects and expresses in Mandopop, thereby further discussing the construction and theorization of "Chineseness" in Mandopop.

"Chineseness" emerged as a concept to discuss Chinese identity in a more fluid way that acknowledges its complexity and diversification over time and space. The notion of "Chineseness" has been discussed in several research fields and is thought of as a

multidimensional construct, which carries complex social, cultural and political connotations. In the music and cultural fields of academic study, “Chineseness” is “imagined” or “constructed” in Chinese culture and Chinese music throughout its various cultural angles (Lau, 2008). It seeks to move beyond narrow, monolithic or state-sanctioned definitions of what constitutes Chinese cultural identity. “Chineseness” is a continually negotiated concept with no consensus due to complex historical, political and sociocultural dynamics both within China and its global diaspora. Exploring the notion of “Chineseness” in Mandopop is significant to identify the music genre, cultural expressions and national ideologies and understand multiple identities in Mandopop. The challenge in this research concerns the differences in understanding the music’s linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds. Popular music is a popular genre with wide appeal that is strongly and directly related to marketing and promoting, while “Chineseness” not only became a culturally significant symbol in the Mandopop market but also related to the impact of official discourse.

This research originally aimed to explore the cultural expression of “Chineseness” in Mandopop and discover the way it widely promotes this cultural symbol in Mandopop to popular music audiences in China and beyond through the perceptions of various music professionals. Through a mixed-methods approach combining in-depth interviews conducted with figures from different professional backgrounds, open-ended questionnaires among broader audiences in mainland China and beyond, music activity observations, and textual analysis of musical works, lyrics, published scholarly writings and promotional materials, the research interrogates: (1) how “Chineseness” is culturally expressed and negotiated within Mandopop’s varied genres and styles over time; and (2) perceptions of “Chineseness” and Mandopop market function from the perspective of industry professionals, including musicians, producers and academics. This multidimensional methodology aims to offer novel insights into the ongoing (re)construction and dissemination of Chinese cultural identity symbols through Mandopop to both domestic and global audiences, and explore the dynamic interplay between music, cultural expression and commercial discourses revolving around ideas

of “Chineseness” in Mandopop. However, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, offline fieldwork became greatly limited, resulting in 13 participants being interviewed, including four academics from Chinese music conservatories, two researchers, three composers, one lyricist, two Mandopop audience members (one of whom was an overseas Chinese) and one music industry worker. While the number of interviewees was limited, the participants helped to understand the perception of Mandopop by individuals from different identities (see Appendix 1). Meanwhile, this research also assisted by using the interviewees’ academic works and musical works to achieve a deeper understanding of their opinions expressed in the interviews.

Research Questions and Objectives

To explore the notion of “Chineseness” in Mandopop, there are three main research questions asked in this research: (1) How has “Chineseness” been culturally expressed within Mandopop’s varied genres?; (2) What are recurrent themes and issues around “Chineseness” addressed in Mandopop?; and (3) What is the correlation between “Chineseness”, society and the music market?

How has “Chineseness” been culturally expressed within Mandopop’s varied genres?

This research question focuses on the policy of reform and opening-up period from 1978, which was a significant turning point in mainland China. Before in 1978, the development of Mandopop in mainland China was limited by the instable and unsafe social context of wars and political factors. Mandopop was impacted by Hong Kong and Taiwan’s popular music for a long time, but after that, Mandopop newly developed to promote in mainland China with the appearance of the “Northwest Wind” genre. “Chineseness” in Mandopop has deeply impacted on the music market of mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan during different periods, and varied musical genres emerged accordingly which reflected Chinese cultural identity to some extent. This research aims to examine how “Chineseness” has been constructed and theorised in Mandopop since the 1980s, and the different roles it has played in the ongoing history

of Mandopop. In this case, the objectives below aim to comprehensively analyse cultural expressions of “Chineseness” embedded within Mandopop’s musical styles.

1. To identify the major genres that have emerged within the Mandopop scene over time, such as Contemporary Music, Revolutionary Music, “China Wind”, New Ballad, Folk-pop, and analyse the musical conventions and stylistic elements used within each genre to culturally represent or allude to Chinese cultural identity.
2. To examine the lyrical themes, imagery and messages commonly conveyed regarding Chinese traditions, values or social commentary within different genres.
3. To investigate how genres may draw from or reference specific Chinese regional cultures, such as Cantopop drawing from Cantonese traditions and the application of dialects in Mandopop.
4. To explore the diverse ways Chinese cultural elements have been creatively expressed within Mandopop’s spectrum of musical genres and how the Mandopop genre portraying cultural heritage navigates notions of “Chineseness”.
5. To understand how newer hybrid genres represent evolving senses of cosmopolitan Chinese identity impacted by globalization.

What are recurrent themes and issues around “Chineseness” addressed in Mandopop?

This research question will discuss different themes and issues of “Chineseness” in Mandopop based on fieldwork data, such as national identity, class identity and fandom culture in Mandopop. The discussions of these themes and issues will be supported by representative musical examples that fieldwork participants mentioned frequently. These musical examples will focus on the textual sound and structure of “Chineseness” in Mandopop, as well as the linguistic features, soundscape and visual characteristics. In these themes and issues of “Chineseness” in Mandopop, the objectives below

comprehensively analyse the thematic landscape around “Chineseness” within Mandopop’s lyrics, melodies, images and discussions.

1. To define the key terms of Chinese nationalism, such as nation and state, and analyse the musical and sociocultural formation associated with the nation-state.
2. To analyse how themes of nationalism, tradition, modernity, globalization are portrayed in relation to notions of “Chineseness”.
3. To discuss class identity in Mandopop and how social class and social stratification impact on the construction of “Chineseness” in Mandopop.
4. To analyse representative musical examples, including the linguistic structure, soundscape, instrumentation and music video, while identifying common themes relating to Chinese cultural identity that emerge in Mandopop lyrics, music videos, album artwork, stage performance.
5. To assess whether certain issues are more commonly addressed or avoided within officially regulated Mainland Chinese Mandopop.

What is the correlation between “Chineseness” and Mandopop music market?

The notion of “Chineseness” is evolving in representing Chinese identity, so that the perception of individuals is impacted by different sociocultural contexts, including regional and generational aspects. To survey the differences in individuals’ perceptions, this research conducted face-to-face and/or online interviews with music professionals, including composers, lyricist, researchers and music industry workers, to understand their perceptions of the role of “Chineseness” in marketing strategies and commercial performance, and conducted online open-ended questionnaires distributed widely to Mandopop fans online through forums and social media to understand interpretations of “Chineseness” in promotions and impacts on consumption from audiences’ perspectives through analysing album promotion, concert promotions, marketing materials, and other visual and linguistic representations of “Chineseness”. The

objectives below analyse the commercial role and impact of different cultural identity notions within Mandopop's market discourse:

1. To examine how the Chinese music industry has portrayed and promoted notions of "Chineseness" in marketing Mandopop acts.
2. To analyse the types of "Chinese" cultural elements and imagery commonly used in Mandopop promotions.
3. To examine industry perceptions of the role of "Chineseness" in appealing to different music audiences, providing insights for industry on audience perceptions of the importance and impact of "Chinese" cultural elements in promotion.
4. To understand how record labels used elements that strongly represented "Chineseness" to impact Mandopop sales and reach.
5. To contribute to scholarly understanding of the intersections between cultural branding and popular music commerce.

Methodology

The research underpinning this thesis is qualitative to explore the notion of "Chineseness" in Mandopop (Bryman, 2016: 385-7; Creswell, 2002: 16-9). Representing Chinese identity, or to understand the notion of "Chineseness" in Mandopop, involved to learn about the views of individuals through one-to-one qualitative interviews with 1 music industry worker, 2 music researchers, 4 academics, 3 composers, 1 lyricist and 2 audience members, and 588 anonymous contributors to an open-ended qualitative online questionnaire (among them, 534 questionnaire results were collected from Tencent and 54 questionnaire results were collected from SurveyMonkey), and to theorise about "Chineseness" in Mandopop based on participants' perspectives. The research involved fieldwork in China and online questionnaire research over 9 months and obtained detailed perspectives by participants while considering their different sociocultural contexts. This mixed methods approach combined semi-structured, in-depth interviews both face-to-face and via video call,

quantitative and qualitative data collected through open-ended online questionnaires, and textual analysis of lyrics, melodies and music videos, along with literary analysis of scholarly books, journal articles and industry reports.

Data Collection

The data collection for this research contained three means: (1) online open-ended questionnaire, (2) face-to-face and online interviews, and (3) textual analysis of audio-visual materials.

Firstly, the online questionnaire was distributed via online social media platforms and gatekeepers to recruit participants. Since the data collection was during the Covid-19 pandemic, there was no paper version of the questionnaire, and was instead distributed via two online platforms, Tencent and SurveyMonkey, while a link and a QR code were generated that participants could click or scan to complete the online questionnaire. This was a more convenient and effective way in the digital age. The questionnaire responses were then recovered and analysed online. The online questionnaires collected the data to explore participants' perspectives, such as whether they were aware of "Chineseness" in Mandopop, how they liked "Chineseness" in Mandopop, and what they thought about "Chineseness" in Mandopop. Since open formats elicit richer, less restricted responses than closed questions, the questionnaire generated rich subjective viewpoints, while online administration streamlined the collection from a large sample size, resulting in 588 valid questionnaire responses, including 534 questionnaire responses from Tencent and 54 questionnaire responses from SurveyMonkey.

Secondly, the research involved 13 semi-structured qualitative interviews, including 8 face-to-face interviews and 5 online interviews. The interviewees came from music professions, practitioners and audiences. When inviting interviewees, the research aimed to cover as many roles as possible to explore different perspectives on Mandopop and identity. All interviews were organised and confirmed by email in advance. 8 face-to-face interviews were conducted in the interviewee's office, in their home, or in a

restaurant or coffee shop designated by them near their workplace. In terms of online interviews, due to the limitation of time and space and influence of Covid-19, online interviews were accomplished via telephone and social media platform WeChat audio calls. With the permission of the interviewees, all interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and translated into English.

The third method involved textual analysis of audio-visual materials. The collection of participants' perspectives was complemented by audio-visual materials, which contained songs, notations and music videos of musical examples to analyse representative Mandopop songs, as well as a television and/or online programme related to Mandopop. 16 musical examples were analysed in this research and included in the thesis, which came from the results of the online questionnaire, plus songs or performances mentioned or exemplified by the interviewees in the one-to-one interviews, while the analysis of these examples focuses on melodies, lyrics, instrumentations, costumes, visual stage effects and music video. Therefore, the audio-visual materials were used as auxiliary illustrative material to support the analytical points of view in the thesis.

Prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, this research originally planned to conduct participant observations beginning in autumn 2019 and lasting until summer 2020 through involvement in numerous Mandopop concerts, events and activities in China, while recording, photographing and video recording the observations at the fieldwork sites. However, with the outbreak of the pandemic shortly after fieldwork commenced, only one event could be observed in person in October 2019, during which fieldnotes were taken to record reflections on activities, research sites and individuals. Most in-person music concerts and events in China were cancelled, and thus there were no further observations conducted for this research.

Online Open-Ended Qualitative Questionnaires

The strategic use of online open-ended qualitative questionnaires as a methodological instrument for empirical enquiry became the main method of data collection in this research. Online open-ended qualitative questionnaires allow to obtain detailed insights beyond the constraints of closed questioning, facilitating a nuanced exploration of participant perspectives on Mandopop and Chinese identity, along with a comprehensive understanding of participants' diverse experiences, opinions and viewpoints. Open responses provide opportunities for unanticipated themes or variables to emerge inductively from the data. Their less restrictive format respects participants' meaning-making capacities and avoids forcing responses.

Questionnaire Design

Determining research questions and objectives suitable for online open-ended qualitative questionnaires is a crucial initial step. The purpose was to understand audiences' perspectives on "Chineseness" reflected in Mandopop to explore their consumption behaviour, and to see what they perceive to be the meaning of "Chineseness" in Mandopop. The questions therefore articulated specific informational domains, establishing a cohesive framework for subsequent inquiries. In addition to align with research objectives, the question design paid attention to foster participant engagement and elicit comprehensive responses, including consideration of question order and flow in the questionnaire design. This allowed including initial screening or closed filtering questions. Based on answers to screening questions (e.g., responding Yes or No), the survey then directed participants to different subsequent pages, which contained tailored open-ended questions targeting specific response subsets. This specific design promoted efficiency by ensuring each participant only sees the follow-up questions most relevant to their initial answers and prevented fatigue from seeing unnecessary questions while enriching the collected response diversity.

Online Survey Platform

Ensuring user-friendly and accessible online questionnaire platforms also played a crucial role in this method. A critical consideration in the execution of this methodology is the selection of a robust online survey platform. SurveyMonkey was initially considered due to its reputation and full-featured functionality. However, upon closer examination, its free plan places constraints that would undermine the research design. Specifically, limiting questionnaires to less than 10 questions could compromise comprehensiveness, and a maximum of only 100 (now 40) responses is insufficient for many studies. These restrictions of the free plan would not support efficiently collecting and analysing sufficiently robust and diverse qualitative data. More importantly, due to network limitations, some well-known platforms such as SurveyMonkey and Google Forms are not allowed to be accessed in China but can only be accessed by connecting to a Virtual Private Network which is banned by the CPC government. Therefore, the main platform selected for this research is called the Tencent Questionnaire by Tencent, an Internet company with the largest number of service users in China. This platform is free to use, reducing barriers to accessing this methodology. Also, its open infrastructure allows researchers to design questionnaires flexibly without rigid pre-set question templates or limitations, thus supporting open-ended question structures efficiently. Its functions are powerful, including no limit on the maximum number of participants, free data viewing and export, and statistical charts and report generation. This allows the research to smoothly transition from the data collection and export phase to the data analysis phase.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

The online questionnaire design also effectively ensured the anonymity and confidentiality of participants in terms of ethical considerations, which required to respect participants' privacy and psychological well-being. Anonymity promotes honest and candid responses on sensitive topics that participants may not feel comfortable disclosing otherwise, and it may also reduce social desirability bias, while self-selection requires accounting for non-response bias. Since it underscored

participants' roles in fostering candid and uninhibited responses, this brought more security and comfort to the participants when they decided to participate in the questionnaire, and participants responded more realistically to their understanding of popular music and did not feel disturbed even if they were unable to answer some questions. Anonymity and confidentiality are particularly important for online surveys since Internet Protocol Addresses could potentially be used to identify participants. Online platforms sometimes inevitably need user data, but this is limited to registration information such as registered users' nicknames and regions. Also, to fully protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, participants were able to select whether they allow the platform to access their registration information or not in the access interface (see Figure), thus allowing participants to obtain informed consent and build trust, reassuring participants their data will remain private and secure.

Sampling, Launch and Promotion

The participants were selected through homogeneous and snowball sampling. Homogeneous sampling allows the targeting of specific populations with similar traits, while snowball sampling was a useful sampling strategy in this context, where initial participants are invited to refer other suitable candidates who meet the eligibility criteria to be sampled. Online distribution facilitates access to geographically dispersed samples, which expanded the potential sample pool. In addition, it is also important to consider specifically how potential participants were reached. To optimize survey dissemination and recruitment prioritised to maximize response rates, questionnaire invitations including the QR code, link and digital poster were promoted through postings on relevant professional social media groups, fan groups and direct email invitations to individuals and gatekeepers. Promotional materials emphasized the voluntary and anonymous nature of participation as well as the importance of the research topic to encourage engagement. Targeted, multi-channel recruitment supported obtaining a robust sample and diversity of perspectives within the parameter population. The number of purposeful participants was 588, and all participants were

recruited via web advertisement or social media, selecting those with similar traits in that they were all ethnic Chinese belonging to a common subgroup in the community of different regions. In obtaining valid and reliable data, sampling methods achieved a diverse and balanced sample, including recruitment target aiming for roughly equal gender proportions, a wide age range of participants (e.g., 20-59), varied perspectives and geographic diversity, while recruiting respondents from a variety of provinces to account for potential regional differences and frequency of Mandopop consumed, capturing a range from casual listeners to “die-hard” fans.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The collected data from online questionnaires produced comprehensive qualitative data and involved appropriate analysis to explore audiences’ perceptions of Mandopop music and its relationship to Chinese identity. To analyse the large corpus of textual, approaches included thematic analysis, including familiarizing with the data through close reading of all responses, generating initial thoughts from questionnaire data to systematically label key ideas, categorizing data into potential themes, and correlating these to the themes and issues emerging in the interview data. The data helped to obtain a general sense of audiences’ perspectives, so the researcher read through data several times before analysing it and developing a deeper understanding of the data. The analysis involved both inductive identifications of data-driven themes as well as selective discussion of themes and issues in relation to Chinese identity theory. The results were also used to purposively select exemplar Mandopop songs recognised by audiences as most representative of “Chineseness”. The results of the open-ended qualitative questionnaires were analysed to select the most representative “Chinese” Mandopop songs that audiences recognised. This involved a simultaneous process of selecting and analysing music examples from both questionnaire results and interview data and writing up each theme and issue from the interview data.

Reporting Findings

The questionnaire received responses from a total of 588 participants. The age distribution of the participants was as follows: 20-29 (71.77%), 30-39 (23.13%), 40-49 (4.59%), and 50-59 (0.51%), which reflects typical platform user profiles. In terms of gender, the survey had a relatively balanced representation, with 53.91% female respondents and 46.09% male respondents. The participants were geographically diverse, representing the target regions of 27 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and a few overseas Chinese communities. The findings reported in this thesis are presented thematically with detailed synthesis and interpretation of both questionnaire and interview data, alongside musical textual analysis. The emphasis lies on the delineation of discovered phenomena to understand audiences' perspectives on Mandopop's role in evolving Chinese identity frameworks. The synthesis of findings is approached with a methodical lens, utilizing participant quotes and anecdotes as illustrative examples. Participant quotations are used judiciously to illustrate themes in respondents' own words. Among the use of findings, both descriptive and analytical discussions are included to balance delineating phenomena of Chinese identity construction in Mandopop while also theorizing the deeper meaning of "Chineseness". Along with the thematic discussion of the qualitative data, exemplary Mandopop songs will be presented, which were selected based on prevalence in participant responses as perceived representations of "Chineseness". Lyrical excerpts, musical elements and screenshots of music videos help to illustrate themes of the construction of "Chineseness" in Mandopop. The analysis will consider both objective musical features as well as subjective listener interpretations.

Qualitative Interviews

In addition to the open-ended online questionnaires, in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted to obtain rich narrative data. Within interpretivist research paradigms, qualitative interviews play a pivotal role within the context of contemporary research methodologies and are particularly well-suited for exploring experiences in nuanced complexity. There is a unique capacity in conducting qualitative interviews to unearth

nanced narratives, providing an in-depth comprehension of participant experiences and perspectives. In this research, the fieldwork emphasises the capacity of the qualitative interview to capture the complexity and depth inherent in interviewees' experiences of Mandopop and its identity discourse, aligning with the epistemological underpinnings of qualitative inquiry. Alongside eliciting detailed stories and perspectives from interviewees to comprehensively capture how they understand Chinese identity in Mandopop within its sociocultural contexts, there are also unexpected themes and issues for further insight emerging in the qualitative interviews.

Interview Design

To ensure the rigor and integrity of the qualitative interview method, this research conducted interviews with an open and non-leading style to probe responses without bracketing any preconceptions or introducing own biases. The interview was semi-structured with an outline to refine question clarity and flow. The questions were open-ended to facilitate rich participant responses and to elicit narratives rather than brief answers. Open-ended follow-up questions expressed interest without judgment, allowing flexibility to follow unexpected avenues and build understanding holistically from each interviewee's perspective according to their unique experiences about Mandopop. Additionally, the semi-structured interviews employed rapport-building strategies like a casual conversation to support candid sharing. Active listening during the interviews indicated interest in their experiences and conveyed care for understanding each participant's perspectives. Interviews occurred at a time and location of the interviewee's convenience, and they could choose to go off-the-record or end early as preferred. This balance of structure and openness supported interview integrity. This interview design aimed to respect interviewees' rights while also standardising reliable data collection. Rigorous procedures ensured the qualitative interviews fulfilled their methodological role responsibly.

Sampling

Considerations of diversity and relevance to the research objectives were integral to the participant selection strategy. Purposive and theory-guided sampling was employed to select information-rich cases beneficial to exploring the research topic in depth. The sampling of interview participants in this research involved theory or concept sampling to understand “Chineseness” by selecting professional individuals occupying diverse roles and perspectives on Mandopop in different research sites during fieldwork in China (Bryman, 2016: 424; Creswell, 2002: 209). Those involved in the Mandopop industry through occupations like performing and producing were prioritised for their expertise. The offline and (later) online interviews were semi-structured with an interview guide with pre-determined open-ended questions. The interviews usually started with a basic set of topics to cover interviewees’ experiences of Mandopop, and the questions were focused on topics of interest. The questions differed based on participants’ occupations and their answers, therefore questions were adapted according to interviewee responses and allowed new ideas and issues to emerge from interviewee responses. The number of participants for interviews was 13 and the participants were self-selecting, including music industry workers and music researchers who were interested or specialists in Chinese Mandopop. It took up to 60 minutes for each interview, and the venue was selected in the participants’ workplaces in China. The perspectives of music industry workers and music researchers were helpful for this research to explore the meaning of “Chineseness” in Mandopop.

Informed Consent

Ethical imperatives were foregrounded in the fieldwork conduct, with a focus on obtaining informed consent and navigating potential ethical challenges. The ethical considerations intrinsic to qualitative interviews included participant autonomy, confidentiality and the right to information. When interviewees were invited, they received a participant information sheet detailing the study, risks, benefits, confidentiality, right to withdraw, and a consent form indicating voluntary participation and permission for audio recording. Before the interview started, there was a verbal

confirmation of understanding consent procedures to let interviewees know their rights. In addition, I provided local contact information if interviewees had further questions or wanted to address any issue. The detailed ethical considerations will be discussed in the following section to show how this research considered ethical issues before conducting fieldwork and how it was ethically approved by the LJMU Research Ethics Committee.

Transcription and Data Management

The post-interview phase involved a meticulous approach to transcription and data management, which is an important part of rigor in qualitative research. There are nuances in translating spoken narratives into written form, ensuring accuracy and preserving the richness of qualitative data. Transcription captured the nuanced, narrative nature of responses rather than being a literal translation. As the participant population was ethnic Chinese, qualitative interviews were primarily conducted in Mandarin Chinese or other Chinese dialects. Initial verbatim transcription of all interviews was therefore done in the Chinese language originally using transcription software. This provided an initial draft but included errors due to audio quality challenges. To ensure accuracy, all transcripts needed to be double-checked in detail while re-listening to the original audio recordings, and corrections were made as needed to fix any mistakes in transcription. Rather than a literal word-for-word rendering, transcription aimed to convey the full narrative flow and intent of discussions. So, in this step, transcription captured the nuanced and narrative nature of responses rather than being a literal translation. Later after transcription checking was complete, interview transcriptions were translated into English for inclusion in the thesis report. A back-translation method was also utilised to ensure translations accurately reflected the original Chinese meanings and cultural contexts. In addition, there was a regular review of transcripts during analysis allowing re-listening for nuanced contextual cues, and regular memo-writing synthesised emerging ideas during the transcription process. All transcripts and audio files were stored securely in password-protected folders.

Thematic Analysis

The qualitative data analysis focused on thematic analysis, discussing the identification and interpretation of emergent themes raised by interviewees. After transcribing face-to-face interviews data, a thorough familiarization with all interview transcripts through repeated readings was conducted to analyse semantic and latent meanings across the entire data set, then organising the data into potential themes and issues through constant comparison. Themes and issues were extracted from the most mentions by the participants, which included functions of Mandopop, Chinese nationalism and national identity in Mandopop, social stratification and class identity in Mandopop and fandom culture in the Mandopop market. During the data analysis process, themes were continuously refined through reviewing of relationships between data, and each theme was defined and labelled through detailed analysis. The transcriptions were summarised into different themes that informed the chapters. The researcher circled back and forth between data collection and analysis for the supplementary data and followed up with participants via social media during the stage of analysis and writing-up. There was also a selection of compelling data excerpts exemplifying each theme, such as direct quotes from the interviewees' points of view.

Reporting Findings

Synthesising findings was approached with methodological rigor, incorporating interviewee quotes and contextual anecdotes as illustrative evidence, highlighting the significance of a narrative that captures the essence of participant experiences while contributing to the broader research discourse. The findings of interview data was thematically presented rather than by individual interview questions, including participant quotations that clearly illustrate and substantiate the themes and weave quotes into the narrative. In addition, the findings analysed and interpreted the meanings and implications of the themes in relation to different identities reflected in Mandopop, going beyond just describing the phenomenon that occurred in Mandopop or its sociocultural context and historical background. More importantly, in addition to

the interviewees' perspectives, this research was further informed by their academic works, publications and music works, which provided valuable insights into the interviewees' thoughts, ideas and contributions, enhancing the depth and breadth of the research. The inclusion of these sources allowed for a more comprehensive exploration of interviewees' intellectual journey and creative expression. Moreover, interviews and questionnaires together provided complementary perspectives through naturalistic inquiry versus structured responses. This multipronged qualitative approach granted access to Chinese identity discourse in Mandopop.

Textual Analysis

Textual analysis was used in this research for the systematic examination and interpretation of musical texts and visual texts, including music examples, stage performances, music videos and other media materials, aiming to understand the meaning and context within texts applied in Mandopop. It allowed the researcher to explore and interpret the content, structure and language of musical texts to uncover underlying themes, ideologies and relationships reflected in Mandopop. The purpose of textual analysis in different chapters depended on the themes discussed, but some common goals included understanding the context of the explicit and implicit messages conveyed within texts, examining musical elements within music works and performances, as well as contextualizing the text within specific contexts, such as historical, cultural, social or political contexts.

Selection of Texts

Considering the relevance to the research question, the frequency of mention during fieldwork, and popularity were valid factors to consider when selecting texts for analysis. In the case of musical texts, the music examples were selected from the questionnaire and interview data which were mentioned most frequently during the fieldwork. This suggested that these sources contain important information related to the research question. The selection of texts also considered the diversity and

representativeness of the sample, including a range of perspectives, voices and genres to ensure a comprehensive analysis. This research analysed the text of representative case study examples of Mandopop. The textual analysis would include typical sampling. The number of case studies included for analysis is 16, plus a further 5 musical examples when analysing case studies, which were selected based on questionnaire responses to include the most representative and typical “Chinese” Mandopop sub-genres of “Northwest Wind”, “China Wind” and “Ancient Wind”, which questionnaire respondents had selected. These include ‘Roll Bead Curtain’, ‘Lady’, ‘East Wind Breaks’, ‘Blue and White Porcelain’, ‘Huayin Laoqiang a Shout’, ‘Liuyang River 2008’ and ‘My Motherland and I’, as well as other musical examples that appear in the discussion. Analysing these musical texts provided insights into participants’ experiences, opinions and attitudes toward music, allowing the researcher to explore the themes with a deeper understanding of musical expressions and cultural reflections from these sources. In terms of selecting visual texts, the research also considered the frequency of mentions during fieldwork, popularity and significance. Some specific stage performances and music videos of musical examples were analysed from the screen, scenery, costume, thus the researcher effectively incorporated visual analysis into the research methodology and gained valuable insights from the visual representations within this research.

Familiarization

Familiarization is a critical step in textual analysis that involves immersing the researcher in the selected texts to gain a profound understanding of their content and context. This immersion allows the researcher to develop a comprehensive knowledge of the texts, enabling them to conduct a more thorough and insightful analysis. In the case of musical and visual texts, repeated viewing and listening are essential aspects of the familiarization process. By repeatedly engaging with the texts, the researcher can grasp the nuances, patterns, and meanings that may not be immediately apparent upon a single exposure. During the familiarization process, it is also crucial to identify the

specific elements that need to be analysed. These elements may include lyrics, melodies, instrumentation, imagery, narrative structure, or any other features relevant to the research objectives, which allows the researcher to focus the analysis and extract meaningful insights from the texts. In addition, identifying the intended audience of the texts is an important aspect of familiarization. By considering the target audience, the researcher can better understand the context in which the texts were created and the messages they convey. In the context of Mandopop, considering the characteristics of this genre as a commercial product is essential for understanding its unique features and appeal. Mandopop is influenced by various factors such as market demands, cultural norms, and industry trends. By examining these characteristics, the researcher can gain a deeper appreciation of the genre's dynamics and its significance in the broader cultural landscape.

Categorization

Once the researcher was familiarised with the texts, the next step in textual analysis involved identifying and labelling key themes, concepts and patterns within the text. This step was crucial for systematically organizing and analysing the textual data. The musical texts were used in different themes and chapters, so this step involved looking for recurring ideas, topics and concepts that emerged from the texts to identify the main themes relevant to the research questions, as well as labelling them as categories. In addition, analysing the use of linguistic devices and composing devices was the main step when analysing musical and visual texts, especially in the analysis of lyrics, tonalities, instrumentations. For instance, analysing the language and rhetorical aspects of lyrics provided insights into the lyricists' intentions and the overall impact of the musical texts, while analysing the melodic texts was helpful in examining how songwriters convey their ideas and create persuasive resonance through their choice of chord, harmony and instruments. For visual texts, such as images or videos, analysing visual elements including costumes, characters, composition, design and other visual cues was useful in considering how these visual elements contribute to the overall

message, symbolism and aesthetics of music videos and stage performances, and how they enhance the intended meaning and evoke certain audiences' emotions.

Analysis and Interpretation

The application of different categories and the analysis of collected data from open-ended qualitative questionnaires involved a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative methods, such as calculating frequencies of music examples mentioned during fieldwork, provided numerical data for understanding the distribution and prevalence of specific cases within the texts. Qualitative techniques, on the other hand, focused on identifying recurring themes of Mandopop, examining contextual nuances and interpreting the underlying meanings within the texts. In the mentioned case studies, participants' perspectives and textual readings were combined to analyse the data collected from the open-ended qualitative questionnaires and semi-structured qualitative interviews. This mixed-methods approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research topic by incorporating both the numerical frequencies of music examples and the rich qualitative insights provided by the participants during their interviews. Based on the results of the open-ended qualitative questionnaires, the case studies were analysed by combining participants' perspectives and musical textual reading. The "text" of music examples included the melodies, lyrics, instrumentations, costumes, visual elements of stage performances and music videos. This broad definition allowed for a holistic analysis of the music, considering both the auditory and visual components. Thus, the qualitative research conducted in this case was informed by interpretive research, which emphasised understanding and interpreting social phenomena through subjective meanings and experiences. By analysing the case studies, the researcher aimed to comprehend the characteristics of "Chineseness" in Mandopop, exploring the cultural and musical elements that contribute to its distinctiveness. Additionally, the analysis of case studies helped in identifying and formulating subgenres within Chinese-style Mandopop, providing insights into the diverse musical expressions of "Chineseness" within the genre. Based on the analysis,

the researcher interpreted the texts, including identifying overarching themes summarised from fieldwork data, making connections to existing theories, as well as generating new insights by synthesizing the findings from the analysis and interpreting their significance in relation to the research questions.

Introducing My Interview Participants

My research engaged with people's perspectives on "Chineseness" in Mandopop, and the interview target group included music audiences, music researchers and other music-related workers. In my research, my participants' point of view was decisive for my selection of themes and issues in discussing "Chineseness" in Mandopop. Thus, in this section, I will introduce the participants in chronological order who gave me great support. Before I engaged my participants, I contacted them via e-mail to have their official permission, as well as confirming the interview date, time and duration and sending electric copies of the participant information sheet and consent form. Due to the unstructured nature of interviews, and that the content of interviews was often based on interviewees' own perceptions and experiences, I often kept an open mind about the breadth and depth of interviews. As a result, the thesis includes participants' experiences of engaging with Mandopop, which shows the distinct personality of the interviewees, who will each be introduced below.

Associate Professor Sen Wang

Associate Professor Sen Wang is from the Department of Musicology, Wuhan Conservatory of Music. He was my first interviewee, and I made an appointment to meet him in his office on 25 October 2019. Although he is now engaged in research in Musicology, he was a member of a rock band when he was young, and he still loves rock music to this day. He once initiated the establishment of the Hubei Guitar Association, founded the JustPlay Guitar Club in the conservatory and released the music album *JustPlay* in 2015. Although he appeared as an academic in the interview, I found that the experiences he shared with me were more from the point of view of a

musician who loves Chinese rock music. In his own words, he is not only a bystander, recorder or narrator of his personal experience, but also as an in-depth participant. Over the course of our interview, he told numerous stories about his past band formation, which he experienced during the 1980s when Mandopop and Cantopop developed, telling how famous singers and labels at the time became famous. When he knew that my research topic was Mandopop, he showed great appreciation and friendliness. He told me that researching popular music in China was not mainstream, and he was very envious that we could talk about popular music topics academically. It also allowed our originally scheduled one-hour interview to last almost two hours. At the end of the interview, he happily took a photo with me and gave me the book he edited as a precious gift.

Professor Shenshen Wang

Professor Shenshen Wang was the Director of the Musicology Department at Wuhan Conservatory of Music. After retirement, he was hired back by the conservatory to continue teaching. He was the assistant editor-in-chief and editorial director of Chinese Musicology. He is a very gentle man, who invited me to his house after he knew that I was going to interview him. I visited him on 30 October 2019, and in the study at his home, I saw many books related to music aesthetics, Chinese folk music and Chinese musicology. In his more than 40 years of teaching experience, he has experienced the development and transformation of Chinese music education, so he has a thorough understanding of pertinent issues in Chinese music. He believes that Chinese identity in Chinese music is not a black-and-white issue, and he expounded his views from both the teaching aspect and the research aspect. He was also the first interviewee in my fieldwork, who illustrated that the “Four Matters of Confidence” propaganda in China represents a lack of self-confidence, because he believed that if we were confident enough in our own culture, we would not repeatedly stress that we need self-confidence. He expounded sharp points in his flat tone, which showed me his academic persistence and his great wish for the development of Chinese music.

Doctor Yuan Wang

Dr Yuan Wang graduated from the University of Glasgow majoring in popular music studies. He was a student of Professor Shenshen Wang and studied music aesthetics during his Masters programme. He and his teacher frequently share similar views, and even develop his teacher's ideas, because he thought that the era of popular music he experienced was different from what his teacher went through. I also interviewed him on 30 October 2019, because after Professor Shenshen Wang introduced me to him, he became interested in my research topic, so we soon made an appointment at a coffee shop near his home to conduct this interview. From his hairstyle and dress, I detected that he is a very rock-loving person. He even took his teacher to a live concert house to watch a rock music performance. He said it was interesting to see a white-haired old man rocking to rock 'n' roll music. He believes that "Chineseness" is an unchanging concept, and "Chineseness" is difficult to define, which changed fundamentally whether how Chinese music developed, because it represents the Chinese people's view of thought, world view and universal view, and these concepts are difficult to change. However, he thought that "Chineseness" can represent both the traditional Chinese meaning and the new identity endowed under socialism with Chinese characteristics. When it came to the expression of "Chineseness" in Mandopop, he was a little disappointed, because he stated that people who study popular music in Chinese conservatories were often considered to be unprofessional. Even so, he still hoped to pass on the knowledge of popular music to the next generation. In the months after the interview, I saw him again, this time taking his students to a class on "The History, Style, and Aesthetics of Popular Music". While he was lecturing, he sang and played the guitar, as if in an open-air concert.

Associate Professor Guanyu Cao

Associate Professor Guanyu Cao is a famous female composer in mainland China, and is the Director of the Composition and Conducting Department of the School of Music at Central China Normal University. She studied composition at the Gnessin Russian

Academy of Music. Her educational background provides a wealth of material and inspiration for her music compositions. When I contacted her, she very warmly invited me to her home for an interview, so I visited her on 8 November 2019. At her home, I also met her husband, Professor Jun Xie, an expert performer on the Chinese dulcimer. During the conversation, I learned that her father also studied Chinese dulcimer, so she was familiar with the use of Chinese national musical instruments in her compositions. She composed not only popular songs but also art songs, choral works and symphonic works, so she was very skilled in the use of the Western harmony system to compose musical works with distinctive Chinese characteristics. Meanwhile, she stated that Chinese-style popular music in today's music market, including those popular songs in TV programmes promoted by well-known TV stations, deliberately express the Chinese style but does not pay attention to the cultural connotation of the music itself. Therefore, she hopes that she can write truly meaningful Chinese works, which is her mission as a composer.

Doctor Qian Wang

Doctor Qian Wang graduated from the University of Liverpool researching Chinese rock music. The contact with him was very efficient. After I sent an interview invitation, we both wanted to chat with each other about Chinese identity in Mandopop as soon as possible, but he was extremely busy at the time and we were unable to find a suitable meeting time, so we decided to conduct an online interview on 9 November 2019. Although the online interview was impacted by network delays, he patiently explained his research experience to me. During his PhD study, he interviewed Professor Andrew F. Jones, Professor Jeroen de Kloet and Doctor Nimrod Baranovitch, who all specialize in Chinese music. In the interview, he, like a kind senior, reminded me to read more literature related to Sinophone to supplement the literature on "Chineseness" discourses. He deeply felt the cultural differences between China and the West, so he kept reminding me to pay attention to those authoritative works and opinions. At the same

time, he also hoped to use his research to provide academic support for Chinese popular music.

Professor Danhong Yu

On 13 November 2019, I went to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music to visit Professor Danhong Yu. She asked me to meet at the teachers' canteen. She is engaged in music education, but at the same time, she is also a witness to Chinese popular music, since she formed a band at an early age and was a keyboard player. At the same time, she has also witnessed the development and changes in Chinese popular music, from everyone secretly buying illegal tapes and CDs because of the country's opposition to popular music to popular music becoming widely recognized and promoted today. During the interview, she showed that she is very professional and academic, and always has sharp rhetorical questions and doubts in the face of questions. But she also told me about her concern that "Chineseness" and Chinese popular music are too broad to be considered simple research topics. She also patiently gave me advice on narrowing down the research scope. After the interview, I listened to the audio recording several times, and I gradually understood her point of view during the writing process.

Professor Xin Tao

After I visited the Shanghai Conservatory of Music on 13 November 2019, I met Professor Xin Tao through Professor Danhong Yu. Due to his heavy workload, we could only conduct a telephone interview on the next day, 14 November 2019. He was one of the few supervisors, who enrolled doctoral students on the major of "popular music studies" at the Conservatory of Music in China, which is very rare in Chinese universities and music conservatories. He believed that popular music studies can be carried out in three aspects, which are the cultural aspect, the industrial aspect and the aspect of music language and style. Meanwhile, he also pointed out that each person's difference in understanding of Chinese identity stems from the difference in their ideology. The process of talking to him was very professional, as if he was taking me

into class as his student, using his experience and interesting examples to express his points of view. He also encouraged me to study the commonalities and changes in Chinese identity in different societies, looking at this issue from the dual identities of insiders and outsiders.

Mr Yuchuan Wen

Mr Yuchuan Wen is a pianist and young composer. When he came to Guangdong to teach a master class on 27 November 2019, I met with him and conducted our interview at the school where he taught. He is very good at composing and adapting works with traditional folk songs of ethnic minorities or poems from the Tang and Song Dynasties. He once used the local folk songs in the southwest region as the motive for the composition of songs and wrote widely circulated suites. He studied piano since he was a child, and he was exposed to classical music. In fact, he did not listen to popular music much, so his experience with Mandopop was limited. Most of the very popular works of his compositions combine traditional and ethnic elements, but he believes that this was unconscious, and his inspiration came from preferences. He preferred authentic music from ethnic minorities, which he thought is more rustic. When he liked a certain folk song or poem, all these elements were in his mind, so he naturally wanted to use them in his compositions.

Ms Wenyin Qiu

Ms Wenyin Qiu is a young composer working in the Guangdong Cultural Centre. She has been studying composition since she was a teenager. She loves playing Guqin and composing Guqin music. Later, she also composed popular songs, including Chinese-style music and jazz music. I visited her on 5 December 2019 and conducted an interview in her personal studio. She likes traditional Chinese culture very much, and she has a lot of ethnic musical instruments in her studio and a tea set on the table. The clothes she wore were a modern and improved version of Han clothing. During the interview, she said that many young people were wearing Han clothing now, but they

do not really understand the culture of Han clothing, and even the type of clothes and how to wear them are wrong. After she said this, she smiled and expressed her regret that Chinese traditional culture has not been well inherited. As a composer who has been fond of traditional culture since childhood, she believed that it is her responsibility to inherit Chinese composition techniques. Her supervisor taught her about the pentatonic horizontal composition technique, and she said that after her supervisor passed away, she was the only one in China who knew how to use this composition technique. This made her feel the importance of inheritance even more.

Mr Xuehuai Xiang

Mr Xuehuai Xiang is a lyricist from Hong Kong. His works were popular in Hong Kong in the 1980s, and those excellent works also spread to mainland China. On 5 December 2019, he was invited to attend the 2019 Guangzhou International Audio Electronics and Record Awards Ceremony and Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area Digital Music Industry Development Seminar. After learning that I was going to interview him, he commissioned me a media ticket and allowed me to observe this musical activity when I interviewed him at the cafe of the hotel where he was staying. He told me a lot about his experience of writing lyrics and witnessing the heyday of Cantopop. Now his focus of work has gradually shifted to mainland China, serving as a Visiting Professor in some universities and conservatories and as a tutor for music variety shows. In the interview, he said that the musical style of his compositions has gradually shifted from commercialization to thematic inspiration with the feelings of home and country. More than a month after the interview, his work 'Common Homeland' (共同家园 Gongtong Jiayuan) was performed on stage during China's biggest Spring Festival Gala as the theme song for the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area which shows strong patriotism.

Ms Oushu Lin

Ms Oushu Lin is the first interviewee I interviewed for online fieldwork after the lockdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. She is a music teacher working at an international school in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates. She has lived in Germany and Finland and the United Arab Emirates for almost 10 years. Because of her music education background, she is a very loyal fan of Mandopop and Cantopop. We made an appointment to conduct an online interview via WeChat audio call on 27 March 2020. The popular music she likes include the songs of the 1990s that she heard from her mother, and she felt that the songs of that era had obvious Chinese characteristics and artistic conception. She paid more attention to the artistic conception brought by the melody and arrangement of the songs than the lyrics. She often cited revolutionary songs and traditional art songs in our interviews, which were not only popular songs of a certain era but also her favourite popular songs. She evinced Eastern thinking but can only act according to Western rules, which made her often contradictory, but her sense of Chinese identity was still very strong, which she believed is because she was born in China and lived in China for more than ten years, so the deep-rooted influence of music and culture was indelible.

Mr Xu Cheng

I met Mr Xu Cheng in a Mandopop singer's fans club. My interview with him was also conducted online after the pandemic began, and we completed this interview via WeChat audio call on 28 March 2020. He started listening to European and American popular songs when he was in primary school, and then he listened to Mandopop in junior high school. He liked to ponder the singing styles of different singers and sing along with the music. He studied Business in Australia during his undergraduate and Masters degrees, and besides taking classes, his greatest interest was singing in online chat rooms. He is a very loyal fan of Jay Chou, a popular Taiwanese singer, however, he did not mention many Jay Chou's songs as examples during the interview, but instead explained his views from his own experience as a Mandopop fan. In his opinion, Chinese-style music was a kind of cultural output, and no matter if others do not or

cannot understand it, it will continue to develop, to integrate and express Mandopop with more musical elements. But he was also worried that in the highly commercialised Mandopop music market, the intervention of capital would reduce the quality of Chinese-style music.

Mr Zixuan Song

Mr Zixuan Song was originally an editor of a music magazine, resulting in a lot of reports related to the music industry, and later he worked in one of the largest music streaming platform companies in China. I originally planned to visit him in Beijing, but because travel was still restricted due to the pandemic, we finally decided to conduct an online interview via WeChat audio call on 20 October 2020. Due to his insights into the music platform he works on, he can easily know popular trends and evaluate digital music from a media perspective. For many issues we discussed, he gave his own views from two points of view: on the one hand, it was from his own understanding of Mandopop, and on the other hand, it came from his understanding of Mandopop as a music industry worker. Therefore, the way he thought about the problem was usually multi-dimensional. When faced with certain questions, he was more cautious, perhaps due to the nature of his work, and he thought for a long time to give answers that he thought were rigorous.

Questionnaire Participants

In addition to interviews, I designed an online questionnaire via two websites, Tencent and SurveyMonkey, and generated links and QR codes and sent posters on social media and via gatekeepers to invite more Mandopop listeners to participate in this research. I sent out the research poster and the link of the online questionnaire through social platforms, and attempted to invite more participants through gatekeepers, including music teachers working in mainland China, students studying music in Hong Kong, a doctoral student studying business in Macau, and an English teacher working in an international school in Taiwan. The scope of their invitations included the schools

where they work and study, as well as their social platforms. The open-ended questionnaire format usually took participants 30 minutes to complete, which led to some participants not having the patience to answer all the questions or filling in some meaningless answers, which made some of the questionnaire responses invalid. In general, the number of valid questionnaire responses was considerable, including more than five hundred valid questionnaire responses, which also allowed me to extract musical examples used as case studies. In total, I collected 588 valid questionnaire responses, while only a very small part of the questionnaire results was invalid, such as not completing the questionnaire or filling in the answers randomly. Most of the 588 questionnaire responses I collected were from mainland China, and the regions where the participants were located covered 21 provinces, 4 municipalities and 2 autonomous regions. Also, there were 56 questionnaire participants who came from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan.

Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Research Methods

The unexpected Covid-19 pandemic broke out at the end of 2019 and beginning of 2020, which highly coincided with the timeline of the fieldwork for this research that started in October 2019 in Wuhan. This was because my hometown is in Wuhan, and Wuhan is a city with a relatively high level and high quality of education and is home to well-known universities in China, so the first stop of my research was to start in Wuhan by sending questionnaires to colleges and universities and contacting music researchers in colleges and universities for interviews. In late December 2019, Wuhan began to report pneumonia of an unknown cause, followed by a full-scale outbreak of Covid-19. To prevent the spread of the virus, Wuhan was closed on 23 January 2020, when I transferred my fieldwork to online spaces. While the online questionnaire was not greatly affected, the offline fieldwork was the most affected part, and meant no face-to-face interviews and observations of musical events.

The original research methods included fieldwork in research sites among both Han-Chinese groups and provinces for ethnic minorities, especially autonomous regions of

ethnic minorities, as well as Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. However, under the influence of the pandemic, people's travel was restricted. The country divided cities and regions into high, medium and low risk zones according to the degree of the impact of the pandemic. If a city had affected cases, its risk level would be raised, and it would no longer be possible to travel to these places. Therefore, the offline fieldwork was almost stagnant and had to be transferred online. When interviewees were selected, they could only be contacted through online networks, so the sampling group was also limited. The limitations of online interviews impacted on the respondents and recording equipment, including inefficient replies, non-response contacts and respondents' expectations for offline meetings, so I needed to contact more interviewees for sampling.

The most affected and least controllable were the planned observations of musical events. Because Covid-19 is highly contagious, gatherings of more than 50 people were restricted and required approval from relevant departments in advance. Even if approval was obtained, it was possible that events would be postponed or cancelled. From 2020 to 2022, large-scale concerts by well-known singers and groups and well-known domestic music festivals with stable fan groups were announced to be postponed or cancelled, and the number of them was no less than a hundred. When the pandemic stabilised for a while in late 2020, live broadcasts and recordings of online music activities gradually started again. Its audience was stable and large, but operation was groping forward. The observations were therefore limited, especially the observations that addressed the research problem. The Covid-19 pandemic indeed had a huge impact on the design of the research methods, so this project had to adjust the previous research design to focus on the issue of identity and its changes in Mandopop during the pandemic era and post-pandemic era.

Research Site

The research site of this research included sites for conducting online open-ended questionnaires. The online questionnaire was distributed through various digital platforms and social media groups relevant to the population of interest. Primary sites

of recruitment and data collection included Mandopop fan forums on social media platforms such as WeChat, Weibo and Facebook, online music streaming platforms such as QQ Music and NetEase Cloud Music, and fan groups including WeChat and QQ groups for Mandopop enthusiasts in target regions. Questionnaires were administered through survey websites Tencent and SurveyMonkey, and this online format allowed access to geographically dispersed populations across research locations in a time-efficient, low-cost manner. While digital spaces lack physical immersion, they constitute meaningful sites where communities form and identity discourse occurs. In addition, location demographics mirrored the target regions of 27 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and a few overseas Chinese communities. Among 588 participants, there are 532 from mainland China and 56 from Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and overseas Chinese communities. Most participants were under 40 years of age, reflecting typical platform user profiles.

The qualitative interviews were conducted with music professionals, including composers, lyricists, researchers and music industry workers from different regions. Interviews were conducted both in-person and online via video conferencing due to pandemic restrictions. The primary in-person research sites included conference rooms or offices at music academies, coffee shops or restaurants near the interviewee's workplace, and the interviewee's home. These professional industry settings granted access to elites while also providing quiet spaces conducive to in-depth discussions. Permission was obtained from organizations to conduct interviews on-premises. These locations are mainly concentrated in different cities in mainland China such as Wuhan, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Foshan, etc. Originally fieldwork involved in-person interviews across multiple research sites including those from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Chinese communities in the UK in addition to the cities in mainland China mentioned above. This multi-sited design better supported comparative analysis by incorporating voices from the overseas Chinese diaspora alongside mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwanese perspectives. However, after 3 months global travel was halted due to the pandemic.

This prompted modifying the design to transition the remaining interviews online using video conferencing tools. Online interviews took place via platforms like Zoom, Skype and WeChat. This allowed participants in other locations such as an industry conference organiser based in Beijing and the overseas home of a loyal Mandopop audience living in Abu Dhabi of the United Arab Emirates. Virtual communication necessitated more structure but also broke down geographic barriers. Locations were private to ensure focused conversations. By combining on-site access with remote flexibility, insights from a variety of industry voices informed the examination of Mandopop cultural production across contexts. While pandemic impacts required moving later interviews online, initially expanding research sites beyond mainland China strengthened overall insight into transnational Chinese identity negotiations through music.

Timeframe

This project started in October 2018 and lasted until October 2022. During the first year, the project focused on reviewing the previous literature on the question of identity, Chinese identity, Chinese music history and Mandopop, and on completing a Literature Review and Research Design and to determine the timeframe of the fieldwork. Also, I completed an ethics application to the university and gained approval to ensure ethical conduct when it comes to people's perspectives and observations of people's activities. After that, the fieldwork started in October 2019, and the one-to-one interviews were conducted concurrently with the open-ended qualitative questionnaire open until May 2020. Following the Covid-19 outbreak in December 2019, the fieldwork moved online. Due to the restrictions on my travel, several interviews that I had set up were postponed or cancelled, and the interviewees were reluctant to accept online interviews because of the panic caused by the pandemic. Therefore, the interview schedule was delayed by 5 months and completed at the end of October 2020. During fieldwork, the transcription of audio recordings, translation and data analysis were processed at the same time. Subsequently, the research results, which were informed by the themes and issues of "Chineseness" in Mandopop, were evaluated and written up in this thesis. Meanwhile,

the music examples were also collected and textually analysed from October 2019 to October 2021, and all music examples were selected based on the interviews and the results of the questionnaires.

Ethical Considerations

This research involved people's perspectives and the observations of people's activities, i.e., human participants, so it was vital to consider if participants felt uneasy, uncomfortable or impatient during the process. Before this research began, I obtained the certificate of LJMU Research Ethics Training held by the LJMU Research Ethics Committee and then obtained ethical approval before conducting fieldwork. My ethics application contained all ethical issues that may arise during the research process and explained how to avoid these problems and protect the complete rights and interests of potential participants if discussions became sensitive, personal or political. The ethics application was officially approved by LJMU Research Ethics Committee on 12 August 2019 (UREC reference 19HSS010; see Appendix 2).

A participant information sheet and consent form were attached to the application to let participants understand their rights. The participants were informed of the purpose of this research, why they were invited, and their rights to decide whether they attended or not. If the participants agreed to participate, they were informed about the interview method, interview duration, interview location, whether they will be recorded and how the recording files will be used. Also, in online interviews in the wake of the pandemic, the electronic version of the participant information sheet and consent form were attached to the emails, and the interview time, the use of communication software - normally using WeChat audio call - and the request for the audio recording were also determined via email. Additionally, and more importantly, the participants were also clearly informed that they can suspend or withdraw from their participation at any time if there was anything during the conversation that makes them uncomfortable or involves any sensitive or private content.

In the early fieldwork, most of the interviewees I interviewed were music researchers and composers, who understood and supported me as a researcher. While my interviews were conducted with the official permission of the interviewees, during my visit, my goal was to not interfere with the interviewees' work. My identity as a researcher brought many advantages that my research was understandable to someone working with music, so I did not need a lengthy explanation of the reason why I visited them. Many times, they were happy to give their understanding of Mandopop and their experience of participating in Mandopop activities. However, one of the interviewees expressed disdain for this research problem after agreeing to be interviewed. She believed that the existence of Chinese identity in Chinese music was inevitable and denied the value of this research problem. I did not comment on this and still listened to her critical analysis of her views on this issue. Another interviewee was ambiguous on several questions, and I thought he might be trying to avoid certain questions, so I did not keep asking but continued the interview in the direction of what he wanted to talk about. During interviews, I tried to be polite and appropriate in my work to build and maintain good relationships with the people whom I encountered. I expressed verbal and written acknowledgements for their participation and brought small gifts for them when I visited, which was also in line with the tradition of reciprocity in China.

During the later online fieldwork, text communication was the main communication method. I still maintained a polite and appropriate text expression, actively answered the questions of potential interviewees, and followed up on their willingness to participate in the interview in a timely manner. However, due to the low timeliness of written communication, under the panic caused by Covid-19, the pre-communication efficiency of online interviews was quite low, and network signals often affected the efficiency of online interviews. I still tried to show my patience and paid more attention to the emotions of the interviewees as much as possible.

Meanwhile, I ensured the rights of participants by informing them of the purpose of my research. For example, at the request of interviewees, I informed interviewees about the

results of how my thesis would use their views and possible follow-up publications. Ultimately, my goal was to write the thesis in its entirety and honesty without altering the results and findings to fit my own theoretical perspective. Throughout the process, my purpose was to describe participants' perspectives comprehensively and realistically. The success of my research really depended on the willingness of the participants to share their experiences and perspectives, while being comfortable and having a healthy and good relationship with me, which is crucial for ethical ethnographic research.

Conclusion

This chapter elaborated the research problem, research aims and objectives, as well as the methodology. The sampling for the one-to-one interview, including face-to-face interviews and online interviews, involved theory or concept sampling to select potential participants, who included music industry workers, music researchers, composers, lyricists and fans, while the homogeneous sampling and snowball sampling methods were used in the open-ended online questionnaire. The research method was unfortunately adjusted in practice due to the impact of the Covid-19 when some offline interviews and music activity observations had to be transferred online or even cancelled. Besides analysing the data collected from fieldwork, this research also selected representative musical examples from participants' perspectives for textual analysis. In addition, the research successfully gained ethical approval and could ensure that participants were adequately protected during their participation. After the research methodology was determined, the most frequently mentioned themes were extracted from the participants' perspectives, and then expanded into the subsequent chapters in this thesis. The next chapter will explore the historical background and sociocultural context of Mandopop to illustrate the formation of "Chineseness" or Chinese identity, and to open the discussions on the first theme, namely the function of Mandopop.

PART II

MANDOPOP IN A CHANGING CONTEXT

Chapter 3

The Sociocultural and Historical Context of Mandopop

Music has always been embedded in the context of culture and history all over the world, although it is also commodified and commercialised within a global music market (White, 2012: 2). While music has developed within market demands around the world, it is created and produced within unique sociocultural and historical contexts. This chapter will discuss the consequences of the development of Mandopop as a commercialised and commodified genre within China's centrally managed and booming economy. It will provide definitions of genre and its construction in Mandopop, while considering the sociocultural contexts and historical background of Mandopop in China.

Chinese popular music is usually categorised by different languages and regions. It includes but is not limited to Mandopop, Cantopop and Hokkien pop, and it may also include other types of popular music from Chinese minorities. Such artificial division of Chinese popular music is usually reflected in the music streaming platforms and music award ceremonies, and using these categorical tags refines genres to show differences in musical style and music market demands. Among these genres and sub-genres of Chinese popular music, the definition of Mandopop is relatively complicated. Mandopop means "Huayu" popular music in Chinese, however, the concept of "Huayu" often goes beyond the scope of Mandarin and is wider, which also makes Mandopop's radiation range larger. Thus, Mandopop could be the one with the widest audience due to the breadth and authority of Mandarin as the official language, and, at the same time, it is also because the Huayu popular music referred to by Mandopop has a wider definition than the literal translation of Mandarin popular music. However, according to my interviewee Mr Xuehuai Xiang:

Calling Mandopop a Huayu popular music is actually overstating the scope. In fact, it should be called Putonghua popular music. China is too big, has too many people, and has numerous ethnic groups. These elements must be viewed separately. (Xuehuai Xiang, Guangzhou, 5 December 2019)

Mr Xuehuai Xiang's viewpoint emphasises the need for precision and specificity when discussing music genres and their cultural contexts. By suggesting the term "Putonghua Popular music", Xiang aims to reflect the linguistic and cultural aspects associated with the genre. His argument suggests that using a more focused terminology can better capture the nuances and distinctiveness of Mandopop within the Chinese music landscape. Indeed, the relationship between Huayu and Mandarin, and even Putonghua, reflects the complexity of language and culture in China. By acknowledging the regional variations and linguistic diversity encompassed by Huayu, while centering on Mandarin as the standardized form, Mandopop incorporates elements from different dialects and regions, creating a blend of cultural influences in its music. Before starting the research on Mandopop, the previous relationship between Huayu and Mandarin and their influence on the definition of Mandopop needs to be explored.

As mentioned in the Introduction, Huayu and Mandarin have been marked equal in the official modern Chinese dictionary, and it seems that the two terms can refer to each other. And in fact, Huayu and Mandarin are indeed often used interchangeably to refer to the same language, that is, the Standard Chinese language under the official definition. However, there are some subtle differences between the two terms. Mandarin specifically refers to the official language of China, which is based on the Beijing dialect. Historically, Mandarin was derived from the Chinese word "Guanyu" or "Guanhua", meaning the language spoken by the officials in the imperial court. According to Coblin's research on the brief history of Mandarin (Coblin, 2000: 537), the term "Mandarin" when used to refer to a language has referred to different meanings in different historical periods: firstly, it was considered the common language or standard language used by traditional Chinese officials and educated people during the

Ming and Qing dynasties, and could even extend to the earlier Yuan Dynasty; meanwhile, dialectologists and comparative linguists use “Mandarin” to refer to the entire northern or northern-like Chinese phonetic form, which is called “northern dialect” in modern Chinese; and later in modern society, it is generally taken today as the name for Modern Standard Chinese, which is in the absence of other qualifications and is now known in Chinese-speaking areas as “Guoyu”, “Putonghua” or “Huayu”. Furthermore, based on the historical development and pronunciation characteristics of Mandarin, Coblin concluded that modern standard Mandarin is by no means the actual dialect of Beijing (Hi, 1987: 27-31 and Chen, 1999: 37-41, cited by Coblin, 2000:), but a direct descendant of this late 19th-century common language. Although Coblin’s research did not tell exactly how China’s official language was unified into “Guoyu”, and how it became a common language as what we now call “Putonghua”, his definition and use of Mandarin in modern society is clear Mandarin is essentially different from dialects, and without other restrictions, it expresses the same meaning as several other terms that also represent modern standard Chinese.

This leads towards considerations of, what does this restriction refer to? Is it influenced by historical conditions, regional differences, cultural constraints, or the result of a combination of factors? Over time, Mandarin became the standardised spoken and written language in China. It is now the most widely spoken language in China and serves as a lingua franca for communication throughout the country. However, language should not be the only element to define Mandopop or other music genres in wider Chinese popular music. The distinction between Mandarin and dialects is linguistic, while Mandopop suggests additional cultural and regional aspects are at play in defining the genres. Mandopop has gone through a century of development, but due to different sociocultural and historical backgrounds, its ideology and reflected musical forms are also different. Mandopop has always been diverse, from an emerging genre of music that is distinct from serious and folk music and based on Western popular music, to a fusion genre that includes many sub-genres with very different musical styles. Some factors that likely contribute to the definition of Mandopop include but are

not limited to historical, cultural, political and commercial forces, which will be explored in this chapter. During the fieldwork conducted for this research, which was mostly online due to the impact of the pandemic on the research, the participants, including music producers, researchers and audiences, often mentioned the term “genre” when they talked about Mandopop, as well as “Chineseness” in Mandopop. However, their meaning of “genre” is slightly different to the notion of “genre” as understood from the perspectives of popular music studies and broader musicological sub-disciplines. Thus, in this chapter, defining Mandopop as a genre is not only connected to the commercial elements but also closely related to its historical background, as well as its social and cultural context.

This chapter will explore the sociocultural context and historical background of Mandopop as a commercial genre, while the discussions will be divided into three sections. The first section will discuss the notion of genre and define whether Mandopop may be regarded as a commercial genre in the Western sense of the term, while juxtaposing Mandopop with the historical development of different genres within Chinese popular music. The second section will discuss the Chinese term “wind” [simplified Chinese: 风, traditional Chinese: 風] that is generally used to describe a particular musical style called “China Wind”. It will also contain a musical analysis of two examples of “China Wind” to explore how “wind” emerged and was then constructed as a music genre. The third section will explore how patriotism and its promotion is reflected in Mandopop, with providing a musical example to discuss the educational role of Mandopop and how Mandopop – with its educational function – promotes patriotism.

Defining the Genre of Mandopop within the Music Market and Audiences’ Perspectives

The emergence and popularity of modern Mandopop was impacted by Westernisation around the world, including Western cultural expansion in Asia. Mandopop absorbs the popular cultural forms, practices and musical elements from Western and Asian

countries, which led to the formation of a new mixed culture after mixing and matching the pre-existing local sociocultural contexts and history. During cultural interactions between the West and Asia, diverse cultural and musical elements were integrated into Mandopop, thus constructing musical traditions with certain common musical features (Rice, 1987: 473). This was also reflected during my online fieldwork. When interviewees talked about the genre of Mandopop, or specifically “Chineseness” in Mandopop, they usually connected the concept of genre with the music’s sociocultural and historical context. However, from a Western perspective, “genre” is often understood as a commercial category for different types of music aimed at specific audiences (Witzleben, 2004: 115). This understanding of “genre” deviates from, or is even contrary to, the discussion of “genre” that I obtained during online fieldwork due to the different individual experiences of the interviewees. Thus, this section will discuss the notion of genre and explore whether Mandopop may be regarded as a commercial genre in the Western sense of the term, while combining the fieldwork data and juxtaposing Mandopop to the historical development of other different genres in Chinese popular music.

In Western discourses, academics, popular music commentators, popular music charts and entertainment journalists often use different words such as “genre”, “music type” and “musical style”, sometimes accidentally and sometimes in particular circumstances. However, although distinctions between terms like genre, musical type or style, and other generic categories are not obvious universally, defining music genre is still useful when creating “more nuanced representations of musical culture” (Holt, 2007: 12-3). The terms “genre” and “generic” emerged from the Greek word “genós” and the Latin word “genus” to originally represent biological categories, and the identification of categories gradually developed according to Darwinian evolutionism in modern Western society (Holt, 2007: 13). However, the mode for understanding the biological categories of nature did not adapt to cultural phenomena, whose genres were constituted and evaluated differently due to their unpredictable development (Holt, 2007: 13-4).

In music, genre is usually understood as a product of the music industry, so the emergence of the concept of genre relates to the industrial discourses surrounding music and culture. The construction of genres effectively reflects industrial practices and the identity of consumers, as well as the relationship between genre itself and people's ideas (Burton, 2005: 69). "Genre communities" commercially connect cultural production, distribution and consumption and draw together a diverse constituency of record labels, audiences and musicians (Lena, 2012: 16). Besides these connections, genres describe and categorize music, and connect with producers, musicians, consumers as well as with different musical labels (Brackett, 2002: 67). Indeed, Dave Laing (2014: 25) argued that the existence of a "genre-market" would be the precondition of most music industrial activities due to its interactionist and sociological emphasis, while incorporating the features from a cultural industries perspective. Frith (1996: 88, cited by Laing, 2014: 25-6) also discussed that the process of constructing a new genre is very complex and chaotic because genre and genre discourses must be applied to marketing and promotion in the music industrial activities for the new sounds and markets to be understandable for audiences. Frith (1998: 75-6) illustrates the significance of labelling music that is "at the heart of pop value judgements" and argues that the emergence of music genre occurs in relation to commercial market demands and becomes a way to define music through its market or the market through its music.

Therefore, the construction of genre becomes a source of consumers' "private interests, emotional pleasure, and personal identification", and serves the market interests of the music industry and simplifies music production (Krüger Bridge, 2018: 178). With a specific focus on the commercial genre of World Music, Krüger Bridge states:

The branding of World Music illustrates the way that popular music is organised and maintained as genres as a means for music industries to streamline production, and as a source of pleasure or identification for audiences and consumers. (Krüger Bridge, 2018: 11-12)

Thus, when recording labels produce, release and promote music, their strategies are based on “genre rules”, that is, by following market demands to label music (Frith, 1998: 76). For instance, with the cultural expansion of Western music and the exploitation of other non-Western music brought on by capitalist economic globalization, diverse music types, especially non-western music, have spread and become consumed within the commercial category of “world music”, which is the “soundtrack for globalization” and “a manifestation of global processes and dynamics” to express globalization in the cultural and political terrain (White, 2012: 1). Although world music is a typical product of consumer society that reflects the “global imagination”, it also reflects “a roots phenomenon and an expression of national and ethnic identities and multicultural diversity” (Erlmann, 1996: 467). According to Fabbri and Shepherd (2003: 401), the definition of genre in popular music refers to the music types that exhibit similar features and are apparently distinguished from other categories. Brackett (2002: 65-7) states that musical style refers to “a bundle of characteristics that distinguish a socially recognised musical category or genre” and emphasises audience perception and social context. For instance, Moskowitz (2009: 76) believes that all genres of today’s music, including rock, punk, pop and country music, are created by extracting musical elements from other genres and then localizing them, thereby exposing an audience of a particular genre to a new musical style and illustrating the combination of different musical forms. Thus, while genres may be identified through their internal consistency, genre boundaries keep changing and are broken due to the commercial requirements of the music market.

Besides the connection to music industry practices, there are other extramusical features to be considered in defining the term “genre”. Lena (2012: 16) illustrates through a sociological approach that musical genre emerges from audiences’ consensus about a distinctive type of music, thus forming “systems of orientations, expectations, and conventions that bind together industry, performers, critics, and fans in making what they identify as a distinctive sort of music”. Lena (2012: 17) gave an example of four genres created in 20th-century American music history based on the “similarities, or

clusters of attributes within dimensions”, which are avant-garde, scene-based, industry-based and traditional music genres. These genres not only reflect common musical features within each genre, but they are also linked to a variety of social characteristics, such as class, gender, geography and ethnicity. According to Fabbri (1982: 53-63) and Frith (1998:91-3), “performance rituals, visual appearance, the types of social and ideological connotations associated with them, and their relationships to the material conditions of production” should be considered in defining genres, rather than only considering the single element that characterises musical style. Therefore, the characteristics of a genre are not immutable, but are overlapping, that form “a group of stylistic tendencies, codes, conventions, and expectations” in different cultural contexts, and thus reflect specific meanings and characteristics in a particular era (Brackett, 2002: 67). The descriptions of musical genres reflect how “mental spaces for physical and spatial conditions are mapped onto culture”, such as “cool jazz” refers to physical, while “crossover” refers to spatial aspects of genre (Holt, 2007: 14). Thus, genres are cultural reflections, whether they are categorised depending on the venue or the physical sense.

The Factors that Influenced the Definition of the Mandopop Genre

In the Chinese context, there are also different commercial genres or sub-genres that exist in Chinese popular music based on different social, cultural or ethnic phenomena. As mentioned, Mandopop emerged as a localised blended type of music by importing Western popular music, a process more generally described by Arjun Appadurai (1996, cited by Chow and de Kloet, 2013: 53). The “isomorphic” expansion worldwide led to the spread of Western pop-rock music and influenced popular music expressions with “local variants and adaptations” in the sociocultural context of many different countries, including China (Regev, 2013: 32). Mandopop as a product of globalization is not only a commercial product of Western cultural influence, but also a reflection of Chinese traditions within their sociocultural and historical contexts. Thus, the definition of Mandopop as a genre is multidimensional and arises from the intersection of various

influential factors, including historical factors, regional factors, sociocultural factors and linguistic practicalities and consumer markets in nature.

The definition of Mandopop is influenced by historical conditions, particularly the evolving status and spread of Mandarin versus other Chinese dialects over time. Mandarin emerged as the official standard language more recently than dialects like Cantonese, which was more dominant regionally. However, Mandarin emerged later as the official standard national language promoted by the government, and its adoption coincided with China's modernization period and signified modernization and a shift towards a modern, national Chinese identity. As Mandarin became standardised through education and media across regions historically dominated by dialects, its user base expanded dramatically. It now has many more native and secondary speakers than any single dialect due to China's large population and dissemination policies. So historically, the root of defining Mandopop in Mandarin rather than another dialect lies in Mandarin gaining prestige and popularity as China's common tongue in the modern era, marginalizing regional identities in the process.

Moreover, the definition of the Mandopop genre is also relevant to regional differences. Dialects are strongly tied to local identities in some parts of China such as Hong Kong, Macau, Tibet and Xinjiang. Dialects like Cantonese developed strong localised identities and cultural norms in places like Hong Kong over history, and using these dialects is tied to expressing pride in distinct regional belonging. However, within China, promoting any single dialect could challenge national unity and the government's authority, while Mandarin represents a more pan-Chinese identity without challenges to local sociolinguistic norms. By adopting Mandarin, Mandopop forges a pan-Chinese affiliation that transcends local loyalties, which avoids sociolinguistic tensions around the representation of specific regional identities over others. Meanwhile, genres like Cantopop allow dialects to still symbolize autonomy and unique heritages. Even though exclusively using one dialect may position that region's culture as representing all of China in a simplified and insensitive manner, the

use of Mandarin in Mandopop as the lingua franca helps it neutralise tensions in a way that transcends regional affiliations and allows for a more cohesive pan-Chinese cultural identity to emerge through the genre. Therefore, in considering regionalism, Mandopop's use of Mandarin makes it able to strategically circumvent the complex sociocultural power dynamics between China's various regional dialects.

In terms of sociocultural considerations, music genres themselves can potentially represent sociocultural symbols and identities shaped by regional differences and reflect social changes and cultural evolution. Popular music genres emerge organically from unique social and cultural contexts, reflecting the values and tendencies of their eras. Mandopop, Cantopop, Hokkien-pop and other genres in broader Chinese popular music each developed distinct expression through integrating local cultural customs, traditions and artistic influences. Their lyrical content and musical styles convey the lived experiences and identity nuances of their home regions. There will be strong identities and subcultures constructed in regions, making their use in music represent a kind of national unity promoted by the authority. For the mainland government, promoting any single dialect risked elevating its sociocultural influence over others domestically. Some localized genres like Cantopop and Hokkien-pop powerfully symbolize pride in divergent cultural experiences from mainland China, while what distinguishes Mandopop is its embrace of a standardized pan-Chinese language - Mandarin - as its medium of expression to transcend territorial boundaries to connect Chinese communities across the nation and globally. It forges a sense of shared cultural affinity while still incorporating influences from different regions, which allows Mandopop to exist alongside other dialect-specific genres without challenging their important sociocultural roles. So Mandopop's defining factor is how it bridges regional Chinese identities through a common linguistic framework, achieving both ubiquity and diversity. Meanwhile, the coexistence and exchange between these genres promote cultural diversity, and different perspectives intermingle and further develop through borrowing styles and blending influences between genres. This enriches cultural expression and moves popular art forms forward rather than establishing discrete

boundaries. Therefore, the sociocultural factors have naturally propelled Mandopop's formation and evolution beyond just top-down definitions.

In addition to the elements discussed above, linguistic aspects like standardization and consumer markets also played a crucial role in defining Mandopop. Politically, standardizing Mandarin emphasizes national cohesion and unity over localized identities, which was a goal of early political propaganda of the CPC government. However, as a member of commercialized popular music genre, the linguistic practicality of Mandopop is closely in relation to its consumer markets. The use of Mandarin maximizes the commercial viability of Mandopop across borders, while commercial viability was a major driver as well - Mandarin offered the largest potential customer base given its prevalence. Using Mandarin maximized Mandopop's ability to reach mass markets across borders where Mandarin is spoken and understood. This boosted its popularity internationally compared to more regionally confined dialects. The standard language helped open distribution channels and minimized translation needs. So, both political ideology and market logic incentivized promoting Mandarin to maximize Mandopop's commercial sustainability and profitability.

Furthermore, due to these factors mentioned above, it also spawned the emergence of other subgenres in Chinese popular music, such as Cantopop and Hokkien pop which celebrated regional culture and regional identities. Importantly, Cantopop and Hokkien pop developed their own distinct histories, audiences, and cultural traits over time, and demonstrated huge commercial viability by tapping loyal regional audience bases, becoming autonomous genres with unique musical qualities. Meanwhile, there are also some popular songs that do not form a large-scale commercial genre but still reflect regional or local culture, such as Wutiaoren's music in the Haifeng dialect and Ma Fei's music in the Shannxi dialect. While having niche audiences, these dialect-based genres still meaningfully represent localized expressions of Chinese identity within the broader Huayu popular music context. Mandopop's embrace of multiple Chinese dialects and regional identities provided more opportunities to facilitate the emergence of new

subgenres, and proliferated diverse Chinese voices in locally resonant dialectal forms with dedicated fan communities and commercial success.

In summary, historical, regional, social, cultural, political and commercial forces intertwined to establish Mandopop's identification specifically with Mandarin rather than a broader Chinese label. The restriction reflects both linguistic realities and sociocultural context. This research gained a more nuanced understanding of how no single element in isolation defines Mandopop. Rather, it is the interplay and overlapping effects of historical, regional, social, cultural, political and commercial dynamics that have collectively established and given meaning to the parameters of this distinct musical genre over its evolution. Recognizing the multidimensional and interdisciplinary nature of the genre's definition enriches analytical frameworks for its study.

Cultural Labels and Commercial Labels within Mandopop

The development of Mandopop's identity has been a complex process influenced by interactions with other music genres and cultures. Mandopop has incorporated elements from genres like Western pop, rock, R'n'B, K-pop, J-pop and others, which expanded its musical palette and creativity. However, Chinese popular music seems to reflect a dwindling Chinese cultural identity due to the absorption of different musical styles from Japan, Korea and the US (Liang, 2001: 79, cited by Moskowitz, 2009: 71). Excessive borrowing from abroad risked diluting its distinct Chinese cultural flavour and character thus diluting the emphasis on Chinese cultural identity construction as well. As has been shown in the literature review, particularly on the history of Mandopop, the origins of Chinese popular music can be traced to 1920s' Shanghai, although the "official" beginning of Chinese popular music was after the policy of reform and opening-up in the late 1970s (Fu, 2003: 11; You, 2008: 5-7; Livia, 2018). As the wars led to social and economic unrest in the 1940s, the recording industry in Shanghai gradually declined, while the music industry in Hong Kong and Taiwan made great progress. From the 1950s to the late 1960s, many singers who performed

successfully in Shanghai emigrated to Hong Kong and continued the singing and musical style of Greater Shanghai and recorded many records, thus starting their new career in the Hong Kong's music industry (Guan and Zhang, 2007: 76-7). However, due to the popularity of new Hong Kong movies and TV dramas in the 1960s, the film music and theme songs of TV series sung in Cantonese became very popular. Cantopop began to replace Mandopop and occupied a dominant position in the Hong Kong music industry. Meanwhile, Mandopop made a full recovery through the Folk Song Movement in Taiwan, which in turn established Taiwanese popular music in the Chinese popular music industry (Guan and Zhang, 2007: 77; Moskowitz 2010: 1; You 2008: 127, 137). Thus, since the 1980s, Chinese popular music has become regarded as a hybrid product of its evolution from Taiwan's 1970s Folk Song Movement and other musical traditions in East Asia, such as Shanghai's contemporary song, Japanese *enka* music, Hokkien pop and Cantopop (Moskowitz, 2009: 69-70).

In addition, due to the period of wartime and social unrest from the 1920s to the late 1970s, including the War of Resistant Against Japan, the Civil War between the Kuomintang and the CPC, the War to Resist US aggression and Aid Korea, and the Cultural Revolution in mainland China, different ethnic groups and regional divisions shaped the emergence of different styles of Chinese popular music on the basis of different languages, such as Mandarin, Cantonese and Hokkien (southern Fujian province dialect), which expressed distinctive multiple identities in terms of nation, culture and politics. Consequently, due to the differing political and economic consciousness in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, numerous popular songs in different genres, languages, themes and styles emerged, which in turn meant that Chinese popular music has had no fixed standard and uniformity in its musical features. Thus, the dialect, geographical area, historical background and local culture became significant factors in the formation and constitution of Chinese popular music. All these factors impacted the construction of several specific commercial genres, such as Mandopop, Cantopop and Hokkienpop, within the category of Chinese popular music, which not only satisfied specific market demands, but also expressed ethnocentric

Chinese identity and different national musical styles and features based on local cultures.

In the mid-to-late 1990s, Korean culture had a huge influence on the entertainment industry and music industry throughout Asia, and the Mandopop music market was also impacted greatly. K-pop, the popular music from South Korea, is one of the most representative and successful genres, which reflects an increasingly mature music industry within wider neoliberalism in Korea and contributes numerous industrial music products in the international cultural market (Howard, 2014: 408-9). K-pop not only became a widely recognised and accepted commercial genre that appeared on Billboard charts (Herman, 2019), but also triggered some popular cultural phenomena that embed ethnocentric pride and local traits of Korean culture, such as Hallyu (meaning “Korean wave”, the stream or flow of South Korean culture), idol culture, fandom, K-pop jazz and so on (Kim, 2018: 26). Concepts like Hallyu, idol culture and dedicated fandom models have proven commercially viable for K-pop, and the success of K-pop has stimulated the development of Mandopop and its emphasis on the music industry and market demand. As a result, Mandopop has begun prioritizing audience pleasure and tapping consumer demand and desires in the music market, taking cues from K-pop’s industry approach, which shows how Mandopop integrated external influences like K-pop’s market focus, while also cultivating homegrown genres, to construct its complex, evolving identity over time. Cultural products and their commercial value used to enhance national pride also inspired Mandopop, and Mandopop began its continuous creation of cultural labels and commercial labels. Cultural labels in Mandopop embraced Chinese tradition as well as modern cultural influences, exploring how Mandopop conveys and represents aspects of Chinese cultural identity through its music, lyrics, imagery, etc., while commercial labels in Mandopop focus more on the business, marketing and branding of Mandopop with a goal of largely commercial success. More importantly, collaborations between commercial and cultural spheres can strengthen Mandopop’s ability to straddle artistic and popular appeal globally.

Since the 2000s, the Mandopop sub-genre labelled “China Wind” quickly swept the country. At the same time, there were several names used to describe specific Chinese styles in Chinese popular music for marketing, promotion and consumption, such as “Chinked-out” (*Sohu Entertainment*, 2014) and “M-pop” (*Sohu Entertainment*, 2018). The first name “Chinked-out” was put forward by an American-born Taiwanese singer, Leehom Wang to identify Chinese hip-hop music and express Chinese identity in Chinese hip-hop music. He created “Chinked-out” to emphasise Chinese identity in Chinese hip-hop music by drawing on the example of the problematic term “Negro”. “Negro” represents hip-hop culture created by people of African descent and reflects a shifting sense of racial identity that addresses racial challenges and achieves self-affirmation through hip-hop music (Perry, 2016: 60-1). Thus, Leehom Wang created “Chinked-out” as a genre that represents a fusion of Chinese hip-hop and other musical elements such as rock, R’n’B and Chinese traditional opera to express his heartfelt wish for a blueprint of Chinese popular music (CNN, 16 June 2006). The term “chink” was considered a symbol of anti-Chinese racism with highly offensive connotations, which first emerged in America in the 1880s and in Australia in the 1890s in response to the emergence of Chinese labour (Hughes, 2006: 75-6). However, in Leehom Wang’s musical blueprint, “chink” is a commendatory word to represent the shifting sense of Chinese identity, and “-ed” represents the past tense of the sluggish history of China’s popular music, while “out” reflects the hope that Chinese music can enter the world stage (CNN, 2006; Chen, 2012: 74-5). The latter style of “M-pop” represents mixed Mandarin popular music, created by a Chinese K-pop singer, Yixing Zhang. Zhang was a member of the K-pop group EXO from SM Entertainment, who created his own style called “mixed Mando-pop” under the huge influence of K-pop by combining the sounds of Chinese traditional instruments with Western music genres, such as hip-hop, R’n’B and Latin. Zhang stated that “one where Mando-pop frees itself of the labels of being ‘vapid’ and ‘vain’ and presents new avenues of experimentation and cultural triumph” to express his ideal future of popular music, that is, every genre and every language can be mixed with each other (Singh, 2020).

While artists may aim to creatively define new subgenres or styles within Chinese popular music from a cultural perspective, the commercial music industry in China ultimately treats genres and styles as marketing and promotional labels. Commercial labels became tools to package, position and sell music to target consumer segments, thus building brands and concepts to build fanbases and marketability. So even if subgenres emerge organically from artistic experimentation, the commercial apparatus such as record labels and music streaming platforms tends to transform them into commodified labels for industry purposes. For example, the top music streaming platforms Tencent Music (see Figure 1) and NetEase Cloud Music (see Figure 2) use many different categories based on language, musical style, age, mood and theme to classify musical genres and styles. For instance, in the category of language, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, there are two categories “Guoyu” and “Huayu”. As was explained in the Introduction in this thesis, “Huayu” is like Mandarin in the cognition of the language system of modern Chinese languages, while, according to the *Contemporary Chinese Dictionary*, “Guoyu” refers to the old name of Mandarin in China. “Guoyu” (Figure 1) refers to the language commonly used by the people of the country. Therefore, “Guoyu” is equivalent to Mandarin (Institute of Linguistics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2016: 499). So, whether it is “Huayu” popular music or “Guoyu” popular music, both can refer to Mandarin popular music, or Mandopop, which exists and spreads on Chinese online music platforms. As shown especially in Figure 2, there are some flame icons to indicate that this category is the hottest and most popular, while Mandopop is the most popular genre in the category of languages. In the category of Apple Music (see Figure 3), Mandopop exists as an individual musical genre, like J-pop, K-pop, Cantopop and even R’n’B and Jazz. Within the more general Chinese popular music, the coverage of Mandopop is broader than other genres due to the widespread use of the Mandarin language. Indeed, Mandopop reaches not only mainland China, but also Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and other ethnic Chinese communities all over the world.



Figure 1: Musical categories on the online music platform Tencent Music.
(Screenshot from mobile phone app, captured on 05/11/2021).



Figure 2: Musical categories on the online music platform NetEase Cloud Music. (Screenshot from mobile phone app, captured on 05/11/2021).

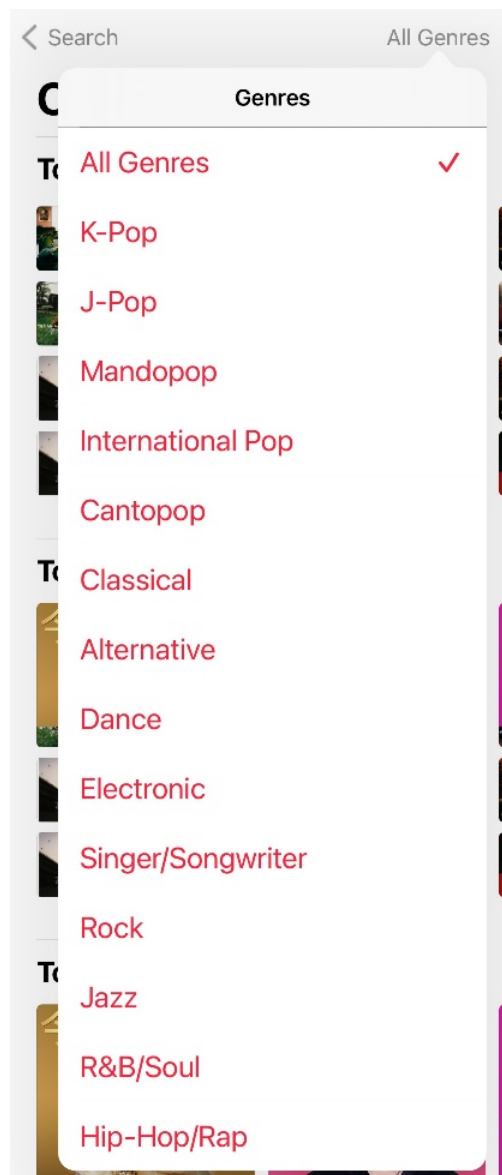


Figure 3: Categorisation of Apple Music⁵ on the Chinese music market.
 (Screenshot from mobile phone app, captured on 05/11/2021).

Moreover, the musical styles of “Zhongguo Feng” (usually translated as “China Wind”) and “Gu Feng” (usually translated as “Ancient Wind”) also appear on these platforms as commercial genres (see Figure 1). More generally, these musical styles or sub-genres represent Chinese cultural and national identity, or “Chineseness”, in Mandopop more

⁵ Apple Music is a music product launched by Apple Inc., and different countries and regions have different stores in Apple Music. Apple Music is available in China, and the copyrighted music in the Chinese store is as good as the local music software and mobile application in China, or even more. However, most of its copyrights are signed with record companies, and many popular online songs are not copyrighted, so the number of users in China is relatively limited.

generally. These commercial music genres and styles reflecting Chinese identity have achieved successful popularity during the past two decades and occupy huge music market shares.

According to media operation platform Nakedmusic (“Yinyue Xiansheng”) on an official WeChat account (Wind, 2008), certain sub-genres in Chinese popular music are gradually growing closer musically, thus the musical gap between them is narrowing due to industrial integration. In fact, it is rare to use the term C-pop to represent Chinese popular music, either in academia or in the music industry. On the one hand, C-pop does not form a fixed standardised style; different dialects and ethnic traditional elements mark its diverse forms. On the other hand, as a commercial product, the industrial chain surrounding the creation and marketing of Chinese popular music is not yet fully formed, since, to some extent, the Chinese popular music industry attempts to construct itself based on the industrial model of the West and other Asian countries. Moreover, the usage of the term C-pop reveals signs of positive competition between Chinese popular music and other types of Asian popular music and/or Western popular music, as well as international ambition and anxiety.

However, Chinese scholars and musicians often connect the genre of Mandopop with its sociocultural and historical contexts, which also became evident during the interviews during fieldwork. When it was mentioned during the interviews, Mandopop was not just regarded as a “genre” label but as intrinsically linked to musical styles and cultural features that emerged from sociohistorical trajectories. As evidenced in interviews, insiders like scholars and musicians conceptualize Mandopop's definition in a more holistic cultural sense versus the commercial labelling lens. Interviewees usually placed more emphasis on the sociocultural and historical contexts involved in shaping Mandopop's development. and regarded its definitions malleably between cultural, aesthetic and commercial strategic meanings. In this context, the cultural and commercial imperatives of Mandopop can intersect in complex ways. For example, Dr Qian Wang, who graduated from the University of Liverpool and now works at the

University of Yibin, stated that “China Wind” reflects “Chineseness” in Mandopop, as it achieved “milestones” and represented a flashing moment in the 2000s, instead of being a commercialised genre:

(Chinese-style music) cannot be called a genre, but a milestone, that is, there will be a representative moment in different stages... So far, it is difficult to treat the Chinese-style music as a genre. My personal perception is that the Chinese-style music is an aesthetic concept in Chinese pop music. It is difficult to understand it as a genre like jazz, hip hop, or reggae. (Qian Wang, WeChat Audio Call, 12 November 2019)

This is because the younger generation in mainland China accept “Chineseness” in Mandopop, but do not embrace it due to its changing identity. The mention of multiple milestones marked by representative songs within the concept of “China Wind” implies that there is a diversity of expressions and interpretations of Chinese-style music within Mandopop. This challenges the notion of treating “China Wind” or Chinese-style music as a homogeneous, commercialized genre. Qian Wang’s argument regarding Chinese style as an aesthetic concept in Mandopop rather than merely representative of commercialization suggests that “Chineseness” in Mandopop should be perceived as a cultural and artistic element, contributing to the overall aesthetic experience of the music, rather than solely associated with commercial motives.

The Chinese composer Ms Wenyin Qiu recognises stylistic trends like “Chinese-style music” in today’s Mandopop market. However, she notes that styles like “Northwest Wind”, “China Wind” and “Ancient Wind” represent specific musical identities based on their regions, times and cultural elements:

The genre should be a parallel concept, while “Northwest Wind” represents the regional concept and “Ancient Wind” represents the concept of the times, so they cannot be divided as genres. If Northwest wind is a genre in terms of a specific region, then Yunnan can have Yunnan-Guizhou wind, or Guangdong can have the

wind of South of the Five Ridges area, but in fact, they do not exist. But all genres of Guqin music are divided by regions. We can use the word "wind", which refers to wind direction or weathervane, which in music can refer to these created music styles or developing tendencies of music. China wind is a kind of music style with Chinese elements. This may also be the definition given to it by others, that is, this style of Chinese music is called "China Wind". But in a broad sense, it can also be understood as a musical style with Chinese elements - the "Northwest Wind" could be regarded as a musical style with northwest elements. (Wenyin Qiu, Guangzhou, 5 December 2019)

Importantly, Wenyin Qiu views these as musical identities but does not consider them fully-fledged, historically significant genres within Chinese popular music. She also pointed out that the music genre of the traditional musical instrument Guqin is related to its regional division, and still emphasised the influence of regional culture and regional identity on the genre. This implies the fluid, evolving nature of stylistic categories - what marketing may label as genres are not necessarily considered so culturally or historically. Musical identity formation is complex, incorporating region, time and culture, but not all such identities crystallize into standardized genres. Wenyin Qiu's perspective contrasts commercial genre definitions with a more nuanced socio-cultural view of identity construction in Chinese music.

Another composer, Mr Yuchuan Wen, recognised the influence of traditional Chinese elements when he described the "good" Chinese style music in his mind:

Good Chinese style works should have rich harmony, sophisticated melody, and originality... For example, using some national instruments in the arrangement and referencing some folk music, traditional opera, etc... I think the Chinese style should have several characteristics. First, it is in line with Chinese aesthetics. It uses ancient Chinese thought and Chinese wisdom and then uses a more pentatonic tone in style. (Yuchuan Wen, Foshan, 27 November 2019)

This indicates genres are shaped not just by cultural references and tradition but by inherent musical patterns and systems unique to a culture. Some technical aspects like scales, harmony and melodic conventions help characterise genres in addition to historical, social and cultural factors. Mr. Wen highlighted that Chinese popular music exhibits definite musical properties besides drawing from traditional cultural roots. So, both the borrowing of traditional forms and the existence of indigenous technical conventions combine to hybrid genres. By noting these intrinsic musical qualities, Mr. Wen demonstrated an insightful dual perspective that usefully showed how genres synthesise borrowed tradition with organically evolved musical frameworks - it's not just sociocultural context but the inborn language of music that defines them as well.

Associate Professor Sen Wang further supported the notion that Chinese popular songs successfully blend the Chinese pentatonic scale with the Western harmony system. He specifically highlighted how Chinese artists have strived to reconcile the conflicts between these distinct tonality systems to achieve a harmonious fusion in Mandopop creation:

There is a conflict between the national melody and the Western harmonic system originally. Because the Chinese national mode is pentatonic scale, which is very different from the western major and minor. If Western harmonic instruments are used to accompany the national melody, there will be conflicts between the two modes. Many music producers have come up with a clever idea, that is, the third note in a chord is removed, leaving only the root note and the fifth note to become the fifth chord... It is a technical problem to solve the problem that the national melody coincides with the Western harmony system when accompanies the national melody. Many musicians are still working on this problem and trying to find different solutions. (Sen Wang, Wuhan, 25 October 2019)

Sen Wang's observations reinforce that Chinese music borrows and integrates different systems, creating technical challenges. And this may require some solutions like adjustments to ancestral scales for harmonious blending. Therefore, musical genres

emerge from resolving tensions between musical language transplants. His expertise usefully illustrated how the merging of diverse traditions shapes genres via innovations that facilitate their coordinated coexistence, capturing the two-way cultural exchange nature of the process.

From the interviewees' key perspectives, the popularity of Mandopop stems from alignment with Chinese musical aesthetics, rooted in pentatonic modes and ancient thoughts, which gives rise to distinctly Chinese aesthetics reflected in Mandopop genres. While Chinese identity sometimes is not explicitly emphasized, its distinct style exists and is recognised. Mandopop reflects Chinese cultural identity by language and other inherent characteristics. In addition, the interviews collectively demonstrated that socio-cultural context, musical traditions and technical features combine to shape unique Chinese genres, thus defining aesthetics aligned with Chinese audiences' musical tastes. Commercial genres act as a reflection of cultural identity through embodied traits, while identity construction occurs organically versus being overtly asserted.

There are overlapping identities shaped by different cultural, social and historical backgrounds in the formation of a music genre. Although the creation of Chinese popular music is based on Western popular music, it absorbed a unique musical style based on Chinese local culture using the pentatonic scale, song theme, lyrics, instrumentation, costume and other Chinese auditory and visual elements. Chinese-style music is not only a label used to promote Chinese popular music in the music industry, but also represents an aesthetic concept in the genre of Mandopop with different definitions, standards and forms of expression. Although in Mandopop sub-genres emerged with different musical characteristics, Mandopop has always constructed and expressed its Chinese identity in social and cultural context through these different musical expressions. The next section will (re)define the term "wind", since it was used in the styles of "Northwest Wind" and "China Wind" within Mandopop.

Relocating the Label of ‘Wind’: The Meaning of ‘Wind’ (风) in Social and Cultural Contexts

Although popular music from Hong Kong and Taiwan shared high musical fame in the Chinese music market, popular music from mainland China officially started to become successful due to the policy of reform and opening-up since 1978, when Western culture and Hong Kong and Taiwan culture began to be introduced to the mainland, which increased people’s demand for popular music. Thus, the 1980s was an important turning point for the revival and prosperity of popular music in mainland China. In 1979, Guangzhou Pacific Audiovisual Company, the first record publishing and distribution label in mainland China, was established in Guangzhou and positively affected the promotion of the mainland popular music industry in the following two decades. Thus, in the history of Chinese popular music, 1979 is the beginning of the revival of mainland popular music. Although popular music from Hong Kong and Taiwan shared high fame and success in the Chinese music market during the 1980s, it stimulated a process of rejuvenation of Mandopop styles. In 1986, the Chinese Central Television Station held the second National Young Singers Television Grand Prix and, for the first time, set up a category of pop song, which meant that popular music was now officially promoted through the top media platform of television.

The growth of local Chinese rock music popularised the “Northwest Wind” sub-genre rapidly, which was also the first time that “wind” was used to describe a style of music. In the 2000s, another genre called “China Wind” from Taiwan “shocked” the entire Chinese popular music market. The popularity of “China Wind” meant that Mandopop produced and distributed in Taiwan occupied the greatest market share, which reached approximately 80% to 90% of music sales in the Mandopop market of mainland China by 2002 (Xu, 2002: 23, cited by Moskowitz, 2009: 70; Wong 2003: 153, cited by Moskowitz, 2009: 70). Yet does “wind” represent a genre or a trend in the development of Mandopop? This section will define the term “wind” in its social and cultural context when different musical styles of Mandopop emerged.

As mentioned, Chinese popular music developed with a unique national identity during the wartime of the 1920s to the late 1940s. At that time, there were numerous folk songs and ballads emerging in the tenements of east China, centred around Shanghai, due to the development of the recording industry and import of western music. In north-west China, the new folk songs and revolutionary songs of the resistance emerged to oppose aggression and encourage people to live a positive spiritual life. There were also western instruments introduced in Guangdong music to form the new light music of south China (Fu, 2018: 75-8). All these different types of music from different geographic areas reflected the early stages in the emergence of Chinese popular music.

However, after the founding of New China in 1949, China experienced external wars, such as the war against the United States and the aid to North Korea, and internal socialist education movements such as the Cultural Revolution, which had a huge impact on the direction of Chinese literary and artistic works. This left the three decades from the 1950s to the 1970s in the development of Chinese popular music almost in limbo, with revolutionary overtones influencing the form and content of socialist literature (Fu, 2018:114-6; You, 2008: 185). The lyrics in the songs during these three decades mostly moved towards nationalism, creating the genre of Chinese new folk songs with a new-age character based on the melodies of original folk songs and the use of national instruments. As a cultural heritage, the new folk songs with their “true” folkloric influences became one of the most widely circulated mass songs, apart from revolutionary and red songs. This historical background caused the production of popular music to be to some extent in opposition to revolutionary songs.

There was also a controversy during the early stages in the development of Mandopop around the late 1970s and early 1980s when the PRC authorities published a book called *How to Identify Yellow Song* (referring to identifying pornographic and vulgar popular songs) through the editorial office of the *Journal of People's Music* (1982). The controversy manifested prominently in the PRC's attitude towards the Mandopop coming from Hong Kong and Taiwan, which they called “Gang-Tai” pop to express the

state's aesthetic cultural standard which regarded Mandopop as a vulgar and evil product. In *How to Identify Yellow Song*, the definition of Gang-Tai Pop was as follows:

In China, the term “pop music” has a specific meaning formed in its history, that is, it is a general term for those songs that are pornographic, frivolous, confused unhealthy even vulgar... This kind of song was produced in the 1930s and was part of the declining culture in the semi-feudal and semi-colonial society of old China... People refer to some of the songs sung by Hong Kong and Taiwan singers that have poured people into our society in recent years - because in some ways, they have the same characteristics as “pop songs” in the past - they are also collectively called “Gang-Tai pop songs”. (Zhou, 1982: 8)

This one-sided understanding by the PRC, which sought to amplify the disadvantages of popular music, while reducing or even ignoring its advantages, is one factor causing a lag in the development of Chinese popular music. In addition, popular music was “measured” by the standards of revolutionary songs and popular songs of the wartime, so it was taken for granted by the authorities that Mandopop should be the opposite of traditional music, professional music and serious music (Xiang, 2010: 14-5). Mandopop was not only unacceptable in mainland China, but also criticised by Western countries. According to Moskowitz (2009: 71-4), the critiques of Mandopop from Western countries were mostly based on “a perceived failure to live up to Western standards for the genre” because people in China were apparently more concerned with “a perceived danger of disrupting a communist Utopian ideal” than the quality of the music (Moskowitz, 2009: 71). Although the debate about the genre of Mandopop continues, the consensus from both within China and the West was that Mandopop as a reflection of Mandarin-speaking culture should be rooted in the local cultural and social context. Those scholars from Taiwan or Western countries who gave critiques on Mandopop are outsiders, and vice versa, Mandopop is also an outside cultural production for them. Thus, the emergence of “wind” within Chinese local popular music came into being in the context of sluggish Chinese music development. It not

only satisfied Westerners' illusions about Eastern culture and music evoking an image of art and culture of a far-off Asian land and its peoples (Bellman, 2011:2), but also created a musical form to meet Chinese market demands as a hybrid of ancient tunes and text.

When "wind" was first used to describe the "Northwest Wind" style of Mandopop in the 1980s. The rise of "Northwest Wind" was caused by the growing sense of "seeking roots" in Chinese ideological and cultural circles to tap into traditional culture and compete with western culture under its impact and influence in China (Wu, 2006: 3-4). The song 'Loess Plateau', which was released in 1988, indicated that although the geological environment in Northwest China is poor, the people there still manage to create a rich material and cultural life: "My home lives on the loess plateau and the strong wind blows from the slop. Whether it is northwest wind or southeast wind, it is my song"⁶. The lyrics describe the northwest and southeast wind, presenting a metaphor for geographic difference and living style, which could also be extended to difference in musical styles between the northwest region and southeast region of China to echo the next line of lyrics "it is my song". The lyrics explain why Chinese new music with national and traditional elements in the 1980s became called "Northwest Wind". The lyrics originally described the real existing wind from the Loess Plateau, but later, the actual wind became a concept to describe a new popular music style. Meanwhile, national consciousness strongly rejected Chinese rock music since the beginning. Fu (2018: 160) stated that there was still much stubbornness and prejudice when "Northwest Wind" emerged, even though tolerance towards the cultural policy was gradually broadened. Thus, the rebellious consciousness of rock music and the anti-traditional and free spirit of freedom determined the environment for Chinese local rock

⁶ This line of lyrics is translated by the author according to the Chinese lyrics of 'Loess Plateau', and the original Chinese lyric was shown in the first 50 seconds of this music video (Source available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icCBajqQRKQ&ab_channel=%E6%81%92%E5%A4%A7%E9%9F%B3%E4%B9%90EvergrandeMusic. Accessed on 2 August 2022). This video is not the original singing of 'Loess Plateau', but it is one of the most famous versions of this song in China, and the video is published by the official channel of Evergrande Music on YouTube.

music. Although “Northwest Wind” is a valuable cultural heritage today, it died out rapidly at that time for a variety of social and political reasons.

In the 1990s, the popular music recording industry in mainland China was developing rapidly, and the industrialization process led to a tenfold increase in the production of popular music songs. The rise of music videos and the growth of original music in the music charts became the two main driving forces for the development of popular music in the 1990s (Fu, 2018: 381). In 2000, Jay Chou from Taiwan released his first album *Jay* and created a new genre “China Wind”, blending Chinese ancient style lyrics and R’n’B to produce a contrasting hybrid music style. This genre provided another possibility for the direction of Mandopop, which made himself a decisive figure of Mandopop. Later in 2001, Jay Chou released his second album *Fantasy* and produced music videos for each song, which responded to the important promotional role of music video in the music market at that time. The large-scale promotion by the record company made this album a great success in commercial operation. In the environment where karaoke was popular at the time, music videos of songs had a great influence on the frequency of clicking songs, so Jay Chou’s MV also made his songs receive a high click rate in karaoke, so his influence was further expanded, while his reputation and persistence on “China Wind” Mandopop for each album promoted this hybrid musical style of Chinese tradition and popular music.

In the following years, the sub-genre of “China Wind” extended and changed, and more musical elements were added, resulting in different new musical styles within the sub-genre of “China Wind”. There are nowadays many “China Wind” styles, which are no longer based on the western genre but became closer to Chinese music, while the themes and central ideas reflect a desire to carry forward Chinese national identity. Although the term “wind” is an incorrect direct translation, “China Wind” reflected a kind of temporal character and timeliness; indeed, its popularity was short-lived and in flux due to external factors. The musical features, functions, and social and cultural

identities of this short-lived musical sub-genre have all been changed over time and were susceptible to changes in market demands.

Although the commercial sub-genres in Mandopop, such as “Northwest Wind” and “China Wind”, significantly stimulated the creation of Chinese-style popular songs in mainland China, using the label of “China Wind” to promote Chinese traditions and national identity in Chinese music is not a stranger. The term “China Wind” does not only refer to the genre of “China Wind” in the 2000s but is also a direct translation of Chinese musical style (it means 中国风 “Zhongguo Feng” in Chinese) more generally, while the use of this Chinese term could be traced back to the early 1990s. In 1991, Guangdong Huizhou Audio and Video Press released an orchestra album called *Zhongguo Feng*, which contained 24 orchestral pieces with themes on Chinese folk songs to emphasise Chinese identity and national music stylistics (Bao, 2007). However, the emphasis on Chinese style existed far longer, which was widely used in not only music, but also other subjects, such as art and design, architecture, film, literature and in the practices of philology.

There also exists another word for describing Chinese style, which is “Chinoiserie”. In the *Oxford Dictionary*, the term “Chinoiserie” originally refers to the European interpretation and imitation of Chinese and other East Asian artistic traditions, especially in the decorative arts, garden design, architecture, literature, theatre and music. It emerged in the 17th century first and was then popularised in the 18th century due to the rise in trade with China and the rest of East Asia (Beevers, 2009: 19). It represented an obvious Chinese style in European arts. In the 21st century, this term re-emerged to challenge conventional heuristics and convey an insistence on sovereign demand (Christie, 2015: 343). Although this term is not accurate in the context of this research, it still has a certain meaning to indicate the existence of a Chinese style in various fields. The terms “Zhongguo Feng” or “Guo Feng” could also be used to express the cultural aesthetics of Chinese culture and establish “confidence in its culture” in contemporary China.

As mentioned in the Literature Review, “China Wind” in music research is normally defined as a musical style that combines traditional Chinese melody and musical instruments with western popular music, while expressing Chinese cultural elements lyrically (Chow and de Kloet, 2010: 60). This direct translation of “China Wind” was widely quoted in the literatures in discussions on definitions of Chinese-style music. However, this translation and explanation is too unclear to reflect how the genre represents and expresses musical features, especially around the meaning of the word “wind”. Chinese composer Bao Yuankai (2007) argued that “Feng” in “Zhongguo Feng” represents style, climate, vogue, fashion, scenery, amorous feelings, charm, mien and genre, and refers to the local folk songs collection “Feng” or “Guofeng” in *The Book of Odes* (诗经 Shijing). While Bao used this term, he did not clarify and define it specifically. Thus, during the fieldwork for this research, exploring different perspectives surrounding the definition of “China Wind” was helpful to define the label of “wind” and this musical style.

The Chinese traditional music composer Ms Wenyin Qiu emphasised the mistake of directly translating “wind”:

It certainly shouldn't be translated into “wind”, but it should be a style... If we want to use the word “wind”, it represents trendiness and refers to a kind of popular “wind direction”, a trend that everyone likes and chases to sing. At the same time, it is also a kind of folk music style. (Wenyin Qiu, Guangzhou, 5 December 2019)

Thus, from this point of view, Qiu thought these styles of “wind” music, such as “Northwest Wind”, “China Wind” and “Ancient Wind”, only expressed narrow and specific musical styles based on their regions, times and cultural elements, which have not become a “real” or historically recorded genre in Chinese popular music. By comparison, Dr Qian Wang similarly commented that the direct translation of “China Wind” is an obvious mistake:

It must not be “wind”, that is an obvious mistake. If I were to translate, I would put more emphasis on the Cultural taste of “Chineseness”. This taste is not the trendiness represented by wind, but the aesthetics of music in culture, so I think it is the cultural taste or aesthetic criteria. This aesthetic standard must not be static but in the process of continuous production. (Qian Wang, WeChat Audio Call, 12 November 2019)

He cited the example of Chinese singer Zun Huo, who was awarded first place in a music reality show programme *Sing My Song* (21 March 2014). As one of the earliest producers of electronic and popular music in China, the moderator of this programme, Huan Liu, exclaimed on stage when he first heard Zun Huo’s song ‘Roll Bead Curtain’ (卷珠帘 Juan Zhulian) that this kind of outstanding “China Wind” music is what he has been searching for all his life. Due to Huan Liu’s reputation, his action on the television programme impacted on Zun Huo’s success instantly.

However, interesting is that ‘Roll Bead Curtain’ is a misleading “China Wind” song (Zhang, 2014: 84-5). As Zun Huo himself stated, his song was inspired by a Nordic cartoon, and he originally intended to write an Irish-style song, but he found that the melody seemed to be more Chinese-style. After revising the lyrics several times, Zun Huo referred to the parallel prose of the Tang Dynasty and chose the title ‘Roll Bead Curtain’, thus, as a result, the song completely deviated from the original track and changed into a Chinese style (*Daily Sunshine*, 2014). Moreover, a final released version of ‘Roll Bead Curtain’ was transformed further by Huan Liu and made even more Chinese in style by revising the straightforward lyrics to be closer to ancient poetry, replacing the original tonic, subdominant and dominant chords with two chords of A minor and D major, replacing the original electroacoustic band with string orchestra, and adding traditional instruments such as pipa (a plucked string instrument with a fretted fingerboard), xiao (a vertical bamboo flute) and Chinese bass drum (Han, 2015: 121-2). Huan Liu’s creative idea meant giving full credit to the traditional Chinese style as the most crucial point, rendering the song not only similar in shape but also in spirit,

with Western techniques and elements based on the premise of enhancing artistic expressiveness, rather than impacting and damaging the Chinese traditional style (Han, 2015: 121-2). However, and based on Zun Huo's own statement, Zhang (2014: 85) insisted that this song drew on the Celtic folk song 'The Elfin Knight' and the English 'Scarborough Fair', a popular song adapted from it, which meant that 'Roll Bead Curtain' evolved from European music and was rooted in the pentatonic scale of the Celtic folk musical system. Yet, regardless of whether 'Roll Bead Curtain' falls into the category of "China Wind", this song became known as a completely Chinese-style Mandopop song by Huan Liu after continuous adaptations in terms of harmony, instrumentation and lyrics.

The uniqueness of this song's melody and its popularity in the market are also reflected in the questionnaire data. One participant commented on this song as follows:

I like 'Rolling Bead Curtain' the most because it is different in style from other songs and has more of a Chinese opera feel. "Rolling Bead Curtain" seems to be both a Doria mode and a Chinese Yu mode, so it sounds like an Irish folk song and an ancient Chinese style. I think this is the most exquisite part of the author's creation. Its harmonic texture is very close to European folk songs - Chinese folk music does not have harmonic texture, it is all unison and ensemble, and its melody is very close to ancient Chinese music. (Questionnaire Participant No. 265, Tencent Questionnaire Platform, 2019)

On the idea that Huan Liu's reputation influenced the success of Zun Huo, Dr Qian Wang argued:

This is obviously the intervention of aesthetic construction, entertainment discourse right and state executive power. (Qian Wang, WeChat Audio Call, 12 November 2019)

Huan Liu's own concept around the creation and adaptation of Chinese-style music makes 'Roll Bead Curtain' a successful case of "China Wind" Mandopop. Although the song deviates from the original creative idea, it became undoubtedly a success. At the same time, it also reflects a kind of interference in musical aesthetics under the influence of authority figures. Dr Qian Wang made an interesting statement on the "interference in aesthetics", which suggests that the aesthetic ideas of the music specialist himself to some extent guides or at least impacts on market consumption.

It is common to see an interference in aesthetic standards, trends and consumption by experts, individuals or cultural departments in China, who may represent the aesthetic aims and requirements of the authority. An example observed during fieldwork will illustrate the intervention made by the cultural department during an event called "2019 Guangzhou High End Awards and Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macau Greater Bay Area Digital Music Industry Development Seminar" (observed on 5 December 2019, see Figure 4). This event is not a public awards ceremony aimed at an audience but is held among music specialists from local music committees, recording labels and audio manufacturers. There are different award categories, such as best audio product, best album, best singers, best recording engineer, best record label and best digital platform, as well as presentations in relation to the development of digital music in the present recording industry. However, there is no clear evidence or standards to show that these awards result from audience and market polls, but rather from the title of attendees and music associations, who, under the leadership of the local government, intervened in the awards ceremony and seminar. The awards ceremony is not the only example, as such award ceremonies are relatively common in the Chinese music industry and reflect the differences in aesthetic standards between music critics, musicians and audiences.



Figure 4: Photograph depicting the guests who participated in the “2019 Guangzhou High End Awards”. Source: Music events observation during fieldwork, taken on 05/12/2019.

The aesthetic standard agreed by music executives guides the direction in the Chinese music market, especially under censorship conditions, promoting economic capital as opposed to symbolic capital, while the authorities keep their leading role in controlling the production and promotion of popular culture (Varriale, 2015: 13-4). In this case, the opinions of the so-called popular music experts, who represent the opinions of aesthetic standards in Chinese pop, impact on the direction of the Chinese music market. Even so, aesthetic standards among music critics, musicians and audiences often differ due to their different tastes, considerations and demands, and this difference leads to contradictions and dispute over whether a genre or musical style or musical symbol should be popular or not.

An interesting example of dispute is provided by music critic Taisheng Ding, who became “hot” over the past two years due to being invited frequently by music television programmes as a guest to comment on the performance of singers. The phrase “hot” refers to the fact that he often became a trending topic or hashtag on the Chinese microblog platform after scolding singers sensationally on music television programmes. Zihui Fan (2021), the contributing author of the media operation platform *Nakedmusic*, commented that the reason why Taisheng Ding scolds is that

some music critics are pursuing higher quality popular music, while today's popular music is constantly touching the bottom line of music aesthetics, which is the root cause of the conflict between some music critics and the current popular music market. From this point of view, Fan (2021) illustrated that Mandopop results from a fixed creative routine to cater to the market, which made Mandopop functional, that is, the creation of Mandopop is for the needs of the market. This is understandable because popular music itself is a commercial genre, but music critics like Taisheng Ding often expect to appreciate a song from the aesthetic aspect rather than its commercial value. Taisheng Ding believes that the lyrics of a song are its aesthetic standard, which can sublimate the cultural connotation of the song from the perspective of musical aesthetics. However, even if individuals' subjective aesthetic standards conflict with market demands, the creation of Mandopop cannot completely ignore aesthetic appreciation but focus only on market demands, which is why Taisheng Ding values the aesthetic function of lyrics (Fan, 2021).

There is another reason why the importance of lyrics was emphasized when discussing Chinese popular music, which is related to the localization of popular music itself. From this point of view, Fan (2021) gives an example of Chinese hip-hop music and its localization. In recent years, mainstream Chinese hip-hop music by Chinese rappers, a popular product and result of commercialization, is no longer satisfied with the musical influences of Western hip-hop music and has begun to focus on more localised social issues, enriching the contents and expressions of hip-hop music in China. This transformed hip-hop music from an imported product to an art form organically integrated into the context of Chinese culture and a medium of public self-expression. The 30-year history of Chinese hip-hop music is also a representative case of foreign music types being increasingly enriched by Chinese lyrics. If the importance of lyrics in the process of Chinese hip-hop music localization is erased, it is tantamount to erase the meaning of the localization of hip-hop music itself. The same applies to Mandopop, especially when "Northwest Wind" and "China Wind" are considered. Both sub-genres typically reflect "local pop history" as a "novel phenomenon" and the role of lyrics in

the localization of music (Chow and de Kloet 2011: 60). The former absorbed the musical style of Western Rock'n'Roll but with the addition of lyrics describing the human customs of northwest China and sung in its local singing style (Wang 2010: 291-2). The latter absorbed ancient poetry to express cultural identity and artistic conception in south China. The importance of lyrics in Mandopop could not be ignored but is not the only element to form this musical style. Overemphasizing the importance of lyrics and elevating it as one of the important aesthetic standards to sublimate the quality of songs is a narrow understanding of the formation of a musical style or music genre.

An Analysis of Jay Chou's 'Lady' to Demonstrate the Meaning of "Wind"

As mentioned in the literature review, Jay Chou, a Taiwanese pop singer, released a song called 'Lady' (娘子 'Niangzi') in 2000, which was regarded as the first song of "China Wind" Mandopop and established Jay Chou himself as the "Father of China Wind" (Cao 2006, cited by Chow and de Kloet 2010: 60). The title of this song is 'Niangzi', which is the ancient name for a wife, but this term was originally used to describe young ladies and later it was an honorific title for an ancient queen. In the Yuan Dynasty, "Niangzi" became the title for married women, and during the Ming and Qing Dynasties, because of the popularity of script dramas, the term "Niangzi" became especially used to describe the wife. The song 'Lady' is representative of the first work of Jay Chou's "China Wind" Mandopop. It conveys many firsts and unique features that have never been seen in Mandopop before. First, its lyrics are in an ancient style that tell the story of a man whose ambitions are unfulfilled, and who felt sorry to his wife and misses his hometown. The lyrics use a time-travelling narrative approach, intertwining the three temporal dimensions of past, present and future. The main story of this song is that the man was far away from his hometown in Jiangnan (regions south of the Yangtze River) and went to the Saibei (the northwest region) alone, and the heavy responsibility of taking care of the elderly parents falls on his wife alone. The desolate scene in the northwest was described with terms such as yellow sand, the northside of the Great Wall, horses and grassland, and the hometown Jiangnan was described with

southern scenes, such as willow and streams. The Saibei and Jiangnan are not only geographically opposite to the north and south, but also two completely different spiritual sustenance for Chinese people. The main tone of Saibei is heroic and sad, then the main tone of Jiangnan is gentle and delicate. The Saibei in classical poetry has frequent wars and is a place of suffering, where many literati lived in exile, full of unfulfilled feelings. Jiangnan, for thousands of years, has been fond of thousands of Chinese literati, who expressed the beauty of scenery and people. This strong contrast between the north and south showed the abjection and distress of the male character in the song. The man suffered helplessness, but the lyrics did not directly express it but implicitly represented his feelings through the scenery.

The lyrics of ‘Lady’ describe a story that happened between an “I” in the present and past and a “you” - the wife - in ancient times. When the two protagonists are connected, there must be “travelling”, as the song indicates a structure around the traversal narrative. The “I” plays three roles in this story, that is, the “I” who expresses emotions, the “I” of the storyteller, and the “I” of who participates in the story. These three roles express three different themes in the lyrics, namely the sorrow for unfulfilled aspiration, guilt towards the wife, and longing for the hometown. Since the lyrics do not specify the time and space, the traversal narrative is not limited, bringing infinite imagination and impressions to singers and audiences on the image of the ‘Lady’, thus creating circulation and continuance in the story of the lyrics.

The lyricist Vincent Fang’s introducing of the concept of “travelling” in the lyrics is not only a breakthrough in lyric writing, but it deepens the depth and breadth of expressing emotions within lyrics by adding a new way of expressing emotions through lyrics. When Fang first created “China Wind” lyrics, he wrote two versions of the lyrics of ‘Lady’: one is a “safe” version that conforms to the nature of the modern melody, and the other is the currently released one (Feng’s Talk, 2019). From the bold attempt of the songwriter and lyricist, this song is a challenge to the music market at that time, and its unique packaging and combination subverts the audience’s perception and

makes people feel that Chinese traditional elements can also enter the contemporary popular music market. However, for Vincent Fang himself, “China Wind” only represented a label that was given by the music market, but he insisted on creating Chinese lyrics during the past two decades, since researching and promoting traditional culture is a mission rather than simply a belief or business (Feng’s Talk, 2009). Jay Chou’s rap in ‘Lady’ achieved high quality technically, although it was his first attempt of integrating Chinese traditional elements into hip-hop music and applying it to Mandopop. The collaboration between Jay Chou and Vincent Fang created tremendous energy and creativity, reflecting a huge progress in Mandopop especially in the use of lyrics. From this point, the lyrics reflected the literate atmosphere of Chinese tradition, which played a crucial role in forming the Chinese style of this song.

The melody of this song is simple. It does not deliberately use the pentatonic scale to create a Chinese-style atmosphere but uses the harmony of minor keys to create a noncommittal sense (see the use of ninth and minor chords in Bar 35 and 37 in Figure 5-2). The whole song is in a minor key, and there are occasionally a few chords for tonicization in the middle that turn a certain phrase into a major key of dominant (see the modulation of Bar 45 in Figure 5-3). The verse switches between tonic chord and subdominant chord. The harmony of the two minor seventh chords is grey and ambiguous, which sets the tone for this song (see Bar 9-16 in Figure 5-1). The chorus uses a flattened supertonic chord and moves to the dominant seventh. This imperfect cadence creates a sense of continuation after incomplete termination (see Bar 31 in Figure 5-2). After the verse ends with the dominant seventh chord, the chorus does not return to the tonic chord but uses the submediant chord (see Bar 33 in Figure 5-2). This harmony gives the chorus a relatively sad colour, which brings a contrasting harmonic progression that follows. The flattened supertonic ninth chord is used following the chorus and then resolved the harmony in the tonic chord and subdominant chord. The second chorus uses the same harmony as the first but proceeds from the flattened supertonic chord to the supertonic minor ninth chord (see Bar 45-47 in Figure 5-3), rather than the regular supertonic half-diminished chord. This harmonic progression

gives the audience a bright feeling, while a following phrase directly modulates to the major of the dominant key. These complex and novel harmonic progressions are refreshing, rather than mass-produced with “cookie-cutter” patterns. Although the harmony of the fixed structure develops smoothly and harmoniously, it is easy to get tired of listening to it too much. The song ‘Lady’ uses uncommon chords and harmonic progressions to make it more eye-catching and more “China Wind” in style.

9
娘子却 依旧每日 折一枝杨柳你在那里 在小村外的溪边
Cm⁹ Fm⁹

12
河口默默等着我 娘子 依旧每日 折一枝杨柳你在那里
Cm⁹

15
在小村外的溪边 默默等待 娘子 一壶好酒再来一碗
Fm⁹ Cm⁹

Figure 5-1: Musical notation of ‘Lady’ (Bars 9-14).

Source available at: <https://www.gangqinpu.com/cchtml/1000781.htm>, captured on 03/08/2022.

The rhythm of the song is interesting and unique in Mandopop. Usually, the rhythm of most traditional folk-style songs is even and stable, and the most complex rhythm pattern usually involve dotted notes; the notes are harmonious, and all five notes within

the pentatonic scale are used. So, the rhythm is relatively fixed and lacks variation. Of course, this also relates to the thousands of years of Chinese culture and deep-rooted appreciation habits, that is harmony, while music must also pursue great harmony. However, the rhythm of ‘Lady’ breaks this harmony. ‘Lady’ adopts the method of “blanking” the strong beat by adding the rest sign on the strong beat, which breaks the traditional creative style (see Bars 9, 11 and 13 in Figure 5-1).

30
娘子她人在江南等我 泪不休 语沉默
G7(#9)

33
娘子却依旧 每日折一枝杨柳
Abmaj7 Db9

36
在小村外的溪边河口
Cm9

Figure 5-2: Musical notation of ‘Lady’ (Bars 30-38).

Source available at: <https://www.gangqinpu.com/cchtml/1000781.htm>, captured on 03/08/2022.

The lyric ‘Lady’ enters on different off-beats, similar to “lay-back” rap; some are on the last semiquaver note of the fourth beat (see Bar 30 in Figure 5-1), some are in the second quaver note of the first beat (see Bar 9 in Figure 5-2), and some on the

syncopated crotchet note of the first beat (see Bar 13 in Figure 5-1 and Bar 33 in Figure 5-2). Its sense of language is completely different from Chinese conventions. All emphasized words are on off-beats rather than strong beats. The accent in the language of lyrics is placed on the last beat, while the end syllable is placed on the strong beat. Jay Chou also deliberately inserts some phrases to break the integrity of sentences, giving people a broken feeling lacking the beginning and end of sentences. In addition, the rap lyrics are sung only on the fourth tone of Mandarin (there are four tones in Mandarin). Many audiences, especially the elder generation, cannot understand such lyrics in the rap style by Jay Chou, through which he breaks the norms of the Mandarin language and the creative methods of Mandopop. 'Lady' was created according to the rhythm and flow in the language first and foremost. Both the melody and lyrics follow the rhythm, even if the words are dismantled, deconstructed and reconstructed. The rhythm of the song is deliberately left blank by strong beats, and many rhythm patterns, such as dotted quavers, syncopation and anacrusis, are used to express the unstable feeling, which make this song more fascinating due to these lyrical and musical contradictions.

Figure 5-3: Musical notation of ‘Lady’ (Bars 42-47).

Source available at: <https://www.gangqinpu.com/chtml/1000781.htm>, captured on 03/08/2022.

According to the evaluations and comments by audiences in QQ Music, one of China’s largest music streaming platforms, ‘Lady’ is a piece of experimental music with ultra-idealism and realism.⁷ Jay Chou composes melodies that are highly chromatic and even lean towards modernist music and jazz to depict the desolation of the northwest region and “Chinese-style sadness” (Dongjiaren, 2022). It is interesting that these comments are still made one or even two decades after the release of ‘Lady’. After comparing other “China Wind” songs on the market, audiences often begin to marvel about the advanced Chinese-Western fusion of ‘Lady’. Although the melody and instrumentation of this song are not that complicated, the continuous chromatic ascending melodic development can be regarded as techniques of jazz music to raise tonality, which gradually increases the emotional tension of the song, and then pushes it to a climax. In

⁷ This is the author’s conclusion after seeing the general evaluation of ‘Lady’ by audiences in QQ Music. These audiences may not understand music so well, but they, from their listening experience, can feel the difference between this song and other “China Wind” songs. These comments are available at: https://c.y.qq.com/base/fcgi-bin/u?__=ZK1uMCR2fG75.

terms of instrumentation, there are no Chinese instruments used in this song, as the main instruments are guitar, bass and drum kit. These instruments use dense and short rhythmic patterns in their accompaniment, while even the longest note of the vocal accompaniment is only two beats. These kinds of accompanying instruments do not create the soundscape of long lines, and the range of notes is relatively narrow, only within two octaves, so that the music style of the song is very different to the drawly sound of Chinese traditional instrument. However, to create the unique R'n'B style, Jay Chou uses the tremolo on the solo of the fingerstyle guitar in the interlude that imitates the timbre of the *pipa* via short and quick circular finger movements.

As for the visual elements in the music video, the characters wear ancient costumes in the water villages of the south of the Yangtze River, and the scenes constantly switch between ancient times of the late Qing Dynasty and modern times. Jay Chou, wearing a black vest and cap, appears from the perspective of a third person to tell the story of a wife waiting for her husband to return from the war, however his appearance is incompatible and forming a strong contrast with the story plot in the music video (see Figure 6-1 and Figure 6-2). Visually, Jay Chou combines a Chinese ancient scene and character in a hip-hop soundscape to create Chinese artistic atmosphere and emphasise the historical context of this song, while using a dilapidated bistro as a backdrop to hint that there were frequent wars in the Saibei in ancient China. The “wife” in the music video adopts a variety of roles by wearing both a cheongsam, representing the south region of the Yangtze River (see Figure 6-1), and a front opening raiment and black waistcoats representing northwest clothing (see Figure 6-2). Using regional characteristics to depict the image of traditional Chinese females and different clothing emphasises the time-travelling narrative approach of the song. This strong visual contrast gives the audience a freshness that is both visual and sensory.

The new style created by ‘Lady’ received high praise. Xiaosong Gao, an authoritative pop singer, songwriter and producer of Mandopop, and former music director of famous record companies in China, such as Taihe Rye Music Co., Ltd., Xin Ao Music and

Alibaba Music, once commented highly on Jay Chou's music in his television programme Xiaosong's Talk (2013), stating that Jay created an important music genre in Mandopop history and promoted Mandopop to take a big step forward in its development. He also marvelled at the seamlessness between the lyrics and the song. The collaboration between Jay Chou and Vincent Fang created an energy and creativity that made a huge advancement in Mandopop. Gao (2013) argued that Jay Chou indeed created a style that melted into his own style instead of completely drawing on Western R'n'B and hip-hop music - Jay Chou's own musical style rather than so-called "China Wind" - which makes his own music complicated and interesting. Even though there were not many Chinese traditional elements used in this song, it is still clearly different from Western R'n'B and hip-hop music in terms of the theme, tonality, lyric and arrangement.



Figure 6-1: The "Niangzi" wears a cheongsam in the music video.

Source: Music Video of 'Lady' on YouTube, available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpP9dw_j2PI&ab_channel=%E5%91%A8%E6%9D%B0%E5%80%ABJayChou, captured on 24/01/2022.

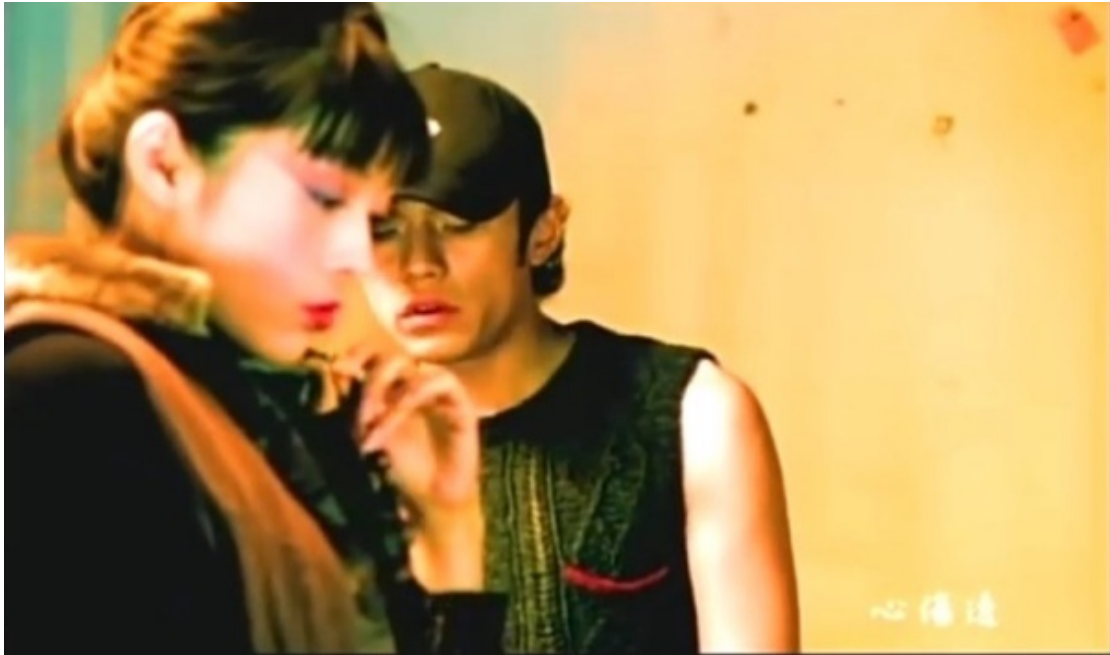


Figure 6-2: The “Niangzi” wears the northwest clothing in the music video.

Source: Music Video of ‘Wife’ on YouTube, available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpP9dw_j2PI&ab_channel=%E5%91%A8%E6%9D%B0%E5%80%ABJayChou, captured on 24/01/2022.

The release of ‘Lady’ in the 2000s was clearly an innovative moment, which broke through the conventional routine surrounding Mandopop creation and, of course, completely differed from the subsequent “China Wind” works that Jay Chou created later. It can be said that ‘Lady’ is unprecedented and unrepeatably. It is based on an innovative concept at the opposite end of routine music creation, showing Jay Chou’s musical personality and his techniques used on rhythm, harmony and instrumentation that go beyond conventional creation. Jay Chou’s later creations, such as ‘East Wind Breaks’ and ‘Chrysanthemum Terrace’, are comparatively basic, in which the rhythm is stable, the melody is in line with the tone of the lyrics, and the arrangement is more in line with folk music. Even though they are regarded as the most popular productions of “China Wind” Mandopop and even the entire Mandopop market and have won numerous awards, they no longer convey the refreshing and exciting sense of ‘Lady’. It is possible that the creative freedom of ‘Lady’ was not desirable in the Mandopop market of the 2000s, so Jay Chou had to create songs that adapt to market demands. Creation is not only determined by composers themselves, but by changes in the market,

media and record industry, which resonates with the emergence of a genre, thus formed the unique “China Wind” in Jay Chou’s style.

An Analysis of Jay Chou’s ‘East Wind Breaks’

Speaking of the “China Wind” that Jay Chou created later in line with the market, the song ‘East Wind Breaks’ (东风破 Dongfeng Po) is undoubtedly the most representative one and is the first pure and real “China Wind” Mandopop song according to the “Three Old and Three New” concept, as was raised by music producer Xiaoliang Huang (2011). Firstly, the title of the song is the name of Ci Diao in the Song Dynasty, which is normally used for pipa music to accompany song and dance programmes. “Po” or “Qu Po” means “Break”, indicative of the third movement of the whole song, an individual section that breaks the structure. The theme is based on the sorrow of parting, the bitterness of wandering and the lamentation of past memory. In the sadness of parting and wandering, it is the memory of the good times in the past. However, the emotions are not expressed directly, but with the graceful rhetoric of Song Ci (the poems in the Song Dynasty) and with the help of beautiful images and clever rhetoric that expresses emotions indirectly. Most of the rhetorical techniques use anthropomorphic techniques, transforming abstract emotions into nouns and then adding verb descriptions to concretize them, for example, “the sadness lonely stands at the window”; “a pot of wandering is difficult to enter the throat when roved all over the world”; and “the wine warms the memory, and the missing becomes thinner”. Within the lyrics, the “sadness”, “lonely”, “wandering”, “roved all over the world” and “missing” are not concrete images, but through personifications become a concrete description, an almost palpable object, which accentuates the weight of the imagery they represent. The sentences “candlelight awakes in the middle of the night, and it cannot bear to blame me”, how does “candlelight” “awake”, and how can it “blame?” are, of course, also a method of anthropomorphism - depicting the candlelight as a person and giving it a human touch. It seems that the protagonist is trapped by love, and he cannot bear to disturb or blame even the candlelight, and then uses this to bring out the loneliness that haunts him. In

terms of lyrical writing skills, these rhetorical devices and scene descriptions endow ‘East Wind Breaks’ with a Chinese style, placing the scene into an ancient era unknown to audiences. It is precisely because this ancient thousands-of-years-old dynasty is not in the present space and time, the lyricist can delicately create the beauty of the artistic conception of the lyrics and romantically construct the story. The pictures give audiences a space for imagination and tension during listening.

Musically, the song uses the G Gong heptatonic scale of *Qing Yue* (G Gong means G as the tonic is the first note of this seven notes scale), which is based on the pentatonic scale but adds two notes, *Qing Jue* (the note is a minor 2nd higher than the third note Jue) and *Bian Gong* (the note is a minor 2nd lower than the first note Gong). Although the notes are the same as the Ionian scale (the major scale), the heptatonic scale is based on the Chinese traditional scale, thus the soundscape is very different from Western major and minor keys (see Figure 7). To highlight the artistic conception of the Chinese traditional music style, the Qing Jue and Bian Gong are rare, while most notes of the melody are still based on the pentatonic scale. The small occurrence of Qing Jue and Bian Gong means to increase the richness of musical colours and to be closer to the tonality of modern popular music.

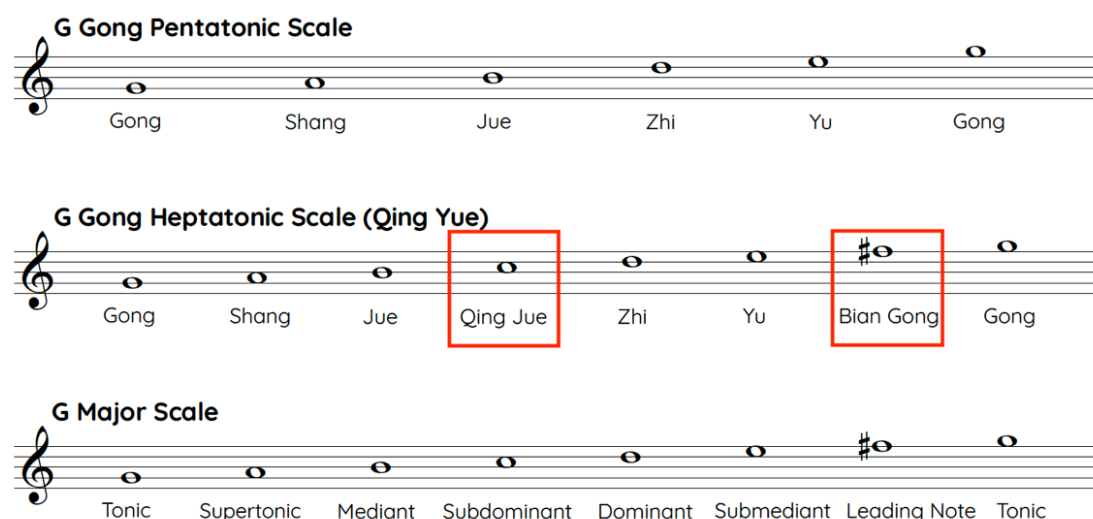


Figure 7: Harmonics of the pentatonic scale, heptatonic scale and major scale.
Source: created from Sibelius software by researcher, created on 27/01/2022.

'East Wind Breaks' is originally an ancient *pipa* song, but as a Mandopop song it uses an antique heptatonic scale, supplemented by the integration of traditional musical instruments, which enrich the traditional elements of the song. In addition to the common popular music instrumentation, such as the keyboard, guitar and drum kit, the harp is also added to the instrumentation to enrich the sound of plucked instruments. Compared to 'Lady', the reason why this song is called the first pure and real "China Wind" Mandopop is that it is created in a more regular routine by adding the essential Chinese traditional instruments *guzheng*, *pipa* and *erhu*. The verse part uses the *guzheng* as the main instrument, supplemented by the *pipa*, while the chorus part adds rich *pipa* timbre. The two instruments that run throughout the song belong to the Chinese stringed instruments where the fingers are used to pluck the strings. The timbre of *guzheng* and *pipa* is crisp and pleasant, and the playing techniques, such as scratching and finger shaking, are often used to prolong the musical sound and create a sense of space for the melody. The rhythm played by the *guzheng* and *pipa* blends with the rhythm of the guitar and drums, forming a richness of timbres between Chinese and Western instruments. In the interludes and endings, the *erhu* is used for the main melody, playing a coherent melody line, while its timbre has the characteristics of soft and lyrical elements, supplemented by the melody of the piano to increase a sense of hierarchy and expressiveness. Due to the tension of the *erhu*'s strings, the sound it emits is like the singing of a human being, so the *erhu* solo part seems to be the protagonist of the story who tells his sorrow and sadness. Lyrically, the song talks about regrets and nostalgia, while the tone of the whole song is sadness. The addition of these traditional instruments makes the melody of this song become more melodious. When the Chinese traditional musical instruments sound, the sadness of the lyrics is highlighted. The addition of these musical instruments also emphasises the Chinese style of the song by creating an antique atmosphere and at the same time highlight the Chinese cultural attributes and characteristics of traditional instruments in the song.

"China Wind" as a Successful Music Genre

The musical analysis of two songs shows that the success of “China Wind” is due to innovation, breakthroughs and, of course, compliance with the market demand. Ranging from a powerfully unconstrained style to a more fixed creative routine, it is undeniable that the songs are both in a Chinese style, even though there has never been a set formula or blueprint for “China Wind”. Even if the existing literature suggest a set formula or framework, these rules only exist in the analysis of the songs. The real “China Wind” is based on various existing styles, while adding some Chinese traditional elements - even if at times with only few Chinese traditional elements - to express China’s cultural and national identity. Whether it is the “Northwest Wind” of the 1980s, the “China Wind” of the 2000s or the more recent “Ancient Wind”, they are all commercial labels to refer to a certain form of music. The “Guofeng” or “National Wind” mentioned in recent years, which can be also translated as “China Wind” but differs from the one of the 2000s, reflects a wider generalization of these kinds of “wind” styles, and even includes more different “wind” styles that reflect a popular trend and then often become a musical style. When these terms are translated into English, they all denote a Chinese style. Although the term “China Wind” is the most widely mentioned and used because of the word “China”, it is generally referred to as a music style with Chinese characteristics and traditional culture.

Nowadays, “China Wind” no longer exists only as a musical style but also as a commercial genre to promote a particular singer, a song or an album, like the function of most music genres when they first emerge. However, “China Wind” reflects Chinese national identity by using the word “China” to define the national identity of this genre, promote Chinese-made music products or patriotic products to wider Chinese audiences, and evoke Chinese cultural identity by promoting the local culture and traditional cultural symbols. This means that in addition to its commercial value, the genre “China Wind” indicates Chinese identity in Mandopop, even though it includes a broad collection of various styles with Chinese elements, including “Northwest Wind”, “Ancient Wind” and others. “China Wind” has assumed a broader meaning and has become a national and cultural symbol in Mandopop. Increasingly more cultural

products are labelled in the “China Wind” category to emphasise Chinese identity. Because of China’s cultural policies in recent years, the cultural value of “China Wind” has thus been highlighted. “China Wind” has gradually become an expression of Chinese identity while promoting patriotism, which is its core social, cultural and political function in Mandopop. Therefore, the next section will focus on the functionality of Mandopop from the educational, aesthetic, sociocultural and political aspects by analysing representative musical examples to discuss its specific functions.

Promoting Patriotism via Popular Music: The Functionality of Mandopop

With the political propaganda such as “The Chinese Dream”, “Great Rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation” and “Confidence in its Culture” promoted by President Xi Jinping, more and more cultural works that embody national spirit and patriotism emerged as and when required. As President Xi Jinping promoted the cultural confidence, cultural foundation, cultural essence and cultural ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics, the CPC proposed clearer and more open cultural production (Feng, 2016: 16). The discourses of Chinese culture, as mentioned, played an important role in the constitution of Chinese ethnic identity, while the most significant factor in shaping the construction of Chinese national identity is the realization of great power or the “rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” (Chow, 1998: 22; Li, 2018: 55). Cultural confidence and promoting positive national sentiment have been priorities under China’s current leadership to bolster social cohesion and unity, thus it became one of the causes to be improved and strengthened in shaping the construction of Chinese national identity and cultural identity. As one of China's most popular music genres, Mandopop serves as an effective cultural tool to reflect and nurture sentiment of national pride, cultural heritage and Chinese identity. Mandopop was of course endowed with several functions, and its expression of national sentiment clearly aligns with and supports overarching state goals of boosting cultural confidence via popular culture to realize “The Chinese Dream” vision, which serves functions of social cohesion and identity construction. In this

section, the functionality of Mandopop for promoting patriotism will be further explored.

First, the government's political and cultural propaganda as the crucial elements that affect the popular trend of music and market demands will be discussed. As highlighted in the Literature Review on the political ideologies of "The Chinese Dream" and "Four Matters of Confidence", the realization of "The Chinese Dream" and the "Confidence in Chinese Culture" is inseparable from the prosperity of Chinese culture and literary and artistic undertakings. To create excellent works worthy of the times and build literary and art groups worthy of both morality and art, the CPC Central Committee controls the general direction of the development of Chinese culture, especially the guiding ideology for the creation of cultural, literary and artistic works that must adhere to people-centred creativity and infuse the spirit of the Chinese nation. These ideas strongly strengthen and improve the CPC's leadership over literary and artistic work. Referring to President Xi's perspective on Chinese literature and art, he emphasized the need for them to reflect the style and atmosphere of the times while inheriting and carrying forward excellent Chinese traditional culture, that is, Chinese literature and art should provide positive spiritual energy and contribute to the modernization and realization of "The Chinese Dream" (*People.cn*, 2015b). This statement represents a specific viewpoint and policy direction put forth by President Xi, reflecting the government's emphasis on promoting cultural continuity and national identity through literature and art, aligning them with broader national goals. However, different individuals and scholars may hold varying opinions on the role and direction of literature and art. Some may emphasize artistic freedom, creativity, and diverse expressions, while others may prioritize cultural preservation and social responsibility. Perspectives on the relationship between literature, art, and national agendas can differ based on cultural, political, and historical contexts.

With the continuous progress in Chinese society, culture – as a kind of "soft power" - has gradually become an important factor in measuring a country's comprehensive

national strength. The inheritance and development of Chinese traditional culture is based on the confidence in its culture, while it is also a means for realizing ethnic and cultural identity. As a cultural phenomenon, music not only includes individual works and theory, but also conveys a sense of human history and civilization (Wan, 2020: 15). Li and Fang (2016: 131) illustrated that there is a symbiotic relationship between the spirit of the times, Chinese spirit and Chinese music, which is evident by tracing back to the theory of “musicians are those who understand ethics” in Yueji. In ancient China, the theory and practice of music was strongly influenced by Confucianism with its harmonious and educational function (McLean, 1998: 41). Since the Warring States period (479-221 BCE), people regarded music as a foundation of civilization. Music has an equal status with the rites and is “a means of cultivating individuals and educating the masses” (Brindley, 2016: 255). Thus, music became one of the most valued cultural arts due to its political and social significance, as it also connects with morals, integrity and cultural ethos since the ancient time. In this context, music artificially connected with the spirit of the times and individual personality, while the concept of “Yuetong Ethics” became the theoretical basis for expressing the Chinese spirit through Chinese music culture (Li and Fang, 2016: 133; Liu & Cui, 2016: 190). This research proposes “Yuetong Ethics” as a theoretical lens through which to understand connections between music and influences like political and social contexts. However, the thesis does not assert this perspective as absolutely determining influence or as a sole valid framework but only connects Mandopop with inheriting and developing traditional music culture.

There is an inseparable and close relationship between Chinese traditional culture and popular music. Chinese traditional culture provides original material for the development of popular music, which includes ideological wisdom, tenacious fighting spirit, integrity-based morality, the unity and harmony between human beings, nature and society, as well as noble moral sentiment and self-cultivation. At the same time, popular music provides new ideas for the inheritance of Chinese traditional culture, thereby actively promoting Chinese traditional culture through a wide range of audience

groups and diversified ways of communication (Wang, 2015: 15-7). Because of the sociality and dissemination of popular music, it can imperceptibly transmit advanced values into people's ideology and social progress, which plays a value-leading and guiding role (Hu, 2018: 32; Yan, 2017: 81-2). In this view, "excellent" popular music not only has unique artistic and cultural functions, but also coincides with the meanings of socialist core values, and is an important carrier to spread Chinese culture and the confidence in Chinese culture (Yan, 2017: 81). Promoting self-confidence in music culture comes exactly from the deep foundations of traditional music. The music from different minorities developed with unique cultural identities and participates in international cultural communication. However, due to the impact of foreign music culture and the influence of network media, the inheritance and development of Chinese traditional music culture was to some extent hindered (Liu and Cui, 2016: 190-1).

Therefore, seeking breakthroughs to preserve and carry forward traditional music in the development of Chinese music provides a new challenge for promoting confidence in its culture. This also explains why "Chineseness" exists in Chinese popular music or Chinese music more generally. Thus, reason for discussing the functionality of Mandopop is that today's Mandopop inherits the Confucian concept of "Yuetong Ethics", carries forward the tradition of Chinese music culture, and reflects strong national identity and cultural identity. As an important part of Chinese literary and artistic creation, Mandopop has aesthetic ideological attributes and educational aesthetic functions of Chinese culture. Popular music culture combines the cultural elements of excellent traditional music, which fully embodies the uniqueness of Mandopop music culture and distinguishes it from the music culture of other countries (Wang, 2019: 145).

The Uses and Functions of Mandopop

Based on the historical background of Mandopop and the special social and cultural context of its development, this section explores the uses and functions of Mandopop.

The interviewees held differing opinions on this matter. For instance, Mr Yuchuan Wen does not think music is functional:

Music can be used by different classes, but these functions do not exist. Or to be more precise, music should be a carrier, and it does not have these functions. Chinese music is of course not special and does not have these functions. (Yuchuan Wen, Foshan, 27 November 2019)

Ms Wenyin Qiu provided a different opinion:

The first function of music is expression and the second is education. For example, in the past, the function of rites and music in China was education... There should also be in the West, for example, the Catholic Church, which also has the role of enlightenment. (Wenyin Qiu, Guangzhou, 5 December 2019)

By contrast, Professor Shenshen Wang and Dr Yuan Wang put more emphasis on the aesthetic value of music, rather than the educational and social function:

The aesthetic taste and aesthetic habits of the nation cannot be equated with the specific artistic expression, which is unspeakable. (Shenshen Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

From the perspective of musical aesthetics, the music itself does not convey any ideas or anything concrete. However, I personally do not like the educational function of music. I want to emphasize the aesthetic function of music. Music with too much emphasis on education has no beauty. (Yuan Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

Nevertheless, in certain political historical periods, such as the 70th anniversary of the founding of the PRC in October 2019 and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CPC in July 2021, there indeed emerged numerous popular songs that serve politics,

which can be regarded as odes to the nation and the party. As Professor Shenshen Wang said:

Even if the music itself does not want to serve politics, it must serve, and it eventually serves politics. But art has its own laws of development, and it cannot be violated. If it is violated, it will have bad consequences. Art and politics are in a helpless and chaotic relationship. It is impossible to completely get rid of this relationship. (Shenshen Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

The emergence and popularity of these songs generates social functions distinct from ordinary commercialised popular music, but the essence and artistic value of music itself should not be ignored. These opinions illustrate the multiple functions of Mandopop, including the educational, aesthetic, sociocultural and political dimensions.

Firstly, due to the integration of traditional culture, Mandopop has a certain educational function that inherits and carries forward Chinese culture. For example, Teresa Teng's 'Going to the West Building Alone' (独上西楼 Dushang Xilou) is based on the poem 'To the Tune of Xiangjianhuan: Silently Going to the West Building Alone' (相见欢·无言独上西楼 Xiangjianhuan, Wuyan Dushang Xilou) by Li Yu, the emperor of the Southern Tang Dynasty, and expressed the sorrow of separation. With the popularity and promotion of the "China Wind" Mandopop, more traditional elements, such as ancient poems, national instruments, historical stories, myths and legends were integrated into Mandopop, which endows it with deep cultural connotation and educational significance. Gong and Fang (2012: 121) believe that many "China Wind" popular songs embody the national spirit and patriotism in terms of not only the theme but also the content to enhance national pride and self-confidence, especially Jay Chou's "China Wind" songs. For example, 'Huo Yuanjia' describes the broad and profound martial arts; 'Compendium of Materia Medica' combines the name of traditional Chinese medicine and spirit of saving lives, and 'Longquan' images the magnificent beauty of mountains and rivers in the Chinese nation (Gong and Fang, 2012: 121; Zou and Long, 2019: 103). Zou and Long (2019: 103) present the large-scale

cultural programme *Everlasting Classics* launched by China Central Television as an example of how integrating classical poems into Mandopop can culturally educate audiences. They discussed how this approach gives new life to poems and shares human stories behind them, and the focus is on how this brings an audio-visual experience of “China Wind” to audiences. They view this as an effective means of cultural communication and spreading Chinese cultural traditions, meanwhile, they also noted the programme aligns with China’s stated cultural propaganda goals.

Mandopop also integrates rich Eastern and Western contemporary literature in the lyrics or themes of the songs. For example, Tayu Lo’s ‘Four Rhymes of Homesickness’ (乡愁四韵 Xiangchou Siyun) is based on the poem ‘Four Rhymes of Homesickness’ by Taiwanese poet Guangzhong Yu to express delicate but profound homesick emotions; Bai Wu’s ‘Norwegian Forest’ (挪威的森林 Nuoweide Senlin) is based on Haruki Murakami’s novel *Norwegian Wood*, which depicts how to untie the shackles of the heart in search of pure land of the soul; and Pu Shu’s ‘Life Like Summer Flowers’ (生如夏花 Shengru Xiahua) is based on Indian poet Tagore’s poem ‘Let Life be Beautiful Like Summer Flowers’ from *Stray Birds*, that expresses a calm attitude towards life. These literary works from different countries and regions are localised and used in Mandopop, providing songs with a variety of cultural content and making them educational to the younger generation in China. According to Dr Yuan Wang, Mandopop, with its expression of “Chineseness”, serves an educational function by conveying Chinese traditional culture to the younger generation:

From this perspective, music with “Chineseness” has educational effects, such as promoting studies of Chinese ancient civilization and traditional culture. It can be used as a part of the entire traditional education system. In the education of traditional culture, they may learn *The Analects of Confucius* and *Zhuangzi*, accompanied by elegant music that suits them, or the music that combined with the imaginary mood when they learned *Xiaoyaoyou*. In this case, music is an

auxiliary means to allow you to experience traditional ideas and traditional culture more emotionally. (Yuan Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

Similarly, Ms Oushu Lin observed past developments and highlighted the educational function of Mandopop under the impact of rapid capitalization and economic development, particularly in the genre of “China Wind”:

Music is functional... I think it is in line with the social environment at that time, because China’s music market was very closed, but after the reform and opening up, the Chinese music market has been impacted by unprecedented capital. Then many people will lose something in the process of moving forward, such as traditional morality. There have been no incidents of toxic milk powder and counterfeit drugs in China before, I think in the process of moving forward, some of them have forgotten all the traditional Chinese morality and ethics. So, I think the current “China Wind” music is very consistent with the social demands, that is, the people’s pursuit of the simple and kind side of their heart. (Oushu Lin, WeChat Audio Call, 27 March 2020)

These perspectives suggest that both Dr Yuan Wang and Ms Oushu Lin view Mandopop, particularly when it incorporates traditional cultural elements or embodies “China Wind”, to educate and rekindle moral values among the audience. By engaging with Mandopop, the younger generation and society can reconnect with their cultural roots and embrace moral ideals, countering the potential loss of traditional values in the face of rapid modernization and economic development. While these viewpoints reflect the opinions of the individuals interviewed, they may not represent a consensus among all scholars or experts in the field. The relationship between Mandopop, cultural education and moral values can be complex and open to interpretation, with different perspectives existing on the effectiveness and impact of music in shaping societal values and morality. Some proponents argue that music, including Mandopop, has the potential to influence and shape individuals’ values and moral outlook, while sceptics argue that the influence of music on values and morality is indirect and mediated by a

variety of contextual factors, which means, they acknowledge Mandopop may play a role in reflecting or reinforcing certain values, but it is only one among many factors that shape an individual's moral compass. However, although the state's involvement in shaping the content and direction of popular music can limit artistic freedom and diversity, in certain contexts, Mandopop has been utilized as a tool to strengthen its cultural and educational function, particularly among the younger generation, under officially promoted cultural policies.

For example, a female singer from mainland China, Bichang Zhou, released 'Liuyang River 2008' (浏阳河 2008, Liuyang He 2008) in 2008 that adapted its original folk song, and invited Ms Guyi Li, the original singer of 'Liuyang River' (浏阳河 Liuyang He), to sing this new version together. This song was thereby in line with both new creativity and old tradition. 'Liuyang River' is a classic Hunan folk song based on the folk music of Hunan Province, and sings praises to Chairman Mao Zedong who was born and raised near the Liuyang River. The lyrics are easy to understand and sincere, and the melody is beautiful and tactful, with a strong influence of local folk music of Hunan Province in China. 'Liuyang River' is deeply loved by the common people and has been sung by generations, penetrated the years of generations, echoed in every corner of history, and inspired generations to forge ahead bravely. This song is like a carrier to cross national borders, languages and cultures, and became a cultural symbol of Liuyang. It uses the special feature of Liuyang River both as the river's name and song title, and turns 'Liuyang River' into a symbol of the time. At the beginning of the music video, a specific line, which also appears in the lyrics, goes: "A song is a river, flows through the loneliness and flows into my dream. Let me experience what you experienced and have the courage to be different" (see Figure 8). 'Liuyang River 2008' not only expresses nostalgia but also connection, difference and reconciliation between two generations. In the introduction, Guyi Li sings the first 8 bars in the original key G Gong pentatonic, which is also the most familiar to the audience. Then, the verse turns into a standard R'n'B style and modulates to B major without the use of archaic lyrics or traditional instruments. The first line of the chorus repeats the first 8 bars but adds a

short pattern “I heard you sung” before it. At the end, when the chorus is repeated, the melody modulates to the higher C sharp major, heightening the mood. Bichang Zhou sings “listen to you are singing”, and then Guyi Li sings the familiar tune of ‘Liuyang River’. This alternation between the singers reflects cultural inheritance and intergenerational reconciliation. The difference is that Guyi Li always sings the original song in a dialect tone, while Bichang Zhou uses Mandarin pronunciation, expressing generational differences and fusions in the different pronunciation of syllables. The generational issues reflected in this song relate to inheritance and development of the spirit, ideology and culture between two generations. The Liuyang River is regarded as the “mother river” of the Hunan area that symbolically flows from one to the next generation, as the song ‘Liuyang River’ has been passed generationally. ‘Liuyang River’ is both a river and a song. In the “long river of time”, the younger generation sings the song that the elder generation sang, through which they finally converge, and its cultural symbolism will continue to be inherited, carried forward and passed on to subsequent generations.

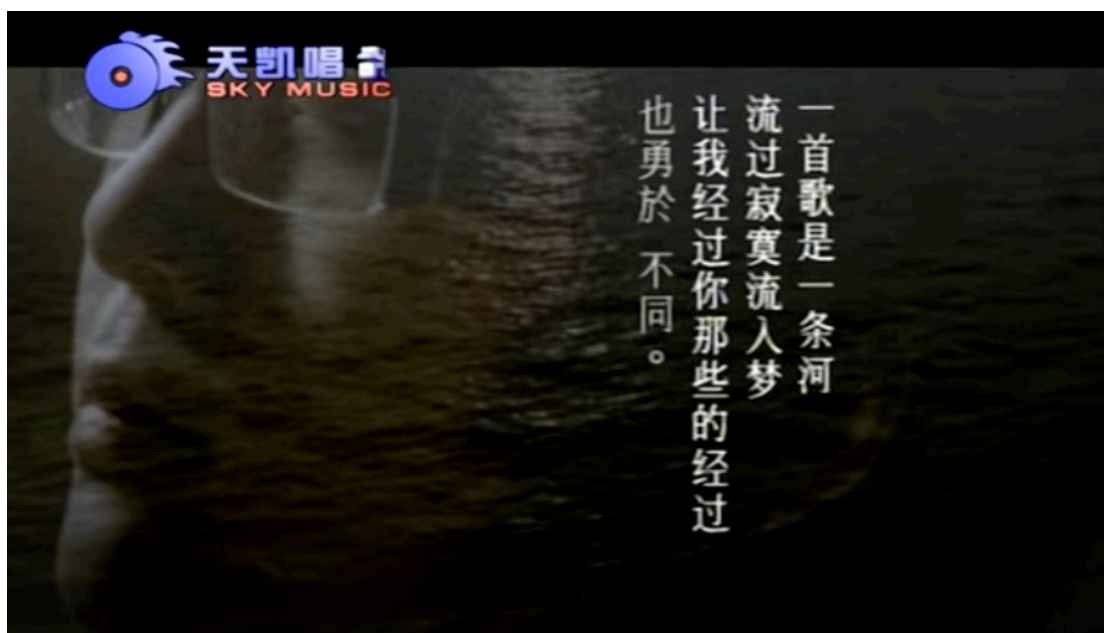


Figure 8: Music video screenshots of ‘Liuyang River 2008’.

Source: Music Video of ‘Liuyang River 2008’ on YouTube, available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DY1_00uV5Ao&ab_channel=BIBICYBER, captured on 28/01/2022.

Moreover, Professor Shenshen Wang emphasized the importance of the aesthetic function of Mandopop. He believes that artistic individuality and artistic level are the top priority:

For artists, the most important thing is the personality of art. If the artists lack of their own personality, nationalism and epochal character will be meaningless in their works. For example, if you add folk elements to the music, is there Chinese flavour? Does it reflect “Chineseness”? If the quality of the work is not good and there are no features or characteristics, then such a work is meaningless, even if it reflects “Chineseness”. (Shenshen Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

Even if music is given multiple functions, its aesthetic standards cannot be underestimated, which has undergone multiple changes over time to keep pace with the times. Today’s Chinese music combines modernity and tradition, fusion and “pure” culture, as well as world and ethnic identity. These multiple aesthetic standards are intertwined, making Mandopop more eclectic and inclusive. For example, during the 2009 Spring Festival Gala, which is a global synchronous live broadcast, folk singer Zuying Song and pop singer Jay Chou sang both ‘Spicy Girl’ (辣妹子 La Meizi) and ‘Compendium of Materia Medica’ (本草纲目 Bencao Gangmu) (see Figure 9). A few years prior, a netizen felt that the two songs are similar, so Zuying Song and Jay Chou combined the two songs for “fun” and found the finished product to be seamless, even with the R’n’B influence in ‘Spicy Girl’. During the 2009 Spring Festival Gala, this interesting combination of two different songs enabled the audience across the country to experience this fusion of modernity and tradition, involving both modern popular songs with rap and street dance and traditional folk songs performed on Chinese instruments.

Zuying Song’s ‘Spicy Girl’ was originally a folk song with Hunan flavour. The lyrics of the song summarize a way of life where people love to eat chilli peppers in areas with heavy humidity, such as Hunan, Jiangxi and Sichuan, and restore the personal characters in a straightforward way. Throughout the song, the word “spicy” appears in

every line of the lyrics. The melody is catchy and full of charm, marking the song not only in a strong national style, but also incorporates elements of the times, becoming one of the representative works of new folk songs. By contrast, ‘Compendium of Materia Medica’ by Jay Chou is a “China Wind” song that expresses the national spirit and satirizes those who worship things foreign and fawn on foreign countries. ‘Compendium of Materia Medica’ is the original name of an ancient Chinese medicine book, while the traditional Chinese medicine best represents China – besides Kung Fu. Jay Chou uses this song to tell the younger generation that these traditional Chinese medicines are hard to come by and deserve everyone’s pride, thus encouraging the younger generation to pay more attention to Chinese culture. Visually, Zuying Song wears a flashy gig dress, while Jay Chou is in a seemingly casual hip-hop style (see Figure 9).

Clearly, the aesthetic function of Mandopop plays a crucial role in spreading traditional culture through cultural differences and integration that was highlighted by this cultural collaboration, enabling the audience to understand that two songs from completely different eras and styles can be combined in this way. This kind of cultural collaboration that blends musical styles from different eras also showcases how Chinese culture can be adapted and integrated over time and constructs a new understanding and appreciation of traditions. At the same time, it also reflects ideas of ethnicity on the stage of the Spring Festival Gala. Performing both folk songs and popular songs together on official media platforms like the Spring Festival Gala combines the performance of diversity in Chinese culture and shared cultural identity through this hybrid music product. By virtue of its large platform, it has the potential to pass this evolution of musical and cultural diversity down to large domestic and global audiences. Additionally, it is acknowledged the event is shaped by a diversity of political, commercial and cultural influences, not just intended representations of a piece of music programme.



Figure 9: The different performing styles between Jay Chou and Zuying Song.

Source: Live Performance of 'Compendium of Materia Medica' and 'Spicy Girl' at the 2009 Chinese New Year Gala on YouTube, available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfgdqZPsz2w&ab_channel=CCTV%E6%98%A5%E6%99%9A, captured on 28/01/2022.

The sociocultural function of Mandopop cannot be ignored either because the development of Chinese music intersects with the social environment. Mr Xu Cheng believed that if national culture and sociality are discussed in popular music studies, then “China Wind” is a phenomenon that shapes the human environment. He confirmed that:

I think if a music style like Zhongguofeng represents not only personal feelings but a cultural phenomenon. For example, the red song is a phenomenon. It has a very strong sense of picture and empathy of revolution. But as far as I know, the Northwest Wind music is more like the description of personal life rather than a social and cultural phenomenon. For example, Mongolia has a special singing method, such as Homai, which uses the throat to make another sound. This is very unique, and only Mongolian music has been sung like this. It can represent the Mongolian culture and is also a cultural output. Just like listening to European and American pop music, the output of European and American pop music is based on

the singer's personal high-quality musical expression and strong singing skills. Among the jazz, R'n'B, hip-hop and rap music styles it shows, the individual singing method is very characteristic and obvious. You can even know which singer sang, but this is all the personal things. At the level of pop music, if you want to say the national culture and sociality, the Chinese style should not only describe the individual but should be a manifestation of the image, the shaping of a humanistic environment and a kind of cultural exchange. (Xu Cheng, WeChat Audio Call, 28 March 2020)

Meanwhile, Ms Oushu Lin also emphasised the social background and historical context of China when she considered the notion of "Chineseness" in "China Wind" Mandopop:

I think "Chineseness" is always based on social background. In the 1960s and 1970s, political demands led to the emergence of red songs, and in the 1980s, the reform and opening up led to the emergence of music encouraging people to strive for progress, because they are all in line with the needs of Chinese society at that time. So, I think it reflects "Chineseness" and Chinese influence. (Oushu Lin, WeChat Audio Call, 27 March 2020)

Ms Oushu Lin and Mr Xu Cheng both emphasize the significant role of "China Wind" in shaping the human environment. By referring to "China Wind", they likely allude to a cultural phenomenon characterized by the incorporation of distinctly Chinese elements, such as traditional instruments, melodies, or lyrical themes, into contemporary popular music. Their assertion that "China Wind" has an impact on national culture and sociality suggests that this musical trend contributes to shaping and reflecting the cultural and social fabric of Chinese society. It signifies a connection between music and broader cultural contexts, highlighting how popular music acts as a medium through which cultural identity and social values are expressed and disseminated. By incorporating traditional elements into popular music, artists

contribute to the preservation and promotion of Chinese cultural values, fostering a deeper connection between music and society.

Additionally, Ms Wenyin Qiu stated that music must conform to people's pursuit and ideas of life and culture at that time to reflect its functionality:

What was popular at that time, in line with the current ecological environment and cultural cognition, was popular music...No matter what core values or artistic genres it reflects, as long as the music that people like to sing is called popular music. (Wenyin Qiu, Guangzhou, 5 December 2019).

Ms Wenyin Qiu highlighted the nature of popular music and its relationship with the ecological environment, cultural cognition and the preferences of the public. Her perspective on popular music aligns with the social function of Mandopop. Mandopop artists and producers often pay attention to the tastes and interests of their audience, crafting songs that resonate with their listeners' sensibilities. This connection between artists and fans fosters a sense of community and mutual understanding, while Mandopop's connection with the ecological environment and cultural cognition is evident through its adaptation to the social and cultural context of its time.

Interestingly, the example provided by another interviewee, Professor Xin Tao, regarding Jian Cui's "ethnic rock" song 'Nothing to My Name' (一无所有 'Yiwu Suoyou') illustrates the sociocultural function of Mandopop. According to Professor Tao:

This is about the epochal character. In the first half of the 1980s, social conflicts were less intense. Because at the beginning of reforming and opening up, the economy and culture of the entire society were developing. Cui Jian's incident was a turning point, making everyone suddenly feel a little uneasy and confused in a relatively stable state of life. Therefore, I think that Cui Jian's music is more about expressing people's emotions about life, rather than having political functions.

This less intense social contradiction cannot be called politics. China's politics is also not the same as Western politics. Western politics is expressed by the opinions of different parties such as the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, and the Labour Party. However, the social contradictions expressed in Cui Jian's music have not yet reached the narrow interpretation of politics. It is at best a social and psychological reaction. If you want to observe this kind of social psychology, you have to look at it in the context of the entire 1980s. This song appeared in 1986, which is exactly in the mid-1980s. At that time, the public was just beginning to feel uneasy. When such anxiety is captured and amplified into a certain political function by people with ulterior motives, it is very regrettable for the music itself. Even so, the song itself has social value. (Xin Tao, Telephone Call, 14 November 2019)

This example highlights how Mandopop is both influenced by and influences the cultural Zeitgeist and sociocultural environment as China undergoes modernization. Mandopop artists and their music must align with the evolving ideas about life, culture and values of the audience to remain culturally relevant and popular. As a result, Mandopop serves as a cultural symbol of the shifting Chinese identities and cultural values across generations. The sociocultural role of Mandopop goes beyond mere entertainment. It has played an important role in reflecting and shaping Chinese culture over the decades. By capturing the sentiments, aspirations and social realities of different periods, Mandopop becomes a medium through which cultural expressions and societal transformations are conveyed and understood. The insights provided by Professor Xin Tao's interview, along with other first-hand perspectives, offer valuable insights into the interlinkages between Mandopop, Chinese identities and cultural values, emphasizing the dynamic nature of Mandopop as it both responds to and contributes to the ever-changing sociocultural landscape in China.

Mandopop's sociocultural function is also reflected in the expression of cultural themes and their significance to audiences and to the state. Mandopop serves as a key vehicle

for expressing resonant cultural themes and concepts to both domestic and global Chinese audiences. The cultural themes promoted through lyrical content and broader aesthetic concepts have deep significance in shaping cultural identities and social discourse. For example, the theme song of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 ‘Together for A Shared Future’ aimed to express themes of shared humanity and future in the context of globalization. It can be viewed as attempting to reflect an idea of globalised “Chineseness” through this culturally significant product. Moreover, there is another example of prominent cultural themes expressed through Mandopop, including nationalism, Chinese cultural heritage, Chinese traditions and cultural values. On 8 August 2014, on the sixth anniversary of the successful hosting of the 2008 Olympic Games, Beijing launched the first music-themed international cultural exchange programme, Beijing Olympic Music Week, and solicited the theme song for the Winter Olympics. This was authorised by the International Olympics Committee and was the first international cultural exchange programme through music held in the history of the International Olympic Games, while promoting the development of sports and cultural industry, and international music and cultural exchanges. The programme achieved the state’s vision of promoting national pride through sociocultural themes in the music that resonated with and enhanced people’s sense of national identity. The expression of certain themes aligned with the state’s social goals can boost the cultural influence and success of Mandopop itself, especially within China. Conversely, themes deemed sensitive are avoided or censored. The articulation and popularity of cultural themes through Mandopop thus resonate strongly with audiences while also serving socio-political functions depending on the themes promoted or constrained by the cultural environment.

Whether Mandopop has a political function, this point is the most divided. Some critics deny that music is politicised and instead focus only on its artistry, while others argue that music has always served politics, even if people are reluctant to admit it. However, it is undeniable that in the history of Mandopop’s development, there were revolutionary songs and odes for Chairman Mao Zedong, while more recent Mandopop

also plays a role occasionally in singing praises to the CPC and the nation. There also exist numerous patriotic songs called “red song”, which extol the revolutionary movements of socialism, the CPC and the proletariat. Because “red” symbolizes proletarian revolution and socialism, “red songs” represent the political orientation and ideology of the proletariat. Therefore, on specific days related to the celebration of the nation and party, creative music activities around “red song” usually increase dramatically. According to a journal article about “red songs” by one of my interviewees, Dr Qian Wang, (2012), the CPC government has repackaged traditional “red songs” that openly celebrate the party and socialism into popular song formats with modern beats and styles to make them more appealing to younger audiences, helping spread political propaganda through commercialized popular music. Meanwhile, the government has also adapted elements of genuinely popular music genres and incorporated ideological content and themes that align with the “main melody” into these songs, which means that popular culture should align with and reflect the country’s core socialist values and political priorities. For example, during the 70th anniversary of the founding of the PRC in 2019 and the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Party in 2021, the political function of Mandopop is very prominent, when numerous musical works and publications were released, such as “100 Outstanding Songs Celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the Founding of the PRC” and singing contests, such as Sing the Praise of China. Everywhere, people can hear songs praising the motherland and the CPC. These may not be Mandopop in the general sense, even though Mandopop is undoubtedly the most popular during that time, with numerous literary and artistic activities carried out across all regions under the guidance of local governments and CPC committees. The education department also organised for schools and universities to participate in arts performances. While some activities explicitly asked for the theme of patriotic songs, others did not, yet participants tacitly chose music works praising the motherland and the CPC not only to respond to the national agenda in mainland China, but also to achieve good results in the national competition. Since culture and arts development in China is closely related to the

government's cultural policy, the "tacit" meeting of the national theme and agenda is thus a hint for success.

Since the 70th anniversary of the founding of the PRC in 2019 to the 100th anniversary of the founding of the CPC in 2021, a song that could be heard everywhere was 'My Motherland and I' (我和我的祖国 Wohe Wode Zuguo, also translated as 'My people, My country'), a phenomenon also mentioned in President Xi Jinping's New Year's message "Seize the Day and Live It to the Full" in 2020:

The most memorable moment of 2019 was the celebrations for the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China ... All of China was arrayed in red with proud smiles on all faces as the song 'My Motherland and I' played throughout the streets and alleys. Patriotic feelings brought tears to our eyes, and patriotic spirit forms the backbone of the Chinese nation. All these merge into a surging current that sings an ode to New China and inspires us to work harder in the new era, filling us with boundless energy. (Language Tips, *China Daily*, 2020)

Released in 1985, 'My Motherland and I' is a well-known patriotic song with first-person lyrics expressing love for the motherland. It was handed down to the present and is still popular today, first because of its artistic quality and second because of its political function. Based on the qualitative questionnaire data, it is surprising to discover that among the participants, 28 of them mentioned 'My Motherland and I' when discussing their most important Mandopop songs. This unexpected finding challenges the initial stereotype that the song would not be classified as Mandopop by some audiences. One participant shared her perspective on the song, stating:

The song utilizes a lyrical and passionate style, skilfully blending a beautiful and emotionally evocative melody with simple and sincere lyrics. It effectively expresses people's deep emotional connection and admiration for our great motherland. (Questionnaire Participant No. 271, Tencent Questionnaire, 2019)

This participant's comment highlights the qualities that resonate with them and contribute to their perception of the song as Mandopop. The combination of a heartfelt

and expressive musical style, along with the song's thematic focus on patriotism and reverence for their country, creates a strong connection between the listeners and the song. It also underscores the diverse interpretations and associations that listeners may have with a particular song. 'My Motherland and I' has evidently struck a chord with these respondents, aligning with their understanding of Mandopop and its ability to evoke emotions and convey sentiments of national pride and admiration.

At the opening ceremony of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, specifically during the passing of the Chinese flag by representatives of 56 ethnicities and nationalities and from all walks of life, a young boy stood under the flagpole and played the loud and affectionate melody of 'My Motherland and I' on trumpet (see Figure 10-1). The passing of the Chinese flag by representatives of 56 ethnicities and nationalities and from all walks of life highlighted China's multiculturalism and the importance placed on promoting harmony and unity among its diverse population, aiming to showcase the country's commitment to inclusivity and its recognition of the rich cultural heritage and diversity within its borders (see Figure 10-2). On the one hand, by involving representatives from various ethnicities and nationalities, the ceremony highlighted China's multiculturalism and the importance placed on promoting harmony and unity among its diverse population. The act of passing the flag from person to person symbolized the collective responsibility and shared ownership of the nation's values and aspirations. On the other hand, by showcasing the participation of individuals from all walks of life, the ceremony aimed to reinforce the idea that the spirit of the Olympics transcends boundaries and embraces people from various backgrounds. It also highlighted the role of sports and cultural events in promoting understanding, respect, and cooperation among different cultures and nations. The passing of the Chinese flag served as a visual representation of China's commitment to celebrating and preserving the cultural identities and traditions of its diverse ethnic groups.



Figure 10-1: A Chinese boy performing ‘My Motherland and I’ at the Opening Ceremony of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

Source: The Opening Ceremony of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics on Migu Video, available at: <https://www.miguvideo.com/mgs/website/prd/detail.html?cid=722648245&source=search>, captured on 28/01/2022.



Figure 10-2: The flag passing session at the Opening Ceremony of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

Source: The Opening Ceremony of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics on Migu Video, available at: <https://www.miguvideo.com/mgs/website/prd/detail.html?cid=722648245&source=search>, captured on 28/01/2022.

At this special moment for China to show its unity and diversity to the outside world, the inclusion of the song 'My Motherland and I' and the representation of the younger generation playing it aimed to foster a sense of national pride and highlight the patriotic inheritance and development among the younger generation in China. The choice of this song was likely intended to evoke emotional connections to the motherland and evoke a strong sense of patriotism and showcased the active involvement of the youth in expressing their love for their country, attempting to highlight the continuity of patriotism across generations and evoke emotional connections to the motherland during this significant event. This occasion displayed China's economic and cultural strength and Chinese identity to the outside world, but also represented political unification that promoted national pride and patriotic feelings internally. The political function of Mandopop is thus not just about identity representation, but also about spiritual and patriotic feeling among the Chinese people.

Overall, Mandopop is endowed with educational, aesthetic, sociocultural and political functions in addition to being a commercial genre in the historical context of its development and in today's social and cultural context. In addition to its original artistic value, it has become a means of realizing the patriotic unity that China has always advocated. Whenever there are important events or major festivals, some Mandopop songs will be used to enhance, or at least express, patriotic feelings of the Chinese people on the mainland and overseas.

Conclusion

Within its historical background and sociocultural context, Mandopop has gradually formed its own market value through its national, social and cultural identities in changing environments, being constructed as a commercial genre while forming parallel relationships with other genres. Mandopop is the most popular one among all categories of Chinese popular music because of its commercial dominance, its rich historical background, its large audience, and its multiple distribution channels. Many sub-genres have been constructed within Mandopop with certain fixed creative criteria

promotion. Among these sub-genres, “China Wind” is the most representative one, which is not only the most successful genre in the 2000s, but also represents the collections of Chinese-style Mandopop to form a label with commercial and cultural value. However, from the original Chinese-style Mandopop, such as Jay Chou’s ‘Lady’, to the standardised productions conforming to the market seem to reflect a deliberate attempt of adding Chinese style elements to become “China Wind”. Chinese-style Mandopop is a kind of “wind”, and its literal translation shows its commerciality as a genre and its alternations in the market, while quickly becoming popular and quickly disappear again. When it is more of a trend and a style after the precipitation of the market, a fixed commercial label has been formed to emphasise its commercial value in the market in addition to artistic value and cultural value.

Mandopop reflects multiple functions during different eras. During its history, there was the earliest “school-song”, which used foreign songs with Chinese lyrics. As a new musical form, it had profound social internal impact and played a significant role in promoting school music education and China’s journey towards a modern society. The later “contemporary song” was rich in a wide range of creative material and form, covering many aspects of public life, thoughts and emotions that ranged from country and society to family and the individual. Meanwhile, revolutionary songs had obvious political and social functions. After the policy of reform and opening-up, Mandopop began to have its own market, while encountering unprecedented cultural and economic impacts. While expressing a unique Chinese identity, Mandopop slowly adapted to the market and catered to market demands. The functions of Mandopop have become more diverse, especially after its commercialization. In today’s political environment that emphasizes Chinese cultural self-confidence, Mandopop songs in an obvious Chinese style and with a strong Chinese identity have become vehicles for expressing and promoting patriotism within this historical background and sociocultural context.

While Mandopop became a means to promote patriotism and inherited the national spirit, nationalism and national identity are themes worth of further exploration. In the

next chapter, expressions of nationalism and national identity in Mandopop will be the focus, which will define the key terms of nationalism, and how it is constructed and reflected in China. The chapter will explore how nationalism and national identity is expressed in Mandopop by analysing case studies of representative musical examples.

PART III

EXPLORING “CHINESENESS” IN MANDOPOP: THEMES AND ISSUES

Chapter 4

National Identity and Nationalism in Mandopop

While exploring Chinese identity and how it was formed and reflected in Mandopop in the Literature Review, the notion of “Chineseness” was mentioned as a general concept to describe Chinese identity, including national identity, cultural identity and social identity. From the different perspectives by academics and music professionals on the discourse of “Chineseness” in Mandopop discovered during fieldwork, the most representative notion mentioned by participants was “nationalism”. The participants tended to refer to nationalism to describe a phenomenon of “Chineseness” in Mandopop. Thus, this chapter will mainly discuss the problem of nationalism and national identity that is expressed in Mandopop. In the first part, the definition of state and nation will be explained as well as the differences between them. Then, there will be a discussion of the origin of nationalism in the Western world. China as a nation-state with multiple ethnic groups is quite complicated in its national identity. Defining the meaning of state and nation will help to explore China’s multinationalism. The second section in this chapter explores the development of nationalism in China, starting with the origin of nationalism and its development in contemporary China, which evolved as an identity to maximize national benefits. The multiple identities of Chinese nationalism may reflect differences between Han nationality and other ethnic groups. The third section will discuss how national identity existed and developed in Mandopop historically, which illustrates the existence of national identity and its changes. Chinese music developed at the peak that expressed people’s patriotism due to the war against aggression; it awakened Chinese nationalist ideology and, at the same time, stimulated Mandopop and its development. National identity exists alongside the development of Mandopop, and it also changes in its different expressive forms. Moreover, in interviews during fieldwork, the research participants mentioned nationalism when they talked about “Chineseness” and gave their own opinions about nationalism as it is reflected in Mandopop. By drawing on their thoughts, this chapter will thus also

demonstrate the debate on the construction and expression of national identity and nationalism in Mandopop.

The State, Nation and Nationalism: Defining the Key Terms

There is some confusion around the concepts of state and nation, the relations and differences between them, and the concepts of society, communities, associations, races and tribes are easily confused. Harley provided broad distinctions between the concepts of society, community and association:

“Society”, for example, may be defined as a combination of men and women, in which, by reason of common ideas and habits or the pursuit of a common employment, such men and women act in some sort of a complementary relation to each other. “Community”, on the other hand, carries with it the implication of neighbourhood or locality, the men and women concerned being within the same superficial area. Lastly, “association” is best limited to cases where there is some sort of conscious realization of the need for combination as in the case of the voluntary societies to which reference has been already made. (Harley, 1925: 178-9)

Differing from the concepts mentioned above, the concept of the “state” is understood in relation to the nature and basic characteristics of the actual state, which requires historical discovery and philosophical thinking. Thus, in this section, three key terms of discussions of national identity in Mandopop will be defined, which are the state, nation and nationalism.

The state consists of a multitude of people united, thus breaking the circle of single families and forming ethnic groups, and then nations. According to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, “state” means one of the political units that some countries are divided into, and it is also a country or its government. At a higher stage of civilization, there can be no state without a nation (Blotchily, 2000: 22-3). “Nation” was used in a cultural sense

rather than a political sense in German (Study Group of Member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, cited by Butt, 2010: 34), and this cultural sense of state theory may also apply in other Communist countries. Due to the multifaceted character of nations, Socrates and Plato identified the surface “national” of the ancient Greeks from other groups based on ethnic, linguistic and historical criteria. Moreover, the medieval chronicler indicated that “different peoples” can be also differentiated based on “descent, manners, language and laws” (Lawrence, 2014: 2).

“Nation” means a country, especially when thought of as a large group of people living in one area with their own government, language and traditions, or it can also refer to a large group of people of the same ethnic group who share the same language, traditions and history, but who might not all live in one area. From the definitions of these two words, their difference is obvious: that is, “state” is more of a construct to describe the political concept of a country, while “nation” embodies a group related to multiple cultural elements, such as literature, history, language and tradition.

The inherent amalgamation and intersection of cultural, physical and temporal boundaries reflect rather well the fractured and complex condition of our world when we are asked to re-examine what we assumed were the well-established concepts of the nation, citizenship and the nation-state. (Harris, 2009: 145)

In the Chinese context, China is a multi-ethnic country with a diverse range of cultures and ethnic groups. This diversity has a significant impact on Chinese musical and cultural products, which can vary greatly depending on specific sociopolitical and historical contexts. Chinese nationalism can be seen as hybrid due to the interactions and communication between different ethnic groups within China. Culturally, while there is a dominant Han Chinese culture that has historically influenced much of China’s cultural production, there are also numerous minority ethnic groups with their own distinct traditions, languages, and artistic expressions. These minority ethnic groups have made significant contributions to Chinese culture, and their unique musical and cultural practices have been incorporated and integrated into the broader Chinese

cultural landscape. This blending and exchange of ideas and artistic expressions between different ethnic groups have resulted in a diverse and hybrid Chinese cultural identity. For instance, Tibetan group ANU (meaning “youth” in Tibetan) once participated in a talent show called “I am a singer”, which is a top singing competition in China. ANU adapted OneRepublic’s ‘Apologize’ that rearranged classic and typical Western popular music with Mandarin lyrics, added Tibetan rap, integrated Tibetan opera in the interlude part, and used many Tibetan musical instruments. This is a typical cultural hybrid sense reflected in Mandopop that expresses multiple national identities in one song, not only Han national identity and Tibetan national identity but also Western and Eastern identities. However, within China’s multi-ethnic context, tensions and challenges related to cultural identity and nationalism can arise. The country is home to a diverse range of ethnic groups, each with its own distinct cultural traditions, languages, and histories. In some regions, struggles for cultural autonomy, representation, and recognition of minority cultures and languages persist. These tensions and challenges are not limited to specific domains but can also be observed in popular music from a cultural perspective. Artists may use music to express their regional identities and perspectives, reflecting the cultural diversity within China. This can be seen in the incorporation of regional musical styles, languages, and themes in popular songs. Meanwhile, the Chinese government plays a role in promoting national unity and cohesion. Officially sanctioned songs and cultural policies are implemented to foster a sense of patriotism and collective identity. These efforts aim to emphasize the shared heritage and values of the Chinese people across different ethnic groups. It is important to note that while tensions exist, they do not solely define the relations between different cultural identities within China. Cooperation and exchange also play a significant role. Artists from diverse backgrounds often collaborate, blending different musical styles and cultural elements to create innovative and inclusive works. Through such collaborations, cultural exchange and mutual understanding can be fostered, contributing to a more harmonious and diverse cultural landscape.

There also exists nationalism as a relatively new and modern phenomenon that is not the product of a single historical event but is shaped by different stages of history and contains cultural and ethnic orientations (Butt, 2010: 35). As for the origin of nationalism, its existence and emergence could not be predicted. Greenfeld (2019: 13-4) thought Shakespeare's five historical plays described the circumstances in which nationalism emerged, that is, the emergence of the ideas of nation and equality in the 15th century that would distinguish modernity. Nationalism as a social-historical phenomenon that only appeared in modern times. It is generally believed that the trend of nationalism first started in Western Europe in the 17th century, and some believed to have originated in Britain and France in the 18th century, and later expanded to other European countries and the Americas region. In the 20th century, it spread to every country in the world (Xu, 1998). According to the order of its emergence and the specific historical impetus, the modern world's nationalism produced in the process of world's modernization can be roughly divided into two types: endogenous nationalism or Western European nationalism produced by industrialization and the development of civil society, and exogenous nationalism or non-Western European nationalism caused by the expansion and aggression of Western European nation-states (Xie, 2010: 93). However, although nationalism seems to be "an outdated concept and a relic of colonialism" to some extent and it has lost its charm and glory of the past, the notion of nationalism is more clearly expressed and reflected in daily culture, such as national anthem, art and literature (Butt, 2010: 33). There are complexities inherent in different use of the word "nationalism", which can be used in describing an ideology, reflecting a political doctrine, as well as signifying people's sentiments that belong to the nation (Lawrence, 2014: 3).

Anderson (1991: 7) defined the notion of nation as "an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign". The existence of one nation is in relation to the existence of other nations, rather than of population, geography and race, and nationalism would be a reflection on a thought, or a movement based on the benefits of this nation itself (Liu, 2014: 10). In ancient China, Chinese civilization was

regarded as the centre of the world by Chinese people themselves because of the closed geographical environment and the lack of cultural communication. Without contact with foreign nationalities, there would be no national self-consciousness and modern national concept based on civilization and ethnic differences in ancient China. Nationalism plays a positive role in the development of a nation-state, such as maintaining national unity, safeguarding national independence and interests, providing a basis for the legitimacy of national authority, and promoting national economic development. Nevertheless, nationalism is still causing local conflicts within today's world (Xia, 2010: 31-5). It would be the same in contemporary China since the early 1990s.

With the rising power of China, Chinese nationalism began to be used in a patriotic propaganda campaign by the government to strengthen people's beliefs in Communist doctrine and theory. However, there have been movements and activities advocating for independence in certain regions like Tibet and Xinjiang within the context of Chinese nationalism. These movements often stem from historical, cultural and political factors specific to these regions. In Tibet, for example, there has been a long-standing movement advocating for greater autonomy or independence from China. Supporters of Tibetan independence argue for the preservation of Tibetan culture, religion and identity, as well as addressing grievances related to political and economic issues. Similarly, in Xinjiang, there have been movements and activities that call for greater autonomy or independence from China. These movements often highlight issues related to ethnic identity, religious freedom and human rights. The Chinese government, on the other hand, views these movements as threats to national unity and territorial integrity. They often attribute such movements to what they perceive as national separatism, in which they aim to employ various strategies, including a combination of policies addressing economic development, cultural preservation, legal frameworks, propaganda and social integration, to maintain a consensus in national ideology and promote unity among the diverse ethnic groups within China. These strategies aim to foster a sense of Chinese nationalism and national identity while

accommodating the unique characteristics and aspirations of different ethnic groups. While these strategies aim to maintain a consensus in national ideology, they have also faced criticism and scrutiny. Some argue that these policies may limit cultural and religious freedoms, particularly in regions with ethnic minority populations. The balance between promoting unity and respecting diversity remains a complex challenge for the Chinese government. This geopolitical tension indeed exists, however, the nationalism in modern China in this thesis is from a cultural perspective, to examine how culture can play a role in fostering a sense of national identity. By focusing on the cultural aspects of nationalism, the thesis can delve into discussions surrounding the role of cultural expressions, including Mandopop, in constructing and reinforcing a shared national identity. The next section will delve into the discussion of Chinese nationalism by examining its origin, rise and influence, exploring how nationalism has evolved and been shaped within China's cultural and historical context. This exploration will shed light on the complex interplay between cultural expressions, political dynamics and societal factors in the construction of Chinese national identity.

Nationalism in Contemporary China

Conceptually, since China became the PRC, the people are in the principal position in national governance. However, the words “people” and “nation” point to different meanings in different countries. These two historical products do not completely overlap. In ancient China, the notion of people was generally used separately as “human” (人) and “civilian” (民). There is a legend that Nuwa (Goddess of Sky-patching) made man in Chinese mythology, which shows that “human” is a species specially created by the gods of heaven and earth, which is the closest to God in all things in the world. Because people are divided into high and low rank, the powerful and noble king, duke, general and minister will equal those of the upper class as “human”, and the lower class is “civilian”, which refers to the ordinary people and the public from the perspective of ruling and being ruled. When human and civil are used together as people, it mostly refers to ordinary people, that is, the civilian (Li and Wang, 2016: 102-3). “People” and

“nation” are both products of history. But the difference is that people are born through a slow psychological process. In this process, many people gradually develop a way of life and form a society. However, the rise of a nation represents a political process, that is, the establishment of a nation. But the sense of security that the nation gives to the people is based on the establishment of the constitution and the foundation of nationality (Bluntschli, 2000: 79-80).

Chinese national identity is multiple, and its expressions are also diverse. Although it cannot be equal to Chinese national identity, it indeed reflects a national spirit and emotion. Hans Kohn (1965: 9) defines nationalism as “a state of mind, in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is felt to be due to the nation-state”. This research supports the notion that Chinese nationalism aligns with this definition, representing an ideological movement rooted in the interests of the Chinese nation and reflecting Chinese national ideology and individual and social group loyalty. However, it is important to acknowledge that there may be variations in national consciousness among different ethnic groups.

As mentioned in the introduction, the reason why this chapter focuses on nationalism is based on the participants’ perspectives during fieldwork. Dr Yuan Wang, a music lecturer from Wuhan University, mentioned that:

China is not a single-ethnic country but a country with the Han nationality as the main body and multi-ethnic coexistence. Is “Chineseness” to include 56 Nationalisms and their various hybrid identity? When some bands mentioned that they were “Chineseness” bands when they performed abroad, the audience would question that they are not “Chineseness”, they are Mongolian. Do we have to explain that “Mongolianness” is one of the 56 Nationalisms under “Chineseness”? Can different Nationalism be equivalent to “Chineseness”? I think this is also an issue worth exploring. (Yuan Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

He argued that the nature of multi-ethnic coexistence means that “Chineseness” cannot exist on its own in relation to nationalism, but also includes multinationalism. Indeed, there are 56 officially recognised ethnic groups in China, excluding the branches of these groups and other unofficial ethnic groups, while reflections on nationalism in each ethnic group differ. Thus, Dr Yuan Wang was unsure whether “Chineseness” refers to the whole Chinese nation or any specific ethnic group, or both. Chinese nationalism is quite complicated due to the state character of China, a unified country of multiple ethnicities.

On the one hand, China has been a unified country. Although there were many occasions of multi regime separation in the long history of China, it is temporary, and unity is always the mainstream of state development. For example, according to Zhan (2006: 68), there have been a total of 953-years grand unifications of the Qin and Han Dynasties (273-years unification), the Sui and Tang Dynasties (215-years unification), and the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties (465-years unification). On the other hand, there is the historical fact that China has been a multi-ethnic country since ancient times. It is a generally recognised as an objective historical fact that many ethnic minorities and Han people live together in the motherland during various historical periods. As early as 3000 years ago in the Zhou Dynasty, there were Dongyi, Huaiyi and other ethnic groups living together with the Huaxia nationality (the ancient name of China, it refers to Han nationality here) in China. Different ethnic groups formed during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, such as Man, Yi and Rong, while more different ethnic groups, such as Hsiung-nu, Qiang and Wuhuan, formed in the western region and southwest during the Qin and Han Dynasties. The ethnic groups of Sui, Tang and later dynasties are mostly formed by the development, evolution, integration and reorganization of ancient ethnic groups. Therefore, for 3000 years ago, different ethnicities have coexisted with the Han people, expressing their unique nationalisms in Chinese history.

Since China is a unified multi-ethnic country, and its nationalism has multiple identities, Chinese nationalism is not a single existence, but a coexistence of multiple nationalisms with its complication. The sociocultural backgrounds of various ethnic groups in China differ from each other, such as educational patterns, eating habits and lifestyles. Some provinces are established as ethnic autonomous regions, such as the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and Tibet Autonomous Region. To maintain the stability and balance of the country, policy implications for all ethnic groups are inevitable. According to Bluntschli's theory of the state from his book *The Theory of the State* (2000), he views the basic elements of the state are the people (or nation), the territory they inhabit, and the sovereignty or supreme power exercised over both by a government. In addition, nationality and the identity of the people united in the state are also important factors in Bluntschli's theory. He saw nations as core to strong, cohesive states. Bluntschli presents a classical legal and political theory that defines the state in nationalistic terms focused on stability, authority and progress through sovereignty and law. For a nation such as China, to maintain unity among and within all ethnic groups is a key concern for the CPC, while dealing with ethnic relations. According to Rule 4 of Chapter 1 General Principles, Constitution of the PRC:

The state protects the lawful rights and interests of the minority nationalities and upholds and develops the relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all of China's nationalities. Discrimination against and oppression of any nationality are prohibited; any acts that undermine the unity of the nationalities or instigate their secession are prohibited. The state helps the areas inhabited by minority nationalities speed up their economic and cultural development in accordance with the peculiarities and needs of the different minority nationalities. Regional autonomy is practiced in areas where people of minority nationalities live in compact communities; in these areas organs of self-government are established for the exercise of the right of autonomy. All the national autonomous areas are inalienable parts of the PRC. The people of all nationalities have the

freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, and to preserve or reform their own ways and customs. (Constitution of the People's Republic of China, 1982)

Therefore, the Constitution of the PRC has stipulated the equal relationship between all ethnic groups, which has also impacted on the emergence and development of Chinese nationalism. Due to the state's nature of multi-ethnic China, Chinese nationalism is generally considered as exogenous, which not only has the positive effect of promoting the self-sufficiency of the Chinese nation and its economic and cultural development, but also has the negative effect of developing into extreme nationalism (Xia, 2010: 31). Nationalism is regarded as the most conspicuous means of many contemporary Chinese ideologies (Cheng, 2011: 66). On the one hand, nationalism has become the most eye-catching political and cultural phenomenon in the world and has gradually become the ideological and legal basis for the rule of most countries, especially in today's ideological and cultural exchange, blending and confrontation. On the other hand, in the 100 years of the development of modern Chinese nationalism, it has played different roles in different fields and different periods, and it has a significant complexity. It is a sign and slogan against foreign aggression, but also reflects as the ideology of national prosperity and people's prosperity after the founding of new China. It is thus not only an ideology, but also a social movement (Pei, 2015: 56).

Tracing the history of Chinese nationalism, the question of the Chinese nation was raised because of an imminent crisis and to safeguard national independence and defend against foreign enemies following the First Opium War (1840-1842). Chinese scholars generally believe that Qichao Liang, a modern Chinese thinker, educator and historian, introduced the concept of nationalism to China and strongly promoted the development of Chinese nationalism in the late 19th and early 20th century (Lei and Liu, 2000: 98). Liang pointed out that strong cohesion and independence of a state is directly related to its survival or extinction (Liu, 2014: 10). After the Opium War, Western powers opened China's doors with aggression. To save the nation in time of crisis, Sun Yat-sen

incorporated nationalism into the system of *Three Principles of the People* - Principles of Nationalism, Principles of Democracy and Principles of People's Livelihood - held high the banner of nationalism against colonialism and feudalism, and thus explored the way to save the nation. This awakened Chinese people's national consciousness and made them realize that the Chinese nation is a community of common destiny, which is the germination of nationalism in modern China. Although Western powers expanded their territories in the name of nationalism in the 19th century, after the Second World War, nationalism gradually transferred away from military expansion and towards the influence of political, economic and cultural aspects (Pei, 2015: 56). In the early stage, Chinese nationalism was expressed as an individual's emotional connection to the group to which the individual belongs (Liu, 2012: 12). At this time, the thought of nationalism played a role in maintaining national unity and stability of China. In addition, Hass (1986: 726-7) defined nation, nationalism, nation-state, nationalist ideology and national myth by reviewing four authors' ideas on nationalism and defined a nation as a group that is made up of individuals with a collective consciousness and united by certain characteristics. He regarded nationalism as faith and social solidarity among individuals to form a nation, or that they may have formed a state already.

Primary Chinese identity is regarded as a cultural identity "with no perception of a Chinese state or nation apart from the cultural heritage" (Townsend, 1992: 98). Townsend's research is based on the theory of James Harrison and Joseph Levenson, who thinks that Chinese nationalism is mainly cultural, that is, taking Chinese civilization as the central object, rather than the state or/and ethical. According to his view, in the feudal period, Chinese nationalism was in the stage of determining ethnic and racial consciousness through culturalism led by Confucian principles and Chinese pure civilization. After the end of the second Opium War in 1860, China stayed at a stage that transformed from culturalism to nationalism. After the *May Fourth Movement* in 1919, Chinese nationalism started to prevail. China's nationalism today is a multi-level complex, including political nationalism, Chinese national identity and

cultural pride. All these emotions have been partially shaped or reshaped by the changing Chinese regime.

Contemporary Chinese nationalism encompasses a range of national emotions, sentiments and ideologies that have emerged in recent times. It often reflects the collective pride, identity and attachment to the nation among the Chinese population. This form of nationalism has indeed been observed since the early 1990s, coinciding with China's economic reforms and increased global integration. As China has become more interconnected with the world through trade, technology and cultural exchanges, these global influences have shaped and influenced the expressions of Chinese nationalism. However, it is important to note that nationalism is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, and its origins and influences can be traced back even further than the 1990s. Contemporary Chinese nationalism takes ethnicity, region, language, culture and other factors as natural, and uses national identity as the psychological foundation, while aiming at safeguarding the interests of the Chinese nation. It is highly important in the process of realizing China's modernization, which has this ideology and social movement at its basis (Gao, 2020: 32). The occurrence of some important historical markers, such as the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia by the United States on 8 May 1999, the reconnaissance of the US military aircraft over the southeast coastal waters of China that caused the crash of Chinese military aircraft on 1 April 2001, the visit of the former Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to the Yasukuni Shrine in 2002, and Japan's strong landing on Diaoyu Island in 2003 all led to the upsurge of nationalism and a series of protests among Chinese people. In addition to the violations of the territory and sovereignty of these countries, there are also many events to strengthen Chinese national identities, such as the return of Hong Kong in 1997, the return of Macao in 1999, the accession to the WTO in 2001, and the holding of the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 (Xia, 2010: 36-7).

In the 21st century, Chinese nationalism has been strengthened, which is reflected in the realization of national rejuvenation and the promotion of national soft power. As mentioned in Chapter 3, President Xi Jinping proposed the important guiding ideology and the important ruling idea “The Chinese Dream”, that is, to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The specific performance of “The Chinese Dream” is that the country is rich and strong, the nation is revitalised, and the people are happy. The way to achieve this dream is to carry forward the national spirit and gather Chinese strength. Chinese nationalism in this period is mainly reflected in the promotion of national cohesion and the realization of national prosperity. Moreover, Chinese cultural nationalism also played an important role for achieving “The Chinese Dream”. To be a major cultural exporter, China frequently emphasises confidence in its culture in recent years, which has already been explored in an earlier section and shall be briefly recapped hereby. On 8 November 2012, former President Hu Jintao, on behalf of the 17th Central Committee, mentioned to the 18th National Congress of the CPC that China should adhere to the “Three Matters of Confidence”, which is the confidence in the path, theory and system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. President Xi Jinping proposed the “Four Matters of Confidence” by adding confidence in its culture in the 95th Anniversary Celebration of the Founding of the CPC on 1 July 2016. The “Four Matters of Confidence” creatively expands and improves the genealogy of China’s “Three Matters of Confidence” and highlights the cultural foundation, cultural essence and cultural ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which marked CPC’s more clear and open cultural construction on the understanding of China’s socialism with Chinese characteristics (Feng, 2016: 16). However, Dr Yuan Wang from Wuhan University argued that:

A major cultural exporter will definitely not emphasize cultural nationalism. If this excessive emphasis of “Chineseness” in pop music actually means the fact that our music is too westernized and there is no Chineseness in it. So, we are now deliberately searching for “Chineseness” in music. Otherwise, we are looking for the intentionality in Chinese music, or we will be thinking that this foreign element

is not bad. It used to be 100 per cent “Chineseness”, and now it has 5 per cent other elements, which is a bit interesting. But now it is just the opposite, we now find how much of our own culture is left in our own music. Is not it strange? (Yuan Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

In the pursuit of global recognition and influence, cultural exporters may choose to focus on universal themes, appeal to diverse audiences or emphasise cultural exchange rather than solely promoting a specific nationalistic agenda. While cultural exports can contribute to shaping a nation’s image and influence, the comment implies that achieving widespread recognition and acceptance of Chinese nationalism on a global scale through cultural means may require further efforts. It suggests that cultural diplomacy and engagement with international audiences are ongoing processes, and there is still progress to be made in effectively conveying and promoting Chinese nationalism in the cultural sphere.

Chinese nationalism is a political notion that has multiple value orientations (Chen, 2012: 136). In the process of modernization and globalization in China, nationalism has a reasonable position and inner force that plays a positive role in participating in political, economic and cultural spheres (Xu and Hu, 2018: 25). The founding of the PRC meant the ultimate formation of Chinese national ideology and Chinese nationalism (Dong, 2018: 47). However, being nationalistic as an inner force without direction needs to be guided to maximize the benefits for the Chinese nation. Dong (2018: 49-50) states that it should be led by socialist core values, which inherit the essence of Chinese tradition and develop the use of Marxist ideology in China. Xu (2015: 3, cited by Gao, 2020: 32) regards nationalism as a polysemy and a complex concept, which reflects a social ideological trend, political activities, cultural activities such as music activities, political ideology and even emotions, and it emphasises promoting national culture and national benefits to fight against those of other nations. Thus, the development of Chinese nationalism seeks to achieve national self-confidence and equality, and ultimately, as the governmental slogan says, the great

rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It not only reflects identity between Han Chinese and ethnic minorities, but also forms a top-down national identity for the achievement of national benefits, especially on the global stage.

There are often debates between Chinese and Western scholars about the attributes of Chinese nationalism. Liang (2015: 31) offers explanations of whether Chinese nationalism is endogenous or exogenous, with the former suggesting that “nation” is an absolute entity based on stable internal identification and long-term existence, while “nationalism” is based on the natural needs of human nature and a force that will not disappear easily (O’Brien, cited by Liang, 2015: 31), and the latter indicating that “nationalism” is a modern product of construction, as well as a phenomenon that occurs at a specific stage of technological and economic development (Hobsbawm, cited by Liang, 2015: 32). So, is the emergence of Chinese nationalism that reflects a national identity or instrumentalism for the achievement of national benefits? Since national consciousness refers to a sense of belonging of an individual or group to a “nation”, which includes both objective factors and subjective identification, Chinese nationalism is original or instrumental because it has multiple value orientations. Even though it is exogenous, it exists not only because of maintaining the stability of national internal identity, but also because it is strengthened in the national cohesion in the construction of modernization.

From the perspective of social psychology, many scholars have described China’s nationalism with “face-saving”, “conceited”, “militant”, “defensive” and “reactive” labels (Lei, 2005: 498; Xiao, 2008: 57-8; Townsend, 1992: 97-130; Carlson, 2009: 20-35, cited by Li and Lin, 2017: 25). Besides, some scholars have defined the view from the perspective of national politics and believe that China’s nationalism combines the factors of preservation and renewal and connects the glorious past of faith with the future. Other scholars also define it from the perspective of “real politics” and think that Chinese nationalism shows strong independent and anti-interventionist tendencies in diplomatic terms that is an “arbitrary” nationalism. (Li and Lin, 2017: 25). Whatever

the nature of Chinese nationalism, the discussion of this concept should not only be focused on the history, culture and national integration of China's ethnic groups, but also on the economic and political development in the process of modernization. Moreover, does "Chineseness" include 56 nationalities and their various hybrid identities, Dr Yuan Wang asked in our interview (30 October 2019)? It is not a yes-or-no question, and it is difficult to answer easily. Han Chinese and the other 55 ethnic minorities express Chinese nationalism, which obviously differs from each other, and differ from Western countries. If Chinese nationalism is multinationalism in a hybrid sense, then "Chineseness" should also be reflected in the hybrid identities of different ethnic groups.

The Rise of Nationalism in Globalization

In the Chinese literature on Chinese nationalism, some authors mentioned globalization frequently, and "modernization" is often followed by the term "globalization". They believe that Chinese nationalism was developed and accelerated in the context of diversified communication during globalization and modernization (Xie, 2010; Liu, 2012; Pei, 2015; Li and Lin, 2017; Dong, 2018; Xu and Hu, 2018; Gao, 2020). But what does exactly globalization mean? What kind of role does it play during the development of Chinese nationalism? According to Boudreaux (2008: 1-2), globalization was regarded as "unintentional cooperation" that "starts with the simple commercial exchange, where each party pursues chiefly his own gain". Although there are some globalised behaviours, including people's conscious border-crossing to achieve common goals, the number of unconscious global cooperation is larger.

The term "globalization" became popular since the 1980s. It is not only the inevitable historical process and development of human society but also the nonlinear historical aggregate of contradictions (Wang and Li, 2020: 15). Although the notion of globalization emerged for a long time and the earlier scholarly interest in this concept can be traced back to the 1960s (Özegin and Arıöz, 2014: 181), comprehensive

theoretical discussion of globalization begun in the mid-1980s after the end of the Cold War (Hay, 2001, cited by Mercan, 2007: 24).

The origin of globalization is closely connected with capitalism. Wang and Li (2020: 18) argued that the process of globalization is driven by the emergence and development of capitalism in Western Europe. The socialised mass production of machines, the private ownership of capitalism and the market economy have created the internal needs and fundamental power for the process of globalization, while the Western industrial revolution supported by modern science and technology has provided the material conditions and realistic possibilities for it. The motive force of capitalism's economies became the main reason for how globalization emerged and developed, and the pursuit of common economic interests is also the original reason for various countries to embrace globalization. Due to the aggression of capitalist economies and conflicting interests, China and Western countries have accumulated certain contradictions since the 19th century. However, to pursue economic development and stand up against the "superpowers" US and USSR, socialist China started to engage with Third World countries and promoted the unity of these countries. Even so, the trajectory of China's globalization since the 1980s is still considered to be related to global capitalism instead of anti-imperialism:

The nationcentric world system under which revolutionary China battled with imperialist powers for its national independence impacts the way its statist TCC (transnational capitalist class) participates in global capitalism today. (Harris, 2018: 1711-2)

When much direct foreign investment circulated between China and Western countries, the CPC began to use its new economic and political influence to rebuild "the old Western-centred world order into a multicentric one" (Harris, 2018: 1712). The multicentric world order breaks the economic hegemonism of Western countries and enables each country to develop in a balanced way, which is beneficial to the rise of China. The process of globalization is also the process of the global expansion of capital.

Globalization driven by capital has shaped the basis of spatial pattern for reform and opening-up, not only creating opportunities for deepening reform and opening-up but also bringing unprecedented challenges for deepening reform and opening-up due to the paradox of capital logic itself (Gong, 2019: 46).

Moreover, Wang and Li (2020: 18-20) divided globalization into the old globalization stage characterised by aggression and colonization of Western capitalist countries and the new globalization stage after the Second World War. The first stage of globalization is dominated by economic interests and economic relations due to colonialism, Eurocentrism and hegemonism. The second stage of globalization has unprecedented universality. Every country in the world has entered a global field of social communication to varying degrees, forming a wide range of contacts across many areas, such as politics, economy, culture and social life. With the deepening of world economic integration and the arrival of the new revolutionary science and technology, which is marked by information and media technology, more and more common global problems are faced by human beings, which require all countries to consult and act together.

However, the hegemonic characteristics of the old globalization have not been eliminated in the new globalization stage. Some developed capitalist countries still take hegemonic practices, pursue power politics by virtue of their economic and military advantages, impose their own values and cultural concepts on other countries and nations, and attempt to establish their dominant position in the overall control of economy, politics and culture. Therefore, globalization in the new stage is still the globalization dominated by capitalist countries, although it can no longer be the absolute dominant position, but the relationship of unipolar dominance and multiple interactions.

In defining globalization and discussing its context, Wilkinson suggests:

Briefly, globalization should be seen as a nested set of processes, including very long-term processes, with deep historical and biological roots, on a wide functional scale, largely driven rather than chosen, towards the uncertain ends characteristic of complex systems. (Wilkinson, 2006: 62)

French scholar Benoit Vermander discussed the relationship between globalization and forms of Chinese values. He illustrated that globalization means people live in a limited world, in which all factors interact and form a system of their own, and globalization has its different sides. It integrates and reconstructs not only the economy but also ways of thinking, culture and behaviour (Vermander, 2002: 5). Moreover, Wang and Li (2020: 16) mentioned four main understandings and views of globalization, including the objective revelation and description of the globalization phenomenon and specific characteristics in the present era from a specific perspective of human social life: a) globalization as economic globalization; b) globalization as capitalism, Westernization or Americanization; c) globalization as an all-round transformation of social history; and d) globalization as a global consciousness in the sense of spirit and concept. However, Özekin and Arıöz (2014: 179-80) argued against two popular arguments about globalization, which are a) the advance of capitalism as an all-embracing economic system on a global scale, and b) a new version of cultural imperialism signalling hegemonic domination of the West over other countries, and placed globalization in a wider context as “a rapidly developing multidimensional process of complex interconnections between societies, cultures, economies and states on a global scale ... and brings cultural elements to the core of globalization debate” (Özekin and Arıöz, 2014: 189). Combining the above points of view, globalization developed from capitalist economy firstly, and then developed gradually from hegemonism to global integration and has impacted on society, culture and nations.

Over the past 40 years of reform and opening-up, the proportion of China's GDP in the world economy has risen from 1.8% to 15%, an increase of more than 8 times, which means China's powerful economic engine is gradually becoming one of the important

driving forces to promote world economic growth, especially in the context of the slow recovery of the world economy (Jiang, 2018). In the early stage of reform and opening-up in 1978, China was a relatively poor and insignificant country, its total economy accounting for 1.8% of the world's total. However, with the process of reform and opening-up as well as globalization, China gradually became the second-largest economy in the world, accounting for 14.8% of the global economy in 2018 (Jiang, 2018). The "rise of China" is regarded as the very top news in the 21st century. It not only challenges the global hegemonic system but also intends to break "Euro/American global domination" in the past hundreds of years and restructure the world system. After the Cold War, capitalism and socialism have been entangled with unresolved conflicts in economic, cultural, social and political perspectives in society in the name of globalization. China, as a beneficiary of capitalist globalization, challenges hegemony with cultural nationalism as an identity symbol (Dirlik, 2017: 387-8). This highlights the important role of Chinese nationalism, especially cultural nationalism, in the process of its rise to power.

Globalization is a multifaceted process that influences national identity and has both positive and negative implications. Globalization is generally seen as a positive force that promotes global integration, such as bringing nations and societies closer together and facilitating increased interactions of ideas and economic integration. It is not a historical "myth" of failure and end, or a political "trap" deliberately set by capitalist countries for third world countries with dilemma and crisis but became an important element influencing national identity and a multifaceted process related to the complex interconnectedness of society, culture, economy and countries (Wang and Li, 2020: 15). There is no doubt that globalization makes people feel the obvious consequences of economic integration brought about by globalization. However, potential pitfalls and challenges come with globalization as well. Alongside globalization, there are international and domestic national disputes and the emergence or even strengthening of national separatism (Wu, 2020: 3). There are differing viewpoints on the impacts and consequences of globalization: some argue that globalization can lead to cultural

homogenization, economic inequality and the erosion of local identities, while others emphasize the importance of maintaining cultural diversity, protecting local industries and addressing the negative consequences of globalization. For instance, Yin and Zeng (cited by Yin and Zhang, 2020: 128) illustrate that in the era of globalization, building, consolidating and strengthening national identity is an important way for a nation-state to improve its ability to adapt to changes in the social environment and manage risks, maintain its national unity, and enhance its cohesion and national capacity. In their study of the influence of globalization on national identity, Yin and Zhang (2020: 130-4) show that globalization can strengthen national identity versus globalization weakens national identity, while even other scholars think that globalization complicates national identity. Therefore, when the relationship between globalization and national identity is considered, it cannot be measured from a single variable, but should focus on different dimensions and ranges, such as the nature of the country, multiple national identities and cultural identity. Moreover, “Chineseness” will always struggle between nationalism and modernization in the context of globalization, especially in the field of popular music, raising questions on how to express Chinese identity in modern popular music.

Expressing Nationalism in Mandopop

As mentioned in the previous sections, nationalism is an ideology used to achieve maximum national benefits, and it can exist and be expressed in national culture, including music. Although Han nationality accounts for 92 per cent of the total population of China, there are another 55 ethnic minorities in China, which includes the different national identities of their own ethnic groups. These minorities have their own music, including melody, tonality, singing style and language with their own characteristics. The genres and styles of their music are also different. Because of the present situation of the centralization of Han people, most Mandopop listened to reflects Han nationality. Undoubtedly, Han music is dominant, and the national music of ethnic minorities is sometimes marginalised. However, Professor Danhong Yu provides an

interesting viewpoint on the relationship between Han-centric dominance and the music of minorities in China:

There are 56 ethnic groups in China, and each ethnic group has its own independent national music and language. So, in this sense, the so-called “Han-centric theory” has never affected the music in minorities, such as the Dong folk songs... I think “Chineseness” also include the nationalism of minorities. This relationship also reflects the complexity of “Chineseness”. In this complexity, it includes the independence and cultural integration of 56 ethnic groups. For example, Han Chinese like to listen to Uygur songs very much. At that time, Wang Luobin recorded so many Uighur songs that we all liked. But I do not know whether Uighurs like Han songs. So, there is cultural integration between different ethnic groups, but we don’t want to permeate the music of all ethnic groups into that pentatonic composing approach. The music of each ethnic group should remain independent, but it can still be affected by other ethnic groups. This is a good trend. (Danhong Yu, Shanghai, 13 November 2019)

Indeed, the music language ethnic groups employ serves as an expression of their daily lives and is developed independently. In this view, Chinese nationalism as reflected in music is characterized by a hybrid and multi-ethnic nationalism that encompasses multiple identities. This perspective challenges the notion of a monolithic and homogenous Chinese identity in music, suggesting that the diversity of ethnic groups within China enriches the musical landscape and contributes to a multifaceted sense of nationalism. It recognizes the importance of preserving and celebrating the unique musical traditions of minority groups while acknowledging their place within the broader framework of Chinese culture.

Thus, this research involved fieldwork, including the face-to-face and online interviews, to explore participants’ different perspectives on their understanding of “Chineseness”. While “Chineseness” was translated in different ways in Mandarin, such as Chinese nature, Chinese characteristic and Chinese style, this term not only refers to an

embodiment of a peculiar aesthetic style of China but is also understood as an expression of Chinese tradition, ideology and history. Both meanings reflect a kind of nature and attribute, which is connected but confused with national character, and, as my participants mentioned, Chinese nationalism. However, after discussing the rise of Chinese nationalism in globalization in the previous section, “Chineseness” should have a broader meaning for expressing Chinese identity, which not only includes Chinese nationalism, but also involves a combination of nationalism and globalization. As an important form of expression of Chinese culture, the nationalism reflected in Mandopop is particularly prominent. In the previous sections, I mentioned that China has always emphasised confidence in its culture, however, the Westernization of Mandopop reflects less nationalism due to this historical background, which is why cultural nationalism is more emphasised and sought to be expressed. Thus, before discussing nationalism in Mandopop and analysing the interview data on nationalism, this section will firstly focus on the historical background of Mandopop, and then further explores the interviewees’ perceptions in relation to how nationalism is expressed in Mandopop.

Before Chinese popular music emerged, there was China’s “new” music of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that served the revolution and inherited Chinese traditional folk music. Liu (2010: 9-10) illustrated that China’s new music was based on the tonality, harmony and form of Western music, however, its melodies and rhythms still followed Chinese traditions. In other words, Chinese music has maintained its nationalism in its beginning and during its development. Mandopop is usually believed to have begun with the advent of the phonograph. The earliest phonograph records in China were produced in Shanghai in March 1903 by Fred Gasberg from the Victor Talking Machine Company of the United States. Therefore, the European and American music industry has greatly promoted the rise of recorded music in the early 1900s (Li, 2011; Ge, 2009, cited by Li, 2012). Moreover, the phonograph was first brought to Xizang Road in Shanghai by a Frenchman Labansat, who created Pathé Records in 1908. Pathé Records is one of the earliest record

companies to create Mandopop and took over the leading role in the music industry after the 1910s (Ge, 2004, 2008; Li, 2011, cited by Li, 2012). Imported from Western popular music, the commercialised Mandopop emerged and developed due to the introduction of the phonograph and gradually developed into the Mandopop music industry. At the same time, Mandopop from Shanghai became promoted widely and localised gradually.

Fu (2003: 1) regarded Mandopop as the broader sense of Chinese popular music and argued it has developed for more than a hundred years since the late 1910s and early 1920s and was understood as “mass music” in China. During the period of *May Fourth Movement* in 1919, there were a huge number of workers’ and peasants’ revolutionary songs with proletarian revolutionary ideological content, which differed from traditional folk songs (Wang, 2009: 62). Besides, Shanghai’s popular music as the most representative Chinese popular music from the 1920s was basically based on Western popular music, such as the School-song (学堂乐歌 Xuetang Yuege) that drew its melody from Western music and used Chinese lyrics, and its popularity represented the beginning of China’s new music and inspired early Chinese popular music creations (Liu, 2010: 181; You, 2008: 3-4). The first authentic Chinese popular song ‘Drizzle’ (毛毛雨 Maomao Yu) was created by Jinhui Li, when “contemporary song” emerged and started to be popular in Shanghai in the late 1920s and early 1930s (You, 2008: 5).

Why is ‘Drizzle’ considered as the starting point of Chinese popular music? Professor Xin Tao, one of my interviewees, provides insights about the origin of Chinese popular music and the emergence of ‘Drizzle’ in his book *Handbook of Popular Music* (1998: 156-73) and during a public webinar on 23 December 2022. First, the consciousness of ‘Drizzle’ aligns with the contemporary era, as popular music emerged alongside urbanization and industrialization. Second, in terms of the human environment, Shanghai’s social landscape had already formed, and the emerging citizen class began seeking entertainment. ‘Drizzle’ fulfilled the aesthetic demands of urban audiences with a modern aesthetic consciousness at that time. Third, from a musical language

perspective, Chinese popular music's characteristic features, notably influenced by Western music, began to take shape, and 'Drizzle' also incorporated Western musical elements such as jazz music. Finally, and significantly, Chinese popular music emerged through modern communication, being a product of intentional and industrialized communication. The presence of radio stations and records during that period played a pivotal role in establishing 'Drizzle' as the starting point of Chinese popular music when it debuted in 1927.

Since 1930, facing the increasingly serious national crisis and social inequality, several left-wing cultural organizations were established in Shanghai and created several artworks calling for anti-Japanese, national salvation and social transformation. Moreover, a group of young musicians, represented by the composer of Chinese national anthem, Er Nie, inherited the fine traditions of school-songs and the new culture movement of the *May Fourth Movement*, and created many mass songs with the theme of the people's anti-imperialist and patriotic struggle, which became the standard of revolutionary music. Other works, with a humorous artistic style, show the injustice and resistance by the urban lower classes to invasion and oppression (Yi, 2018: 64). After the Western capitalist culture gradually spread to the East, there was a situation of conflict and integration in Chinese traditional culture. The "contemporary song" was created as a new music genre to contrast with the traditional one. Thus, the emergence of "contemporary song" and Chinese popular music occurred under the influence and stimulation of imported Western popular music to meet audiences' demands. From a historical perspective, the rapid development of Chinese popular music in the 1930s is precisely due to the social tension caused by Japan's war of aggression against China. Due to the social unrest, the masses hoped to avoid the damage caused by the war with popular music to express a yearning for life and an expectation of victory in the war. Generally, the first peak of Chinese popular music was in the 1920s to the 1930s as an expression of nationalism based on the Western popular music system. Nationalism accompanied the development of Chinese popular music from the very beginning.

According to Moskowitz's research on Mandopop under siege, contemporary Mandopop emerged in the 1980s as a distinctive genre, evolving from Taiwan's 1970s Campus Songs Folk movement and drawing inspiration from various musical traditions in East Asia, "including Shanghai's 1930's jazz era, Japanese enka, Taiwan's Taiyupop, and Hong Kong's Cantopop" (Moskowitz, 2009: 69-70). The convergence of these diverse musical traditions, including the Campus Songs Folk movement, Shanghai jazz, Japanese enka, Hokkien pop and Cantopop, contributed to the unique sound and style of Mandopop. Learning from his research, one significant influence on Mandopop was the jazz era in Shanghai during the 1930s. Shanghai was a vibrant cultural hub at the time, and its jazz scene had a profound impact on Chinese popular music. The fusion of Western jazz elements with Chinese melodies and lyrics contributed to the development of a unique musical style that would later influence Mandopop. The convergence of these diverse musical traditions contributed to the unique sound and style of Mandopop. While incorporating elements from these traditions, Mandopop artists also infused their own creativity, ideology, and cultural influences, resulting in a dynamic and evolving genre that continues to shape popular music today.

Although contemporary Mandopop was significantly Westernised, Chinese musicians have sought to nationalize and localize it. In the past hundred years of the development of Chinese popular music, there have been different genres of music with Chinese national characteristics, as well as many widely spread classic songs, whether they were created deliberately or unconsciously. For instance, "Northwest Wind" in the 1980s could be regarded as an attempt of nationalizing and localizing rock music to express Chinese nationalism in Chinese rock music. Mr. Zhaojun Jin, editor of the people's Music of the Chinese Musicians Association at that time, believed that the prevalence of "Northwest Wind" was a cultural problem, a musical problem, a social and psychological problem, and even a certain economic problem, all in the context of reform and opening-up (Jin, 1988). In the history of contemporary popular song creation, "Northwest Wind" is a manifestation of new musical thinking, an inevitable result of the aesthetic needs of a new era, and a symbol of the rise of a new generation

of singer-songwriters. Having experienced the blending of foreign and Chinese folk music thoughts and the combination of modern dance rhythm and Central Plains music culture, the creative culture of Mandopop sought a new form that differed from the previous “old” genres. Since the reform and opening-up, world culture, especially Western culture, has entered China, through which the creative environment of Mandopop was greatly affected. “Northwest Wind” is based on rock rhythm and Western classical harmony, but its creative materials have shifted from the rich Central Plains music culture to the original northwest music culture, resulting in a new aesthetic of Mandopop (Jin, 1988). The cultural nationalism reflected in “Northwest Wind” differs from the feelings of protecting the family and defending the country because of the revolution in the 1920s and 1930s but reflects the foundations of Chinese culture and a desire to create music with Chinese local characteristics. It is a new form of musical thinking and a new musical style created based on tradition and adapted to the aesthetic needs of Chinese society.

In discussions of expressions of Chinese nationalism in Mandopop, “China Wind”, which appeared in the 2000s, is another important Mandopop sub-genre. Although “China Wind” attempts to integrate ancient Chinese poetry or artistic conceptions of ancient poetry in its lyrics along with R’n’B rhythm and Western harmonic system to express distinctive Chinese style in music, “China Wind” is more commercial than “Northwest Wind”, forming a distinct label for promotion and advertisement. Even if “China Wind” songs of uneven quality are produced, if they are labelled “China Wind”, these can become popular, which reflects the commercial phenomenon. During the interview with Associate Professor Guanyu Cao from Central China Normal University, we discussed which styles of Mandopop reflect “Chineseness”, and she revealed that Jay Chou’s “China Wind” is not such an example:

If you asked me to say a piece of popular music which reflected “Chineseness”, my first reaction is that Jay Chou’s music is not counted...He did use pentatonic scales and folk instruments, but he is compromising to the market. Because young

people find it easy to accept R'n'B music, at the same time they will passingly accept Chinese elements and Chinese culture in this kind of popular music. (Guanyu Cao, Wuhan, 8 November 2019)

“China Wind” is primarily driven by commercial interests and serves as a label for promotion and advertisement, with the potential for songs labelled as “China Wind” to become popular regardless of their quality, reflecting a commercial phenomenon. Nevertheless, even if drawing lessons from and integrating various elements and techniques of European and American popular music, “China Wind” tends to show China’s unique artistic conception, emotion and strong identity by absorbing Chinese traditional music elements. It is unique in the musical world where diversified music styles coexist (Chen, 2013: 11). Therefore, while Jay Chou’s music, associated with “China Wind”, is seen as compromising artistic integrity, the sub-genre integrates elements of European and American popular music while incorporating Chinese traditional music, showcasing China’s unique artistic conception, emotion, and identity within the diverse musical landscape. In the development of Mandopop, explorations of characteristics of Chinese musical style and Chinese cultural nationalism have always existed.

In discussions of Mandopop, it is important to consider it as a cultural output. From a historical perspective, Mandopop imitated Western popular songs and created a Chinese style, while the process of Westernization of Mandopop is exactly the process of imitation, innovation and creation. The less cultural nationalism is reflected in Mandopop, the more confidence in its culture is emphasized, whereby confidence in its culture relates to the development of the economy in China. China gained cultural confidence previously by achieving rapid economic growth since releasing the policy of reform and opening-up in 1978. The former Director of the Musicology Department in Wuhan Conservatory of Music, Professor Shenshen Wang, stated that:

China is a country with more than 5000 years of civilization, not just a few hundred years like the United States. Chinese culture has taken root... It is not necessary to

treat foreign cultures as though confronted by a formidable enemy. No matter how strange the foreign culture is, as long as it is considered useful by the Chinese, the Chinese will naturally absorb and digest it. If Chinese people do not need it, even if foreign culture was imposed on them, they will not want it... We are a nation with a population of 1.4 billion. There is really no need to worry that foreign culture will erode national culture. (Shenshen Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

Self-realization is achieved in competition, and the self-realization of Chinese nationalism comes through revolution and a series of democratic movements in China's long history, such as the First Opium War, the Revolution of 1911 and the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression. Moreover, Professor Shenshen Wang argued that:

There is no need to emphasize "Chineseness" or "non-Chineseness" in music creation, because it should be a natural existence. (Shenshen Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

Some people promote art for the purpose of patriotism and nationalism rather than seeking the personality, creativity and quality in art itself, but, in his view, nationalism ought to naturally exist in the musical creation:

No matter which country, no matter which era, Chinese nationalism exists naturally in art. If a musician accepts Chinese musical education from an early age, he will inevitably be affected when he creates music. Their creative works will be unconsciously influenced by Chinese culture and reveal nationalism. In the words of Mr Xun Lu, the water flows out of the water pipes, and the blood flows out of the blood vessels. (Shenshen Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

Professor Shenshen Wang refers to the theory of water pipes and blood vessels by Mr. Xun Lu, a respected Chinese writer and thinker. He suggests that the essence of things determines its external characteristics and ideology, including in music creation. The

actual environment of musicians determines the musical language they use. The music created by Chinese musicians has national character, so the music reflects nationalism to some extent. Associate Professor Guanyu Cao also argued that the imprint of the times and the cultural background always remains in the creative thinking space. She stated that,

Chinese nationalism ought to be embodied in the nationality and modernity of music, tradition and innovation, academic style and popular acceptance, and the differences in techniques and culture between Chinese and Western creations.
(Guanyu Cao, Wuhan, 8 November 2019)

Associate Professor Cao also argued that Chinese nationalism can be reflected and expressed in many ways due to long-term cultural habits, however, it should not be externalised for expression but needs to be internalised into Chinese people's "own blood". Chinese nationalism is about language and culture, and "Chineseness" has become the Chinese musical native tongue in the music creation. That is the reason why she argues for Chinese nationalism and "Chineseness" to be a natural accumulation and natural expression.

According to my interviewees, even if Chinese musicians do not explicitly emphasise it, Chinese nationalism exists in their cultural and national identities and naturally emerges in their creations. It is indeed true that Chinese nationalism exists naturally, although it exogenously originates from anti-aggression. In 1920s Shanghai, when Chinese popular music was in its infancy, it was the stimulation of Western popular music that made Chinese composers shift from imitation to creation, reflecting the social emotions and daily life in popular melody and colloquial lyrics. In that era, it thus formed an expression on Chinese nationalism. Composers' sociocultural contexts have a great influence on their creation, including literature, characters, language, music education, tradition and other cultural elements, which is why Chinese nationalism existed in their creation quasi-naturally. Chinese composers' creations unconsciously

reveal the musical moods of their own nation, no matter the specific national elements or the overall creation concept, or even the embodiment of Chinese characters.

Musical Case Study Examples

This section illustrates two music examples. By analysing their notation, melody, lyrics, tonality, instrumentation and other social and cultural elements, this section will explore the Chinese elements in these two music examples and how they express Chinese nationalism. Questionnaire participants and interviewees were asked to name Mandopop songs with Chinese style and characteristics, and which are most impressive one to them. The first example most frequently mentioned in the questionnaires is Jay Chou's 'Blue and White Porcelain' (青花瓷 Qinghuaci). Whether the questions evoked the most impressive Mandopop song, the most representative Mandopop song, or the one that the audience thought was the most "authentic" Chinese style Mandopop song, 75 respondents (12.76% of all 588 participants) mentioned Jay Chou's 'Blue and White Porcelain' among over 150 songs mentioned in total, and expressed their appreciation about its melody, lyric, artistic atmosphere and visual effect. For example, one participant liked its lyrics very much:

The lyrics of this song express the meaning of "I like you, so I wait for you". Just like burning blue and white porcelain, it requires the right time, place and people to burn the azure colour. It is very difficult, but I will not give up. The lyrics in this song express Chinese culture in romantic lyrics. So, I like it very much. (Questionnaire Participant No. 305, Tencent Questionnaire Platform, 2019)

Another participant commented on its artistic atmosphere, saying that:

Jay Chou used a series of words such as "plain embryo", "lady" and "Han Li" to describe the style of blue and white porcelain handed down from ancient times. Jay Chou's singing voice is tender and simple, with a hint of the prototype of

Jiangnan opera. His exquisite lyrics and retro music constitute a masterpiece of R'n'B. (Questionnaire Participant No. 422, Tencent Questionnaire Platform, 2019)

Given this was an open response with no prompting of specific songs, the dominance of 'Blue and White Porcelain' as the most mentioned song is highly significant, which demonstrates how iconic and influential this song has been among Mandopop audiences.

The second music example most often mentioned by participants was 'Huayin Laoqiang a Shout' (华阴老腔一声喊 Huayin Laoqiang Yishenghan) by Weiwei Tan. For example, Professor Guanyu Cao thought it reflects the north-west style:

If we talk about popular music with "Chineseness", I am thinking about Weiwei Tan's 'Huayin Laoqiang a Shout', which is more interesting. I live in the south, and I have only heard about the music in northern Shaanxi, but when you really see the folk music in northern Shaanxi express with pop music, it is very interesting. (Guanyu Cao, Wuhan, 8 November 2019)

Dr Yuan Wang connected the singing style of this song with "ancient Chinese rock music" from the aesthetic aspect:

For example, Weiwei Tan now sings the Huayin LaoQiang again and made it popular, and then, some people started to argue that the Huayin LaoQiang is actually ancient Chinese rock music... In my opinion, it can be regarded as ancient rock music from the aesthetic experience, but in terms of connotation, it is not necessarily as same as rock music. (Yuan Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

Ms Wenyin Qiu also combined this song with a rock style:

Weiwei Tan's 'Huayin Laoqiang a Shout' expressed some of the characteristics of northern Shaanxi folk songs and combine it with Rock'n Roll and experimental music. I think this is a good attempt. (Wenyin Qiu, Guangzhou, 5 December 2019)

In addition, the questionnaire participants also mentioned this piece, for example:

My first reaction to Chinese style popular music was the unique north-western-style song ‘Huayin Laoqiang a Shout’. ‘Huayin Laoqiang a Shout’ is a song composed and arranged by Zhou Liu and produced for Weiwei Tan is a model of the fusion of Chinese rock and traditional folk art. Because I am from the northwest, I feel that ‘Huayin Laoqiang a Shout’ is very down-to-earth, unique and distinctive. (Questionnaire Participant No. 209, Tencent Questionnaire Platform, 2019)

This song blends a Shaanxi folk song and Chinese rock music, which models the integration of modern music genre and traditional folk art. It was performed by Weiwei Tan along with Huayin Laoqiang folk artists. It was first performed in a variety show in 2015 and later again at the 2016 China Central Television Spring Festival Gala. Since this song was originally created for a variety show, the most impressive part of this song is the stage performance, since the participation of folk artists and use of traditional musical instruments had significant auditory and visual impacts alongside the modern rock music arrangement.

The open-ended follow-up question asked participants to explain their song choices, provides qualitative insight into audiences’ perspectives. Accordingly, a significant proportion (40.14%) of the respondents explicitly linked both songs to Chinese culture, nation, tradition and patriotism. This finding suggests that these participants perceive a strong connection between the songs and their cultural identity and national pride. The fact that 236 people specifically mentioned keywords such as Chinese culture, nation, tradition, patriotism indicates the significance of these themes in their perception of the songs’ key messages. It suggests that the songs have resonated with them on a deeper level, evoking a sense of pride, nostalgia and emotional connection to their cultural heritage. This data highlights the power of music in fostering a sense of belonging and identity. When songs incorporate elements of Chinese culture, tradition or patriotism, they can strike a chord with listeners, strengthening their emotional attachment to their

country and heritage. It directly corroborates analyses that Mandopop songs can effectively evoke notions of national sentiment and cultural identity among listeners. The data therefore confirms that Mandopop functions significantly in nurturing cultural pride and connection to Chinese roots. While audiences' perspectives differed, the two most frequently mentioned songs come from different eras, express different musical styles and reflect different nationalism in the music itself, yet evoke shared meanings to Chinese listeners around identity. Both songs will be explored in more depth in the subsequent section.

Jay Chou's 'Blue and White Porcelain'

Jay Chou's 'Blue and White Porcelain' was the Mandopop song most frequently mentioned in the open-ended questionnaire, revealing its profound impact and influence among Mandopop audiences, along with its iconic status due to how uniquely and powerfully it resonates with them over other possible song choices. 'Blue and White Porcelain' was released in 2007 and included in Jay Chou's eighth studio album titled *On the Run*. Jay Chou composed the music for the song and the lyrics were written by Vincent Fang. *On the Run* went on to become a major commercial and critical success for Jay Chou, and 'Blue and White Porcelain' also became one of his most well-known and iconic songs from this pivotal album in his discography. This song has since achieved great commercial success and popularity.

The previous chapter has already featured analyses of two of Jay Chou's most representative songs, 'Lady' and 'East Wind Breaks', suggesting that Jay Chou's later "China Wind" works incorporated the usual routines to achieve auditory and/or visual effects in a Chinese style. 'Blue and White Porcelain' is one such example. Although this song marked a shift to a more classical Chinese folk style, incorporating instruments like the guzheng, pipa and sanxian, the melodic and harmonic progression is much simpler - only the Gong mode of a basic major pentatonic scale is applied in this song. The pentatonic scale in Chinese music theory consists of 5 tones, which are ordered by perfect fifth degree (Li, 2004: 100). The distance between two notes is based

on the perfect fifth, which are named as Gong, Zhi, Shang, Yu and Jue (see Figure 11). These five tones were transposed by one octave and become a scale as Gong (first degree), Shang (second degree), Jue (third degree), Zhi (fifth degree) and Yu (sixth degree) (see Figure 12). The earliest name of “Gong Shang Jue Zhi Yu” in Chinese music appeared in the Book of Rites and Li Yun in the Spring and Autumn Period more than 2,600 years ago. A relatively systematic music theory was developed and summarised as five tones, six temperaments and twelve pitch pipes, of which five tones is the pentatonic scale is still in use today (Jin, 2003: 52; Han, 2019: 56). In addition, these five tones are harmonious whether they are decomposed or played simultaneously as chords, and the sound effect of the pentatonic scale shows the characteristics of consonance, stability and melodiousness. This harmonious sound effect is often associated with Confucianism, ritual music characteristics, and even the Chinese ideology of harmony and unity. The pentatonic scale has been used in Chinese music for a long time, which easily makes the melody create a traditional imagination if the most basic pentatonic scale is used as the tonality of the song in popular music.



Figure 11: Five tones ordered by perfect fifth (Li, 2004: 100).



Figure 12: C Major pentatonic scale (Li, 2004: 100).

As for the instrumentation of this song, there are timbres and melodies of many Chinese national musical instruments used to match the overall style and melody of the song. ‘Blue and White Porcelain’ focuses on the arrangement of traditional Chinese musical instruments, including pipa, drum, bamboo flute, zither, castanets and cymbals. At the beginning of the song, drums, pipa and bamboo flute are used for melodies to make the

sound effect rich and establish the national tone of the song. Also, the electroacoustic guitar serves as the accompaniment for the vocals in the beginning, played on a pentatonic scale. The use of Chinese and Western electroacoustic instruments in the accompaniment gives the song the effect of complementing tradition and modernity, making it more balanced in timbre and wider in range. In the bridge section, the pipa serves as an accompaniment, combining strings and cymbals. After the song enters the chorus part, drums, bass, strings and pipa are added, which increases the thickness and texture density of the entire music accordingly. In the end, the pipa is used as the main instrument, playing the melody repeatedly; the harmonious accompaniment instrument is the electroacoustic guitar, and the drums and cymbals also have the effect of broadening the sound.

In many analyses of 'Blue and White Porcelain', in addition to the melody and instrumentation, the ancient background and story characters of the music video, as well as the singing style of Chinese traditional opera and other national elements are also mentioned, but more frequently the analysis focuses on antithesis, metaphor and rhyme in the lyrics. The lyrics can be divided into descriptions of scenery and narratives of emotions - the description of the craftsmanship of blue and white porcelain is combined with the narrative of a love story to create a scene of an encounter in the misty rain. However, regarding this lyric, a Chinese collector and connoisseur, Weidu Ma, known for his expertise in art and cultural artifacts, pointed out the errors in the lyrics which are not in line with the history of blue and white porcelain. One is that the lyrics showing the blue and white porcelain have the Han official script written on the bottom of the porcelain, and the other is that the lyrics point out that the blue and white porcelain bottle has a copy of the Song-style signature. Weidu Ma criticized the "low-level errors" in the lyrics and pointed out that the lyrics should be written more rigorously and professionally. Also, Vincent Fang said in an online programme that the lyrics he originally wrote to describe the azure color actually described Ru Kiln, but because the visibility was low, he eventually changed the theme of the lyrics to 'Blue and White Porcelain' without any correction on the line describing Ru kiln (see Figure

13). He expressed an opposite view to Weidu Ma's and believes that lyrics are artistic creations, and thinks the audience will not find these loopholes even if he knows that there are errors in the logic of the lyrics, while what he did is strive to find a balance between music and texts. In the later discussion with Weidu Ma, Fang acknowledged the specific inaccuracies that Ma pointed out but still maintained the position that some liberties are acceptable in popular songwriting for the sake of creativity and mass appeal, while Ma appeared to express a nuanced understanding, conceding that occasional errors are inevitable in the artistic process of lyric creation (see Figure 14).



Figure 13: Vincent Fang admitted the mistakes in the lyrics of 'Blue and White Porcelain'.
Source: Vincent Fang Shares Lyrics Creation on the Online Programme *Who Can Who Up*, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mog-FXB8Gk4&ab_channel=%E6%9B%BE%E6%83%A0%E5%B9%B3, captured on 14/11/2023.



Figure 14: Vincent Fang and Weidu Ma discuss whether there are errors in the lyrics of ‘Blue and White Porcelain’. Source available at: https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV17q4y127wS/?vd_source=f35ea4a0849cb9c5b47a967719fda66e, captured on 14/11/2023.

Importantly, both perspectives have merit. Rigorous analysis should not preclude an appreciation of popular culture, and creativity warrants some leniency. This interaction demonstrates a balanced approach to lyrical analysis versus popular artistry.

‘Blue and White Porcelain’ serves as an intriguing case study of this dynamic between critique and popularity in cultural production. There exists a complex interplay between commercial, cultural and discursive values in shaping a song’s cultural legacy and role in identity discourse. Despite the lyrical inaccuracies, the song still resonates strongly with many fans, as evidenced in the questionnaires, which suggests that the song’s cultural meaning transcends minor historical flaws and still powerfully conveys a sense of cultural identity under the support of official discourse. In 2008, the song appeared on the stage of the China Central Television Spring Festival Gala and in the college entrance examination papers of two provinces, thus officially promoting and validating

the song's cultural importance. Its cultural cachet now exceeds mere commercial popularity, taking on deeper symbolic significance. Songs do not always need rigid historical accuracy to reflect cultural experiences in an artistic manner. Emotive and narrative quality can resonate more than scholarly precision for many audiences. The role of official discourse elevated 'Blue and White Porcelain' as a symbol of cultural identity due to its commercial popularity, especially with youth, which gave it a broad influence. So, promoting this song became an opportunity to define and promote its cultural value through mainstream channels, as well as indirectly normalizing certain views of cultural identity. In this way, popular culture served as an effective vehicle for official identity framing, that is, authority and popularity reinforced each other's identity-shaping impact on younger generations.

Weiwei Tan's 'Huayin Laoqiang a Shout'

Weiwei Tan's 'Huayin Laoqiang a Shout' was originally created for the Chinese music variety show *China Star* (中国之星 *Zhongguo Zhixing*) on 5 December 2015 (Yang, 2017), and it was the first time that Mandopop singer cooperated with Huayin Laoqiang artists. Huayin Laoqiang is a family drama of the Zhang family and developed since the late Ming and early Qing Dynasty (Wu, 2018: 64). It is also "an opera form that originated from shadow puppet theatre and narrative singing prevalent in Shuangquan Village of Huayin City, Shaanxi, China" (Yang, 2017; Wu, 2018: 64). One of the main characteristics of Huayin Laoqiang is the singing form of one lead singer and other singers responding, while the scale is five to ten performers. Normally, one lead singer plays the five roles of Sheng (male role), Dan (female role), Jing (painted face), Mo (older male role) and Chou (clownish/comic role), and the remaining singers cooperate with and respond to the lead singer, which is called "crowd roar" in China. The singing style of Huayin Laoqiang is straight and lofty, majestic and heroic. It pursues a delightful sense of being at ease and having fun. Huayin Laoqiang reflects a particular kind of masculinity with a high-spirited voice, which surprisingly coincides with rock music in its performance style. Thus, this kind of performance is also known as the

earliest Rock'n'Roll music on the Loess Plateau (Jin, 2019: 58). Since 2001, Huayin Laoqiang has gradually attracted the attention of main media and film directors. In 2004, Zhongshi Chen, Vice Chairman of the Chinese Writers Association, formally introduced Huayin Laoqiang to the crew of White Deer Plain rehearsals at the Beijing People's Art Theatre. In June 2006, Director Zhaohua Lin performed 30 performances in White Deer Plain with Huayin Laoqiang artists to assist the narration of the story, which in response aroused strong concern in Beijing (Shi, 2016: 128). In 2006, Huayin Laoqiang was selected for the first time for the National Intangible Cultural Heritage list (The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2006a), which is closely connected with its the country's propaganda and influence.

In 2015, Weiwei Tan encountered the art of Huayin Laoqiang due to the White Deer Plain, and was subsequently inspired to combine this art form with rock music and created a song called 'Give You a Little Colour' (给你一点颜色 Geini Yidian Yanse). 'Give You a Little Colour' is a literal translation of the song's Chinese title, which is a provocative reprimand, expressing the rebellious spirit of this hybrid rock song. The original version of this song emerged with more straightforward lyrics and takes the form of call and response, with Weiwei Tan as the lead singer and Huayin Laoqiang artists answering. The performance form is akin of dialogue at different times and among different generations, and reflects the dialogue between Chinese rock music and traditional art form. Both rock music and Huayin Laoqiang are the musical genres that belong to the masses, which meant that lyrics are straightforward and immediate to truly reflect people's lives (Li, 2018: 40), as well as humanistic and critical, which is also at the inner core of rock music in China. A series of questions in the lyrics asks questions about life, but also express the positive attitude of the younger generation as well as the pursuit and yearning for life. However, in 2016, this song was renamed as 'Huayin Laoqiang a Shout' with rewritten lyrics because the song was selected to participate in the China Central Television Spring Festival Gala to promote this national intangible art form. The song won the audience's affirmation due to its creative performance, and the song, as well as Huayin Laoqiang opera, became popular in China

because of being performed at the China Central Television Spring Festival Gala (Li, 2018: 40). However, as mentioned, the song's content was changed from the title to lyrics. While it originally intended to question the social predicament and express the singer's attitude in Chinese rock music (it shares the same name as Jian Cui's album *Give You a Little Colour* released in 2005 and was regarded as a continuation of Jian Cui's rock spirit), the use of Chinese traditional music elements, i.e., Huayin Laoqiang, meant that the song became representative of cultural heritage and innovation in China.

The song's performing arts and singing style also impressed the audiences. It is a brave attempt to integrate traditional performance into rock music. The Huayin Laoqiang section of this song uses the arias of Chinese traditional opera in free tempo with a slow and irregular rhythm, which is like the musical sentiments *senza misura* (playing without measures) and *ad libitum* (various forms of improvisation) in Western musical terminology. The rhythm reflects a free and easy attitude towards life. The Huayin Laoqiang artists create a magnificent scene with a unique "crowd roar" singing style, while Weiwei Tan's explosive singing is like that of "Northwest Wind" music in the 1980s, which is a combination of traditional Huayin Laoqiang and rock singing, producing a strong mixing effect of a soundscape. However, Huayin Laoqiang belongs to the traditional drama genre, distinguished from the singing style of "Northwest Wind" music, while its singing style mellows the unique characteristics of classical opera, thereby enhancing the tensions created in the song. Immediately after Huayin Laoqiang's vocal performance, the high voice and strong emotion brought the audience into the soundscape and scenery of the Loess Plateau. Huayin Laoqiang's singing style meant that the song's genre and colour creates contrast between two different musical styles, but also blends each other by connecting instrumentation and performing arts.

The use of many traditional Chinese opera instruments in the song's instrumentation impressed the audiences from all over China. The *erhu* and *banhu* are used to play the melody in the lower octave and are then supplemented by seven other national instruments (see Figure 15) to enrich the harmony and arrangement hierarchy. The

Huayin Laoqiang artists played the self-handmade instruments *hexagon-yueqin* (Chinese traditional plucked string) and ride bell on stage, while different instruments represented different staged performance roles (Jin, 2019: 57; Li, 2018: 40-1). The use of traditional musical instruments in rock music not only reflects the new ideas of the time, but also retains traditional customs, which renders the work more diversified, enriches the audience's emotions, and further expands the public's audio-visual experiences. The song's stage performance is natural and casual. The Huayin Laoqiang artists, dressed in their typical plain clothes, sat on benches as if it was a village party. The stage layout was staggered; some people sat on benches, some people squatted on the stage, and some just simply sat on the floor. Correspondingly, Weiwei Tan's stage walk also appeared natural and casual. When sitting next to one older artist, she imitated needlework movements, evoking people's productive life in her performance (Huang, 2019: 116).



Figure 15: Huayin Laoqiang artists played accompanied instruments for 'Huayin Laoqiang a Shout'.
 Source: Sina Weibo of China Central Television Spring Festival Gala, available at: https://weibo.com/3506728370/DgMIDCyD0?from=page_1002063506728370_profile&wvr=6&mod=weibotime&type=comment#_rnd1594538083344, accessed on 16/09/2020

From a musical point of view, the inclusion of the song at the China Central Television Spring Festival Gala was indeed a success due to the abundant musical elements, the creative stage effect and the singer's particular singing style, which was highly consistent with Huayin Laoqiang's original singing style. However, the song changed from a Chinese rock song to a medium that promotes traditional Chinese folk art, changing its very essence. Even so, this song's adaptation combining traditional art and modern music elements brought Huayin Laoqiang to a wider audience and played a role in inheriting its culture. It expressed Chinese nationalism in music, even if within the limitations of the state. Indeed, if Chinese authority disapprove of the voices of dissatisfaction with reality in Chinese rock songs, these voices can be completely silenced.

According to comments from various social media platforms, most of the audience was positive about the combination of traditional and rock music. Yang (2017) argued that different audience member's identity and perspective shape different understandings of the blending between rock music and traditional culture. The audiences, especially those aged 20 to 30, expressed surprise at the combination of Rock'n'Roll music and Huayin Laoqiang. They praised that the performance carried forward China's cultural heritage, helped the audience understand this valuable music tradition, and raised the importance of protecting traditional culture, and so many believed that there should be more fusion works. Li (2018: 41) illustrated that the modernization of folk music is not to destroy folk art, but to inherit it. It is a positive argument promoting the integration of modernism and tradition. Due to the distinctive entertaining characteristics of this kind of hybrid work, its creation and performance largely cater for the needs of audiences. However, 'Huayin Laoqiang a Shout' as a hybrid work kept the harmonious blend between Laoqiang and rock music, thereby not only retaining the original taste and spirit of Laoqiang, but also inheriting and promoting this traditional art form while innovating the original basis, which in turn reflects the corresponding value of this integration.

Both case study examples exemplify the fusion of Western musical elements with Chinese traditional culture, reflecting the integration of modernity and heritage within Mandopop. It shows the integration of modern Western music and Chinese traditional culture as a prominent feature in Mandopop. This fusion reflects the ongoing dialogue between tradition and modernity within Chinese popular music more generally. Mandopop artists often incorporate traditional elements such as traditional instruments, pentatonic and sometimes hexatonic scales and the Chinese traditional singing style of folk songs to create a distinct national flavour in their music, which made these external elements serve as expressions of the national style in the music.

Notably, nationalism has assumed an increasingly significant role in Mandopop, particularly considering national cultural policy. Mandopop has embarked on a journey of exploration, delving into themes concerning people, society and culture, while incorporating musical styles from diverse regions and ethnic groups. Although the two case study examples were produced at different times, they both exhibit a connection to cultural heritage. China boasts a multitude of distinct music cultures across various regions and ethnicities, giving rise to a plethora of Mandopop genres or subgenres. In contemporary Mandopop, nationalism finds expression through the incorporation of specific elements that carry a Chinese identity, aligning with the social and cultural functions of music. This trend is further fueled by the growing appreciation for national folk music, allowing the diverse cultures of different regions in China to be showcased within the realm of Mandopop. This connection with younger generations serves as a continuous means of inheriting and promoting Chinese nationalism.

Furthermore, the promotion of Mandopop and nationalism in Mandopop has been actively supported and facilitated by official state media platforms in China. These platforms play a crucial role in shaping cultural narratives and influencing public opinion. Nationalism is often intertwined with themes of patriotism, love for the country and celebration of Chinese cultural heritage. State media platforms highlight Mandopop songs that convey these sentiments, positioning them as anthems of national

pride, which made state media platforms often align the Mandopop songs performed on their programming with the broader cultural and political objectives of the Chinese government.

Conclusion

Mandopop was initially based on imitation of Western popular music styles before developing a distinct national expression. However, due to historical and political factors, Mandopop began incorporating elements of nationalism based on its Western musical foundations. The promotion of Chinese history also influenced Mandopop's nationalist inclination over time, while the development of Chinese popular music increasingly followed the mission of promoting and spreading a national spirit within music. In fact, music in different countries has its own national consciousness and style, while Western popular music, such as hip-hop music, reggae and country music is also related to national culture. Nationalism in music promotes the development of national culture and cultural diversity, and arouses people's national consciousness, especially in times of national conflict and competition.

Nationalism in Mandopop is not limited to culture, as it constructs a multidimensional discourse of national identity through the perspectives of geography, biology, ethnicity, history and socialism. With time passing, expressions of Chinese nationalism in Mandopop have not been weakened, but gradually strengthened. Due to China's confidence in its culture, the existence and strengthening of Chinese nationalism is not only related to the development of Mandopop itself, but to the rise of Chinese national identity. The cultural outputs reflecting nationalism must be fine works within the context of foreign cultural understanding, which don't result from conquest, but communication and integration (Jin, 2012: 1-2). Indeed, in today's diverse world culture, Mandopop must adhere to its unique nationalism to maintain its capital on the international stage. National spirit and Chinese culture aren't forgotten and abandoned in Mandopop, yet at the same time expressing a hybrid identity of nationalism. In this

way, the cultural function of Mandopop is maximised as the real cultural output of Chinese nationalism.

Of course, this kind of cultural output of Chinese nationalism is closely relevant to the ideological agendas of the CPC government. The last two music examples summarised from the fieldwork data coincidentally were also performed at the China Central Television Spring Festival Gala. This shows that official ideology shapes the national and cultural identities of Mandopop songs. One of my interviewees, Mr Xuehuai Xiang, a lyricist from Hong Kong who has created many popular Cantonese lyrics such as ‘Half Moon Serenade’ (月半小夜曲 Yueban Xiaoyequ), indirectly confirmed how official, state-sanctioned media platforms impact music creation through, for example, his involvement in music programmes held by the provincial-level television state, and his composition of ‘Common Homeland’ (共同家园 Gongtong Jiayuan) for the 2019 Spring Festival Gala to suggest a deliberate alignment with the agenda of promoting patriotism and fostering a sense of unity within the Greater Bay Area region. This case highlights how official initiatives and state-sanctioned events can influence the direction and content of music creation. The shift in Mr. Xiang’s musical direction, from creating Cantopop (Cantonese pop music) to contributing to a project with strong patriotic undertones, may reflect the broader trends and expectations within the state’s music industry. It showcases the dynamic nature of the music scene and the ways in which artists respond to evolving societal and political contexts.

Official, state-sanctioned media platforms have a major influence in shaping the national and cultural identities projected through the songs they feature and promote, while the songs’ nationalistic themes and emphasis on promoting Chinese history and culture through their lyrics and other messages are reinforced by official platforms. This indicates the Chinese government and state media actively utilize their cultural presentation levers to relay preferred national and cultural identities to massive domestic audiences. The examples taken from the fieldwork data highlight how the ideological agendas of the ruling Chinese state can guide the nationwide propagation

of certain national and cultural identities through the music they promote at marquee events.

According to both Chinese and Western sociological studies, audience's musical taste and aesthetic judgements are often closely related to their social status and lifestyle. This is the theme to be discussed in the next chapter, with its focus on class identity and social stratification in Mandopop. It will discuss the theoretical framework of social class and stratification, as well as the structures of class stratification in China, and explain how class identity is reflected in and connected with musical taste in Mandopop.

Chapter 5

Class Identity and Social Stratification in Mandopop

In the twentieth century, when Mandopop emerged and developed, its development was broad and diverse. Virden and Wishart (1977: 155) argued that this musical diversity was associated with a high degree of social stratification. Examined in *Distinction* by Bourdieu (2010: 264-79), the relationship between class-based social identity and musical taste reflects a correlation between “high culture” and taste for art music. Krüger Bridge (2022: 5-6) elaborated that music identity research began to focus on the connection between music and status, “including studies of musical taste and its role in the construction of social differences and social exclusion”. Veenstra (2015: 134-5) admitted that there is indeed a homology between class position and musical taste, that is, “class position is aligned with specific musical likes and dislikes”. Musical taste, musical aesthetics and the diversified development of music are closely related to the characteristics of social class and social stratification. This not only suggests that audiences have their own musical taste preferences in the choice of music, but also indicates audiences’ preferences for music aesthetics and appreciation. In today’s cultural hybridization, culture itself has a diversified existence, so the cultural aspect of musical aesthetics is related to the cultural background and educated level of audiences. Therefore, exploring people’s social class positions in China will be helpful to understand the association between music aesthetics and class identity in Mandopop, and examine how class identity is constructed in Mandopop.

Due to the nature of the socialist country, many people subjectively avoid talking about the concept of class in China, but most interviewees are often willing to associate music with class status when talking about musical tastes, thus implying the existence of class identity in music. Therefore, class identity in Mandopop is an important chapter in this thesis, whose the main objective is to explore class identity and social stratification in

Mandopop. However, when investigating the differences in Mandopop's musical aesthetic preferences in the social class structure and stratification in the PRC, interviewees mentioned different definitions and meanings of class and stratification in China. Therefore, in the first section, there will be a discussion on key terms, looking at the different identities of social class and social stratification and the differences reflected in society. The second section will focus on the structure of social class and stratification in the PRC to explore the composition and development of class and stratification, as well as the differences in cultural background and educational level of people of different social classes and stratifications. The third section will discuss class identity in Mandopop by combining the interview data in the fieldwork. Interviewees indicated whether there is class identity in Mandopop and how class identity is reflected in the differences in musical aesthetics based on their own perspectives. Therefore, when discussing class identity in Mandopop, it is necessary to analyse its performance characteristics constructed in Mandopop according to interviewees' perspectives.

Social Class and Social Stratification: Theory and Concepts

Relevant literature on social class and stratification point to *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* written in 1848 by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: "The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles" (Marx and Engels, 1848:3). Levine (2006) illustrated that this manifesto is the classic Marxist statement on the nature of class conflict under capitalism. Kiuranov (1982: 5) argues that the Communist Manifesto defines the basic concept of social structure, that is, society is composed of classes, of which class stratification is its characteristic feature, and class struggle is the form of social movement and development. From this point of view, class itself is different from the stratification of classes, and there even exists a nested relationship between the two. However, the class structure of the PRC in the early stage of the policy of reform and opening up consisted of two classes and one stratification of class, i.e., the working class as the ruling class, the peasant class and the middle stratification. Class and class stratification in China are not subordinate nested

relationships but indicate an equal relationship to distinguish different groups. Therefore, this section will discuss Marxist class theory and the theory of social stratification proposed by Max Weber that incorporates Marx's view of class and explore the differences between groups of classes and stratifications represented in contemporary society.

To provide a comprehensive understanding of class identity in Chinese society, it is essential to examine the guiding significance of Karl Marx and Max Weber's theories and concepts of social class and social stratification. The theories put forth by Karl Marx and Max Weber offer valuable frameworks for analysing the complexities of class identity in Chinese society. China has undergone significant socioeconomic changes, and these theories provide crucial tools to comprehend the evolving dynamics of class structure and identity. Class itself is a historical category, an economic category and a social category. Although the current theory and concept of class identity are related to capitalism, discussions of class are also applicable to the current social status of China. Because the CPC is a loyal believer and practitioner of Marxism, the leaders of the CPC have permanently attached great importance to class and class struggle, and on this basis have developed the structure of social classes and stratifications applicable in China. Meanwhile, the Sinicization of Marxism combined the basic principles of Marxism with the concrete reality of China as a theoretical basis to form the theoretical achievements of Marxism with Chinese characteristics. It is like the construction of "socialism with Chinese characteristics", while China has become more neoliberal in its production and consumption and global dealings since the reform and opening-up policy. China has gradually developed a socio-economic country with a form of Chinese-style socialism that is different from the original socialism. The class theories to be discussed below were produced under certain conditions during certain times, and the application of these theories to the development of class identity in Chinese society also must face the characteristics of the current times. Therefore, Marxist class theory and the theory of social stratification proposed by Max Weber that incorporates Marx's

view of the class played a significant, even almost decisive, guiding role in the discussion of class and stratum in Chinese society.

In Marxist class theory, classes emerge in relation to the mode of production, that is the nature of its technology and division of labour. It is considered that classes are large groups, which have different positions in a certain social production system in history, have different relationships with the means of production, and play different roles in social labour organizations, thus, the way and amount of the social wealth that they control differs according to class. Karl Marx further discussed his class theory in Volume III of *Capital* in 1893. In “On Classes”, Marx explains that there is a multitude of class strata in an existing capitalist society. Among them, wage-labourers, capitalists and landlords constitute the three major classes of modern society based on the capitalist mode of production. He also explained the ways in which the stratification of classes appears in the socioeconomic structure. But since this is an unfinished work, it does not fully elaborate his theories on class and stratification, or even answer the nested set of questions he posed: “What constitutes a class”? “What makes wage-laborers, capitalists, and landlords constitute the three great social classes”? Kiuranov (1982: 5) thought that the answer is contained in Marx’s theory of the development of society and socioeconomic formations. Classes have their roots in the relations of production between people, which arise from “physically sensible conditions” and represent “the law of the division”.

Based on Marxist class theory, Max Weber raised his theory of status stratification to maintain capitalist rule and promote the benign operation and coordinated development of capitalist society. Weber’s critiques of Marxist class theory centred on the failure to adequately analyse political, cultural and market relations, and only using the means of production and labour as the basis for class division. He emphasized that class does not in itself constitute a group and believed that to treat “class” conceptually as being equivalent to “group” leads to distortion (Levine, 2006). Weber’s theory of social stratification is an economic, political and cultural trinity. The conditions of social

stratification are multiple, whereby class divisions are related to an individual's market position and life chances. Although sociologists have debated and expanded on Marxist class theory and Weberian stratification theory (Antonio and Glassman, 1985; Bendix, 1974; Jones, 1975; Wiley, 1987), these studies are based on social class and stratification structures at the time. The boundaries that characterize early social structures are uncertain, and in the transition from pre-modern to modern social structures, internal struggles over wealth, status and authority are exposed to foreign influences in new ways (Bendix, 1974: 159). In addition, class identity itself develops with changes in social contexts, and this research will continue to explore class and stratification of class within the contemporary social structure of China.

In theory, each class should have its fixed corresponding social stratification. For example, the working class is forced to do the most tiring work and take the least money under the oppression of the capitalists and then be divided into the bottom of the social stratification because of their low social status. The wealthy bourgeois families are among the upper social stratification because of their strong economic strength and higher education levels. Muntaner et al. (2003: 950-51) in their research on the association of social class and social stratification indicated that social class is defined by relations of ownership or control over productive resources, such as physical, financial and organizational resources, while social stratification refers to the ranking of individuals along a continuum of economic or cultural attributes, such as income or years of education. This definition of class and stratification resonates with sociological ideas and conforms to the Marx-Weber theoretical framework. Since Marxist class theory believes that history is the history of class struggles, the definition of class is generally associated with struggle, and it can easily be associated with politics as well, while the means of production occupied by class determine its classification. The stratification of classes is more detailed in the level of the economy, society, culture, status and other hierarchies. Although Weber's theory of stratification also contains political elements, in contemporary society, the definition of a class seems to become more and more distant from politics.

Simply put, the concept of class pertains to political struggle, while the concept of stratification pertains to economic, social and cultural status. Social groups formed by social stratification are mainly distinguished by social resources and social opportunities. They focus increasingly on self-identification, so they are relatively mobile. But in today's Chinese society, is stratification a characteristic feature of class? Can class be a special form of stratification in China? In terms of the possession of social resources and means of production, people of different classes can even belong to the same stratification. Therefore, in modern society, there is no absolute fixation on classes and stratification, but there is a reasonable fluidity between the two, even between the various levels of the same class or stratification. Perhaps, class and stratification are not contained relations, but slidable corresponding relations.

To a certain extent, the solidification of class has caused huge and growing social inequality, which has led to contradictions in contemporary class consciousness. While people are often reluctant to identify themselves explicitly as members of a social class, assuming that class status is not necessarily highly meaningful to them, the idea of class appears to be widely and clearly understood as an important feature of social inequality (Savage, Silva and Warde, 2010: 115-16). Although some people are reluctant to admit their class identity, and instead use differences in regions, genders, countries and ethnic groups to distinguish their groups, in the face of class identity, the differences of the latter are a secondary contradiction, while class identity between people is often the most fundamental attribute. No matter which class or stratification people belong to, its contradictory characteristics are always revolving around its own vested interests, including political power of discourse, political status, economic status, possession of means of production and markets, cultural status and social status in general. Human beings as gregarious creatures with social habits inevitably seeking to cooperate with each other, and this cooperation cannot be completely equalised in cooperative relations because of their different abilities, resulting in class limitations.

Class limitations are difficult to break. For instance, intellectuals often look down on the working class who came from poor backgrounds, while the working class also hates the artificiality of the intellectuals. This is a manifestation of class limitations. The most fundamental contradiction between people is the contradiction between class identities. However, due to the differences in their own growth, environment and education level, people of different classes and stratifications have different degrees of differences in their cognitive perspectives, world views and values. Due to hierarchy being deeply rooted in personal relationships, differences in class identity are likely to be perceived in public contexts, while the rise and fall of opposing class cultures and clear identities have to do with the nature of the class itself in public contexts, particularly with “politicized claims and discourses or ideologies of hierarchy and inequality” (Bottero, 2004: 999). In class identity of fluid societies, individual differences form classes, while different social divisions of labour reinforce the emphasis on the concept of class and its characteristics. Class identity of a specific class still pays attention to their political identity, hoping to occupy as many means of production as possible through their political status, thereby consolidating their political status, which is also in line with their class characteristics. Therefore, the contradictions between classes are the contradiction in political identity and the contradiction in class identity. While class and social stratification pays attention to economic benefits and social status, class identity enables to obtain more market resources, social resources and cultural resources. Therefore, different classes and stratifications are constructed with different class identities in society, and the next section will focus on discussing the structure of class and stratification in China to explore the expression of class identity in Mandopop.

Social Class and Stratification in Mainland China

Within the framework of mainland China’s socialist system, the structure of social class and stratification exhibits distinct characteristics shaped by the country’s political and economic dynamics. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the ruling class in mainland China consists of the political elite who wield power and influence at various

levels of government and within the party hierarchy. However, social class divisions persist despite the socialist ideology's aim of reducing them. Different social classes, including workers, farmers, intellectuals and an emerging middle class coexist within mainland China, each with its own set of privileges, opportunities and challenges. Understanding the intricacies of class and stratification within mainland China requires an analysis of factors such as occupation, education and party membership, as well as the interplay of social mobility and inequality within the socialist system.

According to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China (1982), China is a socialist state under the "people's democratic dictatorship"⁸ led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants. This firstly points out that there are classes in China and secondly indicates the dominance of the working class historically. On 1 December 1925, Chairman Mao Zedong published an article "Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society" to highlight the two tendencies existing in the party at that time - right leaning and left leaning - in which he pointed out several class stratifications and their characteristics in China in the early twentieth century, namely the landlord class and the comprador class, the middle class, the petty bourgeoisie, the semi-proletariat and the proletariat. Among them, the semi-proletariat included the semi-owner peasants, poor peasants, small handicraftsmen, shop assistants and hawkers, while the proletariat referred to the industrial proletariat, that is, the working class. This class stratification is undoubtedly linked to the economy.

Subsequently, in the early days of the founding of New China from the 1920s onwards, the five-star pattern of the Chinese national flag represented the basic patterns of the

⁸ The phrase "people's democratic dictatorship" incorporated into the Constitution of the People's Republic of China by the Communist Party of China since 1982. This statement was developed to adapt to China's national conditions based on preserving the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in Marxist philosophy, that is, the Chinese state and CPC represent the people and act for the people but have power to fight against all reactionary forces that in their perceptions. Source: Official Website of The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, available at: <http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/constitution2019/201911/1f65146fb6104dd3a2793875d19b5b29.shtml>, accessed on 15/09/2022.

country's class structure at that time, that is, the great unity of the people around the big star of the CPC, which represented in four small stars the working class, the "peasant" class,⁹ the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. After the completion of the socialist transformation in the 1950s, China realised the task of transforming private ownership of the means of production into socialist public ownership. "While the wealth of landlords and the capitalist class was immediately nationalised in 1950, small entrepreneurs and middle peasants were forced into collectivization under Mao's Commune campaigns in 1958" (Thakur, 2005: 16). Thus, some social classes gradually disappeared. Driven by the public ownership economy, the structure of social classes became simpler, consisting of the working class, the peasant class and the intellectual stratification in the early stage of reform and opening-up during the late 1970s/early 1980s.

Class and stratification in China have shifted from a solidified class system to an open and evolving class system in the post-Mao era (Bian, 2002: 91-2). Since the reform and opening-up in 1978, China has undergone two major changes in the economic and social aspects: first, from a single state-ownership plan-based economy to a socialist market economy with public ownership at the core and multiple economic components coexisting; second, from an agricultural society, in which farmers account for most of the population, to an industrialised and modernised society. Along with these two significant changes, the social class structure of the PRC has also undergone extremely profound and extensive changes. The relatively simple social class structure originally composed of the working class, peasant class and intellectuals has become more and more diverse and complicated, thus forming a structure of China's social class and stratification that adapted to socialism with Chinese characteristics and the requirements of modernization.

⁹ As explained in Note 1, the term "peasant" is a literal translation of Chinese, and this translation is widely used in official Chinese government documents to indicate persons engaged in agricultural production. So, when this research discusses class identity, it will continue to follow this translation to describe the "peasant" class.

Of course, China's current class system is still dominated by the working class and peasant class, but there is a middle stratification consisting mainly of professional and technical personnel. In addition, there are private business owners who have formed a social stratification that is widely concerned, and new social classes and new social groups are constantly emerging (Li, 2018: 14-20). In the past two decades, Chinese social classes and stratifications are still fluid. There are different status groups emerging in China today, which are not classified as classes but as social stratification. Some new social groups that have been continuously generated, renewed and expanded have also been given new titles by the media, such as "ant tribe", "Beijing drifter" and "returnees" (i.e., returned talents after studying abroad). Some of these new social groups grow along with the trend of social structure, and some are constantly changing. In 2016, there were more than 50 million people in the new social class in the country, and their influence in society continued to increase (Li, 2018: 21).

The Characteristics and Differences in China's Class and Stratification Structure

In China's social class and stratification structure, only the working class and the peasant class are called classes, and these two classes are dominant, while professional and technical personnel, private business owners and continuously emerging new social status groups are not part of the official classes but belong to the middle stratification or are called social groups. The working class is the leading class due to production forces and production relations. This means that the working class represents the advanced productive forces in the production stage of large machines in industrial society. With the changes in class structure and the development of productive forces, the composition of the working class has undergone profound changes, and the proportion of intellectual, professional and skilled workers has increased substantially. This further enhances the representation of the working class as an advanced productive force. Interesting is that employees in the state-owned sector are also classified as working class, which includes civil servants in party and government organs, personnel in public institutions, workers in state-owned enterprises and workers in collective

enterprises. This group of working class serves state power and the public economy with a good level of education and production. It can be regarded as the uppermost stratification of the working class. Although the workers from private enterprises, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan-funded enterprises, foreign-funded enterprises and various non-state-controlled mixed-ownership enterprises account for the largest proportion of the working class and have higher incomes, the means of production they hold are not so stable due to economic policies, thus affecting their socioeconomic status.

Moreover, because the worker-peasant alliance forms the foundation, the peasant class also plays an important role in China's social class and stratification structure. Peilin Li (2018: 28-9), the Vice- President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, believes that China's problem is ultimately the problem of farmers, agriculture and rural areas. It is impossible to truly realize the modernization of the country and society without the modernization of farmers, agriculture and rural areas. In recent years, with the development of agricultural industrialization, many migrant workers have joined the production team of the working class, which fully demonstrates the mobility between classes. However, in Chinese academic research, the economic and social status of the working class and peasant class in the actual class structure is not high. Historically speaking, the working class and the peasant class determined the production and development of China's industry and agriculture, and they occupy a huge part of the means of production. But at the same time, most of them have limited education so they cannot acquire a socioeconomic status corresponding to their class. With the technological transformation of modern industry and agriculture, the working and peasant classes have further requirements for intelligence, expertise and technology, while the improvement of production technology has significantly improved their status. Workers and peasants are the main body of the masses of the people, yet improving the economic, political and social status of workers and peasants is still a long-term task.

Other groups related to social, cultural, economic, technological and other social factors are part of social stratification, specifically in the middle stratification, including private

business owners and other new social stratification and social groups. The middle stratification is more akin to the petty bourgeoisie in the early stage of the founding of New China, but because the history of class exploitation has basically ended, and the state believes that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has been resolved, small capitalists, intellectuals, and the white-collar and blue-collar classes are all classified into the middle stratification. Most of the middle stratification are highly educated and professional and technical personnel who are good at mental work. Because the value of knowledge has increased in society, their political and economic status is constantly improving. In terms of the new stratification of private business owners, they developed rapidly after the reform and opening-up, replacing the national bourgeoisie during the founding of the PRC. But they are poorly educated and extremely divided. Affected by commercial gains, they cannot form equal socioeconomic status within the stratification.

Important here is to mention new social stratifications and social groups. Although the new social stratifications are divided into four sections, which are management personnel and technical personnel of private enterprises and foreign-funded enterprises, social organization practitioners, freelancers and new media practitioners (Research Group of the Eighth Bureau of the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee, 2017: 46). In fact, new social stratifications and social groups continue to emerge with same stratifications attributes and social labels. New social stratifications and groups are mainly concentrated among the younger generation. The younger generation is vibrant, they have world vision and innovative spirit, and have created new industries for society with their open minds and unlimited creativity. The younger generation has a flamboyant personality and is daring to think and act. Their lifestyles are fully integrated into the mobile Internet, which promotes mass consumption behaviour and consumption into a new era.

The concept of working and peasant classes in China is relatively stable due to the nature of the state, but the stratification within these two classes as well as the

stratification of other social groups are constantly flowing and changing. Due to the instability and variability of the current class and stratification structure, marginal groups and intersecting groups continue to emerge between the original classes and stratification, in which marginal groups refer to groups in the process of transformation from one social group to another, with transition and change, and intersecting groups refer to groups with dual or even multiple identities in social and economic life, spanning different social groups with periodicity and stability (Zhang, 1990: 177). These groups have not yet formed a stable social stratification, but still have common characteristics and fluid class identities between multiple stratifications.

Moreover, some Chinese scholars have pointed out that the concept of “interest group” can better describe the social group in the stage of differentiation, that is, the group composed of people with similar status in material and economic interests (Zhang, 1990: 173; Li, 2000: 6). Of course, Chinese sociologists have disagreements in their analysis of the stratification structure in China. Among sociological research, the most representative is the *Research Report on Contemporary Chinese Social Stratification* published in 2002 and edited by Xueyi Lu, which proposes that, based on occupational classification, the occupation of organizational resources, economic resources and cultural resources is used as the standard for dividing social stratifications. According to the report (Lu, 2002: 3-9), social groups are divided into ten social stratifications and five social status classes, in which all and part of the social stratifications can correspond to one of the five social status classes (see Figure 16).

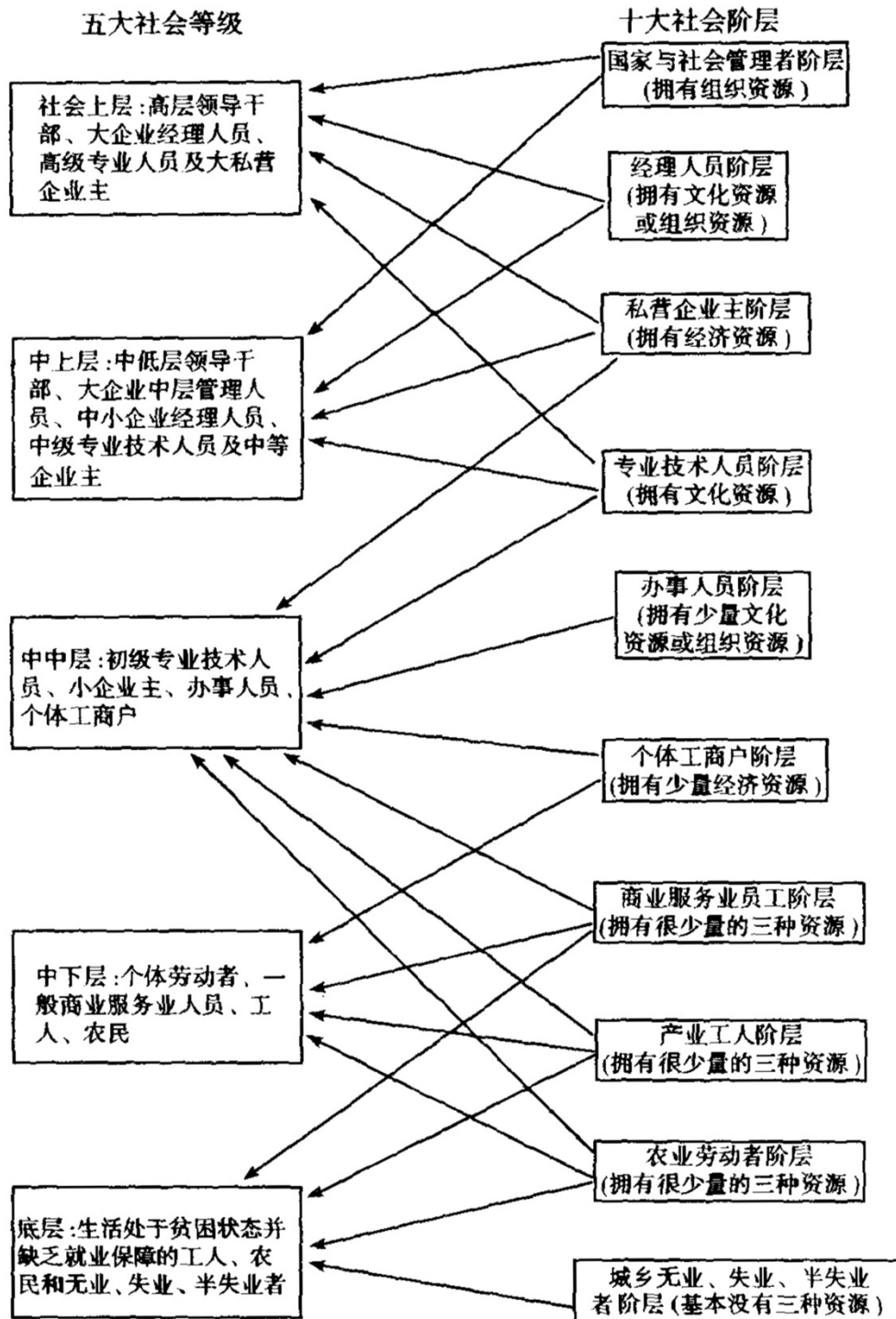


Figure 16: The structure of social stratifications in contemporary China (Lu, 2002: 9).

While the social mobility rate between classes and stratifications has increased significantly, Chinese society has become more and more open. This increase in social mobility is reflected in both upward and downward mobility (Zhang, 2018: 8). Industrialization, urbanization and popularization of higher education have brought

about the upgrading of industrial and occupational structures, which has led to increased opportunities for upward mobility. However, China's industrialization is accompanied by reforms of the economic system and political system. In the process of system transition and transformation, some people have experienced downward social mobility, which has led to an increase in the downward mobility rate. This has also contributed to an increase in the degree of social differentiation. Besides the social differentiation in different social stratifications, the status and mechanism of intergenerational mobility among strata directly reflects the basic characteristics of the stratification structure, highlighting the relationship pattern between stratification, basic order and opportunity structure of society (Li, 2019: 173-5; Zhang, 2018: 8). The inter-stratification intergenerational mobility mainly focuses on the status, trend, mechanism and effect of intergenerational mobility, whose main mode is relatively solid intergenerational inheritance and relatively fluctuating short-distance mobility, which has been influenced by modernization and marketization. Both models of intergenerational mobility have their pros and cons, which remains a topic for further debate, especially in China, a country with low levels of intergenerational mobility.

Class Identity in Different Social Classes and Stratifications

Although Chinese sociologists have different opinions on the division of class and stratification in China, this study will focus on the analysis of class identity in working and peasant classes, middle stratification and new social stratification and new social groups. The proletariat under the socialist system is called the working class in China. In addition to various corporate employees, there are officers from state-owned sectors, as mentioned previously. This group is subject to state decisions, state assignments, state coordination and belongs to a higher stratification in the working class. However, there is still class division in these groups depending on their unit system, unit level and cadre level, file identity and identification with class identity, thus forming a system-based identity hierarchy society.

The stratification of state-owned sectors is the result of top-down determination or imperative allocation of states, with strict stratification within this status hierarchy. For example, high-level leading cadres or state and social managers have more social responsibilities, so they have higher ideological awareness and a stronger identification with their own class. While grassroots workers have tedious work and low income, their social and political power is weak, so their class identity is lessened. In terms of corporate employees, there also exists a class stratification between state-owned and private enterprises. The means of production occupied by state-owned enterprises are stable, while private enterprises rely on political and economic policies to obtain means of production. Within their respective enterprises, there also exists high-level, middle-level and grass-roots cadres' status stratification, which are related to the levels of job position, power, income and education. They identify with their class identity not that much, but they do expect upward mobility to acquire the class identity of a higher stratification.

In general, the identity of the working class shows a tendency towards differentiation, and the evaluation and expectation of the working class on their own status have become an important factor affecting their class identity. The lower working class has lower status evaluations and expectations, and therefore lower-class identity. The group with the highest-class identity is the middle stratification of the working class. They are not satisfied with the status quo and have high expectations for themselves. Top executives often maintain their class identity. Among them, there are also technicians. Because of their high level of knowledge, they prefer upward mobility towards the middle stratification of working class and become professional technicians to achieve higher expectations for occupation, income and class status, which reduces the identification of the working class.

Class identity of the peasant class is obvious, and there are also stratifications of landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, and poor and hired peasants in the process of its construction. But in the revolution, when the bourgeoisie put forward an anti-feudal

programme and land law, the peasants followed the bourgeoisie to participate in the revolution, so the peasant struggle became a part of the bourgeois revolution. Later, after land reform and agricultural cooperation, farmers changed from small producers to cooperative farmers, and their class identity also changed from bourgeoisie to proletariat. The peasants are an ancient and stable class. As one of the two basic classes in Chinese society, the peasants' identity is oriented around political consciousness towards the social life of all members of society, which is shaped by legislators and interpreters of national ideology and social integration but ignore patterns of consumption (Zhou, 2017: 25-6). Social mobility has intensified, and when there is a surplus of rural labour and labour production that can no longer meet the income and living standards of the peasant class, there are many farmers who flow into cities and towns like commodities, giving rise to specific identity concepts and the social stratification of peasant workers.

By 2016, peasant workers accounted for about 60 per cent of the workforce (Li, 2018: 15). At this time, cross-groups emerged between the peasant class and the working class and had dual-class identities. At the same time, intergenerational mobility began to occur between groups of peasant workers, and a new generation of migrant workers has become the main body of the migrant worker group. In the context of the highly mobile and commercialised consumption era, the new generation of migrant workers is facing a process of re-adapting to the new environment and establishing class identity, and a new identity shift oriented towards consumption identity has emerged (Zhang and Wu, 2012: 166; Zhou, 2017: 26). Due to the low share of production means, low education level and low-income level, the new generation of peasant workers at the bottom stratification of urban society has become active actors in consumption, trying to self-transform class identity through consumption and hoping to gain external social identity and higher expectations for social equality, respect and social recognition.

In terms of middle stratification, its class identity is the most fluid and dynamic, changing with changing circumstances and times, because middle stratification itself is

fluid, and its class identities have changed due to the deconstruction and reconstruction of Chinese class and stratification structure. At the same time, due to the heterogeneity within the middle stratification, its value is also diversified. Because of the establishment of proletarian society, the original petty bourgeoisie was incorporated into the concept of the middle stratification and no longer conformed to the political concept of class.

Since the reform and opening-up in 1978, new changes have taken place in the original class structure of Chinese society. In addition to the traditional workers and farmers, some people, as the biggest beneficiaries of the reform, became rich quickly, and these newly rich people are China's middle stratification. There is intergenerational mobility in the current internal composition of the Chinese middle stratification, including the old middle stratification representing the new bourgeoisie, and the new middle stratification of the younger generation. Among them, class identity in the young Chinese middle stratification is even more ambiguous due to the debates and struggles about localization and Westernization within this group (Liu, 2011: 163). Their perception of their own class identities is weak and scattered.

The middle stratification involves a comprehensive consideration of occupation, income, consumption and education level. They are scattered in a complex combination of various occupations, departments, cultures and other communities, even economically and ideologically, thus is not a unified whole. Although a large part of China's middle stratification is professional and technical personnel using mental work and higher education to obtain higher income and socioeconomic status, market factors such as lacking stability and specific boundaries meant that their position is impacted by the disintegration of original class identity and difficulties in establishing a new class identity. The ideal model of China's class and stratification structure is an olive shape, even though this ideal model has not been fully realised in the whole Chinese society but only realised in a few cities, which means that the middle stratification will occupy the majority and play an important role. Therefore, the identification of the middle

stratification of their class identity is crucial as well. They need a clearer and more detailed stratification model that allows them to connect with people who share the same stratification characteristics, thereby clarifying their class identities.

The next focus will be on the identity of new social stratification and social groups. This group is newly formed and fluid, especially in the mix of identities, intersectional identities and excess identities. At present, the new social stratification is problematic due to blurred identity boundaries, low identity recognition and unformed class identity. High recognition of class identity comes from a clear identity and its boundaries, yet for groups, such as the “Beijing drifters” and “returnees”, boundaries are not so clear, who can have mixed dual identities. They can have a clear identity with their professional skills and may have a certain class identity with other people or groups with the same identity as themselves, but they do not think they have the same class identity with other groups with different stratification characteristics.

For example, the “ant tribe” is used to describe low-income groups in China, including ordinary citizens, peasant workers, college graduates and technical school graduates living in crowded cities, and it does not refer to academic groups of a certain age. Among them, college graduates have a high level of knowledge and professional skills. They recognise their class identity but disagree that they have the same stratification characteristics as peasant workers, so they do not recognise that they have the same class identity as peasant workers. These social groups are affected by the pressure of survival and development and tend to seek profits; at the same time, they are also affected by social typification and tend to become professional, so they are more inclined to pay attention to themselves and avoid social and political risks (Li, 2017: 1-2).

The characteristics of the perceived rights that society has given to such groups are not clear enough, and they are also not clear enough about how they function in socioeconomic life, thus affecting their class identity. But it is undeniable that they have a higher-class identity within their own social groups. The members in the group have

a similar social and cultural background and have a stable socioeconomic status of the group, whether it is high or low. Therefore, for these new social stratifications and groups, it is necessary to strengthen their similarities, increase the identification of in-groups and out-groups, such as strengthening the common characteristics of people in the new social stratifications, highlighting the intellectual attributes of new social groups, and enhancing social identity within them. Moreover, it is also necessary to build a new platform for people from social stratifications to promote emotional integration within the new social stratifications and groups and form a psychological identity, thereby enhancing class identity and forming a class psychological community.

In the social class and stratification structure in current Chinese society, most groups can form a mixed subjective class identity, but because of the mobility between classes or between a class and another stratification, and between stratifications within a class, people's class identity often reflects overlapping identities and transitional identities, some existing for a short period of time, and some being stable and continuous. Because of factors such as inequality of possession of production and inequality of socioeconomic status, there exist conflicts of interest between the social classes and stratifications, but it does not mean that class antagonism will arise. Due to the dominance of the proletariat in China and the elimination of the exploiting class, the main contradiction in China is no longer class contradiction. Under the conditions of building a harmonious society, class conflicts will eventually move towards class cooperation. In class cooperation, then, new mobilities and mixed class identities are bound to emerge.

Since participants often discussed during fieldwork the relationship between musical taste and an audience's class status, for example using the Chinese term "Yangchun Baixue" (阳春白雪) to describe groups with higher musical tastes, this research focused on the musical taste of Mandopop audiences to explore class identity in Mandopop. How are the characteristics of various classes and stratifications in China

linked to their musical tastes? The next section will discuss how class identity is constructed in Mandopop.

Class Identity in Mandopop

Based on the social class and stratification division of Mandopop's audience, can Mandopop reflect its class identity? The relationship between musical taste and class identity has been a controversial topic. For example, research on social stratification and cultural consumption by Chan and Goldthorpe (2007: 1) discussed the relationship between social stratification and cultural taste and consumption in the current sociological literature, including three main but rival lines of argument: the homology argument, the individualization argument and the "omnivore-univore" argument. These three arguments are opposing theories, but in fact there is also a potential logical connection between them. The homology argument is based on Bourdieu's Distinction theory that, after rethinking Max Weber's discussion of class and position, agrees that in the generally accepted hierarchy of social good and bad, position is expressed through a particular way of life. Bourdieu (2010: 169-70) claims that this homology is decisively mediated by the habitus of different social stratification, and members of a class are acquired because of the class conditions in which they live through the system of dispositions (Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007: 2). Therefore, members of different classes are always under the constraints of their own class habitus and, with their own unique class identity, enter the field of different tastes, while expressing their class identities by choosing different ways of life and indicating their relationships and social distance from other classes.

The theoretical basis of individualization theory comes from theorizing the "death" of social classes in the 1990s, which suggested that cultural consumption is not a reflection of class status (Clark and Lipset, 1991: 407-8; Pakulski and Waters, 1996). The individualization theory believes that the effect of class trajectory on culture is much more complex than Bourdieu implies, and this effect is weaker as well, particularly at the level of the individual (Erickson, 1996: 249). Although members of different classes

have different cultural tastes and lifestyles, the differences are more manifested in individual self-realization and their correlation is weakening (Pakulski and Waters, 1996; Chan and Goldthorpe, 2007: 2). This theoretical perspective emphasises that the complexity of society continues to increase, therefore the factors including age, gender and religion that affect individuals' lifestyles also increase. The lifestyle of individuals becomes more equal, diverse and full of individuality, and the scope of individual choices becomes wider. Therefore, the society in which people live and its structure is of less importance, and individuals can be independent of its status and choice of lifestyle, that is, they are free to choose their own cultural consumption.

Compared with the homology and individualization argument, the “omnivore-univore” argument has obtained more theoretical research support and empirical support. As early as more than half a century ago, Wilensky (1964: 188-94) found that highly educated Americans are not as traditional theories had suggested, namely that they only like the high-brow culture and reject the mass culture belonging to the middle and lower classes. In fact, they will at least like some forms of mass culture, which is evidence that the relationship between cultural taste and class status is not “univorous”. Furthermore, US-based sociologist Timothy Dowd argued that high-status individuals also distinguish themselves through their omnivorous tastes, such as their preference of a wider variety of music types. Additionally, Dowd argued that high-status individuals would like to differentiate themselves by their omnivorous tastes, such as their preferences for a wider range of musical genres, challenging studies of “univore taste” cultures defined by class status (Krüger Bridge, 2022: 6).

With the increasing mobility of social classes and stratification, the “omnivore-univore” argument is currently the most popular theory of the relationship between class and cultural taste. It suggests that the cultural consumption and taste of the upper classes of society are omnivorous. They not only prefer the culture of the upper-class but also widely accept various forms of culture such as popular culture and mass culture. But within its wide range of cultural consumption and tastes, there is still one dominant

cultural preference (Li, 2014: 40). In terms of musical taste, groups with higher occupational status show a broad interest in music appreciation and are involved in various forms of music, while groups with lower occupational status tend to focus on only a small number of music forms or even complete rejection of other musical forms due to their relatively lower musical aesthetic ability.

The above three theories relate to cultural consumption, taste and class status, and reflect to some extent the mobility of classes and stratification, along with their changes, hence different theoretical frameworks emerge. While these theories seem diverse, they also convey relevance to each other. For instance, people in upper classes often have dominant musical preferences, even if the majority may express omnivorous musical tastes. It is difficult to disentangle each theory entirely in discussions of musical taste and class identity. Even so, the theoretical frameworks have relevance in the context of Mandopop, which will be discussed in the following section with the support of collected data from fieldwork.

The Homology Argument in Mandopop

China is composed of two broad classes and multiple social stratifications and social groups, each with its own characteristics, witnessing in its history numerous temporary class identities and overlapping multiple class identities that signify class mobility. The notion of class identity in Mandopop was therefore an interesting theme during my fieldwork. There were only a few participants who denied the relationship between class status and music when focusing on individuals' preferences and taste. Their opinions somewhat match the individualization theory. On this basis, Mr Yuchuan Wen gave his explanation as follows:

People of different classes or people of different social statuses may have very different aesthetics of music, but this does not equate to the class stratification of music. For example, there are many murderers in the movie with a very high taste in art, such as Hannibal Lecter from the movies, his favourite music is J. S. Bach's,

but from class stratification, he is a prisoner. (Yuchuan Wen, Foshan, 27 November 2019)

Mr Yuchuan Wen argues against the notion that musical taste directly corresponds to class stratification, which challenges the assumption that musical preferences are solely determined by social status or class. He emphasises the complex and multifaceted nature of musical aesthetics, highlighting that individuals' preferences cannot be simplistically categorised based on their class or social status. Mr Yuchuan Wen also refers to classical art music as "high". However, regarding classical art music as "high art" or "high culture" is often contested in contemporary Western academic literatures. This connection has its roots in nineteenth century Europe and across the colonized world, where complex and high-status expressive cultural practices and objects such as opera and classical music were regarded as "high culture". This cultural concept was linked to the humanities, including literature, art and music, and formed its academic core. However, since the 1960s, postmodernist cultural views have gradually diversified and relativized on the basis that all cultures have equal value. Meanwhile, mass popular culture was no longer excluded from the separate and purer values of "high culture", thus the concept of culture as "high art" has become increasingly challenged. The use of "high" and "low" also appeared in discussions on the homology and omnivorism approaches to musical taste.

However, in China, there exists no critical concept of "high culture" or "low culture" when discussing Mandopop in the context of the 21st century, other than on the influence of musical taste and class position on Mandopop audiences. Mr. Wen's perspective on the relationship between musical taste and social class acknowledges that individuals from differing social stratifications may develop varying musical tastes and abilities due to their class status. This seems to support the general idea proposed by theories on the link between socioeconomic variables and cultural preferences. However, he issued an important caveat: having "high" musical taste (in his example, for classical art music) does not necessarily equate to the higher class. His example of

a “murderer” potentially appreciating classical art serves to decouple taste from virtue or social standing. Therefore, Mr. Wen argues that, while correlations may exist, one cannot say that class is inherently “in” music based on taste alone. His view both allows for socioeconomic influence on tastes, reflexive of the homology theory, while challenging direct or deterministic links between musical preferences, class and social value, which counter-balances theoretical perspectives with real-world complexities.

On the question of whether class identity may be reflected in Mandopop, numerous interviewees had a positive opinion. First, they affirmed that there are classes and stratifications in China as a socialist country; second, they acknowledged that musical taste and class status are related. For example, Dr Yuan Wang connected musical genres within so-called “agricultural heavy metal rock” with class theory:

Agricultural heavy metal music is a very funny phenomenon, but I talked in a serious way. I stated the reason why agricultural heavy metal music is produced is actually that Chinese musicians want to establish their own identity in the process of irreversible globalization, but they have not reached an established height in the genre of metal music, so inevitably produced a kind of self-deprecating. Chinese musicians can remain silent because they are not as good as other Western musicians, and they can also express this self-deprecation. Both methods are possible, but the second method just sends out the voices of Chinese musicians. Therefore, agricultural heavy metal music exactly expresses this self-deprecation. Since the West created industrial metal music, then we can create agricultural metal music because China is a big agricultural country. Under the great river civilization, agriculture can represent China. Marxism mentions that different classes have different social development processes. Industrial civilization in the West is advanced, then how about agricultural civilization? Therefore, in agricultural heavy metal music, we will express self-deprecation and admit that our skills are not as good as the West. (Yuan Wang, Wuhan, 30 October 2019)

Within the context of China as a large agricultural country, this explanation reflects the status of China's civilization and social development. Although China is led by the working class, the peasant class is a huge group underpinning China's agricultural identity. Agricultural heavy metal rock music absorbs local and old-fashioned expressions into its musical aesthetic to express the lower-class status of China's peasantry. This style expresses regret about the development of Chinese rock music and hope in venting emotions of an unfulfilled ideal, even though its musical core is in line with rock music, in particular heavy metal. However, in terms of content, it reflects China's agricultural identity on a deep level, in contrast to rock music which is seen as a superficial way of using local but corny content to the extreme. Agricultural heavy metal provides an example of expressing class identity, reflecting the musical tastes of a group of people who are dissatisfied with their class status. Music provides an emotional outlet to vent their dissatisfaction, and through heavy rhythm and a roaring singing style express a vision for upward mobility into a higher class. Dr Wang's analysis of "agricultural heavy metal rock" connects its themes and style to the social status of peasant farmers, who reflect on their lower-class identity. The aggressive style provides catharsis by mirroring frustrations over limited social mobility and conveying a vision for upward mobility. This shows that music genres can represent the tastes of specific groups of people who seek an outlet for their class-related grievances.

There exist other musical examples that demonstrate the homology between musical taste and class status. For example, Ms Wenyin Qiu explained to me the different definitions and classifications between popular music and Tongsu music (通俗音乐 mass music) in Mandopop, which seemingly express the homology between musical taste and class:

There are two classification methods between Tongsu music and popular music. The counterpart of Tongsu music is serious music, but popular music may include serious music, such as the previous Western classical music, which was popular at that time. Popular music may include different singing styles popular, bel canto,

national and so on. Also, Tongsu music may represent the real popular music we see now, not the popular music in different historical stages. Therefore, the scope of popular music may be more. It does not necessarily refer to one music type. It may also be classical music, opera, or any kind of music that was popular at that time. Tongsu music is different from the serious music of the Academy. So, it's actually a classification difference... At that time, in order to distinguish between the classes of “Yangchun Baixue” and “Xiali Baren”, people thought that the academic music was serious, while mass music was popular, but sometimes the level of mass music is higher than that of academic music. Sometimes these Chinese terms are boring. I prefer them to use a professional term to distinguish, rather than this emotional word to distinguish. (Wenyin Qiu, Guangzhou, 5 December 2019)

In her view, the boundary between Tongsu music and serious music differentiates between classes of “Yangchun Baixue” (阳春白雪) and “Xiali Baren” (下里巴人), that is, “high-brow” class and “low-brow” class. This classification suggests that serious music is high-level, while Tongsu music, which is liked by ordinary people, is low-level. This view reflects and evidences the homology argument, even though Qiu herself is dissatisfied with this classification, yet admitting its existence in the development of Mandopop. Qiu’s insightful point provides a clear example of dichotomy historically drawing on the distinction between “popular” and “Tongsu” music as it maps onto class distinctions. Even if under critique today, this dichotomous classification implicitly reflects and reinforces the homology argument linking preference for certain musical styles to high-low social and even economic stratification.

Meanwhile, the views of my interviewee Mr Zixuan Song also reflect the homology theory as follows:

The class stratification of the audience can be reflected in Mandopop to a certain extent. The audience from third- and fourth-tier cities like to listen to divine tunes on Kwai or TikTok, and the aesthetics of those kinds of music are more superficial.

But the cultural aesthetic level of the first- and second-tier cities is probably higher. However, it is difficult to define this class. For example, in the third- and fourth-tier cities, there are also audiences with high social and cultural levels, but their aesthetic level is relatively low; Poor people in the first- and second-tier cities like to listen to classical music and have a high aesthetic level. However, in this case, it seems that it cannot reflect class stratification, which is a little complex and contradictory (Zixuan Song, WeChat Audio Call Interview, 20 October 2020).

Zixuan Song believes that high-status groups in urban areas have higher levels of culture, social status and income due to their elite education, so their music aesthetics and tastes differ to those of other people. Even so, in a contradictory hypothesis, he argues that highly developed cities are also home to people with “low” aesthetic tastes, so the degree of urban development is a rather contradictory indicator of class and musical taste, while the aesthetical music tastes of individuals are far more influenced by personal lifestyle. Many external factors, including city development, may have an influence in some respects, but they are not absolute and dominant. Song’s viewpoint thereby supports the homology theory linking high status with elevated musical tastes, yet at the same time provides a nuanced perspective that challenges assumptions about the relationship between class and music appreciation, which is more complex and contradictory than homology theories suggest. He recognises that individual lifestyle and personal factors too influence musical tastes alongside determinants like city development. Song’s critical observations highlight the limitations in applying overly simplistic theoretical perspectives on the links between socioeconomic variables and cultural behaviours and musical preferences. His perspective underscores the value of nuanced interpretation versus relying on generalized theoretical assertions that do not faithfully reflect real-world complexities, thereby enriching understandings of the complex relationship between class identity and musical taste.

From the viewpoints of both interviewees, the historical Mandopop context demonstrates the validity of the theory in how musical styles are linked to class

associations. Whether implicitly or explicitly, homologous relationships exist between higher or lower socioeconomic status and preferences for certain genres, which are representative of “high” or “mass” culture. Although these discussions on Mandopop do not pose the question of whether the music is good or bad, nor whether the class is high or low, the homologous relationship between class status and musical taste does exist. This manifests itself not as value judgments of musical quality but rather correlates musical preferences along perceived cultural hierarchies. People with higher class status tend to demonstrate distinction through affinity with musical genres coded as refined taste and show their musical tastes through their own music consumption of so-called “high culture”, while people with lower class status tend to prefer more accessible music genres such as mass popular music. This dynamic reflects tenets of homology in how class identity intersects in Mandopop discourse and genres.

According to Na Li’s research on cultural taste and social stratification among Chinese people (Li, 2014: 45), which draw on theoretical frameworks informed by the homology, individualization and “omnivore-univore” concepts, and involved a quantitative study with participants to compare the musical tastes of different social groups according to different social stratifications. She concluded that the musical preferences of Chinese people resonate with the homology theory, given the differences between “omnivore-univore” tastes among the upper-class groups and the social groups with high school and college qualifications. Na Li (2014: 45) believes that the influence of social status on people’s music preferences is reflected in their enthusiasm for and indifference to music, that is, whether they have a tolerant and open attitude towards culture. At the same time, she argues that omnivores have a predominant musical taste among their many musical tastes. So, is musical taste in line with the homology concept, as she said, and is the “omnivore-univore” theory based on the homology argument among Chinese audiences? The next section will continue to combine the perspectives of the interviewees during fieldwork to explore this question.

Connecting the “Omnivore-Univore” Argument with Mandopop

There exists a potential connection between the homology and “omnivore-univore” concepts, as mentioned earlier. Western sociological research challenged the “univore” theory because with the mobility of classes, people’s musical tastes have become more diversified, and omnivorous musical tastes have begun to appear. The shifting relationship is also reflected in Mandopop. As there exist numerous subgenres in Mandopop, the choices of audiences have diversified too. While it is undeniable that class status and musical tastes are indeed in line with the homology theory in the context of Mandopop, virtual communities provide Mandopop with a wide and fast dissemination, and even Mandopop of average quality can obtain extremely high popularity and affinities that results from socialisation, which suggests that by learning how virtual communities socialise and spread, producers can create new Mandopop products that resonate with virtual communities’ tastes. This has prompted a large amount of mass-produced music to suit audiences’ taste. Therefore, when musical choices become more, audiences can more easily obtain their preferred music types, which are not only diverse, but also huge in number. This challenges the “univore” argument in groups with high income levels but low education levels, who tend towards higher stratification levels according to their income, but whose aesthetic taste in music is quite limited, so omnivorous musical consumption may appear.

For instance, Ms Oushu Lin believes that different groups have different needs for music, which leads to the emergence of musical tastes related to class status:

I think popular music will reflect social stratification. For example, those illiterate people cannot sing songs at all... It is like the music used by my aunt for square dance, but I will not listen to this kind of music. It can only be said that the demands are very different... When I was on the way back from my driving tour, I suddenly thought of ‘Returning after Target Practice’ (打靶归来 Daba Guilai) sung during military training... if I see the sun setting and I want to go home after completing the task of this day, I will naturally sing this song. This kind of military song also reflects “Chineseness”. For example, by matching the steady beat of

‘Returning after Target Practice’ with the lyrics describing the scene of the shooting range, it can well reflect the passionate emotion of describing Chinese soldiers. (Oushu Lin, WeChat Audio Call, 27 March 2020)

She also mentioned that:

In fact, the songs you can remember in your mind are those that are constantly being sung. For me, it’s hard to remember the lyrics when I listen to songs. The songs I can remember the lyrics are those I used to sing repeatedly. (Oushu Lin, WeChat Audio Call, 27 March 2020)

Oushu Lin does not listen to music like “Square Dance” but occasionally listens to this kind of music with easy-to-understand and so-called “brainwashing” melodies because of work or study reasons. “Brainwashing” is a popular Internet term in China, which is used to describe the melody or lyrics of a widely spread song that are easy for audiences to remember and hum to after first listening, so the song is quickly instilled in the audience’s subconsciousness. Since Ms Lin grew up in the Cantonese-speaking Guangdong region, she most often listens to popular songs from Hong Kong because the language is easier to understand. But she also listens to well-known Mandopop songs, such as by Jay Chou, as well as some Mandopop songs that are in folk music style. It can be seen from her experience that the variety of music she has been exposed to is rich, and her omnivorous musical taste is obvious. This relates to her middle-class status. Ms Lin was born into an intellectual family, and she herself has a high level of education, a higher income level and overseas work experience. These factors influence her class status and expose her to a wider variety of music types. Because of her high music appreciation ability, she displays more inclusiveness in the choices of her music consumption. Oushu Lin’s perspective offers valuable insights into the complex dynamics between individual music preferences and the broader social context within which these preferences emerge. Her experiences and choices reflect the intricate interplay between personal preferences, cultural influences and situational factors that shape an individual’s musical tastes. Her experiences illustrate how music can reflect

and shape individual identities, forge connections within social groups, and serve as a conduit for emotional expression and cultural belonging.

In this context, Professor Danhong Yu from Shanghai Conservatory of Music also confirmed the relationship between social class status and musical taste, which she believes is not only related to class identity but also related to people's social and cultural identity:

China's cultural identity is complex. For example, the identity of a highly educated intellectual or cultural person, and the identity of an uneducated person at the bottom of society represent the class problems that exist in any social system. If you study from the perspective of the social class in popular music, you can cut into it, because the research opinions of the East and the West are basically the same, and there will not be much difference. As for identity, there is a kind of music that is definitely concerned with some romantic themes, like wind, flowers, snow and moon. This group of people who created the music of romantic themes have been well educated and have not touched the discipline of the bottom of society. Therefore, their words are beautiful, their mood is very good. Their music is loved by young people who love culture and arts. (Danhong Yu, Shanghai, 13 November 2019)

She gave Jian Cui's music as an example, suggesting that he belonged to a social stratification that is outside of mainstream society:

For example, Li Jian's 'Lake Baikal' is a petty bourgeoisie sentiment, which reflects the leisurely sentiment of a well-educated literati. But Cui Jian's 'Nothing to My Name' is not. Its class stratification is very clear, and it can be seen very clearly from the musical subject matter and lyrics' expression. Because of the lyrics, I can even get rid of the abstract musical expressions and tell you directly that I have nothing... Cui Jian is in a class like those who do not belong to mainstream society. Under the conceptual framework of sociology, this class

stratification is dedicated to studying what types of music different social classes like... However, I do believe that this class stratification must exist, and the social class's preference for music is related to identity. (Danhong Yu, Shanghai, 13 November 2019)

Jian Cui's music is located at the opposite of Fenghua Xueyue. Cui himself even argues that mainstream music appears romantic and healthy in its performance forms, but in fact there are snobbish and false value hidden within it (NetEase Entertainment, 2010). Therefore, in both the singer's own creative concept and the audience's perception, these two genres are quite different.

The two contrasting music styles by Jian Cui and Fenghua Xueyue reflect the two sides of class identity. On the one hand, one group of people pursues the romance of artistic conception who live a good life and have not experienced any hardships, on the other hand, another group who experiences the struggles and difficulties of life listen to music that reflects their harsher social reality. Even so, my interviewee Professor Danhong Yu suggested that she can prefer both kinds of music, not only because of her musical tolerance, but also because she has sufficient appreciation for musical aesthetics, understands the meanings and sociocultural context behind the music. This reflects the omnivorous musical taste in Professor Yu's class status. She is a senior intellectual and engages in regular exchanges with music scholars at home and abroad, which makes her extremely knowledgeable, while her status as a professor at a conservatory also gives her a higher social status and income. These factors are closely related to her musical taste.

Although the above two interviewees did not explicitly state their omnivorous musical taste, from their experiences and statements, their higher-class status did reflect the diversity of their musical tastes. Therefore, do lower class social groups have univorous taste in music? The results of the online questionnaires, distributed to students at vocational colleges with relatively lower-class status and limited economic and social advantages, shed light on the question of whether lower class social groups tend to have

univorous taste in music. The students, while possessing good technical skills and potential for upward mobility after graduation, exhibit preferences for specific genres or works of certain singers, and thus limited musical repertoire. Their musical preferences are primarily based on subjective judgments of what they consider to be “good” songs, as many of them lack a music-related educational background and deeper understanding of music. This tendency towards a more univorous musical taste resonates with many students’ fondness for mainstream Mandopop, particularly popular songs from well-known albums and singers. These songs, which have wide dissemination channels and acceptable artistic quality, are more accessible to this student demographic, aligning with their class status and their ability to appreciate popular music with good artistic value.

Mandopop provides an interesting lens to examine the connection between musical taste and class status, revealing the relationship between musical taste, class status and the “omnivore-univore” concept. Participants with higher class status tend to demonstrate a broader range of musical preferences and a more inclusive attitude towards different genres and artists. Their elevated aesthetic abilities, cultivated through exposure to diverse cultural experiences and resources, enable them to appreciate and engage with a wider spectrum of musical styles. In contrast, individuals from lower class backgrounds often face limitations in terms of their exposure to cultural and artistic resources. This restricted access can hinder their ability to develop a nuanced understanding and appreciation of music as an art form. As a result, their musical preferences tend to be influenced primarily by personal preferences, subjective judgments and immediate gratification, leading to a relatively univorous taste.

Thus, the “omnivore-univore” concept is not solely determined by class status but also influenced by factors such as education, cultural capital and social networks. Higher class individuals often have greater access to educational opportunities that expose them to a wider array of cultural forms, including music. Additionally, their social circles and networks may provide avenues for exploration and exposure to diverse

musical genres and artists, fostering a more omnivorous taste. Conversely, individuals from lower class backgrounds may have limited exposure to cultural institutions, music education and diverse social networks that facilitate exploration of different musical styles. Their preferences may be shaped by the immediate cultural influences within their social environment, resulting in a relatively univorous taste that aligns with their limited resources and opportunities. Theoretically speaking, the “omnivore-univore” argument further refines various factors that affect class status, emphasising that omnivorous groups hold a tolerant and open attitude towards other cultures, and their cultural consumption is more about self-realization rather than exhibiting their social status and exacerbating social distancing. In fact, there are several Mandopop sub-genres that are dominant in the musical preferences of omnivorous groups, which is potentially related to the homology theory. The differences between a certain genre predominates in the musical preferences of omnivorous groups, while a genre preferred by univorous groups conforms to the theoretical framework of the homology theory. From the participants’ answers, the homology and “omnivore-univore” theories both reflect the relationship between musical taste and the class status of Mandopop audiences. With changes and developments in social class and class structure, the two theories do not exist in opposition to each other but coexist and potentially connect.

The Division of Musical Genres in Mandopop and Class Structure in China

With the shift away from class differentiation to class mobility, class identity represented in music similarly shifts. While in the thousands of years in the development of Chinese music, expressions of class identity have always existed in music, music has served the different classes, fulfilling certain functions for different groups of people (such as those discussed in Chapter 3). While some people oppose the idea of class-based identity of music, arguing that once it is linked to class, music loses its meaning to bring pleasure to audiences and becomes too functional, the history of music is largely related to the needs of different classes, which became evident in the collected data. The class identity of Chinese music is reflected in the different objects

that music pleases, which also determines the status and class of music in society. This idea is reflected in Chinese music from ancient times to the present through its musical elements and phenomena. For example, in the Xia Dynasty in 2003 BC, a class of slave owners enjoyed certain music and dance, and at the same time, a class of slaves performed music and dance for others to enjoy. To establish their own authority, the class of slave owners created large-scale forms of music and dance, such as banquet music, which is also the earliest ritual music. The slave class communicated their thoughts, emotions and will through the beats of rhythmic music on wood, stone and pottery, and the freed class created music that satisfied their shifting needs as basic musical material (Fan, 2010: 180).

The most representative example of early banquet music is the “Feng-Ya-Song” (风雅颂) in *The Book of Odes*, which includes three types of music classified according to different regions and musical functions. “Feng” or “Guofeng” (translated as “Airs of the States”) is a collection of folk songs from all over the country, reflecting the social life of people at the time. Because it is collected from across fifteen regions, it is also known as the fifteen “Guofeng” (fifteen types of “Airs of the States”). “Ya” (translated as “Court Hymns”) is the collection of songs for court banquets or court meetings. It is divided into “Greater Ya” (“Greater Court Hymns”) and “Lesser Ya” (“Lesser Court Hymns”), whereby “Greater Ya” is mostly for court banquets, while “Lesser Ya” are mostly personal lyrical works. Most of “Ya” are the works of aristocratic literati, and their content is to safeguard the interests of the ruling class. “Song” (translated as “Eulogies”) is a musical type used by nobles to worship ghosts and gods in their home temples and praise the ruler’s merits. Among them, because of the different period, it is divided into three types, including “Zhou Song” (“Eulogies of Zhou”), “Lu Song” (“Eulogies of Lu”) and “Shang Song” (“Eulogies of Shang”). During the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, the ruling class attached importance to the system of ritual music and elegant music and rejected folk music from common people that dared to innovate. Although the culture at that time was regarded as “high art”, its meaning has been changed as a concept that is socioculturally constructed for

all classes, including aristocracy and masses, while the hierarchy of culture, including music, still exists. The music theorists at the time discovered the active role of music in political, economic, humanistic, military and other activities, so they paid greater emphasis on the types of music that can serve the ruling class.

The classification of “Feng-Ya-Song” clearly established the class served by ancient Chinese musical genres and clarified the differences of these musical genres, so the existence of class identity in Chinese music is undeniable. To consolidate their position and praise their own merits, the ruling class often respected “Ya” and “Song” but ignored “Feng”, which reflects people’s life and folk customs. However, there is an argument in Chinese literature that, in terms of ideological and artistic value, the three types of “Eulogies” are inferior to the two types of “Court Hymns”, and the two types of “Court Hymns” are inferior to the fifteen types of “Airs of the States”. The origin of this argument is difficult to trace, but in the literature, there seems to be a consensus. This statement reflects the later generations’ affirmation of the high artistic quality and value of “Feng” based on the present social structure. There is an interesting saying in China called “down-to-earth” (接地气 Jie Diqi), which means to have extensive contact with the simple lives of ordinary people, to be integrated with the public and to reflect their wishes, demands and interests, rather than to be separated from people’s actual needs and real wishes. Consequently, “Feng” is a kind of “down-to-earth” musical genre different to the court music “Ya” and the ceremonial music “Song” that sings merits and praises which are in the hands of a few ruling classes. “Feng” is created by the public to embody their aspirations, and it spreads widely and has great influence. But the ancient ruling classes often did not realize the value of “Feng”, which supposedly has to do with the class structure at the time, that is, the people were always at the bottom of the society, while the nobles were the social class at the top of the chain. The antagonism between these classes and the differences in musical genres reflect that these types of music are generated with different characteristics due to class demands and thus serve the class.

Since “Feng” or “Guofeng” is equivalent to folk music at the time, it was quite popular among the people and is often understood as the popular music of the time, which is in sharp contrast to the court music and ceremonial music that the ruling class respected. In an interview, Ms Wenyin Qiu provided a similar description in her understanding of “Wind”:

In fact, how to define “wind” is a question of elegance and vulgarity, but its essence is the same. “Guofeng” or “Feng” in *The Book of Odes* collects folk songs from ancient times, which do not represent the court, but represent popular folk songs among the people, that is, a kind of civil music at that time... “Feng” is also a kind of folk music style, which is obviously different from the court music “Ya” and the etiquette music “Song”. (Wenyin Qiu, Guangzhou, 5 December 2019)

Because in Chinese, “wind” is the English literal translation of the word “Feng” (风), both represent the same word. Then, “wind” and “Feng” originally referred to the “vulgar” kind of music opposite to “elegant” music, and did not represent the ruling class but the broad masses of the people. Therefore, “Feng” was the popular style at the time and represented a popular trend. In Chapter 3 on relocating the term “wind”, I mentioned that Chinese composer Yuankai Bao believes that the “Feng” in “Zhongguo Feng” also comes from the “Feng” in *The Book of Odes*. Therefore, “Feng” represents the class of the mass people, and it is also a reflection of people’s lives and their most basic demands and visions.

The current “Feng-Ya-Song” no longer has such a clear boundary. Especially today, the leading role of the working class is determined by the current Chinese class and stratification and represents the broad masses of the people. The leading class is fundamentally different from the traditional ruling class. The CPC and PRC government recognise the power of the people, so they use various cultural and artistic forms, including music, to reflect people’s demands. At certain times, it is common to use the musical form of “Feng” to reflect the musical themes of “Ya” and “Song” to

enhance national cohesion, and certainly to establish a good image of the leading class in the hearts of the people.

Can the creation of musical genres still reflect class demands in contemporary China? Ms Oushu Lin believes that the creation of many genres is not only historically related to class demands, but this connection is also reflected today:

There are some labour chants (劳动号子 Laodong Haozi) and military songs in China, and Teresa Teng's songs are defined as decadent and banned. Therefore, I think to some extent, they actually reflect the demands of each class. There is no right or wrong in this demand, but they are just different. (Oushu Lin, WeChat Audio Call, 27 March 2020)

She gave some examples of music genres, such as red songs and military songs, which reflect the needs of classes in wartime, including the needs of soldiers who fought bravely and the needs of people who suffered. The red songs and military songs have a strong emotional tone and sense of rhythm. They are regarded to be a true portrayal of revolutionary practice. They can be inspiring at the time and evoke people's memories of revolution in today's peaceful age, recalling the revolutionary process, martyrs, deeds and spirit. Ms Oushu Lin also used Teresa Teng's songs as an instance to express the contradictions and antagonisms between the popular songs of "the sound of extravagant and decadence" and the leading class. Because of different political stances, Teng's music has been accused of many unwarranted "crimes". However, Teng's songs have changed from the banned "sound of extravagant and decadence" and "yellow music" to being popular in the whole country and even across Asia, which also reflects the changes in class ideology. From confrontation to reconciliation between the two, the needs of classes have changed, and the tolerance of culture has also changed. Ms Oushu Lin believes that this kind of demand is not about right or wrong, but reflects differences between demands, thus producing different genres, while the development of genres has also been influenced by class demands. Her perspective highlights the importance of understanding music as a product of diverse demands and socio-cultural

influences, encouraging audiences to appreciate the richness and complexity of musical genres, recognising their ability to cater to diverse tastes, express unique identities and reflect the social dynamics within which they emerge.

In addition to the creation of musical genres being related to class demands, Dr Qian Wang gave his own opinion:

Popular music can well reflect the class system in China. The division of genre itself is a very clear hierarchy, that is, what kind of people listen to what genre of music. For example, jazz is very popular now, but when you are really talking with people who play jazz, those who have a very good educational background at home and abroad or family cultural background will tell you that the Jazz you listen to is rubbish. Do you think it is jazz that people of the older generation play to you at the Paramount in Shanghai? No, they will tell you which bars to go to in Shanghai and which bars in Beijing. They will also tell you which of Li Quan's music is real jazz, which is showing off skills, which is to cater to the market. I think this is something we cannot avoid. It used to be like this, it is like this now and it will be like this in the future. Because the social stratum structure and social division are solid under Pierre Bourdieu's theory. It is possible that the specific stratum structure and content will change, but the social situation will not change, and the stratum will certainly exist. (Qian Wang, WeChat Audio Call, 12 November 2019)

This concept resonates with the homology theory. Dr Qian Wang agrees with Bourdieu's theory that social class structure and social distance are solid. Even if the specific class structure, class content and characteristics change, the social status remains the same, so stratification reflected by the differences in genres remains the same. The example Qian Wang provided suggests that for groups who also listen to jazz, different types of jazz can correspond to different classes, with deviations in the understanding of music at different cognitive levels. People with "higher" musical taste pursue sound effects and sound qualities outside of music and pursue the aesthetic

concept in music genres as well. From Dr Qian Wang's point of view, this not only reveals the relationship between musical taste and class status, but also reflects an understanding of the class identity of the musical genre itself. The production of musical genres follows the demand of the market as well as the demand of classes. Therefore, genres generated according to class demands contain the characteristics of this class and reflect the identity of the specific class.

Sub-genres in Mandopop also sometimes reflect class identities and emerge from class demands. After all, Mandopop is a commercial genre and has its commercial attributes, so it is necessary to take the market as the main impetus. Specific genres, such as "Northwest Wind", can be understood as a product of class demand, as it reflects the helplessness and demands of the middle and lower stratification in society, although commercially it is still a localised musical genre created to resist the impacts of the foreign music industry. There are some genres used by the ruling classes to express certain functions, such as Chinese nationalism and patriotism. For example, "China Wind" integrates traditional and national culture into songs that play a role in its cultural output. Class identity in Mandopop does not exist independently and is linked with other identities within Mandopop, thus enriching the inner meanings of Mandopop and better expresses Chinese identity in Mandopop.

Conclusion

Class identity in Mandopop discussed in this chapter is the third theme explored in this research, which was one of the most frequently mentioned themes during fieldwork. Participants mentioned class identity because they wanted to understand and discuss the existence of class identity in Mandopop. The concept of class is not often addressed in China because the nature of the socialist state means many people avoid it. Many are reluctant to admit the existence of class stratification in music, while others believe that research should focus more on musical texts rather than on identity discourse. For instance, while Professor Danhong Yu acknowledged the concepts of class,

stratification and identity in music, he admitted this kind of research was lacking in China:

The class stratification is a very political level. However, within the scope of academic research, there are still discussions of class stratification. Mao Zedong himself wrote an article called *An Analysis of All Classes in Chinese Society...* Under the conceptual framework of sociology, this class stratification is dedicated to studying what types of music different social classes like. There is a very clear research result in the United States, but there may not be very clear specific research on the relationship between class stratification and music in China. (Danhong Yu, Shanghai, 13 November 2019)

Even so, it is undeniable that there are classes and stratifications that have existed in China, and there is a clear class structure still today.

Therefore, this chapter first discussed Marxist class theory and Max Webber's theory of social stratification to illustrate the difference between the concept of class and stratification. On this basis, the chapter focused on the existing class and stratification structure in China and its characteristics to understand class identity in different historical periods in China, including the different classes, social stratifications and social groups, as well as class mobility among them. The chapter then returned to class identity in Mandopop to see how musical taste is related to class status from a musical perspective. In Mandopop, the theories that best reflect this connection are the homology and the "omnivore-univore" concepts. Although the two are relatively opposite theoretical frameworks, this research argues that both theories exist in the development of Mandopop, which was also recognised and accepted by the interviewees. If the two can coexist, there is the potential for relationships and connections. Subsequently, this chapter also revealed that the division of musical genres is related to class demands, because genre itself reflects a certain stratification, so musical genres are created to satisfy class demands, and in turn reflect class characteristics and class identity. This also historically corresponds to the construction

of numerous sub-genres in Mandopop in the development of Chinese music more generally.

To summarise, class identity in Mandopop exists, which changes due to the changes in and mobility of the social class structure, while class identity also affects the construction and development of the musical sub-genres in Mandopop. Yet even though the sub-genres in Mandopop can reflect class demands and class identities, as a commercialised product, Mandopop is still dominated by the market. It is for this reason that the next chapter will discuss commercial phenomena in the Mandopop market, mainly focusing on fandom culture and its impact on the Mandopop market under the influence of fandom culture.

Chapter 6

Fandom and its Impact on the Mandopop Market

Mandopop has reflected multiple identities in its historical development and social and cultural contexts, while as a commercial genre, it has always been market oriented. Driven by the market environment, satisfying the needs of audiences has been a key purpose of Mandopop's creation and production, with great impact on Mandopop's creative orientation. Among Mandopop's audiences, there exists a stable consumption group, known as fans, that is, a group of "fanatical" enthusiasts who have a loyal enthusiasm for a certain sub-genre or singer of Mandopop. Most of the time, fandom behaviour revolves around a specific singer - or the star celebrity, who are sometimes not just singers - rather than genres or songs. It is due to purchasing behaviour of fandom that sales of songs or albums are increased. The consumption behaviour of fans is related to the "star system" in popular music, "wherein the media promote personality cults around the musician's lifestyle, fashions, or private life; ultimately, this promotion aims to distance the musician from the public in order to weave an aura of fantasy and glamor about him" (Manuel 1988.:3). The "star system" is a key characteristic in popular music, which has evolved into person-as-brand and impacts on sales strategies (Krüger Bridge, 2018: 13-4, 48). In fact, fans do far more than that. They organise concerts to support, vote for their favourite singers and their music to get a better spot on the chart, especially when the chart ranking is tied to an award, and have professional web promotion teams to create promotional materials such as posters or videos. They may not have a physical venue but have their own social circle and gathering place in the online virtual community, so they can carry out online or offline activities to maximize their loyal enthusiasm. Although I view fandom and fan culture as a researcher, I have also been involved in fandom activities and been one of the "managers" of a fandom group in a particular province. Therefore, this chapter will

discuss fandom and its impact on the Mandopop market and, more importantly, how fandom culture forms a new identity in the Mandopop market.

Fandom, consisting of “fan” plus the suffix “-dom”, is a term used to refer to a mass culture composed of fans characterised by a feeling of sympathy and camaraderie with others who share a common interest, and it represents collective identity based on a shared enthusiasm for some aspect of mass culture and regular participation in group activities arising from this (Chandler and Munday, 2016). Merriam Webster’s entry on the origin of “fan” shows that “fan” in English appeared as early as the late 17th century, but disappeared for two centuries, reappearing in the late 19th century to refer to the devoted observers or participants in sports. The term “fan” first appeared in *The Kansas City Times* in 1885 when it was used to describe a baseball following (Drouin, 2019). Merriam Webster also shows that “fan” was a shortened form of “fanatical”, while the origin of “fanatic” can be traced back to the Latin word “fanum”, meaning sanctuary and temple. This term has been around for a long time, but it is a description of fanatical followings, expressing their devout love for a person, event or culture.

Cornel Sandvoss (2005: 95) argues in his book *Fans: The Mirror of Consumption* that fandom should be better understood as a mode of self-constitution rather than self-negation. It shows the construction of self-identity in the pursuit of this group. As John Fiske (1992: 30) argues, fandom has common features in popular culture in industrial society, which selects certain cultural forms from mass-produced and mass-distributed cultural products and brings them into the culture they selected, and then rewords into very pleasing pop culture with strong symbolism. However, unlike ordinary popular culture, the popular culture created by fans is more symbolic because it is related to the cultural tastes of their stratification, and usually relates to cultural forms that are devalued by the mainstream value system.

Nonetheless, fandom can form its own unique fan community through spontaneous popular culture, thus attempting to use pop culture tactically to subvert dominant cultural meaning. In the music industry, fandom is a mirror of consumption, which not

only reflects the consumption needs of the audience but also the construction of one's fandom identity. They embrace parts of popular culture in their quest and spread it widely among the fan community. Fandom, as disadvantaged with lesser resources, has won the struggle for power in the consumption of popular mass media by means of guerrilla-style tactics, thus fandom research is considered "a worthy cause, one that represented and championed those disadvantaged within society" (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007:1-2).

In Mandopop, the definition of fandom means the same, but its specific behaviour occurs in the specific context of Mandopop which represents a different identity. The concept of fandom in Mandopop is largely impacted by extensive East Asian cultures, such as Hallyu. Most of the fandom behaviours in East Asia are based on a loyal enthusiasm for the singer, and of course, also for a certain genre or (sub)culture. This chapter will focus on the formation of fandom in Mandopop to discuss its development and the opportunities and constraints encountered in its development. This chapter will be divided into three sections: the first section will focus on the formation and development of fandom and fan culture in Mandopop, which will combine its history and the formation of new identities in the Chinese context. The second section will discuss the conflict between fandom behaviour and cultural policies in China, especially when increasingly non-conformist fandom culture begins to be, what the state regards to be, "chaotic", with policies in place to regulate its behaviour. The third section is about the relationship between fandom and virtual community. Online platforms provide fandom with a gathering place for activities, but because of the aforementioned policy restrictions and their operating rules, there exists a "love-hate" relationship with fandom. Fandom in Mandopop is a relatively new research theme. The participants in the fieldwork often mentioned fandom and fan culture when discussing the development of the Mandopop market and believed that fandom impacts on market oriented Mandopop.

Fan Culture in Mandopop: Developing Fandom in China

The formation of Chinese fan culture is inseparable from the idol industry in the entertainment industry, that is, professional economic companies creating idols or star celebrities who exist as professionals. This is not only among the singers of Mandopop, but also other created idols, such as actors, models and Internet star celebrities. In some Chinese online communities, idols seem to have antagonistic relationships with professionals who are real singers or actors, who mostly survive due to Internet promotion and popularity rather than through their own artistic strength. It is precisely because of the market's impression of idols that the cultural form pursued by fandom is often devalued by the mainstream value system. Therefore, when the development of fandom culture in China breaks the boundaries of cultural policy restrictions, the authorities, as the ruling class, takes coercive measures to limit these "disadvantaged" fans who possess little social resources. Since the popular cultural symbols represented by fandom have obvious symbolic meanings to audiences and the market, fandom has also become a tool used by capital to promote the development of popular culture. Meanwhile, fandom itself has developed its own small group, a kind of mini society with different stratifications within it, so its class identity is shaped through fandom. Therefore, fandom has its own unique identity in the development of China's idol industry and even the entire Mandopop industry. This section will focus on the development of fandom and the formation of its identity.

The growth of China's idol industry is closely intertwined with the Hallyu phenomenon, i.e., the Korean Wave, which has had a significant influence on the formation of idols and idol groups. The popularity of K-pop has played a crucial role in shaping the idol culture in China, while the globalized market of K-pop has become integrated into Chinese social media platforms and idol production processes (Zhong and Negus, 2020: 497). The popularity of K-pop idols in China can be traced back to the normalization of Korea-China relations after 1992, which led to the relaxation of restrictions on exchanges between China and Korea when the development of Korean companies in China received policy support. With migration of young people to China, it became easier for Korean individuals to migrate between China and their home country, thereby

promoting the spread of K-pop and Chinese consumption of K-pop. Meanwhile, the increase in the number of Korean companies and Korean students in China has also led to the import of K-pop music (Sun and Liew, 2019: 424-5). In addition, the spread of Hallyu in China coincided with the liberalization of the media by the Chinese state and the development of the media industry. The increasingly independent Chinese consumers had opportunities to participate in more prosperous consumption behaviour, while household ownership of media devices increased, which provided the material basis for the spread of the Hallyu in China (Latham, 2007, 193-4).

The first wave of Hallyu established the fan base of K-pop and Korean popular culture in China. It witnessed the formation of the first generation of K-pop fandom outside South Korea among Chinese fans in different regions of China, so Hallyu is also considered to have originated in China (Ahn, 2014: 52; Sun and Liew, 2019: 429). This gave Chinese fans of K-pop a label called “Hahanzu” (哈韩族) (see Figure 17), which means a group of fans admiring and adoring Korean popular culture, such as Korean subculture, entertainment and fashion.



Figure 17: “Hahanzu” in China.

Source: “Over 30 million K-pop Fans in China” from Enanyang.my, available at: <https://www.enanyang.my/node/273954>, accessed on 11/08/2022

Since “style” is usually constructed through a combination of clothing, music, dance and make-up (Hebdige, 1978), K-pop set off Hallyu in China with a specific subcultural style, thus forming a specific cultural identity in China’s popular music market. The fandom behaviour of “Hahanzu”, teenage fans of Hallyu, also fits with Dick Hebdige’s description of the style of a subculture (Hebdige, 1978) that challenge mainstream ideology, hegemony and social normalization through symbolic forms of resistance. Although Hebdige’s theory is based on capitalist British society, his theory of subculture parallels the Chinese context, since the style and music of Hallyu subculture in China experiences a similar trajectory through shared resistance but was later commodified as elements of the subculture made available to the mainstream. The fan effects and fan economy brought by Hallyu can prove this point.

“Hahanzu” gather to form fan clubs and carry out activities for their idol singers or idol groups. They are keen to pursue Korean-style fashion with an alternative lifestyle and image, such as dyeing their hair, watching Korean dramas, eating Korean food and worshipping K-pop idols, even kneeling in front of their idols to wait for their autographs (see Figure 18). For instance, H.O.T (High-five of Teenager), a famous male idol group signed by South Korea’s SM Entertainment Co. Ltd., had 8 million fan members in the Chinese fan club at its peak. Within five years, a total of about 500 billion Korean Won (about 2.85 billion Chinese Yuan) was earned from shooting commercials and participating in entertainment activities in China (*Tencent Entertainment*, 2015). The sheer number of fans and the behaviour of the “Hahanzu” had a huge impact on the mainstream Chinese popular music market and caused negative evaluations of them by the public. H.O.T members mentioned in an interview that many fans who went to South Korea to study supported them (*Tencent Entertainment*, 2015). But it is undeniable that such a fan economy and operation of the idol industry was recognised and accepted in subsequent years, and even played an important guiding role in the localised Chinese idol industry. In various performances of Mandopop in the past, there were fans with, what the state described as, “fanatical” and “crazy” fan behaviours, but it was far less pronounced in China than in K-pop

fandom, and there were not that many organised fandom activities. The huge impact of the K-pop music industry on Mandopop brought the fan effect and idol industry to the Chinese market. K-pop fandom in China imitated South Korea's operations and activities, gradually establishing a fandom culture in China and applying this culture to the Mandopop market since the late 1990s.



Figure 18: Chinese fan kneeling to get the autograph of a K-pop idol.

Source: "Fans Kneel down for Autographs? Seeing Such Scenes, How Can the Fandom Culture Accept It?" from baijiahao.baidu.com, available at:

<https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1710600533601170894&wfr=spider&for=pc>, accessed on 11/08/2022

While the first wave of Hallyu in the 1990s was a localised wave in East Asia that opened a window for Korean cultural exchange and output in China, the second wave of Hallyu, also referred to as "Hallyu 2.0", was "facilitated by digitalization, mobile and internet communications and social media" (Zhong and Negus, 2020: 497). After Hallyu gained a certain fan base in China in the mid-to-late 1990s, with the rapid

expansion of the digital and mobile economy after 2008, K-pop fandom in China increased even faster (Zhang and Fung, 2017). However, the development of Hallyu is not entirely due to K-pop music itself, but the music industry effect brought by K-pop, such as the creation of idols by management companies, entertainment programmes and television series. According to quantitative research by Ahn (2014: 52-3) on the use of K-pop culture by Chinese Internet users, Chinese users have a strong longing for Korean culture and star celebrities when they watch entertainment programmes, which illustrates the important role of star power in shaping idols and its influence beyond K-pop music. With the combined effect of digital media and the Internet, specifically when China's Internet and digital media were not monitored and restricted by the Chinese authorities, Chinese netizens ("net" plus "citizen") accessed equivalent platforms to Western ones and other countries' network platforms in the early 2000s, through which K-pop and its related industries had wider dissemination channels, which made Hallyu's impact on the Mandopop market stronger. To expand the impact of K-pop and maximize economic benefits, Korean management companies seized the opportunities of the second wave of Hallyu.

As a major market for Hallyu, increasingly more Korean management companies recruited trainees in China and created idol groups, including Chinese nationals to debut. There are even subgroups exclusively operating in China; for example, Super Junior has a subgroup called Super Junior-M (*NetEase Entertainment*, 2009) (see Figure 19), and EXO has a subgroup called EXO-M (*Sina Entertainment*, 2013) (see Figure 20). These subgroups are named by adding the letter "M" for "Mandarin" to the original group name, consisting of some of the original members - usually the most popular members in China, including Chinese and Korean nationals - as well as newly recruited members of Chinese and non-Chinese nationality. However, the almost oppressive operational mode of Korean management companies has made idol artists miserable. Many Chinese members have sued the companies and returned to China to develop their careers after rescinding the contract.



Figure 19: K-pop group Super Junior-M is a subgroup of Super Junior.

Source: “Exclusive Planning: 08 Memories Belonging to Super Junior-M”, available at: <https://www.163.com/ent/article/5JU88S2G00033419.html>, accessed on 12/08/2022



Figure 20: K-pop group EXO-M is a subgroup of EXO.

Source: “What Happened to the K-pop Group EXO-M that Debuted in Mainland China?”, available at: <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1678725149801737001&wfr=spider&for=pc>, accessed on 12/08/2022

The first Chinese member of the K-pop idol group to rescind the contract, Geng Han, was a member of Super Junior and the leader of Super Junior-M. Due to the harsh

conditions imposed by the Korean agency, Han made a request to rescind the contract in 2009. He mentioned that because of his nationality, he has been treated unfairly in South Korea, such as receiving uneven income within the team and excessive workload. Han also disclosed six unfair contracts by the Korean agency, for example, when he was unwell and absent from performances, his contract was extended, and if he was late, he was fined up to about 0.52 million Chinese Yuan (*Sohu.com*, 2021). With the return of Chinese members such as Han to China, it has undoubtedly driven the development of fandom culture in China again, especially when they started releasing Mandopop albums with a fandom base in the Mandopop market that was already popular.

Super Girl and The Rise of Localization of Chinese Fandom Culture

Before the second wave of Hallyu, the Chinese Mandopop market opened a new era of media through talent-making television shows, where audience members votes are used to determine rankings. In the era when the Internet was not yet developed, the audience voted by sending text messages, so the television station obtained tens of millions of profits from communication costs. From amateurs to idols, success is determined through the real money of fans, which is regarded as a manifestation of Chinese entertainment democracy. Among these talent shows, the most representative was Super Girl (see Figure 21) held by Hunan Satellite Television in 2005. In fact, it was not the first time a talent show was held, and it was not the first edition of Super Girl either. The predecessor of Super Girl was a companion volume of Super Boy hosted by Hunan Television Entertainment Channel. After its success in Hunan in 2004, it was jointly organised by Hunan Satellite Television and other local and municipal media and broadcast nationwide. The first edition of Super Girl was held in 2004, which was the first time that a chance was provided to amateurs with star dreams to become famous, but because it appeared like an experiment of building star celebrity, many audiences took a wait-and-see attitude. It was not until the audience discovered that participating in talent shows was really a shortcut to fame that it achieved the huge popularity and

success of Super Girl in 2005. Super Girl is an imported entertainment product modelled on foreign talent shows, such as American Idol and X Factor. The star-making movement was in full swing when China still lacked an outlet for mass entertainment and spectatorship. The emergence of Super Girl successfully broke the past elitist cultural society wrapped up in politics and serious literature and gave the public an outlet for mass culture. A more important reason for the successful integration of business and culture was to catch up with the global consumption era (Er and Yang, 2018).



Figure 21: The finals of 2005 Super Girl.

Source: “The Number of Votes Won by Text Messages of the Super Girl Championship is Announced at the Scene” from eladies.sina.com.cn/, available at: <http://eladies.sina.com.cn/nx/2005/0827/0152185670.html>, accessed on 12/08/2022

The 2005 Super Girl champion Yuchun Li received more than 3.5 million votes in the finals and even appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine (Asia special issue) in October 2005, being named as one of “Asia Heroes” (see Figure 22). *Time* magazine once commented that Yuchun Li’s popularity was phenomenal, while her singing skills are far from her fame, and even her fandom admitted this. However, despite this, Yuchun Li was the most popular idol at the time. As Fung (2013, 83) believes, “Li’s success is

the product of a grassroots effort; more importantly, fans consume *Supergirl* and take ownership in Li's elevation to 'diva' status". Fung (2013: 83) further stated that Yuchun Li's fandom is generated and formed by the interaction between fans and television stations, and the reaction of her fans is a kind of performance arranged by the programme producers to construct an image that resonates with her fans. Therefore, the construction of Super Girl essentially requires the cooperation of enthusiastic fans and audiences, who play an important role and have become accustomed to the interaction between idols and themselves.



Figure 22: Yuchun Li on the cover of *Time Magazine* Asia Special Issue.

Source: "Chinese on covers of Times magazine" from CCTV.com, available at: http://english.cctv.com/photo/album/20100318/102954_13.shtml, accessed on 27/03/2022

Aside from the arrangements of the programme producers, fans are often fond and eager to interact with their idols, even more intimately. Within fandom groups, fans with high status, as fans' opinion leaders, are usually closer to the idols and have more opportunities for direct contact. Thus, there is a hierarchical structure of status formed within fandom groups, and hierarchical difference is reflected in both the online and offline status of the fans, such as attention and access to idols, while the pursuit of status within the fan group has become an important driving factor for maintaining fandom identity.

Since Yuchun Li became popular in Super Girl in 2005, the overnight fame of an amateur is no longer a myth. In the subsequent five years, more than 200 talent shows emerged on various satellite television channels (Er and Yang, 2018). Various popular and mass cultural programmes with the theme of amateur star-making have sprung up, such as Happy Boy, My Hero and My Show. Although these talent shows adjust their contents, at the core is still competition. This type of talent show is aimed at males or females as the specific target audience, for instance female talent shows are more likely to attract the attention of male audiences. To attract female audiences, the talent show itself will establish a neutral image of female contestants or express the power of females, or sometimes show feminism on certain occasions to resonate with female audiences. The creators of the shows use the gender identity of fans to create images for contestants to appeal to male or female audiences, reflecting gender identity in fans as one of the foci of the Chinese idol industry. The phenomenon of focusing gender identity of fans is even more apparent when discussing the talent shows of boy bands and girl groups.

It is worth noting that although there are many programmes that appeared later, almost none of them could continue the grand success and popularity of Super Girl. This may be because the format of the talent show in recent years has made the audience tired, and the music market has used the results of the talent show to "educate" the audience that popularity is not everything, which led to the emergence of singing variety shows

focusing on the professional quality of singers, such as *The Voice of China* and *Sing! China*. These programmes turn the interactive voting relationship between fandom and idol into a new type of teacher-friend relationship between contestants and mentors, with the contestants also including fandom by mentors. Thus, gradually the market began to be dissatisfied with amateur talent shows and conducted a series of competitive shows among famous singers, such as *I am a Singer* and *Legend of Songs*.

With the continuous development of the idol industry in China, under the influence of the second wave of Hallyu, a series of idol cultivation programmes has been produced, in which management companies sent trainees to participate in the competition and form a new idol group through the competition. Programmes such as *Youth with You* and *Produce 101* showcase the production of boy and girl groups to the public, turning trainees, including young Chinese from ordinary backgrounds and trainees who have signed with the entertainment agency, into celebrities. Considering research on masculinity of boy bands by Freya Jarman-Ivens (2013) and femininity of girls groups by Sheila Whiteley (2013), boy bands and girl groups in the West have over the past few decades attempted to shape their masculinity or femininity through song text, stage performances and the ideas conveyed by their music, and these discussions about gender identity have also shown that masculinity and femininity greatly encouraged the development of Western boy bands and girl groups, which is especially reflected in the experiences of female singers or female groups. Gender identity is similarly reflected in the Chinese talent show of boy bands and girl groups. While it is true that certain boy bands and girl groups have historically attracted fans through their overtly masculine or feminine performances, such as showcasing muscular physiques or wearing revealing outfits, a shift occurred in the selection and portrayal of boy bands and girl groups in Chinese talent shows after the 2000s. The image these groups convey is very different from the West - they are more influenced by the image of Japanese and Korean celebrities. This reflects the impact of East Asian cultural influences on Chinese pop culture and the adoption of certain aesthetics and performance styles associated with Japanese and Korean entertainment industries. Talent shows became a common

platform for talent discovery, and the selected groups began to embrace actions and appearances aimed at establishing a more neutral image for female performers and challenging traditional gender norms rather than emphasizing hyper-masculine or hyper-feminine traits. This meant selecting members who embodied qualities that were relatable to a wide range of audiences, including those seeking a departure from traditional gender stereotypes - promoting a gender-neutral image for female performers and embracing a more androgynous or “sissy” male image that found admiration among fans.

In the noughties, fans began to return to voting to determine the popularity of idols, but this time they were loyal followers. Fans belong to highly organised groups since Super Girl 2005, promoting, voting and even organizing canvassing events on streets or online to gain more attention from others for their idols. Fan activities are not only for the television programme, but extend beyond the programme, playing the role of enthusiastic fans for supporting idols’ music, film and television work and other achievements in the rankings and at award ceremonies. This makes the Chinese idol industry and fandom a tacit example that popularity is the most crucial element in an idol’s career. But is it really the case that popularity is the key priority? The relationship between fans and idol (sometimes the term “idol” does represent a singer or actor, whose fame does not match the strength with a quite ironic explanation) should have a better value orientation. In essence, the fan group of each idol is quite similar. The fan group is organised in an orderly manner and has strict levels, the only difference being the size of group and whether fans are mature. A mature fandom culture must be highly organised, and it is also indispensable for the management and education of fans. When an idol and the management company create a virtual community for fans to carry out activities, they should not regard fans’ activities as such a journey but should set up a good image of the idol to set an example for fans, especially the younger generation, at least in terms of artistic behaviour.

The Chinese “Idol” Culture Industry

Fandom is a cultural phenomenon that is inevitably shaped by the development of the idol culture industry in China because the meaning and location of idols themselves are inextricably linked with fandom. In the popular culture entertainment industry, idols typically refer to young entertainers in their teens to twenties who market their image, appeal and personality, while maintaining a financially loyal fan base of consumers. As mentioned earlier, idols are different from singers or actors in the traditional sense, who are systematically trained in acting, singing, dancing, physique and appearance. But often, because of the quality of traditional singers or actors who do not necessarily have fame, the term “idol” is at times used derogatorily in comparison to them.

The idol industry is a new industry in the entertainment industry and developed rapidly by means of the Internet. According to the 49th Statistical Report on Internet Development in China released by China’s Internet Network Information Centre (2022), as of December 2021, the number of Chinese Internet users has reached 1.032 billion and has a steady growth trend. This number provides a solid foundation for the economic development of the Chinese idol cultural industry. According to Endata (2020) estimates, the total scale of China’s idol industry in 2020 had already exceeded 130 billion Chinese Yuan. The quality of content represented by online dramas and shows has dramatically increased. In addition, new online content such as live broadcasts and videos are constantly emerging. Thus, the development of Internet-based high-quality online content has gradually evolved to be the main channel for emerging idols, which relies on the online identity of fans and their online support activities. The online identity of fans is an important part of fandom activity within the virtual community, and there is a strong information transfer between fandom groups and their highly flexible online identity across different online platforms, especially when fans worship multiple idols where the diversity of fandom identity is more prominent. Meanwhile, the online identity of fans also provides a kind of protection for fans themselves in allowing them to hide their real identity, unless it is necessary to use their offline identity to verify online identity. Yet young people in China prefer to use their online identity for fan activity to ensure their own sense of security. Many online

fan activities provide a guarantee for the development of the fandom economy and prompt the rise in idol culture in China.

As media usage habits have gradually shifted from traditional media to the Internet in recent years in the era of Internet social networking, the speed of entertainment hotspots has been greatly amplified and online content has rapidly increased the popularity of new idols. At the same time, the popularity of idols is directly proportional to their commercial value. While the Internet quickly accumulates popularity for new idols, it also drives the growth of idols' commercial value. Most of the new idols who have become popular through Internet communication channels are still inseparable from the star-making model of online programmes. However, this is different to talent shows created by traditional television stations. Online talent shows are more flexible in the forms they take, as they can adjust according to real-time feedback, such as “bullet-screens”¹⁰ and comments, and they can also to adjust the contents to adapt to audience preferences and the “hottest” topics based on online audience feedback. Effectively, online idol programmes can be replayed anytime and anywhere, which is more attractive to fans. In addition, there exists a complete industrial chain for supporting services for idols after the programme, such as releasing records, participating in Internet variety shows customised for them, participating in movies and series, and even hosting programmes. Because the cultivation and training of idols occurs all-year-round, even if their success is limited, they would still be able to maximize their commercial value under the operation of capital.

In recent years, increasingly representative programmes are the talent shows of selecting singers and idol groups. Their appearance allows variety shows to effectively link the music industry with the Internet platform to achieve a win-win situation. Many high-quality singer-songwriters, such as folk singer Buyi Mao (see Figure 23) and rapper Ting Zhou (GAI) (see Figure 24) have been supplied to the music market

¹⁰ “Bullet-screen” is a technique that enables website users to send real-time comments like a “bullet” across the screen.

through these variety shows. Their fresh creations have injected new blood into the Mandopop music market. In addition to releasing digital music albums, they also present different forms of music performances, such as online concerts, song sharing sessions and premiere concerts. While these idols are acquiring popularity, they expand the magnitude of music performance revenue related to digital music. The combination of variety shows and online music into this new online programme format allows to output many audio recording of live performances on streaming media platforms, which not only increases the number of broadcasts but also expands the influence of the programme itself. Therefore, online programmes that serve the idol industry also endow the Mandopop music industry with new functions and values.



Figure 23: Buyi Mao wins first place in the reality show The Coming One.

Source available at: <https://v.qq.com/x/cover/mzc002002f01mnn/u00240jndvd.html>, captured on 12/08/2022.



Figure 24: Ting Zhou (Gai) wins first place in the music talent show The Rap of China.

Source available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KlHeoQKUv08&ab_channel=RapCloud, captured on 12/08/2022.

In recent years, the idol industry has thus spawned a “virtual idol” industry due to the use of new Internet technology. The virtual idol is produced through painting, animation and computer graphics, and performs the activities of real singers in virtual or realistic scenes. Characters of virtual idols are produced and cultivated based on specific needs of business and culture, but do not themselves exist in physical form. Virtual idols often rely on a real actor or actress in a motion-capture suit, who brings the actor/singer to life in real time through voice, movement and facial expressions (Tobin and Zhou, 2022), and are known as VTubers, or in Chinese “pitao ren” (literally means “shell people”) (Gong, 2022). VTubers are as dependent on the attractiveness and personality of real humans as any real-life idols (Tobin and Zhou, 2022). While fans are often attached to the unique personality of the singer and/or actor behind their favorite virtual idols, the emergence of virtual idols has sparked controversy. In the singer talent show *The Coming One*, held in 2017, a virtual singer called HeZ competed on the same stage with other “real” idols (see Figure 25). After HeZ defeated other “real” idols with high popularity, HeZ received criticism of dissatisfied fans of real idols, who questioned the technology of virtual idols and the show’s unfairness, after which the

show judges stopped recording the show, which interrupted the live broadcast (dgchijin.com, 2022).

The appearance of virtual idols is artificial and created by the idol industry to meet the freshness that fans require, especially younger generations of fans, which reflects the crucial role played by fan identity in promoting the Chinese idol industry. But at the same time, Chinese regard virtual idols as synthetic celebrities, who aim to gain a large human fan base, while internet companies are cautious when seeking authorities to deploy virtual idols in what may be an imminent digital virtual world (Lee, 2022). The Chinese idol industry, including its virtual idols industry, belongs to the industrial development model that is under the control of the state. Yet at times, “chaos” (as defined by the Chinese state) in the Chinese idol industry involves rectification by state policy, so the virtual idol industry inevitably faces strict state censorship. Consequently, many fans’ sense of identity is limited, and they therefore seek new spaces for their fan activities through guerilla-style tactics.



Figure 25: The virtual idol HeZ competed with real idols in The Coming One.

Source available at: <https://v.qq.com/x/page/c3338n59zlm.html>, captured on 13/08/2022.

Moreover, the development of China’s idol industry is inseparable from its behind-the-scenes driving force - the management companies. Endata (2020) believes that China’s

idol management companies have developed professionally and ecologically, yet the industry model needs to be more innovative. This means that Chinese idol management companies, under the control and censorship of the authorities, need to have more localised operating models to adapt to the growth environment of local idols, rather than copying the idol star-making models of other countries, such as Japan and South Korea. In other words, it is necessary to develop a localised Chinese idol industry with its own identity, including cultural, policy and commercial aspects under censorship conditions, which are closely related to the identity construction of Chinese fans.

According to the report published by Endata (2020), the current idol training and idol management models in China are basically based on two models. One is the idol-cultivating model of Japanese idols, such as SNH48 Group cultivated by Shanghai Star48 Culture Media Group Co. Ltd. and TF Boys cultivated by Beijing Times Fengjun Culture Art Development Co. Ltd Inc. This model is based on Japanese trainees to be discovered and cultivated, with a core fandom group formed through a membership system, which cooperates with fans to promote and construct idols. However, due to fierce market competition and the difficulty of copying the first generation of popular idols, this model encountered a bottleneck. The second model is based on the idol-training in South Korea by recruiting many trainees to train their performance skills and form idol groups, such as YUE HUA Entertainment, which has many Chinese trainees who have debuted in South Korea. It is based on Korean-style industrialization and assembly-line trainee idol creation through standardised production, planning, publicity and other processes to efficiently produce and reiterate idols. Yet it is difficult for idols to maintain a good operating model after their debut, and they face problems such as uneven distribution of resources and insufficient potential. Although the overall operation of the two models was relatively stable, which provided stable and high-quality idol resources for the Chinese idol industry, the two models have also encountered difficulties and bottlenecks in their practical operation.

The model of cultivating or training idols by imitating other countries' models cannot fully satisfy the Chinese market environment. Therefore, the localization of the idol industry at the commercial level includes adjusting industrial patterns to meet Chinese market demands and cultivating Chinese fans to form specific consumption habits, alongside localizing the surrounding culture and policy. At present, the cultural identity formed in the Chinese idol industry is dual, including the imported Japanese and Korean cultural model and the local cultural content of China. However, if Chinese fans wish to have wider recognition of Chinese idols and the idol industry, it is necessary to continuously emphasise and strengthen Chinese cultural identity in the idol industry, and even create new hybrid cultural identities in line with the current market context. Therefore, to explore the localised operation model in the Chinese idol industry, emerging companies represented by WAJJIWA Entertainment have begun to use a new model of idol operation based on China's local Internet ecology and industrial chain.

To fully benefit from the advantages of the localised idol industrial chain, emerging companies must adopt the ecology of China's Internet industry and explore the closed-loop and localised star-making model of the entire industrial chain, ranging from idol mining, training, cultivation, brokerage to fan economy. Using Mandopop music as the starting point and core, this means to quickly create star celebrities through variety shows, and to radiate these with film and television dramas and the fandom economy. In this way, the management companies can deliver youthful and multi-dimensional content to the market and create diversified and personalised high-quality youth idols, while achieving a market share in the Mandopop music market.

The expansion of the fan economy within China's localized idol industry has focused on guiding fan activities and monetizing fandom through new channels. While this has grown the industry economically, solely pursuing profit by exploiting fandom could backfire if companies neglect fostering positive fan culture. As the industry expands, addressing concerning behaviours and cultivating healthy fandom is important to build

constructive relations. During commercialization, promoted identities may not fully reflect those recognized by authorities regarding culture, society and nationhood. Deliberately shaping gendered celebrity expressions like fabricated relationships can mislead young audiences. An overemphasis on profit through sensationalized “chaos” risks obscuring the industry’s social responsibilities. As fervent support and revenues increased, authorities grew wary of potential issues if left unchecked. The Cyberspace Administration’s “The Clean-up and Rectification of Chaos in Fandom” campaign signalling this concern also inflamed existing tensions. While economic gains motivate growth, the industry’s role in society necessitates self-regulation and cooperation with regulators to steer fandom’s positive development. How commercial and state interests can best balance publicity, guidance and welfare merits further critical discussion.

The Contradiction between Fandom and Policy

Since summer 2005, when Super Girl was launched, the term fandom has become popular in China. Fan identity is an important discourse in Mandopop as it relates to market demand and the development of the Chinese idol industry in the new Mandopop market. Although the discussion about fan identity focuses on the commercialization of Mandopop, due to the excessive amplification of the capital benefits of the fandom economy, fandom activities are censored and restricted by the state, so that the construction of fans’ identities conforms to the state-approved Chinese identity, including cultural identity, social identity and national identity, as these are recognised by Chinese authorities. Influences by the internet, commercial content and capital operations have increasingly fuelled intense fandom behaviour, which the state perceives as “irrational”, exacerbated by a profit-oriented approach exploiting fandom as traffic and revenue.

In the past, when fandom was nascent, fans and idols generally maintained positive interactions. Idols shaped “good” public images while fans expressed positive values through charitable actions. For example, Yuchun Li’s fans were involved in various charity activities, including setting up the “LIYUCHUN Fans Charity Fund”, which is

the first ever fund named by fans in China, set up by the China Red Cross Foundation in 2006 with the support of Yuchun Li and the support of her fans. This shows an example of fans' positive response to Yuchun Li's dedication to public welfare, and conveys the positive energy of helping and giving back to society. At that time, there existed a positive interaction relationship between fans and idols. However, rising entertainment pay coupled with intensifying commercialization have incentivized the hype surrounding idols. While generating fan economy benefits, this model affects idols' conduct and behaviours. Both idols and fandom activities now involve state management aimed at guiding behaviours constructively. A balanced, nuanced perspective is needed to understand evolving relationships between commercialization, policy, diverse stakeholders and complex online fan communities.

Yuanzheng Feng, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Vice Principal of Beijing People's Art, and a veteran actor, said in an interview that his idols as a child were all war heroes, such as Feng Lei and Cunrui Dong, which reflects the public mainstream guidance at that time, therefore he believes that in today's entertainment-dominated society, the state should also guide young people to establish positive idol views and standardize the behaviour of artists themselves (Wang, Song and Wang, 2022). However, in guiding fans, especially young fans and establishing a correct idol view, state control is not that comprehensive due to the profit-seeking behaviour of capital, along with the chasing of star celebrities and associated fan behaviours. According to Feng, when fan behaviour on the Internet went out of control, the Cyberspace Administration of China finally acted to address the "chaos" of fandom, which the state inextricably linked with the operation of capital. The Chinese state thereby believes that such escalating fandom is "not normal" and affects the social order and the healthy growth of younger generations.

The "Chaotic" Phenomenon of Fandom

Fandom is a cultural model driven by fan groups. It is a youth subculture within a media landscape inspired by idol worship (Wu and Zhang, 2021: 4). The cultural form and

content of this youth subculture resonates with Dick Hebdige's theory (1978), suggesting that subcultures challenge mainstream ideology, hegemony and social normalization through "troublemaking" actions, which is reflected in the state's ideas surrounding the "chaos" of fandom. When Super Girl was broadcast, fans' disproportionate support and voting had already begun to emerge, and the polarization of emotions and enlightenment of fans' operation had already appeared in the canvassing behaviours of fans, which heralds the emergence of fandom culture to future audiences.

Wu and Zhang (2021: 5) believe that many scholars now use the theory of "para-social interaction" to study and understand the behaviour of fans, which was proposed by anthropologist Donald Horton and sociologist Richard Wohl in 1956, referring to the interactive mode of an anthropomorphic communication between viewers and television images. The term "para-social interaction" suggests a kind of interaction that is not real communication, but a communicative relationship based on the fan's individual imagination that is attached to the virtual imagination of "idol-fan" intimacy, and this self-imagination of intimacy is the catalyst for the state-declared "chaos" in fandom. This virtual intimacy imagined by fans seems to be based on an "intimacy contract" between fans and idols and fans and management companies, and represents a kind of "contract" between fans and fans as they unite within a group relation. The unity of the fandom group stems from two points: firstly, the Internet era has separated people from traditional collectives of real society and established a new (virtual) community. In reality, lonely individuals pin their success on idols, while the difficulties of idols will also cause them pain; secondly, fandom has a strict organizational structure and working mechanism, whereby an individual fan will be isolated if he/she cannot follow the crowd, thus gradually forming a silent spiral effect in the group and causing "sober" people to be forced to take action and gradually lose their rationality (Fan, 2021: 80).

The process of gathering fans into a fandom community involves cultural imagination, emotional idolization, and formation of identities and belonging. Whether considering the overall community or subgroups, members develop affinity through shared symbols. Indeed, distinct identity representations exist within both the idol industry and broader Chinese society. Fan identities emerge through intimate yet commercialized online circles rather than strictly following mainstream state-endorsed narratives. While enabling capitalization of the economy, this divergence fuels authorities' concern over controlling public discourse. Over time, fandom has evolved from personal idolization into an identity construct and online subculture. However, characterizing all fan behaviours as “chaotic”, as stipulated by the state, risks overgeneralization, while regulatory approaches seek to avoid specific issues that contradict core cultural, legal or ethical standards. The online social dynamics is complicated, and both commercial and policy imperatives shape industry-fan relations.

The state-defined “chaotic” phenomenon of fandom in China does not have a clear origin and is said to have emerged during the birth of the talent variety show, with the quasi-obsessive voting behaviour of fans revealing clues. Although fandom activity has constantly changed, in essence, it has always been guided by the popularity and success of idols. Fandom activity gradually deviated off track in recent years, with an intensifying trend of “chaotic” fandom that usually occurs among fans of idols with high popularity. Although it does not have a definite origin, the root of “chaos” in fandom lies in the excessive profit-seeking behaviour of capital, which has a negative impact on views around money and values for youth groups, and seriously affects mainstream social values and the identities of young people. Under the influence of capital, professional fans, anti-fans, marketing agencies, polling companies and other organizations have begun to support their idols in major online media platforms and virtual communities where fandom groups are located and steer against other individuals or organizations with conflicting interests. Most of these activities occur under the operation of the management companies, becoming the default position by some companies.

At present, the new media facilitate people's communication and fandom, yet fans may curse at each other when they disagree in virtual communities. The scolding battles among fans are indeed frequent. Fans of two co-star celebrities, celebrity couples and idol group members have various conflicts of interest, which is common in Chinese fandom; for example, there are conflicts over who is in the centre position on the poster, or conflicts overexposing an idol's illegal behaviour, which can cause constant scolding battles among fans. In addition, fans also have many new subgroups within their circle, such as "solo fan" (唯粉, means the fan of only one idol in a group), "CP fan" (CP 粉, means the fan of character pairing), and in new formats formed between each other. Liu and Feng (2021: 40) argue that there is a struggle between group portrait appreciation and one-dimensional appreciation due to the contradiction between limited data output and unlimited idol output. This leads to the struggle between fans, even of the same idol, because of different loyalties and imagined virtual relationships, resulting in a struggle that spreads to and impacts other individuals or organizations.

Taking the incident of Zhan Xiao fandom that occurred in 2020 as a representative example, his fans single-handedly stopped the website from operating in China for an invisible "insult" of Zhan Xiao. Zhan Xiao and another actor, Yibo Wang, co-starred in a TV series, which was adapted from homosexual fiction. Although their character relationship is about friendship in the TV series, the homosexual relationship in the original fiction aroused enthusiastic responses from fans, especially "CP fans". Consequently, Archive of Our Own (hereinafter referred to as AO3), a non-profit and open-source fanfiction¹¹ database website, released a novel called *Falling*, in which Zhan Xiao is portrayed through a female image. Due to the illegal status of homosexuality in China, such fanfiction based on love stories between homosexual characters is starkly contrary to mainstream ideology in China. Therefore, TV dramas adapted from homosexual fanfiction tend to weaken the relationship between

¹¹ Fanfiction is a kind of fictional writing written in an amateur capacity by fans, unauthorised by but based on an existing work of fiction. Fanfiction was created with any fictional and occasional non-fictional subject base on comics, novels, movies, musical groups, cartoons and video games.

homosexual characters, and instead adapt friendship-related character relationships. However, their “edgy” behaviour led to many fans expressing an interest in the homosexual relationship in the original fanfiction. Fans, as a subcultural group, use their idolatry of homosexuality to show their resistance to mainstream ideology and even show excitement about it. However, after the release of the fanfiction, shame and anger detonated the battle between “solo fans” and “CP fans” when some fans felt that the novel insulted Zhan Xiao. To protect the idol, “solo fans” quickly and systematically reported the author of this novel, which led to the author’s deletion of the account, and more angry fans even reported it together with other authors of AO3. Eventually, AO3 officially announced the end of service in China on the evening of 29 February 2020 (Li, 2020; Liu and Feng, 2020: 40; Romano, 2020).

This incident shifted attention from fans’ efforts to maintain their idol image and towards the struggle around controversial gendered norms and behaviours, Internet civilization, fanfiction and creative freedom. Xiao’s fans argued that the content classification in AO3 was unclear, and there was a lot of vulgar, pornographic and violent content that could harm Chinese underage netizens, so it should be blocked. Yet in fact, their purpose was simply to resist content with the potential to “insult” idols. Interestingly, underage fans, regardless of their sexual orientation or clear understanding of their own heterosexuality, displayed a significant interest in hyper-homosexual character relationships for idolization purposes. This phenomenon highlights the complex dynamics of gender identity within fandom communities. Moreover, it reveals how this discourse around gender identity has been co-opted by capital interests seeking attention and increased economic gains. Paradoxically, while this may challenge normative gender representations and pose a threat to mainstream consciousness, it also reflects the non-normative aspects of gender identity that contradict the construction of young people’s gender identity within the prevailing societal framework.

Indeed, under the control and censorship by the state, non-normative gendered representations are still controversial in China as they represent unacceptable ideas and behaviours. While these are constructed ideas by the state or families and then passed on via socialisation, young people within fandom groups take rebellious actions against such ideas, even if they do not identify themselves as homosexual, which is why marketing homosexual relationships between the two idols attracted “CP fans”. In this regard, the *Procuratorial Daily*, which is issued by the Supreme People’s Procuratorate, published five consecutive articles on the incident in the fifth and sixth editions of the rule of law commentary to discuss fan-idol behaviour and fanfictions (Li, 2020; NetEase Entertainment, 2020a). In these articles, *Procuratorial Daily* affirmed the value of fanfictions and regarded the creation of fanfiction as an important breeding ground for literary and artistic creation, and that fanfiction websites are created and managed by individuals and organizations with operation rules of self-discipline, classification and elimination. Although it may not be so satisfactory sometimes, it still has value to exist. *Procuratorial Daily* also pointed out that fanfictions used the original comics, animations, novels, characters, storylines or background settings for secondary creation, which may indeed involve the rights of names and reputations. Rights issues, such as portrait rights and commercialization rights, may be related to criminal activity, but criminality should be managed by cultural and legal departments, rather than fandom groups. Secondly, the personal preferences of fans should not affect the creation of fanfictions, which stems from the fact that the idol him/herself and his/her management team did not engage in necessary counselling and appeasement, and that they were not alerted to the social harm and impact of such behaviour. *Procuratorial Daily* believed that both idols and their management teams should sit idly by the fans’ emotional ferment, who did not issue an apology until they caused widespread boycotts and even affected their economic returns. This is an act of disregarding idols’ own social responsibilities; therefore Zhan Xiao was also regarded as a disqualified idol (NetEase, 2020a).

This kind of activism by fans was not the first time. *People's Daily Online* (2021), China's official online media platform, pointed out that every ranking chart is a reaper of money, while some fandom groups boost popularity in dozens of rankings daily to compete for the illusory rankings for idols. Moreover, the platforms that build the rankings provide "convenience" for fans to maintain the idol's data prosperity for profit, thereby requiring fans to spend more money. Through the intimate relationship between fans and idols, fans' pursuit in chasing stars shifts from the moral principle of equality between people towards differences in virtue in a society of acquaintances, and the consumption of fans subtly changes from free preference to compulsory obligation (Liu and Feng, 2021: 41). Fans sometimes connect consumption with identity expression and demonstrating affection. However, intense commercialization has raised concerns about potentially unhealthy dynamics, which may result in a shift where fan labour and consumption of idols no longer adhere to the principles of equality and voluntary action, but rather to a sense of necessary obligation with moral constraints. Some fans and analysts have raised concerns that intense commercial forces could potentially distort relationships for certain vulnerable fan subgroups if left unchecked.

The frequent occurrence of state-defined "chaos" in fandom has thus triggered a series of discussions, while the negative and harmful social impact of fans' illegal social activities was noticed by the national network supervision department. As mentioned earlier, in June 2021, the Office of the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission (2021) launched a special campaign of "Clean-up and Rectification of Chaos in Fandom", focusing on the prominent problems surrounding online fan clubs, ranking charts of star celebrities, hot topics, fandom communities and interactive comments, and comprehensively "cleaning up" all kinds of harmful information, such as fans tearing at and scolding each other, provoking confrontation, insulting slander, rumour attack and malicious marketing. The rectification of fandom behaviour by the state has inevitably caused dissatisfaction among and complaints by fans, and of course, also harmed the capital interests of management companies. The management and

censorship of the Internet also became stricter for a while, threatening the existence of the virtual communities of idol fans.

There are foreign media voices pointing out that the state rhetoric of “saving” Chinese youth is just a smokescreen, with the more serious purpose to reaffirm the party’s control over the Internet as a key battleground for political and ideological security rights by closely scrutinising fandom online activities and taking actions toward Internet crackdown (Bandurski, 2021). While such criticism may reflect the state’s consolidation and control of its own rights, both idols and fans inevitably operate within a system shaped by political and cultural priorities. Entertainers and industries internationally also experience degrees of policy influence. Without at least partial alignment to national identity frameworks and principles, sustained operations may prove challenging. The consciousness mapping of fandom groups can be regarded as the ideology of the idol itself, which the state believes should exist with social values, not stand on the opposite side of its ethics and law. Since fandom activities are highly organised activities by social groups, can such fandom operate within the identity of a social group? This is an under-explored field that needs to be addressed in actual fandom management.

Fan Clubs Operating under Illegal Identity

A fan club is an organization made by a group of fans with a shared interest in idols, and the larger the size of fan club, the higher the popularity of the idol. The fan club is mainly organised by a core individual or management team to convene other fans, whereby after a fixed group is formed, the fan club will start to organise idol-related support activities. The membership identity of fans is the most direct evidence to distinguish members of fan clubs from ordinary fans, and there exist differences in the sense of superiority between high and low status within a fan club. The researcher herself has been involved in the management and operation of fan clubs and knows, through first-hand experience, that a fan club is indeed a hierarchical and strict organization. For example, global fan clubs set up branches in countries with idol career

development, while the Chinese branch is divided into secondary branches, such as in Central China, South China and East China according to geographic regions, and then into tertiary branches for each province within a specific geographic region. The organizational structure and operation scale of such layer-by-layer management goes far beyond legitimate registered social groups. While it is an organization with fans as its main body, its operational initiative is located within the brokerage company. For example, Singaporean Mandopop singer Wayne (Junjie) Lin once owned many different fan clubs, such as JJ Family, JJ Member and JJ Bar in mainland China, which were organised and operated by fans themselves and were acquiesced by Wayne Lin and his management company. Among these fan clubs, there was an organization called Fan club of JJ International Official Website, which attracted nearly 60 thousand fans to register as members because of its “official” identity (iFeng Music, 2013). It then began to reveal the company’s intention to interfere in fandom activities. Different fan clubs often have conflicts of interest in their fight for status in the hearts of idols, which also prompted Wayne (Junjie) Lin and label companies to merge all fan clubs in 2013 to form only one “official” fan club called JJ-Federation. Ostensibly to make the fans more united, it facilitated their manipulation.

Under the control of the management company, fan clubs often implement a membership system. If fans want to have a closer contact with their idols and obtain “privileges”, such as the privilege (“qualifications”) to purchase concert tickets first, fans need to pay membership fees every year to obtain so-called “qualifications”. This makes the stratification differences in fan clubs become obvious. In addition, the so-called “top managers”, the management of the national branch, have more “privilege” and a higher “superiority” because they have close ties with the management company. Not only do they get the chance to participate in events with their idols, but they also get a better seat at concerts and can use their “power” to distribute tickets to other fans and decide over their seating. The internal membership mechanism of these fan clubs seems reasonable because fans can use higher status identities to satisfy the imagined intimate relationship between themselves and their idols, but in fact, it is to allow

management companies to use the fan economy to obtain higher profits. Even so, fans still consume voluntarily to show their loyalties and enjoy their own “privilege”. Therefore, fans, idols and the management company are satisfied to maintain a stable relationship for the continuous operation of fan clubs.

The operation of fan clubs does have a positive effect on the Chinese entertainment industry, including the music industry, and for promoting normalised identity constructions among young people. The internal stratification division of fan clubs enables fans to construct an internal class identity. Since high status fans, as opinion leaders, have more opportunities to get closer to idols, the class identity of fans shows upward mobility. Although the class status within fan clubs does not represent the social status of fans, they keep them entertained, given that identity construction in fan clubs seems to bring psychological satisfaction and fulfilment to fans. As a strictly hierarchical and highly managed group, their activities are organised and disciplined.

Under China’s national conditions, fandom activities are bound by laws, regulations and the social value system to promote certain acceptable identity constructions. Here, fandom identity does not represent the identity construction within the fan club, but the identity constructed in the Mandopop music industry as a whole and even in Chinese society. Consequently, the state finds it necessary to exercise censorship and control measures to shape fandom identities that align with culturally and socially recognized norms. However, it is worth noting that organizing public gatherings and establishing formal fan clubs is currently considered illegal in China (Fung, 2013: 83). This means that while Chinese fan clubs may engage in gathering activities, their legal status has not yet been officially recognized. It is not due to a prohibition on fan clubs being legally recognized by national policy, but rather because fan clubs are rarely registered as formal social organizations, leading them to operate in unregulated and restricted ways.

According to the requirements of China’s new Civil Code, fan clubs are generally classified as social groups because they belong to non-profit organizations. They are

usually registered with the State Council and are also subject to management regulations, such as the amount of registered capital and member numbers. Zhenling Wei, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, pointed out that fan clubs of star celebrities are social organizations in operation (*China Youth Daily*, 2021). They organise personnel, raise funds through the Internet, and call on fans to buy products endorsed by star celebrities, with a strong social mobilization ability. Since most fan clubs do not really exist legally and are officially recognised, it is likely that there is a dark and secret industry chain behind them that uses fans to make profits, especially when the capital behind idols intervenes, thus these fan clubs are no longer virtual communities that belong to the fandoms only. If fandom is deemed by the state as too antagonistic or even outside of the social value system, it brings potential threats to the Chinese idol industry.

Nevertheless, fandom culture has become an important driving force for the development of the entertainment industry and does have a positive side. However, their current constraints and management are still in a vacuum state, and many gaps in legal supervision need to be filled urgently. As illegal social groups, all kinds of behaviours have appeared in fan clubs, which have misdirected immature minors. When these fan clubs are unable to self-regulate themselves, the implementation of laws and policies becomes necessary for the effective governance of fan clubs. Zhenling Wei (*China Youth Daily*, 2021) proposed that fan clubs should undergo registration with the civil affairs department to establish clear responsibilities, define rights and obligations, determine permissible activities, and regulate fundraising practices. Additionally, any fundraising initiatives must adhere to relevant regulations, including registration and filing requirements. It is crucial for fan clubs to conduct their activities in compliance with the law and undergo regular inspections to ensure adherence to legal standards.

Due to the (il)legality of even “official” fan clubs, they maintain their identities via illegal operations independently, despite the continuing suggestion that fan clubs should be regulated. The term “official” thus only refers to their identity as it is

recognised by idols and management companies, not by the government. If paying for an “official” fan club can be regarded as a kind of consumption, then the fundraising behaviour of fan clubs for organizing activities has become illegal fundraising while illegally absorbing public deposits. Activities, especially fundraising activities, need to be organised by legally registered social groups who need to be approved for filing and audited according to law. Even events organised by “formal” fan clubs must abide by laws and regulations, and they are therefore subjected to scrutiny and supervision. Such a strict mode of censorship may still be regarded as the state’s control of the Internet and media’s right of freedom of speech, but the state’s laws and regulations provide the entertainment industry with a basis for developing platforms and operating rules, so the illegal identity of fan clubs can soon be officially managed. Clues of the state’s determination are evidence of the rectification of the state-defined “chaos” in fandom mentioned earlier.

In the development of fandom culture, both the “chaos” of fandom and the illegal identity of fan clubs are phenomena that contradict Chinese policies and regulations. It is undeniable that fandom culture has a positive impact on promoting fandom activity, loyalty and consumption in the entertainment industry, but at the same time, some of their aggressive behaviours have also brought negative comments to their idols, which has caused the term “idol” to assume a meaning with a derogatory connotation. Under China’s national conditions, the development of an industry is constrained by policies, laws and regulations, and fandom groups belonging to non-governmental organizations are no exception. The Office of the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission already addressed the state-defined “chaos” in fandom on the Internet and has thus comprehensively addressed issues such as illegal acts by entertainers and fraudulent ranking data. Thus, the legalization of fan clubs is only a matter of time.

Fans have always maintained an active image in the entertainment industry, and, within a virtual community for their survival, various platforms on the Internet have provided them with an effective and “formal” gathering place to more easily carry out support

activities. In the Mandopop industry, the well-known social media and music streaming platforms not only provide a virtual community for fandom, but also many virtual activities that rely on fandom, which are directly related to idol interests and popularities. The next section will discuss the relationship between these platforms as virtual communities for fandom and gathering places for fandom activities and the fans themselves.

Online Platforms: A Double-Edged Sword for Fandom Development

Since fandom groups are not legally recognised for gathering activities and have no offline physical communities and gathering places, they rely on the virtual community of online platforms to plan and organise activities to support idols, including online and offline activities. Fans share common interests and hobbies and form a shared social identity, and need a virtual community and gathering place to realize their social identity. HBRResearch, a social media platform focused on media industry development trends by Huayi Brothers Media Group, pointed out that fandom culture that promotes one-way communication from idols to fans has been transformed into a two-way communication, as the virtual community has improved the scale and organization of fan groups (Huayi Brothers, 2020a). Various social and music streaming platforms provide the living spaces for fans. For their own data traffic and revenue, platforms are often willing to provide fans with more space for activities and opportunities to express their loyalty to idols. Platforms have access to online fan clubs building online communities, and exercise their accountability rights at certain times when fans' needs and platform usage conflicts with other stakeholders or policies.

This section first uses a case example to discuss the importance of platform data for idols' popularity. This provides a clear example of the supporting activities by fans who have contributed their own consumption in the charts of the major music streaming platforms and spammed repeated comments online to maintain the popularity of idols on social platforms. There is an interesting example of Kris Wu and his fans' behaviours on social media and music streaming platforms, which is a typical case where idols and

fans have a negative influence on each other. The state-defined “chaos” in fandom caused by Kris Wu angered mainstream consciousness and broke the boundaries of law, which not only had a negative impact on the identity construction of Mandopop itself, but also made Chinese authorities more stringent in their interpretation of “appropriate” fandom identity.

The Case of Kris Wu and His Fandom on iTunes and Sina Microblog

The Chinese Canadian singer and actor Kris Wu, former EXO member and EXO-M’s leader, released an album in 2018 called *Antares*, referring to a star representing the heart of Scorpio in the West and the “Heart of the Blue Dragon” in eastern constellations. References to the East and West running through the title of the album convey Kris Wu’s idea of integrating Eastern and Western music. The album, however, was embroiled in controversy on Chinese and American social networks when it was released in 2018, as Kris Wu’s Chinese fans flocked to the iTunes United States store to buy his new songs, making the seven songs on his album quickly occupy the iTunes United States Top 10 songs charts (Zhang, 2018). While being shocked, the American media believed that Kris Wu’s fans were “bots” who brushed the charts, which is fraudulent and suggested that Kris Wu’s iTunes United States sales cannot be included in US data and charts. The US media even pointed out that “fans of fellow Universal Music artist Ariana Grande, as well as industry insiders, contend that the Chinese artist gamed the system” (Halperin, 2018). Apple’s iTunes did not comment on the matter, but Kris Wu’s music suddenly slipped out of the top 100 after the media storm. However, Universal Music China issued a statement denying the rumours, saying its sales figures and locations were true and valid (Halperin, 2018; Zhang, 2018). Industry analysis showed that one reason for this turmoil related to the lagging release of the album in China, so fans used VPNs outside China to buy from US online stores to obtain new songs faster. Another reason is that Chinese fans were eager to show their support for Wu to help him gain big exposure and achieve impressive results on US streaming platforms. This shows that in China, with a population of 1.4 billion, the

number of Chinese fans is huge, and they can quickly influence Western and other charts and make their idols more attractive through these planned fandom activities and via mobilizing new audiences.

The fandom group of Kris Wu has indeed played a huge role in this album sales event. They organised on social media to purchase digital albums “over the wall” (using VPN to access foreign websites), increase album listening on streaming media platforms to gain wider exposure, and dedicate instructional tweets (see Figure 26). After album sales were questioned in the US, fans also fought back, posting statements on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to counter the accusations and express their continued support and anger at unfair rumours (see Figure 27). They claimed that they are not robots but a huge fandom group that is better than robots and believed that the data generated by purchasing behaviour was true and effective. Even more, they thought that they are consumers rather than robots, and even requested a refund from the music platform if their consumption behaviour was not recognised. Although this matter did come to an end on the music platform, the “rights protection” behaviour of fans has continued on social media platforms ever since.



Figure 26: Kris Wu’s fans on Twitter teach other fans how to buy songs to increase sales and how to increase their views on streaming platforms.

Source: An article on Zhihu.com “Kris Wu’s New Album was Dropped by iTunes, What Did the Fans Do Wrong?”, available at: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/48860416>, accessed on 26/03/2022.



Some words from the fans of Kris Wu

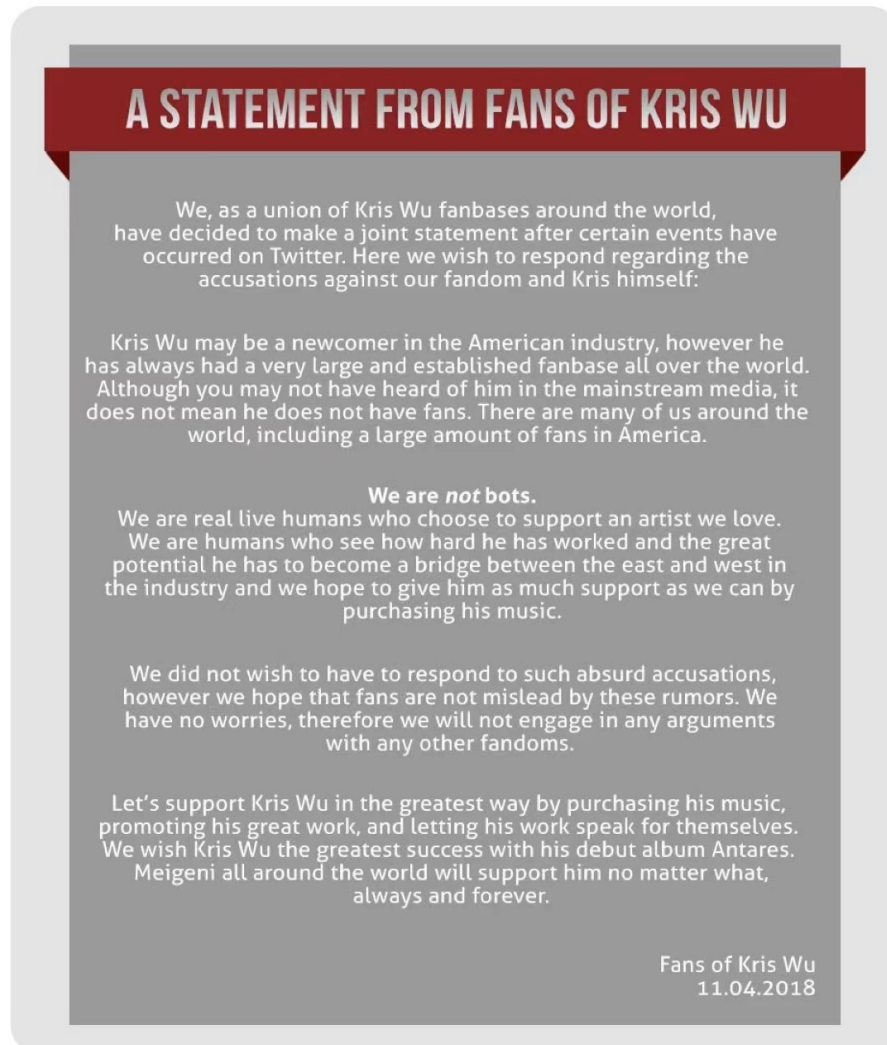


Figure 27: Kris Wu fans' release of a statement on Twitter.
(Screenshot from mobile phone app Twitter, captured on 26/03/2022).

The case of Kris Wu is a typical example of fan behaviour, but the idol pays the “bill” for the fans, given that the idol’s performance on the charts becomes questionable, which shifts fandom culture away from worshipping idols and towards brainwashing fandom. The state-defined “chaotic” behaviour of fans is like a pyramid selling organization, whose organizational structure is that of a small-size enterprise, but the mode of operation is based on idols as the “mainstream” to counter the mainstream

culture in the social value system. Unfortunately, Kris Wu did not establish good values for fans and even carried out illegal and criminal acts to fans. According to police reports, Kris Wu repeatedly seduced young females to have sex, which was reported by one of his female fans who assisted the police in obtaining evidence (*Legal Daily*, 2021). After Wu’s criminal behaviour was exposed, his contracts with endorsement brands were terminated one after another, including international first-tier brands, such as Louis Vuitton and Porsche. However, his fans are “united”, discussing plans to bend the law, including things such as “see you in Beijing”, “jailbreak” and “prison visit” (Central Committee of the Communist Youth League, 2021). At the time, Sina Microblog, China’s largest microblog platform, still provided a virtual gathering place for Wu’s fans such as “super-topics” and fan chatting groups, even though Wu violated the law, which then became a fan community discussing possible illegal activities, such as occupying the jail, sharing a topographic map to rescue Wu during night time, sending a jointly written letter to the Canadian embassy and kneeling at the court door pleading for mercy (see Figure 28).



Figure 28: Kris Wu fans’ discussion of possible illegal activities on Sina Microblog.
(Screenshot from mobile phone app Sina Microblog, captured on 02/04/2022).

However, Sina Microblog also became a place where the Chinese state official media reacted and spoke out. When the behaviour of Wu’s fans was exposed by the official media, Sina Microblog took proactive measures to protect itself, such as shutting down illegal celebrity “super-topics” and disbanding illegal fandom chatting groups (see Figure 29).



微博管理员  

+关注

8-1 21:37 来自 微博 weibo.com 已编辑

#微博社区公告# 自 @平安北京朝阳 通报吴亦凡涉案信息以来，引发全网高度关注。微博站方对此非常重视，以维护好站内社区生态秩序为落点，立即对相关信息进行了排查治理。截至8月1日晚，处置情况如下：

- 1.关闭错误导向超话108个，解散违规群组789个，坚决遏制非理性行为，坚决处理极端言论。
- 2.对于借机寻衅滋事、攻击政府机构、恶意营销蹭热点、恶意洗地等违规账号予以严肃处理。已禁言和永久关闭账号共990个。
(部分处置账号见配图)

法律法规神圣不可侵犯。站方坚决支持有关部门的行动，认真履行平台责任，维护社区秩序，及时清理有害信息，也欢迎广大网友提供举报线索。

Figure 29: Sina Microblog announces the closure of misdirected communities.
(Screenshot from mobile phone app Sina Microblog, captured on 02/04/2022).

The consumption behaviour of fans in the music sales charts directly impacts on the data traffic of a singer, which means good promotion in the music market. Although it is uncertain whether such a promotion is a virtuous circle or whether it will be unstable in the long term, the benefits generated by the fandom economy have brought development and growth to the Mandopop music market. However, as shown in the above example, routine fandom culture brushed the charts of non-mainstream target markets, and not only helped the idol singer to gain data traffic but led the idol to be ridiculed by other audiences, which also gave the fans negative labels in the music market. This meant that album sales consumed by fans were not fully recognised, and the platform's removal of data hurt fans' enthusiasm. Joking about the album sales on

the US iTunes represents a form of fan activism, but making excuses for criminal activity represents a complete departure from the values of Chinese society. When Kris Wu himself violated Chinese law, his fans continued to construct what was considered a “non-normal” identity deviating from Chinese social values. In fact, the behaviour of fans is to some extent a projection of the behaviour of the idol since it was acquiesced by the idol and his management agency. Although the fandom community is virtual, it adopts the form of a small society. The overwhelming support he received from tens of thousands of fans on various platforms seemed to fuel his arrogance, defiance, and disregard for the law. Consequently, Kris Wu faced significant consequences because of his behaviour and the subsequent responses from his fans and the authorities. In response to his actions, music streaming platforms made the decision to remove all of Kris Wu’s music works from their platforms. This was a significant step taken by these platforms to distance themselves from his controversial behaviour and send a clear message about their stance on his actions. Furthermore, the repercussions extended beyond the online sphere. Kris Wu’s social media account in China, where he had a substantial following, was closed. This action effectively removed his direct presence and ability to engage with his fans through that platform. In addition, his fandom online community on various social media platforms also faced closure. This step was likely taken to prevent further dissemination and amplification of his controversial behaviour, as well as to discourage the creation of a supportive online environment that could potentially perpetuate his lawlessness. This example shows that both music streaming and social media platforms have a huge effect and reaction on fandom activities. These platforms provide virtual spaces for the construction of fandom identity, and provide online venues for fandom activities, but it is worth noting that platforms often serve the state and need to operate under the policy requirements. So, when fans use virtual platforms to construct identities, they are constrained by state policies. The following sections will specifically discuss how fans’ behaviour on music streaming and social media platforms affects new directions of Mandopop.

Music Streaming Platforms and Fandom

In the new media environment, relying on digital technology and network technology, the reproduction, distribution and sales of music works can be completed in the virtual space of the Internet. The digital music industry has developed rapidly and has a certain scale of output value. The sales of digital music albums have far exceeded the sales of traditional music productions. At the same time, the new fan model that tends to pay for material brought by fandom culture makes it easier for fans to guide their emotions, positions and consumption tendencies. Especially, the consumption behaviour of fans on music streaming platforms has prominent manifestations in the music industry and impacts on the development of the industry, involving copyright, industrial ecological chain, music platform atmosphere and other aspects. To promote the healthy development of China's digital music industry, the fandom economy can be rationally utilized to promote the optimization of all links in the industry chain. The consumption power of fans brought considerable profits for music platforms because the consumption behaviour of fans is characterised by enthusiasm, persistence and habit. Based on these characteristics, in the digital music industry, various music streaming platforms tried to develop different fandom marketing models to stimulate fans' consumption behaviour, bring user persistence and direct music consumption to the platform, and expand market shares.

Taking the behaviour of fans "brushing" the music charts as an example, the release of digital albums and singles on online music platforms as an increasingly common sales form directly leads to fans' purchases and sales. Music charts are one of the most common marketing methods and publicity strategies for music, and their intention is to provide listeners with intuitive and fair music playback data to display their preferences. As mentioned in Chapter 5, fans' musical preferences and tastes are often related to their class identity and social status, while under the influence of the second wave of Hallyu the fans in the Chinese idol industry are basically young people, most of whom are at the middle stratification or even lower stratification, with upward or downward mobility, and do not have a stable social status. Their preferences are still in the stage

of pure idolatry to some extent, so they are happy to consume in line with their preferences.

Since the rankings of an artist's songs can directly reflect their popularity and public preference, which affects the selection for awards, the fan group usually organises fundraising or manpower to "brush" views, shares and comments on the songs during the artist's promotion period to help the songs get better chart rankings. For example, Yixing Zhang released the digital album *SHEEP* on Tencent Music in 2017. The number of albums purchased in the name of the fan group "Zhang Yixing Bar" was as high as 28000, and several individual fans purchased more than 1000 albums alone (Li, 2019: 108). The large-scale purchase of music by fan clubs and fans is a stable income for idols, their management companies and music platforms. The strong appeal of fans reflects the huge benefits brought by digital music. In addition to making profits through fandom behaviour of "brushing" data traffic of online music charts, music platforms also stimulate the sales of digital albums through special fan marketing activities. For example, in 2016, when Yixing Zhang's digital album *Lose Control* sold 0.6 million and 1 million respectively, Xiami Music, according to the promise of prior fan activities, carried out a one-week large-scale outdoor advertisement lighting in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen and the special metro promotion of Beijing Metro Line 1 (Li, 2019: 108). At the same time, music streaming platforms listed the top three repeat purchases for certain songs. For example, on one music chart, an account purchased the same album repeatedly up to 320,000 times, which amounted to several thousands of Chinese yuan (*Xinhua News Agency*, 2021). In the payment information menu, numbers with meanings were provided as default options, such as "520" for "I love you" and "1314" for "forever", etc., to lead fans to buy the same album in bulk (*Xinhua News Agency*, 2021). For fans, these campaigns offer a platform to showcase their support and dedication to their favourite artists. It allows them to actively participate in shaping the success and popularity of the artists they admire. By participating in these campaigns, fans can generate a desired publicity effect, such as boosting album sales, increasing streaming numbers, or trending hashtags on social

media. This level of engagement and involvement gives fans a sense of empowerment and fulfilment. On the other hand, music platforms also benefit from these campaigns. The increased activity and consumption driven by fans help generate revenue and promote the visibility of the platform itself. The more fans engage with specific artists or songs, the more exposure and recognition the platform receives. This symbiotic relationship between fans and music platforms creates a win-win situation where both parties have their interests fulfilled. However, it is important to recognize that these campaigns and the influence of music streaming platforms have also led to the emergence of irrational consumption behaviours among fans. The intense focus on achieving specific goals, such as chart success or breaking records, can sometimes lead to excessive and impulsive behaviours. Fans may engage in repetitive streaming, bulk purchasing, or other forms of consumption that may not align with their genuine preferences or interests. This behaviour, driven by the desire to support their favourite artists, may become detached from the intrinsic value of the music itself. As a result, music streaming platforms play a role in shaping and influencing these consumption patterns. The platforms' algorithms, charts, and promotional strategies can inadvertently reinforce and amplify this irrational behaviour. This phenomenon highlights the need for a balanced and sustainable approach to fandom and music consumption, where the intrinsic value of the music and the genuine preferences of fans are given equal importance.

To some extent, the consumption of fans has also accelerated the process of legalization of digital music. As China has strengthened its crackdown on piracy, various music platforms have also cancelled free trial listening offers, while strengthening the protection of music copyrights, creating a good atmosphere for music copyright payments. More "exclusive" cooperation agreements have been signed between music platforms and record companies, so that fans can only access music listening services on platforms with exclusive cooperation agreements. Under the framework of exclusive cooperation, many fans are willing to spend money to buy digital albums to support their idols, and major music platforms have also tried their best to obtain exclusive

copyrights to bring considerable economic benefits to the development of their platforms. In addition to copyright protection, major music platforms have also implemented separate sales methods for membership systems and digital album purchases. This means that even if fans have become members of the platform, they still must pay extra for the digital album to be able to listen to it (see Figure 30). This sales strategy marketizes the enthusiasm of fans while promoting copyright protection, so also caused a lot of controversy among fans. But because of the exclusive cooperation agreements, fans must compromise with the music streaming platforms.



Figure 30: Extra payment by the members of NetEase Cloud Music for purchasing digital albums. (Screenshot from mobile phone app NetEase Cloud Music, captured on 02/04/2022).

The music streaming platforms continuously stimulate fans' consumption with its various "temptations", which reflects the prosperity of the digital music market in the short term. Since music is often used by people to express their identity as it makes them feel good and resonates with their ideal identity, fans' consumption of idol's

music can often show a kind of emotional projection onto idols, which satisfies fans' imagination of an intimate relationship. Although this intimate relationship itself is not real, fans can act on their consumption behaviour around idols and their music by establishing an imaginary intimate relationship, and thereby expressing their identities in this way. However, the proliferation of fan groups on music platforms has brought about not only increased consumption activities but also a significant amount of information "noise" which refers to the abundance of less useful information that disrupts the orderliness of content. For instance, in response to fans' preferences, there has been an increase in the production of low-quality homogeneous Mandopop music. This catering to fan preferences may inadvertently limit the exposure and recognition of excellent minority music genres. The overwhelming focus on catering to fans' tastes can overshadow the opportunity for diverse and lesser-known music genres to gain visibility. Indeed, many fans select the "confession" and "loyalty" options in the song comment area, so that the quality of interactive content in the comment area is worsening. Although fans' preferences play a guiding role for music platforms, the derogatory label of fans' identity is highlighted here, and the platform uses the emotional projection of fans' identity to cater to the fans for profits and benefits.

This occurrence caused a negative effect on the positive development of Mandopop, even though the fandom economy is still an important part of the new Mandopop market. The persistence of this kind of information "noise" on music platforms causes fandom behaviours affect the sensory experiences of ordinary audiences and brings about a split between different user groups. Therefore, in future development, in addition to attracting fans with continuous consumption behaviour, music platforms also need to effectively maintain the platform atmosphere. Although it is impossible to completely stop such fans from "brushing" the music charts, music platforms should take measures to reduce their impact on the fairness of the music charts and adopt new ways of counting data traffic to maintain the order of platforms.

The core of the fan economy is a kind of emotional premium, and fans gather because of emotional connections. Just as idols and fans need multi-faceted interaction and communication on online platforms and offline activities to maintain the emotional bond between imagination and reality, it is equally important for digital music platforms. Music streaming platforms should extend from online to offline, so that the cultural symbols of idols can resonate with fans to the greatest extent and concentrate and amplify their consumption power.

Music platforms in China have a significant influence over the construction of fan identities, aligning with the values advocated by Chinese authorities. The primary objective is to foster the development of the new Mandopop market, which is driven by commercial attributes. However, it goes beyond mere commercial success, as Mandopop aims to establish a cultural identity that can exert influence over the younger generation within the country. In this landscape, the major players in the Mandopop music industry, such as record companies and music service providers, have a crucial role to play. Rather than solely focusing on catalysing fan consumption, they should prioritize the production and dissemination of high-quality content. By doing so, they can cultivate a fan base that appreciates various types of music in a rational manner. This approach is intended to foster a healthy and well-regulated digital music market. The construction of fan identities aligns with the desired “ideal” notion of identity in China, which is shaped by the state’s perception and guidance through censorship and control mechanisms. By influencing the behaviour and preferences of fans, while simultaneously constructing the identity of Mandopop itself, the aim is to promote the development of the fandom economy within the music industry. This process is seen as beneficial for the construction of Chinese identity among younger generations. It is believed that this fan identity construction can be passed down through generational inheritance, exerting influence over subsequent generations. Overall, music platforms in China play a significant role in shaping fan identities, with a focus on promoting the development of the Mandopop market and constructing a cultural identity that resonates with the younger generation. The involvement of key industry players and the influence

of state-guided mechanisms contribute to the formation of fan identities that align with broader Chinese identity aspirations.

Social Media Platforms and Fandom

Before the advent of the Internet, traditional media were almost all information media, not only in China but around the world. Although they could not influence the formation of the public's specific views on news events, they could guide the public to pay attention to the content selected as the key topic through agenda-setting. However, since the Internet comes with social online media, the channels for the public to obtain information are no longer limited to newspapers and television, as Internet media have won the centre place on the media map to meet the information needs of the public. In the era of social media, fans demonstrate more independent and diverse characteristics. They emphasise independent choice and no longer passively accept the information offered by websites, but actively look for the information they need and the products they want to consume. Since the Internet has benefited from the continuous development of information technology, fans have more selection information about celebrities in different industries at their disposal. The social media and other public platforms created by the Internet have greatly increased the autonomy of fans, who create communities based on their collective interests and choices.

The most used public social media platform in China is Weibo, a popular information export platform based on Twitter. The micro size of microblogs satisfies the needs of fragmented information consumption, so information is quickly spread and copied around China. According to the analysis of Chinese microblog platforms by Dr Wei Zhou (2013: 39) from Fudan University, China's first microblog platform Fanfou was established in 2007. However, due to the first generation of Chinese microblog users who have found an outlet for their opinions were keen on interactive political topics on this platform and the platform's unclear profit model, entrepreneurs of "Fanfou" were unable to receive investment support, so it ceased operation after two years. In August 2009, backed by the information resource platform of China's chief

portal website, Sina launched its own microblog and invited celebrities to join based on opening to normal users. Later, another Chinese internet company Tencent joined the Chinese microblog landscape.

Until 2010, with the help of the rapid popularization of the Internet, Chinese microblogs had over 100 million users. The Microblog platform has its social media attributes that are reflected in the fact that everyone is in a definite or potential group. At the same time, the microblog platform also has micro-groups with definite boundaries as an enhancement of social media attributes. The group attribute of fans on Microblog shows the ability of opinion leaders to gather crowds in addition to direct fans. Microblog platforms gather people with common interests and needs by following and being followed, thus forming powerful aggregation. There also exists enormous influence on young people's ideas and perceptions around identity. While social platforms provide a virtual venue for gathering fans, gathering large numbers of fans to form a group, to construct class identities within the fandom groups and construct fandom identity to show the emotional belonging of fans. It allows fans to build a virtual intimate relationship between them to construct or even emphasise their identification with their own fandom identities.

Fans use the microblogs to get and convey information to establish their own virtual community and shared identities. Meanwhile, the establishment of micro-groups on various instant messaging platforms, such as QQ and WeChat, also provides real-time communication channels for fans. While social media platforms provide communication platforms for fans, they also rely on many users in fandom groups. To support idols, fans create multiple accounts on social media platforms to switch identities. Individual fans have overlapping identities as well as group identities, which are related to fans' loyalty and mobility. Currently, the relationship between fandom and social media platforms is to interact and dialogue, and the two rely on each other to seek development that is beneficial to themselves.

For example, social media platforms invite celebrities to carry out online live broadcasts and concerts on the platform, providing fans with opportunities to interact with idols at close range, and at the same time allowing the platform to have a positive interactive relationship with fans. However, there is also a confrontational relationship between fans and platforms, which is largely influenced by policy. Because fans rely on the platform to build a community, most of their communication occurs on the platform. To maintain the normal operation and rights of platforms, they often follow clear national policies or official hints to restrict fandom activities. For example, in the “chaos” of fandom and the case of Kris Wu mentioned earlier, the platforms blocked illegal fandom accounts, “super-topics”, fandom micro-groups, and even the personal and company accounts of celebrities through the platforms’ own accountability rights. In the face of policies, platforms always have the right to take back the cyberspace they provide to fans.

In China, social media platforms hold significant influence over public opinion, and this influence is derived from a combination of user-generated content and state media. As a result, these platforms play a crucial role in shaping and maintaining people’s identities. Public opinions within this context often exhibit fragmentation, reflecting a sense of randomness and uncertainty, and are frequently characterized by strong emotional expressions. One key factor contributing to the shaping of identity is the autonomous generation of information. The abundance of information makes it challenging for the public to fully discern and evaluate its reliability and accuracy. Consequently, individuals are more susceptible to the influence of public opinion, whether it originates from officially controlled comments or from information continuously transmitted by other users. In addition, there are two primary mechanisms are at play in the socially produced, shaped, and influenced nature of identity formation. Firstly, there is guidance provided by authoritative sources, which includes the Communist Government and other state-controlled entities who hold an absolute right to speak and decide. Consequently, public opinion often operates within certain limits and is guided by the authorities. The second mechanism involves the identification

process within the public sphere. Public opinion on social media platforms is subject to the interactions and dynamics among users. This collective identification process can influence individuals' perspectives and contribute to the formation of their identities. However, it's important to note that in the context of China's socialist system, the authorities hold considerable influence over public opinion. While social media platforms should ideally play an impartial and objective role in handling public opinion, they can also serve as tools for guiding public sentiment in alignment with the authorities' identity construction efforts. This highlights the complex interplay between the role of social platforms, public opinion, and the shaping of identity in China's digital landscape.

The Impact of Fandom Culture on the Mandopop Market

Fandom discussed in this chapter is a special cultural phenomenon generated in the context of consumer society. The fans represent a group with quasi-fanatical admiration and pursuit of stars, idols and products. Looking back at Mandopop itself, fans are a more stable and sustainable consumer group than the general audience, and their preferences and needs often affect the development direction of the Mandopop market. When exploring the identity of Mandopop, participants in this research often discussed whether Mandopop, which is dominated by the market as a commercial genre, can still reflect Chinese identity while emphasizing commercial value. Therefore, this section will discuss the impact of fandom culture on the Mandopop market in conjunction with the viewpoints of the participants.

This discussion is directly related to the functions of Mandopop and the values it embodies. First, as a commercial product, Mandopop is destined to survive in the market, and it must follow the development logic of the market and the needs of consumers. For instance, my interviewee Professor Danhong Yu emphasised the commercial aspect of Mandopop and highlights its value in terms of its market appeal and economic significance:

In any era, China has a popular music form. If you define popular music as a form of singing and performance that can be triggered under the background of contemporary electronic music, it has developed from the West. But if only the music that is popular with the public and has commercial significance is concerned, China has its own popular music from ancient times to the present. My personal definition of popular music is a type of music that many people like to listen to, and it has absolute business support... Popular music is a popular type of music that can survive the market. (Danhong Yu, Shanghai, 13 November 2019)

Meanwhile, Mr Yuchuan Wen acknowledged how music market demand impacts on Mandopop creation from a composer's perspective as follows:

I think in the context of the times, popular music's penetration and blending with each other is very extensive, deep and frequent. It is difficult to stay in a certain style. So, in this context, if you want to create a certain style, it may be a more intentional creation or aesthetic pursuit. Of course, it may also be related to commercial reasons, that is, to write what kind of music the audience needs, rather than writing the music that I want in my heart, but to others, this kind of music is probably spontaneous and also forms a music style. (Yuchuan Wen, Foshan, 27 November 2019)

Here, the importance of fandom is clear. Fans create considerable economic value through their loyal consumption and enthusiasm, while business entities, such as management companies, music platforms and social platforms, develop the fan economy to achieve profit maximization. But is the commercial value of Mandopop simply driven by the audience only? For example, Ms Wenyin Qiu believes that:

I feel that in recent years, the national policy is more and more inclined to promote Chinese traditional culture... I think there is no contradiction between the market and the audience. In a generally good environment, the audience will gradually form the impression that they want to carry forward Chinese traditional culture.

Businesses can also pay more attention to the publication and promotion of some Chinese style works. Therefore, sometimes with the help of this environment, the market, politics and the audience can be brought together in order to achieve win-win results... At the same time, it can also promote artists to really create for their dreams rather than for survival. (Wenyin Qiu, Guangzhou, 5 December 2019)

This suggests that Chinese identity in Mandopop is based on commercial values as well as social and cultural values, which have a strong inner drive to influence commercial values.

In addition, the cultural identity of Mandopop also provides great significance to its dissemination. Mandopop serves as a cultural medium that reflects and shapes the social and cultural values, aspirations and experiences of Chinese society. It provides a platform for artists to express themselves and connect with their audiences, forming a sense of shared identity and cultural belonging. The cultural identity of Mandopop is also repeatedly emphasised, which also depends on China's existing cultural policies and political propaganda. One of my interviewees, Dr Qian Wang, suggests that emphasising Chinese culture is necessary to reinforce China's position as a recognised global player:

“Chineseness” is valuable in the market of Mandopop. From the Belt and Road Initiative and the guiding ideology of 'cultural prosperity, cultural innovation and cultural confidence' proposed by President Xi, you will find that the concept of “Chineseness” and Chinese style will become more and more important... It has a certain importance in public opinion presentation and cultural consumption... When China has been recognized at the highest level in the world, there is no need to emphasize “Chineseness”, because it has become common sense. But in this context, it is inevitable and necessary to emphasize “Chineseness” and Chinese style. (Qian Wang, WeChat Audio Call, 12 November 2019)

Wang's comment highlights the value of "Chineseness". It suggests that emphasising Chinese cultural elements and style is not only valuable for market success but also serves to assert cultural identity and promote China's influence on a global scale. Given the social and cultural context, where there is an increasing emphasis on China's cultural influence and the promotion of Chinese culture, it becomes natural and necessary to emphasize Chinese cultural identity in Mandopop. It allows Mandopop to showcase and celebrate the unique aspects of Chinese culture, cater to the audience's and sometimes authority's expectations, and contribute to cultural diplomacy efforts to some extent. Moreover, the perspectives of two other interviewees, Mr Xu Cheng and Associate Professor Guanyu Cao, recognise the significance of Chinese cultural identity to express and foster cultural connections within the Chinese context. Mr Xu Cheng stated that:

I think "Chineseness" is a national instinct because it is a cultural output. The reason why the Chinese style is a national instinct is that everyone has a Chinese value system and family concept, which comes from Chinese history... They are part of Chinese culture and Chinese elements. (Xu Cheng, WeChat Audio Call, 28 March 2020)

Associate Professor Guanyu Cao underscored the significance and enduring nature of cultural identity and belonging for the Chinese people:

Every Chinese needs cultural identity and a sense of belonging. When I was in the United States, I discovered that the Chinese people in the United States were very aware of Chinese culture. Sometimes they hang lanterns and write Spring Festival couplets during the Spring Festival. This kind of cultural identity is aware of by even Chinese Americans, not to mention us Chinese. It is necessary for the Chinese to recognize and inherit traditional culture because Chinese culture is the blood of the Chinese nation. (Guanyu Cao, Wuhan, 8 November 2019)

These opinions collectively underscore the significance of cultural identity and belonging for Chinese individuals. They emphasize the recognition and preservation of traditional Chinese culture to strengthen cultural connections, assert cultural confidence, and foster a sense of pride and belonging among the Chinese people, both within China and in the global diaspora. While Mandopop serves as a medium to express and embody Chinese cultural identity, it allows artists to incorporate elements of Chinese culture into their music and provides a sense of cultural belonging for Chinese individuals. Additionally, Mandopop acts as a cultural bridge, connecting Chinese people to their heritage and promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation among international audiences.

Furthermore, market operators can be sensitive to grasp policy orientation and cater to it to generate economic benefits. Fans are smart to understand that celebrities certified by official media can gain greater popularity and data traffic, so fans spare no effort to establish a good social image for their idols. The development of Mandopop is still in the hands of the Chinese authority, and from the history of “yellow music” and “excellent model dramas” during the period of the Cultural Revolution, the fate of Chinese music has never depended on the market only. China’s promotion of Chinese traditional culture at present is conducive for the formation of Chinese identity, so that Mandopop can play an educational role in fandom. Also, the construction of social interaction between fans’ existing practical behaviours and their idols also helps to elevate participatory music experiences to social value and level to carry out more cohesive group activities. This is positive for the development of the Mandopop market.

Therefore, the Mandopop market needs to rely on the existing social and cultural context to closely integrate policy, market and fandom, rather than copying the operating routines of the music industry in other countries. Today, with the diversification of social subjects, diversification of values and stratification of consumer groups, Mandopop’s industrialization is still facing difficulties. Music creation and dissemination is controlled by entertaining talent shows and short video

platforms. There are more and more music programmes for entertainment and music works centred on commercialization, making them sometimes lack musicality and cultural connotation. The peripheral products of the Mandopop music industry have become more abundant, which is also accompanied by the dramatic development of fandom culture. Thus, the mutually reinforcing relationship between Mandopop entertainment and fandom needs to be continuously considered, and the quality of music products should be improved based on market demand to promote a virtuous circle in the entertainment industry centred on Mandopop. Many entertainment talent shows have gradually systematised and commercialised Mandopop, which is also a trend in entertainment. Moreover, in the face of complex and changeable consumer groups, Mandopop should focus on adopting different marketing strategies, classifying consumer groups according to different classification standards such as age, gender, status and class, and producing different music genres to meet their needs and preferences, thus, to construct “ideal” identities that conform to Chinese mainstream ideology, including class identity, gender identity, generation identity and fandom identity.

The other direction is to actively develop the fandom economy to promote the Mandopop music industry instead of overusing the fandom economy to make profits. Fans are not only consumers of certain cultural products but can dominate cultural production with strong collective power. The creation of Mandopop should pay attention to the needs of fans as a more stable and sustainable consumer group to guide fans to participate in music activities and stimulate their music consumption. Also, the development of the fandom economy also needs the support and promotion of online platforms, including music streaming platforms and social media platforms. In the long run, only by grasping the new characteristics of fandom in the era of social media can the growth of the fandom economy be stimulated. This also requires that the market, policy and fandom be jointly developed rather than standing on opposite sides. National policies inevitably guide fandom activities at the macro-level and use laws and regulations to constrain them. These restrictions are unavoidable due to the Chinese

sociocultural context and Chinese national conditions. Instead of challenging policy, it is better to register fan clubs as legal social groups, carry out fandom activities on online platforms legally and develop the fandom economy reasonably in accordance with regulations.

The nationalization and globalization of Mandopop brings forth important considerations regarding its educational role within fan communities, especially among young people. The concept of nationalization in this context refers to the promotion of Chinese culture and spirit within the genre, aiming to make Chinese identity more recognizable and prominent in Mandopop. This process of nationalization is closely intertwined with social identity, cultural identity and national identity, all of which find expression within Mandopop music. An essential aspect of Mandopop's educational role lies in the cultural awareness it cultivates among its audience. The listeners' understanding and appreciation of music serve as significant cultural driving forces. An excellent example of this educational function can be observed in events like the *Everlasting Classics* organised by China Central Television. These events invite renowned singers to perform popular songs that are adaptations of ancient poems. By doing so, they effectively convey the historical and cultural value of traditional poetry to the audience. This unique approach not only educates fans on a cultural level but also has the power to enhance their understanding of musical aesthetics and cognition. When Mandopop incorporates themes that are rooted in national culture, it enhances the audience's comprehension of the cultural connotations embedded within the music. This, in turn, deepens their connection to the music and fosters a broader understanding of Chinese culture. Moreover, the educational function of Mandopop extends to its impact on fan communities, particularly young fans. By focusing on high-quality Mandopop music and targeting teenage fans, educational elements can be seamlessly integrated. This serves to expand Mandopop's cultural influence on fans and their passionate behaviours in supporting their beloved idols. Through this educational approach, Mandopop can not only provide cultural education to fans but also enhance their abilities in terms of musical aesthetics and cognition.

Conclusion

Fandom discussed in this chapter is a cultural phenomenon that occurs in the context of social consumption. Fandom not only exists in the traditional entertainment industries but also in the political, cultural and economic fields. It has an obvious enhancement for the economic development of various industries. The development of the fandom economy is accelerated by the Internet in the era of social media, and online platforms provide fans with more rational, independent and diverse choices. The discussions in this chapter started with fandom culture in China, which was influenced by the wave of Hallyu, and subsequently developed in China through the shaping of idols for talent shows. Indeed, China's idol industry developed rapidly, and various talent shows have emerged in an endless stream under the joint promotion of television stations and management companies. However, driven by economic interests, management companies use fans to attract more data traffic for idols, and the word "idol" has begun to bare derogatory connotations. While fandom activity has gradually deviated from its normal track, a state-defined "chaos"-phenomenon in fandom has emerged and the illegal status of fan clubs has been noted. Fandom identity construction in Mandopop occurs at the level of national guidance and for the maximization of economic benefits. Although the state's policy to rectify the state-defined "chaos" in fandom has played a certain guiding role, it has intensified the conflict with certain fans. Since fandom identity was always constructed under the control and censorship by the state, "chaos" in fandom became a sensitive issue for Chinese authorities due to the profit-seeking market and the behaviours caused by fandom. Therefore, the fandom group, as a subcultural group, often expects to construct an identity they identify with, rather than an "ideal" identity recognized by the state.

Meanwhile, there is also a mutually beneficial relationship between fans and music streaming and social media platforms discussed in the third section. Fans rely on the virtual community provided by the platforms to carry out online and offline activities, and the platforms also rely on fans to obtain data traffic and profits. However, platforms

have always existed under national policies and, if necessary, exercise their own authority over access and accountability to guide fans in their conduct of legal activities. Although fandom culture in China is still in the development stage and immature, fans and the fandom economy do provide a new direction for the Mandopop market. As a stable and continuous consumer group, fans have driven Mandopop into a more entertainment-focused, commercial and industrial direction. Fandom, the Mandopop market and policy also seek a more harmonious development relationship between each other to provide a better creative environment for Mandopop. Meanwhile, Mandopop can play an educational role for fans, strengthening their recognition of Chinese identity in Mandopop as well as their aesthetic musical abilities. Overall, the previous four chapters have discussed four emerging themes on Chinese identity in Mandopop. To finish the thesis, the Conclusion will summarize the four themes and discuss other factors that affect the formation of identity in Mandopop and outline some limitations of this research project overall.

Conclusion

The research presented in this thesis explored “Chineseness” in Mandopop and is informed by various approaches within popular music studies, while drawing on methodologies and theories in areas such as ethnomusicology, sociology of music and cultural studies of music. Multiple themes were explored to understand the sociocultural processes of identity construction reflected in and shaped by Mandopop. Mandopop, as well as Chinese music, has been deeply influenced by Confucianism and inherited the aesthetic theory of “Yuetong Ethics” (refer to Chapter 3). This dominant music aesthetic thought in China has positioned Chinese music as an educational and morale-standardising tool, serving to uphold and reinforce social hierarchies. At a national level, music functions as a normative medium capable of conveying ideas related to national governance. However, the development of Mandopop has constantly broken the shackles of ritual music absorbed more humanistic factors from society, thereby developing and reflecting different identities. At the same time, following a closed country policy for decades when China reformed through the policy of reform and opening-up in 1978, Mandopop could absorb high-quality musical elements and styles from around the world, providing Mandopop with more diversified possibilities. In addition, the construction of “Chineseness” in Mandopop is influenced by different factors that convey complex multiple identities. These identities have existed in different ideologies in China’s history and were influenced by war and politics. “Chineseness” also altered in changing sociocultural contexts. As a reflection of Chinese identity, “Chineseness” is inclusive across a wide audience that covers not only mainland China but also includes Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and overseas Chinese territories. This explains the variability of “Chineseness” today. The factors influencing Chinese identity were considered when analysing “Chineseness” in Mandopop. In this Conclusion, I will present a summary of these discussions presented throughout the chapters of the thesis to highlight the multiple themes of “Chineseness” in the construction of Mandopop. Subsequently, I will discuss the factors influencing the

construction of “Chineseness” in Mandopop. Finally, I will explore the uniqueness of and limitations of the thesis and directions for further research.

“Chineseness” in Mandopop: A Summary of Themes and Issues

This research aimed to explore popular music identity in China and to analyse “Chineseness” in Mandopop, particularly after the policy of reform and opening-up in 1978. Identity itself is complex and has always changed within different historical backgrounds and sociocultural contexts. This is the same for identity in Mandopop. The development of Mandopop experienced complex changes in China’s turbulent historical past and sociocultural context. From the beginnings of Mandopop in the 2000s, combining Chinese lyrics with Western popular music, Mandopop showed strong vitality in modern Shanghai and sought a localised creative model that expressed Chinese identity. Later, due to historical changes encountered in the war years, Mandopop was emphasised as a spiritual pillar in revolutionary songs for Chinese people. Even though early Mandopop was not highly commodified, Chinese identity, including national identity, cultural identity and social identity, has always played a role within it.

In the 1980s, the influence of neoliberalism on Mandopop resulted in its significant commodification and the emergence of individualistic expressions to counter cultural invasion. This shift towards commodification allowed Chinese identity to gain unprecedented prominence within the Mandopop market, marking a pivotal moment in its history. Meanwhile, Mandopop relied on its own idiosyncrasies and the market by which it survived to grow tenaciously in the developing market economy. Although it did not convey an absolute identity, Mandopop’s industrial blueprint began to take shape. During the reform and opening-up, the market economy developed rapidly, so Mandopop also experienced a revival and entered the era of national rock music. At this time, during the 1980s and 1990s, identity in Mandopop embodied the conflict between personality and culture, personality and society, personality and living conditions and modernization. In the “China Wind” era of the 2000s, Mandopop

emphasized its “Chineseness” through a large amount of literary material and a deep cultural identity. Chinese identity in Mandopop reflects the fluidity and difference in its promotion historically. This fluidity also reflects the inclusiveness of Chinese identity in Mandopop. This research has demonstrated that the combination of and collision with the cultures of various regions and ethnic groups in China generated new identities and even combined with the cultures of various countries in the world to produce different identities through localised creations.

Theme One: The Function of Mandopop

To explore how Chinese identity is constructed in Mandopop, along with specific identities and the factors that influence their construction, the research design involved online and offline data collection to understand various peoples’ perceptions. Some themes relevant to “Chineseness” in Mandopop were chosen for discussion, including the functions of Mandopop, national identity and nationalism in Mandopop, class identity and social stratification in Mandopop, and fandom and the direction of the Mandopop market, which were most mentioned themes by interviewees and questionnaire participants.

Theme I discussed the functions of Mandopop, combining with its historical background and social and cultural context, including its development, the formation of genres and the term “wind”. Although the literal translation of “wind” is inaccurate, it helped to explain the characteristics of the sub-genres “China Wind” and “Northwest Wind” and “Ancient Wind”. These genres have risen and developed rapidly, have become popular rapidly and covered a wide area, and because they were commercial products, the speed of their demise was also very fast. These sub-genres have been active during a certain era and for a specific audience group. They had commercial value but could not escape the fate of fast-moving consumer goods in the market economy and gradually faded out of the market after a few years. Although they still exist to this day, they are not as popular anymore. However, Mandopop that reflects “Chineseness” has not disappeared with the disappearance of its sub-genres and as

always existed in different forms. The current “Zhongguo Feng” and “Guo Feng” are new forms and exist with the same cultural meanings. These new sub-genres did not change the functions of Mandopop, and still play a role in consolidating Chinese identity in and through Mandopop.

There also exist other functions in Mandopop, including educational, aesthetic, sociocultural and political functions, while Mandopop has become a means of realizing nationalism. For the younger generation, Mandopop can be a valuable tool for cultural education and self-discovery. It provides a means to explore and understand different aspects of Chinese culture, including language, history, traditions and contemporary social issues. Through Mandopop, young Chinese individuals can develop a sense of cultural identity, appreciation and belonging. Additionally, while Mandopop, has the potential to inherit and promote the essence and spirit of Chinese culture, it is not immune to commercial interests, market trends and official discourse that may influence its content and direction. Many Mandopop songs now produced and published by national cultural departments or state media have a clear theme to convey a sense of identity that is in line with the country’s identity. These are all “China Wind” in the broad sense, and the cultural connotations and functions in these sub-genres is far greater than in genres with higher artistic value. The functions of Mandopop rest in its expression of Chinese identity, which enables Mandopop to construct identity within changing historical backgrounds and sociocultural contexts. The discussions on Mandopop’s functionality provide possibilities for Mandopop identity discourse that are sometimes overlooked in the existing literature due to an over-emphasis on its commercial, cultural, political and historical dimensions. Discussions on the function of Mandopop is thus worthwhile as it is valued as an expression for identity construction.

Theme Two: Nationalism and National Identity in Mandopop

The theme of nationalism was another theme most frequently mentioned in discussions on Mandopop, which expresses national identity through music. National identity is

perhaps the most intuitive reflection of musical attributes. National music has distinct national characteristics and indicates its identity through the unique national elements in melody, lyrics, instrumentation and stage performance. It is also the most unique identity that allows the Chinese audience to recognise it at once. National music shares a similar national identity with many traditional operas and folk songs and expresses national cultural characteristics through the music itself. Nationalism, meanwhile, uses quasi political propaganda to give Mandopop a sense of mission to carry forward the national spirit, while, of course, sometimes this sense of mission is only tacitly accepted. National identity in China includes both macro-level identity within the Chinese nation and micro-level identity within one's own ethnic group. It is the spiritual quality and ideology of a nation under the constraints of specific social, historical, economic and cultural conditions that reflects the regional, unique and staged nature of culture. However, a nation is a product of a certain historical period.

Looking at nationalism and national identity in Mandopop from the standpoint of the nation-state, this would inevitably mean a relatively narrow and limited side, being limited to national culture and ignoring the diversity of cultures or being limited to the regionality of the nation and ignoring its historical development. There are many works in Mandopop that shape national consciousness in national conflicts and competitions; some of them could even arouse the self-improvement spirit of the people. However, the chapter also paid attention to the narrow emotions brought about by overemphasizing national identity, which resulted in the tendency to show racism (Ye, 2012: 193). Meanwhile, it was also possible for the producers to piece together national music to cater to the national mood of a specific market or the curiosity of the public, but in fact, tradition is dissolved in an entertaining way. These two creative tendencies represent a misunderstanding and overemphasizing of nationalism and ignore the artistic and cultural value of the music itself.

Therefore, to carry forward national identity in Mandopop also requires a change of position and perspective on the development of nationalism. Nationalism in Mandopop

is not limited to culture and constructs a set of national identity discourses from various perspectives, such as biology, history and geography. The identity of a nation's history, culture and particularity is exclusive to that nation. Yet, it cannot exclude other nations to promote the cultural exchange between various ethnic groups in China and between China and other nations around the world. The construction of national identity in Mandopop is often based on national instinct formed by the Chinese people under the guidance of authorities, so the exclusivity and political attribute of Chinese nationalism was explored in the existing literature. They represent a part of Chinese nationalism that is also reflected in Mandopop's national identity, which should focus on seeking exchanges within different ethnic groups and nations while insisting on its unique diverse national identity and communicating the hybrid identity of Chinese nationalism.

Theme Three: Class Identity and Social Stratification in Mandopop

Class identity and, with it, social class and stratification in Mandopop was discussed in Chapter 5. This chapter first discussed the class concept based on Marx's class theory and then discussed the stratification concept based on the theory developed by Weber. In general, class is the position in which people find themselves, usually being born into, which has social, educational, political, economic and other implications, while social stratification means the ordering of these groups or classes of people into some kind of category, usually in hierarchical order. There are essential differences between the two, but in the development of modern society, there is a certain degree of fluidity between the two.

This mobility is also reflected in China's social class and stratification structure. China's political system is officially described as a socialist state under the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants. This description reflects the dominant status of the working class and peasant class in Chinese society and the significance of their contributions to the country's stability and economic productivity. In China, the social and political status of the working class and peasant class has been relatively stable and solid. However,

with the acceleration of social productivity and advancements in industrial and agricultural technology, there have been changes in the stratification of peasant workers, which can reflect mobility between the peasant class and the working class. Of course, there are many different social groups and stratifications in China, which share common class characteristics, such as middle stratification, the new stratifications of private business owners or the social groups of Beijing drifters. However, there are multiple factors in defining the identity of a class or stratification due to overlapping and mixing brought on by social class mobility in China, which in turn greatly impacts on the musical tastes and musical preferences of different classes and stratifications.

Discussions of social class were accompanied by the notion of cultural taste. Although wealth and education do not completely affect the breadth of one's musical tastes, class and other factors, such as age, gender, immigration status and ethnicity, do in fact shape people's musical tastes in interesting and complex ways (Veenstra, 2015: 136). In other words, the breadth of musical taste has something to do with social class, as social class position affects individuals' likes and dislikes, thus their musical taste. This relationship between social stratification and musical tastes was explained through the homology argument, which suggests that musical taste and social stratification correspond one-to-one. The discussions also explored the "omnivore-univore" argument that points out the higher the social stratification level the wider is musical taste, while the lower the social stratification level the more single is musical taste. This was consistent with the class-stratification theory of musical tastes in Mandopop.

The fieldwork participants provided two intuitive opposite examples: "Yangchun Baixue" (阳春白雪), which means "high-brow" arts and literature, and "Xiali Baren" (下里巴人), which means "low-brow" arts and literature (see Chapter 5). This (inaccurate) translation shows the difference between these two types, and its meaning was extended to now represent differences in both the literary types and the two stratifications. People of higher stratification preferred multiple music genres, even including the cross-border omnivore tastes of classical music, folk music and rock

music; they have a more inclusive musical aesthetic ability. The music itself might not be high or low, but in terms of artistic value and cultural value, society and audiences instinctively give it a framework for judging standards. When people in the higher social stratification understand these added values in Mandopop, the comparison of musical compositions becomes hugely disparate at the aesthetic levels.

The social function of Mandopop determined that it serves the market, and to consider different classes and stratifications, diverse types of Mandopop are created, requiring both music with artistic value, cultural value and social value and the popular songs that meet the public's taste, even including divine comedies. The author asserted that the connection between musical taste and class identity is difficult to separate. This theme is helpful to expose the connection between the class status of the Mandopop audiences and their musical tastes and preferences to illustrate the class identity that Mandopop reflects. Interestingly, discussions of class identity are often avoided because the issue of class in China is sensitive, but class identities do exist, and Mandopop does reflect the musical tastes of people of different classes or social stratifications. The discussions of musical tastes in Mandopop are in line with both the homology argument and “omnivore-univore” argument, which shows an important part of the identity construction in Mandopop.

Theme Four: Fandom and its Impact on Mandopop

The next theme was related to fandom and the new market direction of Mandopop. Fandom in China is an area of growing interest, attracting the attention of diverse groups, such as academia, industry and even the government. Fandom today is often entangled with digital platforms that provide space and functions to make certain aspects of fan culture more accessible in increasingly globalised communities and consumption patterns. It has a positive guiding effect on the music market, including the production of series of television programmes or music products according to fan preferences. But when an overzealous fandom culture emerges, its momentum often starts to deviate from its normal track.

Chapter 6 discussed this phenomenon, especially on the changing nature of Chinese fandom and the role of Chinese fandom beyond music borders. It discussed the development of Chinese fandom culture, which was deeply influenced by Japanese and Korean fandom culture and extended the fandom gathering behaviour of Japanese and Korean idols or groups in the Mandopop market. Chinese fandom was still in a relatively benign development as many specialised variety shows developed for fan groups, such as singing programmes attended by students with singing dreams or famous singers, band programmes that provide a platform for rock music and selection programmes for idol groups. Through a fixed fan base, fans can help the singers or groups who they support debut and become popular through their own votes.

The chapter also discussed the contradictions between fandom culture and national policy. With China's restrictive policy on broadcasting foreign programmes, including cartoons during the evening time and performances of Korean artists, fans are dissatisfied, even leading to an instance when a college student planted a fake bomb in Beijing's largest bookstore to boycott and express his dissatisfaction. However, the state's policies were released to regulate the state-defined "chaos" in fandom. The Office of the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission issued a notice on further strengthening the governance of fandom "chaos" on difficult key issues, and proposed ten measures, including cancelling the star artist ranking, strictly controlling the star agency, strict controlling minors' participation, standardising the accounts of fan groups, and standardizing fundraising behaviours. These actions illustrate the state-defined "chaos" and antagonistic behaviour of current Chinese fandom, which is no longer just a simple fan culture, but a market phenomenon caused by groups working out of their own will. Fandom tends to use fan fundraising and other capital behaviours to influence laws, while these contradictions related to fandom occur in online platforms where they are based.

Fandom has a complicated relationship with online platforms. Fandom participation depends on certain platforms for hosting, sharing, distributing and discussing, which

also provides a broader space for fan gathering and community building. There also exists a conflict between fans and platforms, including social media platforms and music streaming platforms. Platforms can build online communities, access and accountability, yet conflicts between fans and platforms are highlighted when fans' needs and use of platforms conflict with other stakeholders or policies. To increase data traffic, popularity and revenue, platform actively plan and organise idol-related activities to stimulate fandom consumption. However, if platforms provide a fully open venue for discussion, it creates some potential dangers for fandom "chaos", thus platforms have operating rules, even including explicit and implicit policy provisions. Social media platforms are a double-edged sword for Chinese fandom. They not only provide a space for communication and gathering but also standardize fans' behaviour and activities or restrict them to a certain extent. In general, platforms play a guiding role in cooperating with policies, trying to guide the healthy development of fandom.

The Chinese idol industry and fandom were influenced by the second wave of Hallyu after the 2000s, so changes in identity construction of fans also began in this period. Different from ordinary audiences, fans reflect more emotional projections by relying on their imagined intimacy with their idols. Forming a group, they construct class identities within the group, but since the fandom group is an unregistered and unrecognised social group, their identity is still illegal to the state. Meanwhile, to promote the fandom economy in the idol industry and guide the idol industry to develop in the direction expected by the state, fandom must construct its own identity under the control and censorship of the state to avoid conflict between fandom identity and national policy. In general, fandom identity is a newly constructed identity discourse in the development of Mandopop. It is constructed based on Chinese identity and therefore must conform to the mainstream ideology of the state. In this way, the discussions confirm that identity construction in Mandopop develops and changes with the development of Mandopop.

More generally, the research themes explored throughout this thesis were developed based on corroborating participants' perceptions, many of which required further in-depth exploration and discussion. These themes, to a certain extent, reflect the unique Chinese identities that has existed when Mandopop first developed in China and has impacted the Mandopop market directions. The discussion of these identities is based on the Chinese historical background and sociocultural context, showing that the construction of "Chineseness" in Mandopop expresses a uniqueness as an ideological product in changing contexts. However, there are other factors affecting the construction of "Chineseness" in Mandopop, which will be summarised in the subsequent section.

Factors Affecting the Construction of "Chineseness" in Mandopop

The concept of "Chineseness" is rooted in Chinese culture and is used to construct a distinct cultural and national identity that sets China apart from other countries and ethnic groups. It has also been absorbed by ethnic groups that have accepted or been influenced by Chinese culture, shaping their own cultural identities. The influence of Chinese culture resonates with these ethnic groups, and as a result, they may share certain cultural elements and values with the broader Chinese identity. However, it is important to recognize that these ethnic groups also maintain their own distinct cultural characteristics and identities. This diversity is due to their distribution across a wide range of geographic areas and historical influences. Despite the ethnic differences, there is still a sense of national identity that can be attributed to the concept of "Chineseness". This national identity is rooted in the recognition and acknowledgment of China as a multi-ethnic country, where various ethnic groups coexist and contribute to the overall cultural fabric of the nation. The construction of a multi-dimensional understanding of "Chineseness" among ethnic differences is essential to embracing and acknowledging the nature of China as a multi-ethnic country. It recognizes the diversity within the Chinese community, respects the unique cultural identities of different ethnic groups,

and fosters a sense of inclusivity and unity within the broader Chinese national and cultural identity.

Likewise, when constructing and theorizing “Chineseness” in Mandopop, it is also important to consider its cultural and national identity and how these aspects are reflected in the music. Mandopop serves as a cultural expression of the Chinese-speaking world, reflecting the cultural identity of Chinese-speaking communities and often carrying elements of Chinese traditions, values and aesthetics. The lyrics, melodies and performance styles in Mandopop can evoke a sense of shared cultural experiences and resonate with the emotions and sentiments of the audience. Among the sub-genres in Mandopop, “China Wind” is the most successful and influential one to express “Chineseness” via traditional elements. Even though “China Wind”, more generally, can be regarded as a collection of sub-genres that incorporate traditional musical elements, it is not the only one in Mandopop that reflects “Chineseness”. Thus, theorizing “Chineseness” in Mandopop, it is crucial to examine how different identities are represented and negotiated within the music.

Therefore, when looking at “Chineseness” in Mandopop from the perspectives of popular music studies, the thesis situated the analysis of Mandopop identity construction within the interdisciplinary framework of popular music studies, integrating the historical background and sociocultural context in discussions of music alongside the participants’ perspectives to explain market-related discourses, and also examining representations of identity and their relationship to broader socio-political forces. The research into “Chineseness”, especially the research into “Chineseness” in Mandopop, is not solely a textual analysis or an observation but explored ordinary people’s, professionals’ and specialists’ perspectives during offline and online fieldwork. The construction of “Chineseness” in Mandopop is a multi-dimensional concept, which includes the promotion of national identity at the national level and the sense of belonging to the nation by different ethnic groups, as well as audiences and fandom culture in the Mandopop market.

First, cultural identity in Mandopop was explored in the literature, including ancient and modern Chinese literature and world literature classics. For example, as mentioned in Chapter 3, Teresa Teng's 'Going to the West Building Alone' (独上西楼 Dushang Xilou) is based on the text of the Tang Dynasty poem and she composed the melody fitting with the lyrics to express the original meaning of the poem and accommodate artistic conception. There are also Mandopop songs created from world literature, such as Shu Pu's 'Life Like Summer Flowers' (生如夏花 Shengru Xiahua) based on Indian poet Tagore's poem that expresses a calm attitude towards life. These songs select the emotions from the original literary works and express the integration of artistic conception of the songs.

Indeed, ancient literature has never left Mandopop. When literary works are absorbed into Mandopop and become widely popular, the cultural identity conveyed through and in Mandopop has literary value. However, Zhaojun Jin (2002: 98), a famous Chinese music critic, summarised cultural identity in Mandopop in a pertinent way:

The fate of Mandopop in China is quite tragic, whether it was in the 1930s and 1940s or in the 1980s and 1990s after its renaissance, it has always been like an illegitimate child without identification, mixed in the Chinese mass culture camp. (Zhaojun Jin, 2002: 98)

For a long time, Mandopop's cultural identity has been ambiguous, and even though its literary value remained, Mandopop did not gain a precise market position. It was not until Jay Chou's "China Wind" Mandopop came out in the 2000s that it opened new ideas for Mandopop creation. Later, Mandopop actively associated with high levels of cultural and aesthetic identity, such as classical literature and elegant music, to maintain an interconnected and mutually inclusive relationship with them and to follow the path of popularizing folk songs or classics, thus producing traditional-Chinese-style "China Wind" for popularity. Mandopop generally embodies average social literature, especially at the level of cognitive function, and has successfully made many classical and ethnic works accepted by people who were unprepared for professional knowledge.

The value of traditional-Chinese-style Mandopop has been recognised by mainstream ideology and elite ideology, thus forming its own unique cultural identity.

Secondly, multi-ethnic national identities are absorbed in the “Chineseness” of Mandopop, since China is a multi-ethnic country, and its nationalism and ethnic identity are multi-layered. As shown through concrete musical examples in Chapter 4, nationalism is expressed diversely in different songs, for instance ‘Apologize’ sung by the Tibetan group ANU combines Tibetan drums, Tibetan opera and Tibetan rap. Even if the carrier of its fusion is an English song, it clearly reflects the Tibetan identity of the song and the singer. Both members of ANU come from Qinghai province in southwest China, a province with many ethnic minorities, which borders Xinjiang to the north and Tibet to the south and southwest, so the song was not surprising with its clear Tibetan identity. There exist many other provinces with ethnic minorities in China in autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties.

The policy of implementing regional autonomy for ethnic minorities in China was in place in 1954, while the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region had been established in 1947 before the founding of New China (The Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China, 2005). According to this policy, the system of regional ethnic autonomy aims to promote national unity, ensure the rights of minority groups to self-governance, and foster socialist ethnic relations based on equality, unity, mutual assistance and harmony. One of the key objectives of regional autonomy is to preserve and protect the cultural characteristics and identity of ethnic minority groups. This includes the preservation of their own languages, traditions, customs, and ways of life. By granting autonomy to these regions, the policy allows ethnic minorities to have a say in their own affairs, participate in decision-making processes, and maintain a sense of ownership over their cultural heritage. Music, as a form of cultural expression, plays a significant role in representing and preserving the cultural identity of ethnic minorities. Through music, ethnic minority groups can express and celebrate their unique cultural characteristics, traditions, and values, which serve as a medium for the transmission of

cultural knowledge, the reinforcement of cultural pride, and the strengthening of intergenerational bonds within the community.

In China's popular variety show *The Voice of China*, minority singers are shortlisted almost every year and even win the championship, which proves the talent and ability of minority singers in music. This may be because their environment is not that urbanised, but purer and simpler, and they also have inherited traditions for singing and dancing to express their emotions in specific activities, such as holding celebration ceremonies during festivals or boosting morale during labour. Therefore, minority singers with good vocals repeatedly win awards in the Mandopop market, which also proves that the national style of Mandopop has gradually changed from being non-mainstream to being more accepting and inclusive, expressing a unique multi-ethnic national identity in Mandopop. In the multi-ethnic identity of national identity in China, "Chineseness" is constituted as diverse and changeable. Each ethnic group reveals its own specific national identity when creating or adapting music, and these multi-ethnic identities bring freshness to Mandopop music, thus creating new national elements and inspirations in Mandopop.

Thirdly, the thesis showed that "Chineseness" is expressed not only through traditional elements but also by non-traditional elements. There exist several representative sub-genres that reflect "Chineseness", such as "Northwest Wind" and "China Wind". Some genres use obvious traditional musical styles and traditional elements, including instrumentation, tonality and visual elements. There are also some Mandopop songs that do not belong to a clear sub-genre, but still rely on the traditional elements to express a particular Chinese identity. Then there are those Mandopop songs that express a clear Chinese identity and national spirit of China without relying on, or emphasizing, any traditional elements, which indicates the future development trend of Mandopop.

For example, in the musical example discussed in Chapter 3, the theme song of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games Beijing 2022 'Together for A Shared Future' expresses the unity of the Chinese people, the feeling of community with a shared future

for all humanity, and people's expectations in the context of globalization. Due to the clear theme of this song, the few English lyrics do not impact on the song's construction of Chinese identity. Another musical example is 'Returning after Target Practice', mentioned in Chapter 5, which describes the style of the new Chinese military and style of march expressing the theme of the song. Thus, new Mandopop began to create clear cultural themes that show Chinese cultural identity and national identity. This "Chineseness" expressed in music in specific contexts and on a specific theme may become a trend in the future, thereby instead of overemphasizing traditional music expressing new form of "Chineseness" through the ideology endowed by the music itself.

Finally, the thesis revealed that audiences' perspectives impact deeply on the construction of "Chineseness" in Mandopop as well as the direction of Mandopop development. Audiences also create fandom culture within the market discourse. Of course, the Mandopop market is impacted by audiences' demands, but at the same time by meeting the requirements of policy and law. The guidelines set by cultural policy provide the foundation in the direction of Mandopop development, meaning that Mandopop must comply with national censorship, so that the products of Mandopop are positive ones that the state encourages to develop. On this basis, Mandopop as a commercial genre can return to its commercial attributes to service the market and audiences. Meanwhile, different audience groups generate different experiences and ideas due to the manifestation of "Chineseness" in Mandopop being affected by changes at the time, for example differences in understanding of "wind" musical styles produced in different eras. Different generations have a deep resonance with the respective "wind" during the era they grew up in. For example, the post-1980s generation preferred "Northwest Wind", which appeared in the late 1980s and early 1990s because of the rough and heroic singing style of rock music that helped them express their suppressed emotions in times of confusion. The post-1990s generation resonated more with the "China Wind" of the 2000s, which brought them unprecedented freshness through lyrical R'n'B music and traditional Chinese elements,

to which they had little exposure, especially in the music market impacted by Western popular music, K-pop and J-pop.

Fandom culture has had a significant impact on Mandopop over the past two decades, with popularity becoming a crucial determinant of success. This trend has led to a situation where star celebrities, regardless of their professional skills, garner immense fame and attract a large fan base. This phenomenon can be attributed to the influence of consumerism, transforming the relationship between singers and audiences into a transactional dynamic between products and consumers. The concept of an “idol” has emerged within this market-driven environment, encompassing not only singers and artists but also individuals associated with traditional music. Even without a track record of successful songs, idols can amass a substantial following through extensive publicity and marketing efforts. Fans, in turn, go beyond the traditional role of passive audiences, investing significant amounts of money and time in supporting their idols. This includes activities such as purchasing albums, attending concerts, and actively participating in music charts and awards rankings. However, the development of fandom culture in Mandopop has also given rise to certain negative consequences. One such consequence is the potential distortion of identity within the industry. The focus on popularity and fan devotion may overshadow the importance of artistic talent and professional skills. This can lead to a situation where individuals with limited abilities gain prominence solely based on their fan following, rather than their artistic merit. Recognising the need to address these issues, the Cultural Department of China has taken steps to rectify the negative aspects of fandom culture. The launch of the special campaign of “The Clean-up and Rectification of Chaos in Fandom” demonstrates a commitment to promoting a healthier and more balanced industry environment. By actively guiding and shaping cultural values within Mandopop, the Cultural Department aims to foster a positive representation of “Chineseness” and encourage a more authentic and sustainable development of the industry.

To sum up, the construction of “Chineseness” in Mandopop still needs further exploration under the consideration of many intersecting factors. Of course, some factors matured and played a positive role during the research, but there exist research gaps that may be addressed in future developments. The purpose of this study was to fill the academic gap in the exploration of identity in Chinese popular music and the meaning of “Chineseness” in Mandopop from both an emic insider’s perspective and experience and a more objective etic outsider’s perspective. Its originality stems from its focus on the concept of “Chineseness” in Mandopop. “Chineseness” is not a new notion, but it is a new focus in popular music studies to reflect on Chineseness. Thus, this thesis has made an original and distinctive contribution to the current literature and existing knowledge in the research areas of “Chineseness” and Mandopop. Specifically, this thesis focuses on the construction of different identities during the development process of Mandopop from the perspectives of Chinese music professionals and audiences as entry points. Chinese identity has been constructed in Mandopop for a long time during the historical development of Mandopop. It includes national identity, ethnic identity, social identity, cultural identity and other forms of identity, and changes due to the use of Mandopop by different ethnic groups in different sociocultural contexts. Chinese identity in Mandopop has endowed Mandopop with functions. Even though Mandopop has become a means of political propaganda in some instances, it has generally played a positive role in the construction of Mandopop’s musical and cultural connotations. The construction of Chinese identity in Mandopop is limited by internal and external conditions, such as the cultural policy released by Chinese authorities and the globalization of the music industry, which may lead to new research interests and research directions. The next section will focus on the limitations of this study and future research directions.

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

This research on Chinese identity in Mandopop was originally a continuation of my Masters’ project and originated from my own interests and experiences of being a loyal

fan of Mandopop since it has accompanied me throughout my growth. I thus attempted to explore identity construction in Mandopop from the perspective of an emic insider, who was shaped by Chinese social norms and values, but also looked at identity in Mandopop more objectively from an etic outsider's perspective. The definition of Mandopop itself proved itself an unusual subject. Mandopop has produced different ideologies within changing contexts at different times, and audiences have great differences in their understanding. Meanwhile, I acknowledge that this research also has limitations, some of which were discovered during the research process, and which require further research and interpretation, while others were reminders and inspirations received during fieldwork and based on the perspectives of interviewees and participants. Therefore, in this final section of the thesis, I will indicate the limitations of this research and propose some future research directions which may complement and further this musical analysis of "Chineseness" in Mandopop.

The limitations of this research were firstly due to the complexity of Chinese identity. In the previous chapters, it was emphasized numerous times that China is a multi-ethnic country, so in terms of identity, there are many overlapping ethnic identities. Chinese music research in the humanities and social sciences basically focuses on the study of ethnic minority identity and "their" music, which requires intensive fieldwork to truly understand the identity of ethnic groups. This line of music research on Chinese music and identity required expansion, but it proved difficult to balance. Many Chinese scholars who I interviewed or read about focused only on a certain ethnic group to explore its depth and limited their analyses to the type of music of the respective ethnic group. Popular music was rarely used as the focus of research, while traditional folk music and popular music were often separated. However, in today's musically diverse society, the boundary between folk music and popular music is no longer clear in continuous musical deconstruction and reconstruction where crossovers are a common phenomenon. Especially when searching for "Chineseness" in Mandopop, the musical effects produced by those fusions were far greater. The multi-ethnic elements and

materials embodied in fusions bring a different national identity, depending on the specific ethnic minority and its ethnic identity.

This research is a qualitative popular music study of expressions and reflections of “Chineseness” in Mandopop, but it still needs to consider the specific ethnic identities embedded within it. Most research participants were from the Han nationality, which reflects the proportion in the national population. Yet individual minority groups also grow up and live in urbanised environments, are greatly affected by Han culture and lose some of the characteristics of their own ethnic group. During the research, it was thus easy to miss and ignore the musical characteristics of ethnic minorities because of the dominance of Han culture. Although national identity and nationalism was explored in Chapter 4, and there are musical examples reflecting ethnic identities in this Conclusion, this focus was still a small part of the research overall. The research into “Chineseness” in Mandopop needs to focus more on the cultural identity and social identity of ethnic minorities in China. Further research should involve fieldwork within specific ethnic groups, including the ethnic groups which researchers were interested in, to reveal ethnic minority perceptions of identity in Mandopop, and to explore ethnic minority popular music genres and make some connections or comparison with Mandopop.

Secondly, as a qualitative study, this research had a somewhat broad and open-ended research scope, which was also reflected in the suggestions and reminders given by fieldwork participants. Their suggestions involved them hoping that this research could be more specific in terms of a certain ethnic group, a certain era, or a certain genre of Mandopop, as to them the depth of research was more important. While Mandopop has a broad definition, with many sub-genres and some musical styles that do not constitute a genre, this undoubtedly increased the difficulties posed by the research. This research focused on the broad concept of Mandopop and the sociocultural background since the 1978 reform and opening policy. It also included the historical background of Mandopop before 1978 and even the ideology and functionality in ancient China when

discussing its changes in modern society. Therefore, it was difficult to comprehensively cover identities, such as different identities reflected in different genres or musical styles in Mandopop, changing identities in different periods, differences of cultural identity in different regions, as well as gender identity and generation identity, which is not considered in this research.

In terms of the music itself, the focus on “Chineseness” in genres and sub-genres of Mandopop mainly focused on “Northwest Wind”, “China Wind” and “Ancient Wind”, while the popular “Guofeng” (“Chinese National Wind”) culture that emerged in recent years was “China Wind” in a broad sense and covered other “winds”. But there exist other sub-genres in Mandopop, which might not yet form a commercial genre or fixed creative mode but is often integrated and expressed in Chinese music programmes. The resurgence of rock and rap music in recent years, as well as programmes that consciously collide with traditional and modern music, are also good subjects for research. However, the research needed to specifically focus on a certain sub-genre or the intention of a certain programme to reveal the cultural phenomenon behind it. Moreover, as the research explored “Chineseness” in relation to the human and sociocultural context, the research themes were drawn from the common concerns shared by interviewees and participants. Yet considering the complexity of “Chineseness”, different themes and topics were also mentioned that need to be further addressed. Analyses still need to start from the interviewees’ perspectives, but semi-structured interviews could be designed according to these new topics needed for research. Further engagement with literature may also reveal new gaps in research on “Chineseness” in Mandopop, which may generate new viewpoints for explanation and discussion.

The third limitation of this research was an unpredictable and accidental phenomenon, which was also the most impacting factor, namely the Covid-19 pandemic. My fieldwork was planned to take place during the second year of study from October 2019. The research sites were in mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and other areas with

close ties to Mandopop. Yet when I travelled to mainland China for fieldwork, the epidemic started a few weeks into my fieldwork. I even resided in Wuhan and was forced to quarantine for more than three months, which greatly affected the progress of my fieldwork. At that time, people were in panic in the face of the epidemic. Many emails were not responded to, and the observation of scheduled live music events was cancelled. During the pandemic, the interviews, questionnaires and observation of music events had to be transferred to online context, which increased the difficulty of collecting data and reduced the efficiency of obtaining hardcopy resources. When interviewees used electronic devices, they were not as relaxed as during face-to-face communication, and they were more vigilant of self-protection. Because of the recent emergence of the Internet, they were more cautious during speaking, so their views became somewhat ambiguous. The number of participants and interviewees and the ethnic groups they were from also became limited. Ethnographic research normally requires in-depth immersion and a large amount of data collection during fieldwork to obtain the most realistic and direct data to reflect the social and cultural phenomena surrounding musical activities. Due to the limitations posed by the pandemic for my fieldwork, more extensive fieldwork is needed in future studies to collect data, especially among different ethnic groups.

While the Covid-19 pandemic had a huge impact on this research project, it also impacted the entire global music industry, including in China. According to Xiao and Yang (2021: 175), current Performance Industry Association data show that the number of offline concerts expected to be postponed or cancelled in China reached 20,000, and the direct loss reached two billion Chinese Yuan. The pandemic caused a new trend of online performances through the Internet, which also continued after the epidemic in China was alleviated to a certain extent. Major record companies planned a series of online concerts, while some international music events were also moved online. Choral songs were created on the “cloud” to resist the pandemic and convey strength and hope to people through music. These “cloud” music events were mostly on themes of “positive energy” and “public welfare”. Although some concerts sought commercial

fan customization, there was a clear need for subjective words such as “unity” and “love” during these times to echo the cultural and emotional power of music. These efforts beyond the music had the effect of harmonizing people’s moods. However, due to China’s isolation policy, music performance was forced to narrow its channels of dissemination and had to rely on the Internet for dissemination (Cole, 2020; Hall, 2020). This may inspire new research into online music events of Mandopop in the post-pandemic era to explore if the themes and directions of Mandopop change and new identities are constructed.

The future research directions proposed here against the limitations of this study mostly focus on the multi-ethnic identities in Mandopop, the multiple genres and sub-genres in Mandopop, and online music in the post-pandemic era. As mentioned, “Chineseness” is not a singular identity. It is constructed and absorbs different identities in a changing society and across different regions, different ethnic groups, different genders and different generations. Mandopop is also a fusion genre. Because of the construction of “Chineseness”, Chinese identity forms a figurative expression in Mandopop, especially in some sub-genres. This also requires further exploration. In the post-pandemic era, Mandopop could be explored via its newly spreading direction and mode. Online communication has always been a trend, proven by the success of digital music and streaming platforms, but is the new humanist spirit and commercial value formed in Mandopop during the process of online communication in the post-epidemic era? Would new identities emerge in Mandopop? Further research is needed, predominantly since I expected to conduct more offline fieldwork in both breadth and depth, going deeper into ethnic minorities and Chinese music industry to uncover and explore the reflections and changes in “Chineseness” in Mandopop in China.

Final Thoughts

This thesis has grown out of qualitative music research on “Chineseness” in Mandopop, covering the spread of Mandopop in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan after the policy of reform and opening-up in 1978, as well as people’s perceptions and

perspectives regards Mandopop identity. The research defined identity as a general concept and “Chineseness” as Chinese identity. In addition to the historical background and sociocultural context of Mandopop, the thesis contained a much needed (re)defining of the term “wind” and discussions on the functions of Mandopop. Significant research themes emerging during the fieldwork, namely nationalism and national identity in Mandopop, class identity and social stratification in Mandopop and fandom in the Mandopop market, were subsequently discussed. The thesis provided rich musical examples from Mandopop and analysed not only the musical text but also their meanings and impacts on the construction of “Chineseness”. Of course, the critical comments about “Chineseness” could not be ignored, especially the controversy around cultural and political identities.

Although the inheritance and promotion of “Chineseness” in Mandopop was impacted by the state aiming to promote the national spirit and enhance national cohesion through national culture, the artistic value and social value of Mandopop itself cannot be ignored. As a Chinese researcher and witness and insider to Mandopop, I used my experiences to provide a broader discussion on “Chineseness” in Mandopop. This was not a monolithic study, but incredibly diverse and changing during its development. There were many topics related to ethnic minorities, ideology and social culture. The research process was arduous and long, and more research is needed to fully understand the complexity of “Chineseness” more effectively and objectively. The research limitations thus need to be addressed in future studies. Research on “Chineseness” in Mandopop has a long way to go, and we need to view it as being in development. China is developing, and Mandopop is developing, so “Chineseness” is developing as well.

The original idea for this research came from my own experience of being a loyal Mandopop fan and the continuation of my Masters programme, which shaped this qualitative popular music study in its focus on Chinese identity construction within Mandopop, defining Mandopop’s functions and identity, including social identity, cultural identity, national identity, class identity and the identity of fans under market

conditions, and based on the insider perspectives of Chinese music professionals and academics during extensive academic discussion on Mandopop. As a commercial genre, Mandopop's identity is shaped not only by the market but also by state control due to the country's historical background and sociocultural context. The research therefore considers multiple factors to define identities in Mandopop. It makes a unique academic contribution to the rare literatures on Chinese identity constructed in Mandopop and complements the more general literatures on music and identity by contributing a unique Chinese emic insider's perspective shaped by the ideologies of socialist China. The research is also unique in its focus on defining the construction of multiple identities in Mandopop from an etic outsider's perspective by presenting an extensive survey of existing literature on music and identity in China, and on identity in Mandopop. This research used the theories from popular music studies assisted by several musicological research methods, including ethnography, questionnaires and interviewing alongside original analyses of specific musical examples, all duly contextualised within the historical background and sociocultural context of Mandopop. Overall, this qualitative popular music study makes a unique and timely contribution to academic discourses on China's Mandopop identity to existing studies in popular music studies and broader musicology research.

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Appendix 1. The List of Fieldwork Interviewees

Name	Gender	Generation	Region/Country	Identity	Interview Date	Face-to-face/Online
Sen Wang	M	1960s	Mainland China	Academics	25/10/2019	Face-to-face
Shenshen Wang	M	1950s	Mainland China	Academics	30/10/2019	Face-to-face
Yuan Wang	M	1980s	Mainland China	Researcher	30/10/2019	Face-to-face
Guanyu Cao	F	1970s	Mainland China	Composer	08/11/2019	Face-to-face
Qian Wang	M	1980s	Mainland China	Researcher	09/11/2019	Online
Danhong Yu	F	1960s	Mainland China	Academics	13/11/2019	Face-to-face
Xin Tao	M	1970s	Mainland China	Academics	14/11/2019	Online
Yuchuan Wen	M	1980s	Mainland China	Composer	27/11/2019	Face-to-face
Wenyin Qiu	F	1970s	Mainland China	Composer	05/12/2019	Face-to-face
Xuehuai Xiang	M	1960s	Hong Kong	Lyrist	05/12/2019	Face-to-face
Oushu Lin	F	1990s	The United Arab Emirates	Audiences	27/03/2020	Online
Xu Cheng	M	1980s	Mainland China	Audiences	28/03/2020	Online
Zixuan Song	M	1990s	Mainland China	Music Industry Worker	20/10/2020	Online

Appendix 2: Ethics Application Form (19HSS010)



Date received	Initials	LJMU REC Ref
12/08/2019	16/09/2019	19HSS010

UREC Research Ethics Application Form

No research (studies on human participants or their data (including service evaluations, audit etc.)) must be started without full, unconditional ethical approval. There are a number of routes for obtaining ethical approval depending on the potential participants and type of study involved – please complete the checklists below to determine which is the most appropriate route for your research study.

1. Pedagogic Research (ONLY complete if you are a member of staff undertaking pedagogic research – otherwise, please leave blank)	YES	NO
1a. Is the proposed study being undertaken by a member of LJMU staff?		
1b. Is the purpose of the study to evaluate the effectiveness of LJMU teaching and learning practices by identifying areas for improvement, piloting changes and improvements to current practices or helping students identify and work on areas for improvement in their own study practices?		
1c. Will the study be explained to staff and students and their informed consent obtained?		
1d. Will participants have the right to refuse to participate and to withdraw from the study?		
1e. Will the findings from the study be used solely for internal purposes? <i>e.g. there is no intention to publish or disseminate the findings in journal articles or external presentations</i>		
If you have answered YES to all 1a-e , your study may be eligible for consideration under the University's Code of Practice for Pedagogic Research. You should not complete this application form but seek further guidance at https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/114123.htm or by contacting researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk .		
If you have answered No to any of 1a-e , please complete the checklists below		

2. Requirements for NHS Research Ethics Committee & Health Research Authority Approval	YES	NO
2a. Is the study defined as research by the HRA AND is there a regulatory or NHS policy requirement for the study to be approved by a NHS REC? (https://www.hra.nhs.uk/approvals-amendments/what-approvals-do-i-need/ * Please note when completing the decision tool, (http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/) LJMU researchers can store human tissue according to the LJMU HTA licence (https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93204.htm)		✓
2b. Is the study defined as research by the HRA AND will the study involve NHS organisations in England where the NHS organisation has a duty of care to participants, either as patients/service users or NHS staff/volunteers (references to participants include people whose data or tissue is involved in a research project)? (https://www.hra.nhs.uk/approvals-amendments/what-approvals-do-i-need/hra-approval/)		✓
2c. Is the study defined as research by the HRA AND will the study/project be led from Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales and involves NHS/HSC sites? (https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/help/hlpnhshscr.aspx)		✓

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

If you answered NO to 2a then your study can be ethically approved by UREC. Please complete the checklist below to determine whether your application is eligible for proportionate review (applications can be submitted at any time) or full review at UREC meetings (please refer to the deadlines for submission - https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93126.htm)
If you answered YES to 2a , please DO NOT complete this ethics application form . You must complete an IRAS form (https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/) and seek NHS REC approval. https://www.hra.nhs.uk/approvals-amendments/what-approvals-do-i-need/research-ethics-committee-review/
If you answered YES to 2b , you must complete an IRAS form (https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/) and seek HRA approval (in addition to either NHS REC or UREC approval – as determined by your answer to 2a). https://www.hra.nhs.uk/approvals-amendments/what-approvals-do-i-need/
If you answered YES to 2c , you should apply for NHS/HSC R&D Permissions (in addition to either NHS REC or UREC approval (as determined by your answer to 2a) through the appropriate NHS/HSC permission process for that lead nation (https://www.myresearchproject.org.uk/help/hlpnhshscr.aspx)
If you answered NO to 2b or 2c , please seek ethical approval as determined by your answer to 2a .

3. Full versus Proportionate Review - will the proposed study:		YES	NO
3a.	Expose participants or researchers to activities that pose a significant risk of causing physical harm or more than mild discomfort, psychological stress or anxiety or levels of risks beyond those, which the participant is likely to experience whilst participating in their everyday activities? These risks may be related to psychological or physical health, social standing or connectedness, economic well-being, legal harm or devaluation of a person's self-worth (e.g. untrained volunteers exposed to high levels of physical exertion; participants purposefully exposed to stressful situations; exposure to pain; risk of injury or damage; research where participants are persuaded to reveal information which they would not otherwise disclose in the course of everyday life; lone working at night; interviewing in the researcher's or participant's homes, observation in potentially volatile or sensitive situations etc.)		✓
3b.	Involve the discussion or disclosure of topics which participants might find sensitive or distressing? (e.g. sexual activity; criminal/illegal activity; drug use; mental health; previous traumatic experiences; illness; bereavement; disclosure and analysis of findings based on sensitive personal information as defined by Data Protection Act e.g. racial or ethnic origin; political opinions; religious beliefs; trade union membership; physical or mental health; sexual life)		✓
3c.	Involve the administration of drugs, medicines or nutritional supplements as part of the research design?		✓
3d.	Involve the collection of venous blood samples?		✓
3e.	Involve the collection and/or use of human tissue from healthy volunteers? Please note, samples collected for a research purpose and subsequently processed to leave it acellular with any residual cellular material immediately discarded is NOT considered human tissue and is therefore not regulated by the HT act or the LJMU Human Tissue License		✓
3f.	Include adults who may be classed as vulnerable? e.g. drug/substance users; young offenders; prisoners/probationers; those in a dependent relationship with the researcher; those who have an impairment of, or a disturbance in, the mind or the brain. e.g. dementia, mental illness, learning disability, brain damage, intoxication, any other condition causing confusion, drowsiness or loss of		✓

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

	<i>consciousness (e.g. concussion, stroke, heart attack, epileptic fit, serious accident, delirium).</i>		
3g.	Include children (below 16) NOT in an educational setting/accredited organisation OR where active, opt-in parental consent and child assent will not be sought?		✓
3h.	Involve focus groups with children (below 16) with more than 8 participants in each focus group and/or the age range within the focus group is more than 3 years and/or the focus group will last more than 90 minutes in duration?		✓
3i.	Include children (under 11) who will not be supported when undertaking the protocol?		✓
3j.	Involve recruiting participants who have not been provided with a participant information sheet and asked to sign a consent form? <i>Please note that for questionnaire-based studies a consent form is generally not request as consent is implied by the completion of the questionnaire. Applicants conducting questionnaire-only studies should answer NO</i>		✓
3k.	Involve conducting observations (including ethnography) in a non-public place?		✓
3l.	Involve participatory/action research?		✓
3m.	Involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?		✓
3n.	Involve cash payments to participants for anything other than the reimbursement of reasonable expenses or reasonable incentives that are not pro-rata or are unequal between participants (including participants who withdraw)?		✓
3o.	Be conducted outside of normal working hours or at a time and place inconvenient to participants?		✓
3p.	Be conducted outside the EU or in one of the 3 non-EU EEA member countries?	✓	
3q.	Involve accessing and analysing existing datasets that will not be anonymous to the researcher?	✓	
3r.	Involve the sharing of directly or indirectly identifiable data with other organisations outside of LJMU or with people outside of the research team?		✓
3s.	Involve the dissemination of directly or indirectly identifiable data/information without a participant consent (e.g. the use of social media or the internet as a data source – unless the website or social media account is maintained by a public or commercial organisation)?		✓
<p>If you have answered No to all 3a-s your study is eligible for proportionate review. Complete this application form and submit as ONE pdf document (the application form and all supporting documents) at any time to EthicsPR@ljmu.ac.uk. Your application will be reviewed by a UREC sub-committee, all being well, within 10 working days. Please note, the UREC sub-committee finds that your application has been wrongly submitted for proportionate review, you will be notified and your application will be consideration at the next available UREC meeting.</p> <p>If you have answered Yes to any of 3a-s your study must be submitted for full review. Complete this application form and submit as ONE pdf document (the application form and all supporting documents) to researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk by the deadline advertise (https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93126.htm). Your application will be considered at a UREC meeting. Guidance on completing the LJMU REC application form can be found at http://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93044.htm https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93085.htm</p>			

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

➤ **Research Mode:**

Undergraduate – specify course

Postgraduate (Type **YES** in the boxes that apply)

MRes

MPhil

PhD

Prof Doc e.g. EdD or DBA

Other taught Masters programme – specify course

Postdoctoral

Staff project

Other – please specify

➤ **Has this application previously been submitted to the University REC for review? – Yes/ No**

➤ **If yes please state the original REC Ref Number**

➤ **Please confirm whether the Principle Investigator (PI) has successfully completed the LJMU Research Ethics Training and a copy of the certificate of completion emailed to the PI has been appended to this ethics application (<https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/131507.htm>)**

Please type **YES** or **NO** in the box below

YES

(Please note all students **MUST** have completed the LJMU Research Ethics Training **BEFORE** they start to complete the ethics application form. Where student PIs have not completed the training, ethics applications will be rejected).

➤ **Student research - please confirm that an email/letter from the supervisor has been appended to this ethics application confirming that:**

- the supervisor has read and reviewed this ethics application form and all supporting documents
- the information included in the application and all supporting documents will allow UREC to decide whether all challenges to the principles of research ethics have been identified and addressed

Please type **YES** or **NO** in the box below

YES



All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

SECTION A – THE APPLICANT

A1. Title of the Research

An Analysis of the Notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop in a Changing Society since the 1980s

A2. Principal Investigator (PI) (Note that the in the case of postgraduate or undergraduate research the student is designated the PI. For research undertaken by staff inclusive of postdoctoral researchers and research assistants the staff member conducting the research is designated the PI.)

Title Forename Surname

Post

School / Faculty

Email Telephone

Relevant experience / Qualifications

2014-2015
MA in Music Industry Studies, University of Liverpool, UK.
MA Dissertation Project: 'China Wind' Music in 21st Century: Developing the Chineseness of Mandopop
2009-2013
BA in Musicology (Upper Second-Class Honours), Xinghai Conservatory of Music, China
BA Dissertation Project: The Win-win Conversation of Art and Fashion: CULTURE CHANEL in Guangzhou Opera House, BA Dissertation Project.

A3. Co-applicants (including student supervisors)

Co-applicant 1 / Academic Supervisor 1 (where the application is being submitted by a student, either undergraduate or postgraduate, details of their main dissertation supervisor must be included. The form must be submitted with a letter or email from their named supervisor indicating that they have read the application and are willing to supervisor the student undertaking the proposed study – **STUDENT APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE REVIEWED UNTIL NOTIFICATION OF REVIEW BY THE NAMED SUPERVISOR IS RECEIVED**)

Title Forename Surname

Post

School / Faculty

Email Telephone

Relevant experience / Qualifications

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

PhD, FHEA, PGCE, BA, BSc
Published widely, incl. 2 monographs and 2 edited books
Chair FRDC
Executive Committee member of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music

Co-applicant 2 / Academic Supervisor 2

Title Forename Surname

Post

School / Faculty

Email Telephone

Relevant experience / Qualifications

BA (Hons), PhD, University of Sheffield, UK
Postgraduate Research Co-ordinator, Liverpool Screen School
REF Co-ordinator, UoA34 Communication, Cultural and Media Studies
Member of the University Research Ethics Committee
Currently supervising 6 PhD students
Has published widely on identity discourse, the cultural dimension of international relations, and political communication

Where there are more than two co-applicants, please append an additional page to your application containing the relevant details

Co-applicant 3 / Academic Supervisor 3

Title Forename Surname

Post

School / Faculty

Email Telephone

Relevant experience / Qualifications

Ph.D. History of Art, University of Liverpool, 1997.
BA (Hons), University of Liverpool, 1993.
Current Member of the University Research Ethics Committee.
Ph.D. Supervisor, LSAD.
Published on topics in art, design, museology, cultural studies.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

SECTION B – PROJECT DETAILS

B1. Proposed date for commencement of participant recruitment (*Please enter the date when you propose to start recruiting participants – note that no recruitment can take place without full, unconditional ethical approval*)

Start date:

B2. Scientific justification – please provide an overview in plain English - please avoid abbreviations and explain technical terms. State the background and why this is an important area for research (*Note this must be completed in language comprehensible to a layperson. Do not simply refer to the protocol. Maximum length – 1 side of A4*)

This research is an analysis of the notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandarin popular music (Mandopop), which represents Chinese identity and is expressed in Mandopop. Although 'Chineseness' is an abstract concept, it is constructed and theorized in Mandopop as a concrete expression and reflection of identity. Attempts to identify a traditional Chinese style in Mandopop and the genres of 'China Wind' and 'Northwest Wind' already exist, but the definition of Chinese-style Mandopop has not been identified clearly. In addition, the notion of 'Chineseness' has been raised in several research fields such as religion, art and culture. As a symbol of national identity and cultural phenomenon, this notion can be connected to music to express the inner meaning of traditional Chinese culture, especially in pop music.

To connect and explore the notion of 'Chineseness' in the pop music field, it is significant to analyse 'Chineseness' in Mandopop and identify its genres' expressions, identities and national ideologies. The challenge of this research concerns the differences related to understanding the linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds.

Pop music as a genre with wide appeal is strongly and directly related to marketing and promotion. The acceptability and likeability of 'Chineseness' is also a significant symbol of the Mandopop market. Through interviewing the different ethnic groups, the perceptions of audiences will be researched to discover how 'Chineseness' has spread in the music market to promote 'Chineseness' in Mandopop widely to pop music audiences in China and beyond.

Since the research is about the analysis of the notion of 'Chineseness' which represents Chinese social and national identity, the perception of people is significant in this research. In order to explore the acceptability and likeability of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop by examining audience perceptions, the fieldwork will involve (1) face-to-face interviews with music industry workers and music researchers, and (2) online anonymous questionnaires to the general public who are ethnic Chinese but live in different countries within different socio-cultural contexts.

All participants of face-to-face interviews should be music-related workers or researchers who possess a professional music background. These participants will have their own perceptions of the trajectory of Mandopop as well as an understanding of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, which helps this research to define 'Chineseness' in Mandopop and identify how this notion is constructed and theorized in Mandopop.

Regards the online questionnaires, this will help to understand the audiences' perceptions. 'Chineseness' as a changing notion is connected to individuals' understanding across different groups in different communities and their different socio-cultural contexts. Thus, the acceptability, likeability and understandability of 'Chineseness' Mandopop might be impacted by the differences in audiences' age, gender, regions and (non-)music-related background.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

Before conducting the fieldwork in China, I checked the official website of the Chinese Government. It required the ethical approvals only if do biomedical research involving human beings (See Appendix 10).

B3. Give a summary of the purpose, design and methodology of the planned research. What do you propose to do and how do you propose to do it? Provide information as appropriate in plain English (comprehensible to a layperson) to help the REC understand and approve your application.

- a) *Participants – who are they? What will happen to them? How many times? In what order? Where? When? How? How long will take them? Etc.*
- b) *Interventions/procedures - Give details (How? When? Where? How often? For how long? Etc.) of all interventions/procedures that will be received by the participants as part of the research protocol (intervention/procedures might include seeking consent, screening questionnaires, interviews, questionnaires for data collection, exercise, measurement variables etc.)*

Purpose:

The trajectory of music in China has progressed over many centuries. With the socio-cultural context of different eras, the formation of music style in China has been influenced to different degrees. This research concerns the differences related to understanding the linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds of Mandopop. The main purpose of this research is exploring how 'Chineseness' is constructed and theorized in Mandopop.

Design:

This research is qualitative in order to explore the problem of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop. As representing Chinese identity, to understand the notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop is to learn about the views of individuals, including music industry workers, music researchers and audiences, and to theorise about 'Chineseness' in Mandopop based on participants' perspectives. This research will involve fieldwork in China and online questionnaire research over a period of time, and will obtain detailed information of perspectives by participants in their different socio-cultural contexts. In terms of the fieldwork that will be conducted in China, there is no such thing as REC in China. I searched for the relevant policy or organization of REC in China via the official website of the Chinese Government, but there is no specific requirement. It only required if do biomedical research involving human beings.

Specifically, the qualitative research methods involve (1) one-to-one qualitative interviews; and (2) open-ended qualitative online questionnaires.

Sampling:

The sampling will involve theory or concept sampling in order to understand 'Chineseness' by selecting professional individuals in different research sites during fieldwork in China. The interviews will be unstructured, and the questions might be different based on participants' jobs and what they answered. The number of participants for interviews will be 20, and the participants will be self-selecting and will be music industry workers and music researchers who are interested in or specialists in 'Chinese' Mandopop. The participants can also recommend other interviewees who satisfied the recruitment requirement and would like to participate or be interested, which is snowball sampling. It will take up to 60 minutes for each interview, and the venue will be selected in the participants' work places in China. The perspectives of music industry workers and music researchers will be helpful for this research to explore the meaning of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop. As for the sampling for the open-ended qualitative online questionnaire, the participants will be selected through homogeneous sampling and snowball sampling. The number of purposeful participants of questionnaire will be 100, and all participants will be recruited via web advertisement or social media to select those who possess a similar trait in that they are all ethnic Chinese belonging to a common subgroup in the community of different regions. Additionally, it may also be

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

considered to invite the participants to recommend other individuals to be sampled. For the reliability and validity of the collected data, the sampling will strive for maximum balance of the male-female ratio and the range of age.

Interviewing:

The one-to-one qualitative interviews will be face-to-face in China. However, due to the limitation of time and space, some interviews might be accomplished via telephone, email, skype or other social media. All interviews will be recorded by audio once the participants have given their formal permission.

Questionnaires:

The open-ended qualitative questionnaire will be distributed online and collect the data of audiences' perspectives such as whether they are aware of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, how they like 'Chineseness' Mandopop and what they think about 'Chineseness' in Mandopop.

B4. State the principal research question

In order to explore the notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, there are three main research questions raised in this research: (1) whether the notion of 'Chineseness' exists in Mandopop music; (2) what is the meaning of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop; (3) what is the correlation between 'Chineseness', society and the music market.

Whether the notion of 'Chineseness' exists in Mandopop music?

This research will focus on the period from the 1980s which is a significant turning point of mainland China. Before the 'Reform and Opening-up' policy in 1978, the development of Mandopop in mainland China was limited by martial and political factors. Mandopop was impacted by 'Gang-Tai Music' (Hong Kong and Taiwan's pop music) for a long time, but after that, Mandopop had a newly developed way to promote itself in mainland China with the appearance of the 'Northwest Wind' genre. The 'Chineseness' existing in Mandopop in different eras has deeply impacted on the music market of mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. This research aims to examine how 'Chineseness' is constructed and theorized in Mandopop since the 1980s and what kind of different roles it played in the ongoing history of Mandopop. In this case, this research will achieve these objectives below:

1. To define what genre Mandopop is and where it spread;
2. To discuss the historical background of Mandopop, and different genres of Mandopop in developing history such as Contemporary Music, Revolutionary Music, Rock Music, New Ballad, Folk-pop, etc.;
3. To research what the 'Chineseness' in Mandopop is and how it constructed and theorized in different historical context;
4. To explore how the 'Chineseness' connected with Mandopop, and mapping the field;
5. To analyse the musical formation and socio-cultural formation associated with the nation state.

What is the meaning of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop?

This research will discuss presentative genres, such as the 'Northwest Wind', the 'China Wind' and the 'Ancient Wind' which express 'Chineseness' musically. While focusing on the textual sound and structure of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, the linguistic, soundscape and visual will be discussed specifically. In addition, these three genres emerged in different times when Mandopop developed; all the presentations, the characteristics, the functions, the meanings and the agreed values from the communities of the 'Chineseness' will be transformed in changing contexts. In different genres, the objectives below of the 'Chineseness' will be analysed separately.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

1. To analyse of the text of 'Chineseness' Mandopop, including the linguistic structure, soundscape, instrumentation and music video in different genres;
2. To discuss the presentations, the characteristics, the functions, the meanings and of the 'Chineseness' in this genre in the current musical formation of Mandopop.
3. To analyse why it can be a genre in the 'Chineseness' of Mandopop based on the musical and socio-cultural formation;
4. To analyse the presentative music works and notations belonging these genres.

What is the correlation between 'Chineseness', society and the music market?

The notion of 'Chineseness' is progressive to represent the Chinese identity, so that the perception of the individuals will be impacted by different socio-cultural contexts including the regional and generational aspects. To survey how to transmit 'Chineseness' in an effective way, this research will use marketing knowledge to explore the audiences' feelings. Thus, this research will contain ethnography on audiences, researches and music industry workers from different regions, which are China Mainland, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and overseas Chinese communities. The objectives are as follows:

1. From regional and generational aspects, to survey different perceptions of these genres from the audiences in 1970s-2000s generation who experienced the genres of the 'Chineseness' in Mandopop;
2. To interview ethnic groups from mainland China-Han, mainland China among ethnic minorities, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. If it is necessary, it will be considered to gather the views of overseas Chinese communities;
3. To interview the music-related researchers who have studied Mandopop, the 'Chineseness' or any genre of the 'Chineseness';
4. To interview the music industry workers who worked for record labels, pop music charts, music streaming platforms and other music businesses.

B5a. Give details of the proposed intervention(s) or procedure(s) and the groups of people involved (including psychological or physical interventions, interviews, observations or questionnaires)

intervention(s) or procedure(s) (e.g., interviews, questionnaires, Vo2max test, blood sampling, force platform, health-screening questionnaire etc.)	Participants (e.g. LJMU students, athletes, general public, children etc.)	Number of participants required	Avg. time to complete	Where will the intervention / procedure take place (LJMU classroom, LJMU laboratory, participant's homes, public places etc.)
1. One-to-one qualitative interview	Music-related workers and/or researchers	20	60 minutes	participant's work place in China
2. Open-ended online qualitative questionnaire	general public	100	30 minutes	online
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

To include additional interventions place your mouse cursor in the last cell of the final column and press the tab button on your keyboard. A new row will be created for the above table.

B5b. Studies involving questionnaires to collect data. Please confirm that you have:

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

- I. Appended the questionnaire as it would be presented to the participants. This might include an introduction, instructions for completing the questionnaire, instructions for returning/submitted the questionnaire and any signposting to support services where applicable.
- II. Included at the start of the questionnaire, a statement of implied consent and a tick box for participants to confirm implied consent, which you can copy from the consent form template.
- III. Included at the start of the questionnaire, a statement that makes it clear that participants have the option of not answering questions they do not want to answer.
- IV. Requested the age of the participant at the start of the questionnaire, stated the age requirement and included instructions that those younger than the age requirement should not complete the questionnaire.

Please type **YES** or **NA** in the box below

YES

Have the questionnaires previously been validated?

Please type **YES**, **NO** or **NA** in the box below

NA

If YES, please include the references and state the population in which the questionnaire was validated

B5c. Where interviews or focus groups (structured or semi-structured) are proposed you must append an outline of the questions you are going to ask your participants. Please confirm that you have attached an outline of your interview / focus group questions.

Please type **YES** or **NA** in the box below

NA

B6. How will the findings of the research be disseminated? (e.g. thesis, dissertation, peer-reviewed articles, conference presentations, reports)

The details of the interviews and the results of the questionnaires will be disseminated in my thesis and research articles for publication.

SECTION C – THE PARTICIPANTS

Please give separate details for different study groups where appropriate. *Participation in a research project must be entirely voluntary, and no one must be coerced to participate in a research project against his/her will. Researchers should avoid exerting undue influence when approaching potential participants. No sanctions should follow if the participant decides to withdraw from the research at any time.*

Gatekeepers - *A gatekeeper is any person or institution that acts as an intermediary between a researcher and potential participants (e.g., school authorities, sports club, treatment service providers, a coach, instructor etc.). The use of a gatekeeper may be necessary:*

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

- To help identify participants where a researcher does not have legitimate access to personal data of potential participants (names and contact details or information related to identifying participants in relation to the inclusion/exclusion criteria of the study)
- Where it may also be more appropriate or good etiquette to ask a gatekeeper to make the first approach to potential participants – and in specific circumstances to take an active role in recruiting the participants
To minimise and manage potential risks (e.g. to gain permissions to access facilities, use a gatekeeper’s resources such as their facilities and their staff and to undertake the research within certain hours etc.)

C1. How will the participants been selected, approached and recruited? (Where different groups of participants have been identified in section B5a above provide details on how each group will be selected, approached and recruited.)

C1a. Please indicate how individuals will be IDENTIFIED as potential participants.

- If the researcher will need to access an individual’s personal data, please explain why they would have legitimate access to the personal data (according to the data protection act).
- If using a third party, such as a gatekeeper, to identify participants, records or samples please explain why and provide details of their relationship with the potential participants. (e.g., school authority, coach, treatment provider etc.)

1. The participants of the one-to-one interview will be identified by who works in the music labels and conservatories of music. In China, the most authoritative organization in the popular music filed is China’s Popular Music Society of Chinese Musicians Association, by chatting with the chairman of this society via his social media account (I was just asking him some questions in relation to the trajectory of Mandopop for the purpose of writing up my literature review), he is interested in research, and also agreed to participate and will recommend other members in China’s Popular Music Society, which will adopt the snowball sampling. Besides, there are nine official conservatories of music in China and the professors or lecturers whose specialist is Popular Music Studies and Ethnomusicology will be identified as potential participants as well. Their contact details were usually shown on the official website of conservatories.
2. The open-ended qualitative online questionnaire will be distributed via online platforms such as website advertisements and/or social media. It may be considered to invite the participants to recommend other individuals to participate, and also send the link of the online questionnaire to the gatekeepers who work in those nine official conservatories of music in China to invite students and staff to participate. The contact details of gatekeepers will also be shown on the official website of conservatories.

C1b. How, where and by whom will the potential participants be initially APPROACHED/CONTACTED? (e.g. face-to-face, by email/letter, telephone, referrals (e.g. by a gatekeeper or by snowballing etc.), social media, poster, flyers, presentation to a group of individuals etc.)

- Consider how to approach participants without revealing private information to others (e.g. an email sent to a group of individuals who have identified themselves as dyslexic to the gatekeeper but not to each other)
- Time & place – Is it easy for potential participants to say yes or no?

1. The participants of the one-to-one qualitative interview will be self-selected by contacting music industry workers and music researchers in China who are interested or specialist in ‘Chineseness’ in Mandopop. The one-to-one qualitative interview participants will be contacted by email, telephone, social media or face-to-face to confirm whether they agree to participate or not and their convenient time and place of meeting. Since the participants work in music labels and professional institute, their contact information will be shown on the official website.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

And also, I will contact them by their social media account, it will be easier to contact them directly if they replied.

2. The open-ended qualitative questionnaire will be recruited by online platforms (e.g. via website advertisement and social media etc.) and by referrals (e.g. a gatekeeper and/or by snowballing etc.). The participants can complete the online survey by questionnaire at any time.

C1c. Please confirm you have appended a copy of the recruitment emails/letters/posters/adverts etc. Please type YES or NA in the box below

YES

If you wish to send a participant recruitment email/letter then in the text please state:

- i. How the person was identified as a potential participant*
- ii. How you have accessed their contact details / who has provided permission for you to access their contact details / who is emailing the potential participants on behalf of the researcher.*
- iii. Something like "if you are interested in participating in the study please take time to read the participant information sheet (attached) and contact me with any questions. I can be contacted....".*
- iv. Inform the participant what they should do if they would like to participate*

C1d. Participant RECRUITMENT (the process of obtaining informed consent from participants). **Please explain (e.g. who, when, where, how) the process of fully informing participants, gatekeepers and parents/guardians about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved.** (*Exclusively relying on simply handing out a participant information sheet should be avoided. Researchers should be able to verbally explain the study clearly to potential participants, provide a participant information sheet for participants to keep and be available to answer questions*)

- **One-to-one qualitative interview**
 1. The participants of interviews will be self-selected and contacted by email, telephone or social media. Immediate discussion will explain the purpose of the research, what participation in the research entails, and intended possible uses of the research.
 2. Sending an electronic copy of a participant information sheet and making an appointment with the interviewee to confirm the date, time and place.
 3. Handing out a paper copy of the participant information sheet and consent form to participants.
 4. Verbally explaining the study clearly to participants.
 5. The participant retains a copy of the participant information sheet with a copy of the signed consent form.
- **Open-ended qualitative questionnaire**
 1. The participants will be recruited by social media, by gatekeepers, and by snowballing.
 2. The participant consent form will be shown before the questionnaires, and the participants can decide whether they agree to participate or not by themselves.
 3. The participants also will be told that their participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect their legal rights.

C1e. How will the participant access the information sheet after they have consented? (*e.g., will they be provided with a paper / electronic copy to keep? Online questionnaires - consider asking the participant to print/make an electronic copy of the participant information sheet*)

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

1. A paper copy of the participant information sheet will be provided with a signed consent form copy to the participants of one-to-one qualitative interviews to keep.
2. The consent form will be shown before the open-ended qualitative questionnaire, but it is generally implied by the completion of the questionnaire.

C1f. How long will the potential participants have to decide whether they would like to participate?

(Potential participants need time to consider fully the implications of taking part in research. They should be able to ask questions and reflect. Participants should not be rushed into decisions - There are no fixed guidelines for the time to be allowed to participants. It has been common practice to suggest a minimum of 24 hours, but this is not an absolute rule. Each study should be considered on its own merits. If you feel that a shorter period is reasonable in the circumstances and taking into account the nature of the study, please justify this in your answer)

24 hours

C2. How was the number of participants decided? (e.g. was a sample size calculation performed)

1. The number of participants in the face-to-face interviews will depend on the results of contact, but will involve at least 20 participants.
2. The number of participants for the online questionnaire will be 100 participants at least due to the effectiveness of the samples in the statistical analysis.

C3a. Will any of the participants come from any of the following groups?

- *Whether children are considered vulnerable is dependent on the child's circumstance, their susceptibility to coercion, the type of research being undertaken and how and where the research is being undertaken*
- *Please note that the Mental Capacity Act 2005 requires that all research involving participation of any adult who lacks the capacity to consent through learning difficulties, brain injury or mental health problems be reviewed by a NHS REC. For further information please see <http://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/101579.htm>*
- *Vulnerable adults & participants with a dependent relationship with the researcher: This question is designed to ascertain whether your participant groups are likely to need special consideration regarding issues of informed consent and the potential for perceived pressure to participate.*

Type YES in all boxes that apply

- Children under 16
- Children under 18 considered vulnerable
- Adults with learning disabilities
- Adults with mental illness (if yes please specify type of illness below)
- Drug / Substance users
- Young offenders
- Those with a dependant relationship with the investigator (e.g. a coach etc.)
- Other vulnerable groups please specify below

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

Please provide details that might help the REC understand the ethical issues related to the characteristics of the participants and how they might be addressed. (e.g. age of participants; why participants might be considered vulnerable; ethical implications with regards to mental illness, drug users, young offenders; the dependent relationship between participant and researcher etc.)

Please justify their inclusion:

C3b. If you are proposing to undertake a research study involving interaction with children or vulnerable adults do you have current, valid clearance from the UK Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)?

Yes No Not Applicable

C4. What are the inclusion/exclusion criteria?

- The answers to the questions below will help the REC understand how you will ensure the quality of the study, how you will minimise any potential risks/hazards and whether there is the potential for any particular participant groups to be exploited or unfairly excluded.
- Participants need to be fully informed about the inclusion/exclusion criteria – please include the relevant information in any recruitment materials and information sheets

C4a. On what basis will individuals be included or excluded (eligible/ineligible) from your study in order to address the research question/objective? (Consider the characteristics of the target/study population)

1. Interview participants should be music-related workers or researchers. The inclusion criteria are based on the job.
 2. The inclusion criteria of questionnaire participants are choosing the audiences by generation into the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s (age from 20 to 59 years) who lived in China Mainland, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Overseas Chinese communities.

C4b. On what basis will individuals be included or excluded (eligible/ineligible) from your study in order to minimise/manage risk? (e.g. those with a food allergy, injury, mental or physical health issues etc.)

People who have no interest in, or knowledge of Mandopop, will be excluded.

C4c. How will you apply/implement each of the inclusion and exclusion criteria? (e.g. will potential participants self-include/exclude themselves based on the information provided on the participant information sheet – or will you assess the potential participants in some way – such as with a health screening questionnaire or physiological measurements – please explain)

Participation will be self-selecting. Initially, this will be because of knowledge and interest in the subject, and then this will be reinforced by the participant information sheet.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

C4d. If applying the inclusion / exclusion criteria requires the collection of personal information about the participant then please detail the screening process that will ensure privacy and confidentiality. please consider the following:

- request only the minimal amount of information necessary for screening
- Screening should be done in private
- Immediate storage of data to ensure confidentiality

1. The audio recordings made during the interview will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without the participants' permission. Interviews will be audio recorded on a password protected audio recording device and as soon as possible the recording will be transferred to secure storage and deleted from the recording device. Interviews will be audio recorded on an encrypted audio recording device and as soon as possible the recording will be transferred to secure storage and deleted from the recording device.

2. The open-ended qualitative questionnaire is anonymous, and does not require collecting personal information of participants.

C4e. Please confirm that where participants are screened and excluded from participating in the study, the researcher will NOT store screening information and give the screening questionnaire back to the individual

Please type YES or NA in the box below

YES

C5. Payment, reimbursements of expenses or any other benefit or incentives for taking part in the study. The REC will wish to be reassured that research participants are not being paid for taking risks or that payments are set at a level which would unduly influence participants and "cloud there judgement" about whether or not to participate.

- Research participants should not be substantially out of pocket because of taking part in a research study.
- Payment in cash or kind to participants must only be for costs such as travel expenses, child-care expenses, meals and demonstrable loss of earnings etc.
- Consideration should be given to any expense involved in returning postal questionnaires.
- If it is not possible to reimburse such expenses this should be explained before the research participant is recruited. A clear statement should be included in the participant information sheet setting out the position on reimbursement.
- Payment/compensation for time and effort is a considered a wage payment model – and will only be considered by the REC if the tax implications have been considered by the researchers and communicated to the participants.

C5a. Will any payment or reward, such as an incentive or out of pocket expenses, be made to participants?

Please type YES or NO in the box below

NO

C5b. If YES, How much is the payment or what is the reward?

N/A

C5c. Please justify the payment/reward (consider whether this is a fair reimbursement or compensation or likely to coerce or apply undue pressure to participate. Is the payment/reward necessary to achieve a representative sample?)

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

N/A

C5d. How will the payment/reward be made? (*Vouchers are preferable as cash could have tax implications. If using a prize draw, how and when will the winners be notified of results and how and when winners will be notified and results be announced.*)

N/A

C5e. Will participants be able withdraw their participation without losing a payment/reward or entered into a prize draw? Please type YES or NO in the box below.

N/A

If NO, please explain why not (*consider the principle that participants should be free to withdraw their participation without being penalised*)

SECTION D – CONSENT

For most types of research, it is both a legal and ethical requirement to obtain informed consent from participants able to consent for themselves. The researcher is responsible for obtaining an individual's consent to participate. The participant should be fully informed about their participation (ideally verbally and in writing) and should be free to refuse to participate or withdraw their participation.

D1. Will informed consent be obtained from: (Where applicable, please type YES in the box below)

The research participants? YES

The research participant's carers or guardians?

Gatekeeper? YES

(consent for their involvement in identifying/approaching/recruiting participants and/or permissions with regards to access and use of facilities/resources for recruitment and data collection purposes)

Not applicable

D2. Will a signed record of consent be obtained? (*Please note that where the study involves the administration of a questionnaire or survey a signed record of consent is not required for completion of the questionnaire as long as it is made clear in the information sheet that completion of the questionnaire is voluntary. Under these circumstances, return of the completed questionnaire is taken as implied consent. Participation in any other interventions within the same study e.g. interviews, focus groups must be supported by obtaining appropriate written consent.*)

D2a. Please type YES, NO, implied consent or verbal consent (*if written consent is not possible and implied consent is not appropriate*) in the box below.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

Where the study involves the use of more than one intervention for example interviews and a questionnaire please the space below to detail the method of consent to be used for each intervention e.g. Questionnaire – implied consent, Interview – written consent, Telephone interview – verbal consent

YES
Questionnaire – implied consent; Interview – written consent.

If implied consent is to be assumed by return of questionnaires, the following statement (or similar) must be included on the questionnaire:

“I have read the information sheet provided and I am happy to participate. I understand that by completing and returning this questionnaire I am consenting to be part of this research study and for my data to be used as described in the information sheet provided” – please include a tick box so that the participant can confirm they have read the statement.

D2b. If you propose NOT to obtain consent in writing (other than for questionnaires), please explain why not. (Where a participant is unable to sign or mark a document to indicate their consent, arrangements should be made for their consent to be witnessed and this should be documented)

PLEASE APPEND COPIES OF ANY PROPOSED CONSENT FORMS TO THIS APPLICATION

D3. All participants must be provided with written information detailing the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits of participating. An approved template for the participant information sheet can be found at <https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93044.htm> . Please check the box below to confirm that a participant information sheet has been appended to this application.

YES

APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED WITHOUT A PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.

D4. Will participants be able to withhold consent (refuse to take part)?

D4a. Will participants be able to freely withhold consent (refuse to take part)?

Please type YES or NO in the box below

YES

If **NO** please explain why not

D4b. Will participants be able to freely withdraw from the study whilst it is ongoing?

Please type YES or NO in the box below

YES

If **NO** please explain why not

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

D4c. Will participants be able to freely withdraw their identifiable data from the study after data collection has ended? (if there are practical issues related to withdrawing a participants data once it has been amalgamated please explain below)

Please type YES, NO or NA in the box below

N/A

If NO please explain why not

THE ABILITY OF PARTICIPANTS TO REFUSE TO TAKE PART OR TO WITHDRAW FROM A STUDY MUST BE MADE CLEAR IN THE WRITTEN INFORMATION PROVIDED TO PARTICIPANTS

SECTION E - RISKS AND BENEFITS

***Risks** – the potential physical or psychological harm, adverse effects, discomfort, distress, intrusion, inconvenience or changes to lifestyle*

***Benefits** – as defined and perceived by the participant rather than the researcher. Benefits are sometimes “hoped-for”*

E1. Outline all potential risks to participants which are anticipated to be beyond those experienced in their everyday/normal life, how the risks will be minimised and managed

- *Could be physical, psychological, social, economic, legal harm or damage to a person’s self-worth. e.g. side effects, incorrect dosage, injury, dangerous intervention/procedure, untrained volunteers exposed to high levels of physical exertion, participants purposefully exposed to stressful situations, research where participants are persuaded to reveal information which they would not otherwise disclose in the course of everyday life, individual or group interviews/questionnaires discuss any topics or issues that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting, breach of confidentiality, possible misunderstanding etc.*
- *Whether the risk will involve an increased likelihood or significantly higher risk of such negative events occurring than would be encountered in the participant’s everyday life, will depend on the context and a judgement as to the nature of the specific participant(s) and what constitutes their everyday lives.*

	Anticipated risks	How minimised (e.g. consider contraindications, checks, training, information to participants, procedures, equipment etc.)	How managed both during and after participation (what if something does happen during and after the study – what will/might you do) (e.g. stop, treatment, equipment availability, training, re-assess, refer, reschedule, carry-on, signpost to support services to help after-participation care of the participants etc.)
1.	People's perceptions in individual interviews or questionnaires may discuss any issues that might be sensitive or challenge	If there were the sensitive contents in interview, the researcher will discuss it with the participants after the interview and let participants to decide whether keep their perspective or delete it from	If the data of individual interview or questionnaire contains social harm or the content which challenge the policy of Chinese government, the researcher will delete these data from the storage device after participants agreed. And if the participants wish to rearrange another interview or recomplete the

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

	the policy of the Chinese government	the storage device. If participants wanted to keep it, the researcher can decide whether use this data in report. And any perceptions in open-ended questionnaire are anonymous, the researcher will decide whether or not to quote these perceptions in the report.	questionnaire, the researcher will respect their actions and rearrange by following their requirement.
2.	Research where participants are persuaded to reveal information which they would not otherwise disclose in the course of everyday life	The details of personal data about occupation, location, age and ethnicity do not lead to individuals being identifiable. And all data during the fieldwork will be stored in a password protected device and only accessible to myself and my supervisors. Storage will be on a password protected computer on the LJMU mainframe.	If the individuals were indirectly identified, the researcher will involve the participants in the decision-making process to decide whether the data of their interview be deleted from the storage device as well as the report.

To include additional interventions place your mouse cursor in the last cell of the final column and press the tab button on your keyboard. A new row will be created for the above table.

E2. Reporting findings to participants

E2a. Is there the potential for the research to reveal findings that might be considered abnormal or significant with regards to the participant's health?

Please type YES or NO in the box below

NO

If YES, please confirm that the participant will be informed on the participant information sheet that they will be given the option on the consent form to agree, or not agree, for abnormal results to be reported to them.

Please type YES in the box below

E2b. What advice/information will be provided to participants when passing findings onto participants- and who will provide the advice/information?

Consider the whether the methods are a proper diagnostic tool, the researcher's qualifications to diagnose and disclose, whether the participant should consult with an appropriate authority such as their GP etc.

N/A

E3. Explain any potential or hoped for benefits of the study.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

- *PLEASE BE REALISTIC and do not over-emphasise the potential direct benefits to individual participants. Where there are no direct benefits to individual participants, provide brief details of the potential or hoped for broader benefits of the study for example to society or to future service users.*
- *Participation might be a positive experience but it is probably best to refrain from claiming any therapeutic benefit simply from participation)*

Participants might enjoy talking about their interest in, and involvement with Mandopop.

E4. What are the potential risks for the researchers themselves? (if any)

Consider issues related to working outside of normal hours, off university premises (including a participant’s home), loan working, interacting with participants and members of the public who might pose a threat and potentially dangerous environments.

	Anticipated risks	How minimised	How the risks will be managed should an event occur
1.	Getting lost during travel	Plan directions. Take a mobile phone. Tell others where I will be.	Others will be primed to go and find me.
2.	Meeting unknown and possibly unsavoury characters	Meet in safe public locations	Tell others where you will be and when I will be back.

To include additional interventions place your mouse cursor in the last cell of the final column and press the tab button on your keyboard. A new row will be created for the above table.

E5. For studies that involve transporting participants, will the transport be hired through LJMU Insurance officer?

Please type YES or NO in the box below

N/A

If NO, please confirm that the LJMU insurance officer has authorised the use of transport that is not hired through LJMU

Please type YES in the box below

SECTION F – DATA ACCESS AND STORAGE

- **Privacy** – *an individual’s control over the extent, timing, and circumstances of sharing oneself (physically, behaviourally, or intellectually) with others.*
- **Confidentiality** – *the treatment of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others without permission in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure.*
- **Anonymity** – *where individuals cannot be directly and indirectly identified – this could be related to participation (no way of anyone, including the researcher, knowing that an individual has participated), data/information (no way for anyone, including the researcher, to identify the individual from the data/information collected) and publication (no way for an individual to be identified from data/information that is published).*

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

- **Link-codes** – used to help maintain confidentiality – data is coded so that the data is unidentifiable simply by viewing the coded data but is identifiable when using the record that links the code to the identity of an individual. Data coded in this way is NOT anonymised, is still regarded as personal identifiable data and must be used/stored in accordance with the data protection act.
- **Personal identifiable Data/information** - Data/information that can be identified with a participant through identifiers such as names, link-codes, postal/email addresses, telephone numbers, date of birth, full postcode, medical records, academic records, audio/video recordings of individuals, images, voices etc.. The use of identifiable personal information in research should be reduced so far as possible consistent with achievement of the research aims. The "Caldecott Principles" set out an ethical framework for use of identifiable data:
 - 1) Justify the purpose(s) for obtaining the information.
 - 2) Do not use person-identifiable information unless it is absolutely necessary.
 - 3) Use the minimum necessary person-identifiable information.
 - 4) Access to person-identifiable information should be on a strict need-to-know basis.
 - 5) Everyone with access to person-identifiable information should be aware of his or her responsibilities.
 - 6) Understand and comply with the law.

F1. Personal Data Management.

F1a. Please provide details of any personal, identifiable or sensitive information will be collected and stored (e.g. names, postal/email addresses, telephone numbers, date of birth, full postcode, medical records, academic records, audio/video recordings of individuals, images, voices etc.)

1. In the interview, the following personal information will be collected and stored: names, age, gender, email addresses, work position, audio recordings (for transcribing the interview).
2. The questionnaire will be anonymous, but the age, gender and region will be collected.

F1b. How will personal identifiable data/information be COLLECTED/RECORDED to ensure privacy and confidentiality?

- Will data/information be anonymous? Will you use linked-codes/pseudonyms? Will you require codes/pseudonyms to be linked to the identity of the participant?
- How will you ensure that individuals are not identifiable from the codes/pseudonyms?
- Will recording devices be password protected and only accessible to the researchers? Will the data/information be deleted from a recording device once transferred to storage?
- For questionnaires (used for collecting data and screening participants), please explain how the method of submitting/delivering the completed questionnaire to the researcher will ensure confidentiality.

1. The audio recording and the transcript of the individuals' interviews will be password protected and only accessible to myself and my supervisors, and all records will be deleted from the recording device once transferred to storage. Storage will be on a password protected computer on the LJMU mainframe.
2. The questionnaire will be anonymous. The results of questionnaires will be password protected and only accessible to myself and my supervisors. Storage will be on a password protected computer on the LJMU mainframe.

F1c. How will personal identifiable data/information be securely STORED to ensure privacy and confidentiality? (e.g. a locked filing cabinet in an LJMU office, managed client LJMU computers/laptops that require an LJMU username and password to use, an LJMU portal such as the M:drive).

Please note, personal identifiable data/information must not be stored on home or personal computer/laptop or a portable storage device (such as a USB drive)

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

The personal information will be store in an LJMU portal (M:drive). This is backed up regularly and is highly secure and is only accessed via a personal password.

F1d. How will study findings be DISSEMINATED in order to ensure privacy and confidentiality? (e.g. participants will not be directly attributed to data/information that is disseminated – or will be attributed but only with explicit consent from the participant, use of pseudonyms etc.)

Generally, the participants will not be directly attributed to data/information that is disseminated, however, if the participants explicitly consented or used pseudonyms, they will be attributed.

F1e. Following attempts to ensure privacy and confidentiality, if there is the possibility that individuals could be indirectly identified once the study has been DISSEMINATED please explain what you will do (including involving the participant in the decision making process) to minimise the potential for indirect identification, and how you will manage the potential for indirect identification?

- participants with specific characteristics/certain profile or who belong to a specific group might be indirectly identifiable from the things they have said/done that are disseminated by the researcher).
- Care should be taken that the combination of incidental details e.g. details about occupation, location, age and ethnicity, do not lead to individuals being identifiable
- You might want to consult with the participant about how information will be disseminated and what information should not be disseminated.

The details of personal data about occupation, location, age and ethnicity do not lead to individuals being identifiable, but if the individuals were indirectly identified, the researcher will involve the participants in the decision-making process to decide whether the data of their interview be deleted from the report or not.

F2. Will you share personal, identifiable data with other organisations outside of LJMU or with people outside of your research team? (e.g. supervisor, co-applicants)

- Unless there is a good reason, only anonymised data should be shared. Where data has been effectively pseudo-anonymised (can be identified via a linked code) it should only be shared on the basis that the recipient cannot disclose pseudo-anonymised data to third parties and is not permitted to link the data with other data which might render the information more identifiable.

Please type YES or NO in the box below

NO

If YES, please provide further information

Please confirm that personal identifiable data/information will not be transferred out of the EEA without the explicit consent of participants (include this information on information sheets and consent forms).

- In general, personal identifiable data should not be transferred outside of the European Economic Area (EEA). This is because other countries do not have the same legal framework or protections for patient data. Even where this is the case, it is difficult to manage and monitor the use of data to ensure it is safeguarded appropriately and is not misused.
- Such information should be handled with great care and only used in the way described in the way described in the participant information sheet.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

Please type YES or NA in the box below

N/A

F3. For how long will any personal, identifiable data collected during the study be stored?

In order to abide by LJMU policy, the data will be stored five years

F4. Limits of confidentiality

F4a. Is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action could take place during the study? (e.g. during an interview)

- A range of situations – across disciplinary domains – might prompt consideration of the need to breach confidentiality.
- Although it is generally the case that information resulting from research with human participants should remain confidential between the researcher and participant, there are limits to confidentiality and situations where research brings to light information that may mean that this confidentiality will need to be broken. In such cases, a third party (such as an appropriate/relevant authority or organisation) might need to be informed of the information in question.

Please type YES, NO or NA in the box below

N/A

If YES, please state under which circumstances confidentiality might be breached for ethically or legally justifiable reasons. For example

- When the researcher knows or suspects that there is serious, immediate or future harm to others with regards money-laundering, crimes covered by the prevention of terrorism legislation or child protection offenses/abuse of vulnerable adults.
- When the researcher knows or suspects that an individual is harming themselves or others or might harm themselves or others in the future.

F4b. If YES, what might you do if you are confronted with the need to breach confidentiality? (e.g., stop the research and consult with relevant individuals/organisations). Please consider that breaching confidentiality will have legal implications.

F4c. Please confirm that it will be clear to the participants (i.e. on the participant information sheet) as to the circumstances and process in which confidentiality may be breached.

Please type YES or NA in the box below

N/A

DECLARATION OF THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

- The information in this form is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief and I take full responsibility for it.
- I undertake to abide by the ethical principles underlying the Declaration of Helsinki and LJMU's REC regulations and guidelines together with the codes of practice laid down by any relevant professional or learned society.
- If the research is approved, I undertake to adhere to the approved study procedures and any conditions set out by the REC in giving its favourable opinion.
- I undertake to seek an ethical opinion from LJMU REC before implementing substantial amendments to the approved study plan. <https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93205.htm>
- If, in the course of the administering any approved intervention, there are any serious adverse events, I understand that I am responsible for immediately stopping the intervention and alerting LJMU REC. <https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93130.htm>
- I am aware of my responsibility to comply with the requirements of the law and relevant guidelines relating to security and confidentiality of personal data.
- I understand that any records/data may be subject to inspection for audit purposes if required in the future.
- I understand that personal data about me as a researcher will be held by the University and this will be managed according to the principals of the Data Protection Act.
- I understand that the information contained in this application, any supporting documentation and all correspondence with LJMU REC relating to the application will be subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act. The information may be disclosed in response to requests made under the Act except where statutory exemptions apply.
- I understand that all conditions apply to my co-applicants and other researchers involved in the study and that it is my responsibility that they abide by them.

 YES

Type YES to CONFIRM THAT YOU HAVE READ AND AGREE TO THE DECLARATION ABOVE

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION FOR REVIEW

Once you have completed the ethics application form appended all of the supporting documents and saved as **ONE** pdf document, please submit it electronically to **either** EthicsPR@ljmu.ac.uk (no submission deadline) for proportionate review or to researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk for full review (by the advertised submission deadline). <https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93085.htm>

APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA AN LJMU EMAIL ACCOUNT AND FOR STUDENT APPLICATIONS SUPPORTED BY AN EMAIL / LETTER FROM THE MAIN SUPERVISOR CONFIRMING THAT THEY HAVE READ AND APPROVED THE STUDY / APPLICATION.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

CHECKLIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY

(Please note that applications submitted without the required supporting documents will not be reviewed).

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LIMU REC training certificate of completion (Mandatory for students) https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/131507.htm
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ethics Application Form (MANDATORY)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Protocol (MANDATORY) see note below
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Email / letter from supervisor confirming that a) the supervisor has read and reviewed this ethics application form and all supporting documents and b) the information included in the application and all supporting documents will allow UREC to decide whether all challenges to the principles of research ethics have been identified and addressed
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Copies of any recruitment/advertisement material e.g. letters, emails, posters etc.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Participant Information Sheet https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93044.htm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Carer Information Sheet https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93044.htm
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gatekeeper Information Sheet https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93044.htm
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Participant Consent Form https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93044.htm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Carer Consent Form https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93044.htm
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gatekeeper Consent Form https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93044.htm
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Non-validated questionnaires
<input type="checkbox"/>	List of interview questions
<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk Assessment Form https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93044.htm
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other please specify

Note

A research protocol is a document describing in detail how a research study is to be conducted in practice, including a brief introduction or background to the study, the proposed methodology and a plan for analysing the results. For the purposes of your application for ethical approval, it is something that can be presented in a variety of formats dependent on its origin for example:

- for postgraduate research students it may be the programme of work embedded within their programme registration form (RD9R)
- for studies which have obtained external funding it is often the description of what they propose doing which they submitted to the funder
- for other students it is the study proposal they have written and had assessed/approved by their supervisor.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

Appendix 1: LJMU REC training certificate of completion

Certificate of completion - LJMU Research Ethics Training

LJMU Research Ethics Committee [noreply@quizresults.net]

Sent: 01 November 2018 03:19

To: He, Lushiqi

This is an automatically generated email to certify completion of the LJMU Research Ethics Training. You are receiving this because the LJMU REC has specified your email address for sending the certificate of completion.

Name He, Lushiqi
LJMU Email address L.He@2018.ljmu.ac.uk
ID number 855604

Date/Time 2018年11月1日 上午3:17
Answered: 3 / 3
Your Score 3 / 3 (100%)
Passing Score 3 (100%)
Time Spent: 40 sec
Result **Passed**

Question 1 Correct

Points: 1/1 | Attempts: 1/3

Research Ethics Committees:

Select one or more correct answers from the choices below

Your Answer	Correct Answer
Protect the safety, dignity and rights of participants in research	Protect the safety, dignity and rights of participants in research
Provide assurances of good quality research being conducted within an evidence base and for the benefit of society	Provide assurances of good quality research being conducted within an evidence base and for the benefit of society
Protect all stakeholders	Protect all stakeholders

Feedback: That's right! You answered correctly.

Question 2 Correct

Points: 1/1 | Attempts: 1/3

Research ethics is the set of principles and guidelines that help us to uphold the things we value

Choose whether the statement is true or false

Your Answer	Correct Answer
True	True

Feedback: That's right! You answered correctly.

Question 3 Correct

Points: 1/1 | Attempts: 1/3

Ethical approval must be in place BEFORE starting participant recruitment

Choose whether the statement is true or false

Your Answer	Correct Answer
True	True

Feedback: That's right! You answered correctly.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH PROGRAMME APPROVAL

PART 1: COMPLETED BY THE PGR

Programme details:

Student ID Number:	855604
Surname:	He
Forename(s)	Lushiqi
Faculty	Arts Professional and Social Studies
Mode of Study	Full Time
Start Date	26/10/2018
I wish to register for	Master of Philosophy with transfer possibility to Doctor of Philosophy [MPhil/PhD]
Are you transferring your research degree from another academic institution	No
<i>*If yes, please attach a letter from the previous institution confirming details of your previous registration [Appendix 1]</i>	

Funding and Resources:

Who is paying your tuition fees	I am self funded
If externally or match funded:	
Name of External Sponsor	
Point of Contact	

Research Project Details:

Proposed title of the project	An Analysis of the Notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop in a Changing Society since the 1980s
Please provide a brief outline of the research, aims and key objectives or questions	Popular music genres reflecting 'Chineseness' emerged at different times since the 1960s while Mandarin pop music (Mandopop) was developing, and its representations, characteristics, functions, meanings and values have been transformed in different changing contexts according to its social and cultural backgrounds. Tracing the history of Chinese pop music or Mandopop, a variety of musical genres was produced with an obvious Chinese style, which is called 'Chineseness'

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

in this research. In order to explain the notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, the historical background, characteristics of different genres, soundscape, identities, and representations of 'Chineseness' will be focused on.

This research will focus on the period after the 'Reform and Opening-up' policy became law in 1978, which was a significant turning point in mainland China. This research aims to examine how 'Chineseness' as an ideological notion is constructed and theorized in Mandopop. The representative genres that musically express 'Chineseness' will be discussed in this research, including 'China Wind', 'Northwest Wind' and 'Ancient Wind', as these are representative genres of 'Chineseness' that brought a new Chinese-style concept into Mandopop. In relation to the textual analysis and structure of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, the linguistics, soundscape, instrumentation, and visuals will be discussed. From the historical background to the textual sounds, 'Chineseness' can be defined and analysed through the further study of applying ethnomusicological analytical and fieldwork methods. The notion of 'Chineseness' is progressive and anti-essential, so audiences' perceptions will depend on different socio-cultural contexts.

The research methodology consists of three methods: (1) extensive literature review and media research (e.g. news, social media) to study and analyse the historical background of Mandopop and its representation of 'Chineseness'; (2) collect audio-visual examples (e.g. recordings, videos, documentaries) and conduct a textual analysis of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop in terms of linguistics, soundscape, instrumentation, and visuals; and (3) interview different ethnic groups in China in order to study audience' perceptions of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop and to investigate how regional differences and socio-cultural contexts impact on the expressions of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

Details of relationship to previous work if applicable

'China Wind' Mandopop in the 21st century was the focus of my Master's degree research, which provided a meaningful basis or foundation of my research into the 'Chineseness' of Mandopop. 'China Wind' represents Chinese tradition and is widely incorporated into many popular cultural fields such as music, film, architecture, and fashion. In the music field, 'China Wind' has been produced during the 21st century and refers to a type of music genre within the larger macro-genre of Mandopop that combines certain traditional elements of Chinese music with popular music from the West. Hence, 'China Wind' songs essentially represent the localisation and Chineseness of Mandopop, and distinguish it with other music genres. Additionally, my previous research defined the characteristics of 'China Wind' in Mandopop more specifically, with musical sounds consisting of 'Chineseness' given a broader definition.

Based on previous definitions of 'China Wind' and three typical case studies, my research proposed a new perception of 'China Wind': a new genre based on R&B, which has been popular since the 2000s. Its content encompasses Chinese traditional elements and national symbols, and its creative production method includes a combination of Chinese elements and non-Chinese elements in order to express Chineseness in Mandopop music. The success of 'China Wind' is related to the strategies of producers who created this genre, and the promoters who marketed it. Overall, 'China Wind' reflects the Chineseness in Mandopop through various artists' creative methods and efforts.

Please provide a brief outline of your proposed plan of work (research proposal)

Optional – Gantt Chart may be provided as an appendix [Appendix 2]

Seeing appendix as follows:
Appendix 2-1: Research Proposal
Appendix 2-2: Gantt Chart

Ethical Approval:

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

Is ethical approval required for your project?	Yes
Has your project received ethical approval	No
If Yes, please provide the ethical approval reference:	
If No, when will ethical approval be required?	Month: September Year: 2019

Training and Skills Development:

Mandatory Requirements	
Please confirm that you have attended the Faculty PGR Induction	Yes
Date attended	Due to my exceptional enrolment date of 26 October 2018 (approved by the Dean of the Doctoral Academy), I have attended a personalised Induction meeting with my Director of Study, Dr Simone Krueger Bridge.
Please confirm that you have completed the Research Ethics Online Training	Yes
<i>Please append a copy of your certificate [Appendix 3]</i>	

Personalised Training Requirements

Please confirm that you have undertaken a review of your personal Training and Development Requirements with your Director of Studies	Yes	
Please provide details of the agreed schedule of Training and Development Requirements		
Training/Development Event	Date	Place Booked
Faculty Postgraduate Research Student Induction [completed]	25 October 2018	N/A
Research Skills: Discover your Electronic Library [completed]	29 Nov. 2018	Yes
Harvard Referencing laid bare: How to Reference [completed]	5 Dec. 2018	Yes
Speed reading, memory and mind mapping	22 Jan. 2019	Yes
Effective Researcher: Getting Started with your Research	25 Feb. 2019	Yes
Academic Writing: an introduction (for humanities, arts and social sciences researchers)	14 Mar. 2019	Yes
Interviewing for research	2 Apr. 2019	No

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

PART 2: COMPLETED BY THE DIRECTOR OF STUDIES

Facilities for the Project:

Please confirm that all the facilities, equipment and funding required for the investigation, including overhead costs and consumables are available

Yes

If no, please explain what arrangements / contingencies are in place to address this:

N/A

Collaborating Establishment (if applicable)

Name of Collaborating Establishment

N/A

Point of Contact

Nature of the collaboration

Please append a copy of the Collaboration Agreement/Letter [Appendix 4]

Proposed Supervision Arrangements

Please note that attendance at Research Supervisors' Workshop is a requirement for all supervisors who are new to research degree supervision and/or new to supervision of LJMU postgraduate research students. Any proposed external supervisors/advisors will be required to complete and submit an RD41 form [Appendix 5]

Director of Studies

Name

Dr Simone Krüger Bridge

Qualifications

PhD, FHEA, PGCE, BA, BSc

Current Post

Reader in Music

Place of work

HSS

Number UK PGRs currently being supervised

Director of Studies

Full Time	2	Part Time	1
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Supervisor

Full Time	4	Part Time	
-----------	---	-----------	--

Number of previous successful

MPhil	3	PhD	
-------	---	-----	--

completions of UK PGRs as Supervisor

Second Supervisor

Name

Dr Rex Li

Qualifications

BA (Hons), PhD

Current Post

Reader in International Relations

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

Place of work	Programme Leader, MA International Journalism and MA International News Journalism LSS, Liverpool John Moores University			
Number UK PGRs currently being supervised				
Director of Studies	Full Time	1	Part Time	1
Supervisor	Full Time	2	Part Time	1
Number of previous successful completions of UK PGRs as Supervisor	MPhil	1	PhD	2

Third Supervisor (If applicable)

Name	Dr Emma Roberts			
Qualifications	Ph.D.; FHEA, BA			
Current Post	Programme Leader: BA History of Art & Museum Studies			
Place of work	Liverpool John Moores University			
Number UK PGRs currently being supervised				
Director of Studies	Full Time	1	Part Time	3
Supervisor	Full Time	3	Part Time	6
Number of previous successful completions of UK PGRs as Supervisor	MRes	6	PhD	1

Advisors (If Applicable)

First Advisor

Name
Qualifications
Current Post
Place of work

Second Advisor

Name
Qualifications
Current Post
Place of work

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

PART 3: SIGNATURES

Signatures shall be signed or an electronic format, not typed.

I wish to apply for registration for the degree of based on the information given in this application.

Applicant

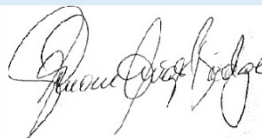


Date: 21/01/2019

Supervisors

We support this application and believe that this applicant has the potential to complete successfully the programme of work proposed.

Director of Studies



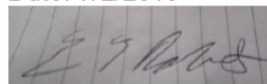
Date: 21/01/2019

Second Supervisor



Date: 7/2/2019

Third Supervisor (If Applicable)



Date: 24th January 2019

Director of School/Head of Department or Research Institute

I support this application for registration as a candidate for a research degree of LJMU.

I am personally satisfied that the necessary resources are available and adequate facilities will be provided to enable the PGR candidate to conduct and complete the research in an efficient and safe manner.

Name

Alex Miles

Position

Director of Humanities and Social Science

Signature



Date: 13/02/19

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

Recommendation by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee (FRDC)

The committee has reviewed the full application from PGR and Supervisor
The necessary resources are available and adequate facilities will be provided to enable the PGR candidate to conduct and complete the research in an efficient and safe manner.

For PGRS who hold a Tier 4 Visa, the committee confirms that an appropriate ATAS Certificate is in place which matches the proposed programme of study.

Approved by the Chair of FRDC, OR their nominee in cases where the Chair is a nominated supervisor or other conflict of interest

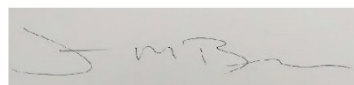
Name

John Byrne

Position

Reader in the Uses of Art/APSS
FRDC Alternative Chair

Signature



Date: 19/01/19

Appendices Check List

Appendix 1	Letter from previous academic institution	Not Applicable
Appendix 2	Optional Gantt Chart	Yes
Appendix 3	Research Ethics Training Certificate	Yes
Appendix 4	Collaboration Agreement/Letter	Not Applicable
Appendix 5	RD41 Form for any external supervisors/advisors	Not Applicable

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

Appendix 2-1: Research Proposal

1. Background and relationship to previous work

The notion of 'Chineseness' was thought of as a multidimensional construct which carries complex social, cultural and political connotations, especially in the fields of religion and national identity (Lu & Gao, 2018). Oakes (2000) argued that analysing 'Chineseness' into the cultural ideologies and spatial strategies is related to illustrating problems of regionalism in China's interior. As for the music and cultural field, according to Lau (2008), 'Chineseness' is 'imagined' or 'constructed' out of expressing Chinese culture and Chinese music throughout its various cultural angles.

'Chineseness' has not only been examined simply as 'the act of pluralizing' but also in 'progressivism' and 'anti-essentialism' which changed in the 'ongoing history' without a 'traceable origin' (Chow, 2013). Chinese researchers have researched 'China Wind' as a cultural phenomenon (Zheng, 2009; Zheng 2010a; Zheng, 2010b; Zhang, 2011; Shao, 2012), specifically comparing it with and relating it to another genre called 'Northwest Wind' (Xibei Feng) which emerged in the 1980s. Pop music genres that combined Chinese traditional elements were generally considered under the discipline of ethnomusicology, which considered their wide identities and representations.

Due to its particular linguistics and music soundscape, Jay Chou's song 'East Wind Breaks' (Dongfeng Po) was thought to be the first real 'China Wind' song in 2003 (Cao, 2006; Huang, 2011). In the long history of the most authoritative music chart in mainland China, 'East Wind Breaks' was awarded the most popular song of the 11th China's Song Chart, and Jay Chou won the award for the most popular male singer in the Hong Kong and Taiwan area (NetEasy Entertainment, 2004). As well as this, Jay Chou's album *Ye Huimei* was awarded the most popular album at the 15th Golden Melody Awards, which is an accolade with a high reputation and can have a significant influence in Taiwan and Chinese-speaking regions (Taiwan Government Information Office, 2004). The achievement of 'East Wind Breaks' stimulated the Chinese pop music market, with 'China Wind' pop music becoming one of the most important genres since the 2000s. Importantly, it was a 'novel phenomenon' that reflected 'local pop history', which can be clearly distinguished from other popular music (Chow & Kloet, 2011).

2. Outline of the research area and key questions

This research examines how 'Chineseness' is constructed and theorized in Mandopop from an ethnomusicological and popular music studies perspective, geographical perspective and from the perspective of music marketing. The analysis of 'Chineseness' in current Mandopop will be based on a combination of literature research, textual analysis of the music itself and fieldwork, which will be conducted in

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

the regions of mainland China-Han, mainland China among ethnic minorities, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, which will help to understand a range of ethnic Chinese who have different perceptions of 'Chineseness' due to their different socio-cultural context. It will be interesting to gather the views of Chinese living in Singapore, Malaysia, UK, USA and Australia, however this could only be done as complementary to the main fieldwork and accomplished via social media. The fieldwork itself will help to study and analyse perceptions of the meaning of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop among various audiences acceptability and likeability, and also how music marketing helps to make audiences like this music. To survey how to transmit 'Chineseness' in an effective way, this research will use marketing knowledge to explore the audiences' feelings. In this research, three main research questions will be raised: (1) whether the notion of 'Chineseness' exists in Mandopop music; (2) what is the meaning of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop; (3) what is the correlation between 'Chineseness', society and the music market.

3. How the research contributes to knowledge in the field

Attempts to identify a traditional Chinese style in Mandopop and the genres of 'China Wind' and 'Northeast Wind' already exist (Cao, 2006; Chow & Kloet, 2011; Lau, 2008; Liu & Mason, 2010; Moskowitz, 2010; Zhang, 2011; Shao, 2012; Zheng, 2009; Zheng, 2010a), but the definition of Chinese-style Mandopop in this research has not been identified clearly. In addition, the notion of 'Chineseness' has been raised in several research fields such as religion, art and culture. As a symbol of national identity and cultural phenomenon, this notion can be connected to music to express the inner meaning of traditional Chinese culture, especially in pop music.

To connect and explore the notion of 'Chineseness' in the pop music field, it is significant to analyse the 'Chineseness' in Mandopop and identify its genres' expressions, identities and national ideologies. The challenge of this research concerns the differences related to understanding the linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds. As a Chinese researcher, I have a deep understanding of Chinese culture, language and national ideology in the Mandopop research field.

Pop music as a popular genre with wide appeal is strongly and directly related to marketing and promoting. The acceptability and likeability of 'Chineseness' is also a significant symbol of the Mandopop market. Through interviewing the different ethnic groups, the perceptions of audiences will be researched to discover how 'Chineseness' has spread in the music market to promote 'Chineseness' Mandopop widely to pop music audiences in China and beyond.

4. Proposed Methodology

The research will be conducted in two phases as follows:

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

- **extensive literature review and media research:** To collect academic and non-academic literatures and publications on Mandopop, Chineseness and identity, including news articles, social media publications, documentaries, and so forth to study and analyse the historical background of Mandopop and its representation of 'Chineseness'.
- **Textual Analysis:** To understand the inner textual meaning of 'Chineseness', materials for this research will come from two principal sources: (1) a selection of published, recorded and broadcasted recordings and (2) notations of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop gathered between 1978 and 2020. As for textual analysis on music works of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, this research will focus on the representative musicians and their music works belonging to the genres of 'Northwest Wind', 'China Wind' and 'Ancient Wind' separately
- **Fieldwork:** The acceptability and likeability of 'Chineseness' Mandopop will be explored by examining audience' perceptions. The transcripts of fieldwork will be carried out by face-to-face and online interviews of audiences, music industry workers who are all ethnic Chinese but live in different countries with different socio-cultural contexts. To understand the generational difference in perception of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, interviewees will be separated by generation into 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s. Audiences include non-music background audiences and audiences who graduated from or study in the music conservatories, as well as the audiences from the music event sites, streaming platforms, and fans clubs. Music industry workers include music researchers, composers, lyricists, and music producers. The interviewees will be chosen from the different regions to research on the regional difference of the 'Chineseness'.

All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

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All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

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All documents including appendices must be submitted as one PDF document with appendices attached in the order listed above.

Appendix 2-3: Research Ethics Training Certificate

Certificate of completion - LJMU Research Ethics Training

LJMU Research Ethics Committee [noreply@quizresults.net]

Sent: 01 November 2018 03:19

To: He, Lushiqi

This is an automatically generated email to certify completion of the LJMU Research Ethics Training. You are receiving this because the LJMU REC has specified your email address for sending the certificate of completion.

Name He, Lushiqi
LJMU Email address L.He@2018.ljmu.ac.uk
ID number 855604

Date/Time 2018年11月1日 上午3:17
Answered: 3 / 3
Your Score 3 / 3 (100%)
Passing Score 3 (100%)
Time Spent: 40 sec
Result **Passed**

Question 1 Correct

Points: 1/1 | Attempts: 1/3

Research Ethics Committees:

Select one or more correct answers from the choices below

Your Answer	Correct Answer
Protect the safety, dignity and rights of participants in research	Protect the safety, dignity and rights of participants in research
Provide assurances of good quality research being conducted within an evidence base and for the benefit of society	Provide assurances of good quality research being conducted within an evidence base and for the benefit of society
Protect all stakeholders	Protect all stakeholders

Feedback: That's right! You answered correctly.

Question 2 Correct

Points: 1/1 | Attempts: 1/3

Research ethics is the set of principles and guidelines that help us to uphold the things we value

Choose whether the statement is true or false

Your Answer	Correct Answer
True	True

Feedback: That's right! You answered correctly.

Question 3 Correct

Points: 1/1 | Attempts: 1/3

Ethical approval must be in place BEFORE starting participant recruitment

Choose whether the statement is true or false

Your Answer	Correct Answer
True	True

Feedback: That's right! You answered correctly.

Appendix 3: Confirming Email from Supervisor

Ethics application form - Lushiqi He (20190705) + SKB

Krueger Bridge, Simone

Fri 05/07/2019 13:56

To: He, Lushiqi <L.He@2018.ljmu.ac.uk>;

Cc: Roberts, Emma <E.E.Roberts@ljmu.ac.uk>;

1 attachments (3 MB)

Ethics application form - Lushiqi He (20190705) + SKB.docx

Dear Lushiqi,

Hereby I am confirming that I have checked and approved your ethics application for submission to the UREC.

Please find attached your ethics application, which I have edited to a minor extent to ensure consistency and clarity for the ethics committee. Please go through and accept the tracked changes, and then save the final version and submit to the UREC.

Please ensure that you submit to the correct email address: there is one for full review and one for proportionate review.

Good luck!

Best wishes,
Simone

Dr Simone Krüger Bridge
Reader in Music
Chair Faculty Research Degree Committee (FRDC)
Humanities and Social Science
John Foster Building, 80-98 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L3 5UZ
t: +44 (0)151 231505 e: s.krueger@ljmu.ac.uk w: [Profile](#)
Editor [Journal of World Popular Music](#)
Co-Editor [Transcultural Music Studies](#) (book series)
IASPM [Executive Committee](#) (Treasurer)

Ethical application

Roberts, Emma

Fri 05/07/2019 12:44

To: He, Lushiqi <L.He@2018.ljmu.ac.uk>;

Cc: Krueger Bridge, Simone <Sk.krueger@ljmu.ac.uk>;

Dear Lushiqi,

Thank you for sending your ethical application through to me. I am writing to confirm that I have read and checked everything and approve your application. I am happy for you to send it to the University Research Ethics Committee.

Best wishes,

Emma



Emma Roberts Ph.D., R.A. (Hons)
Programme Leader: BA (Hons) History of Art & Museum Studies and Foundation History of Art & Museum Studies, International Mobility Officer (Liverpool School of Art & Design)
Liverpool School of Art and Design
The John Lennon Art and Design Building, Dockside Street, Liverpool, L3 5RD
t: 0151 904 1173 e: E.E.Roberts@ljmu.ac.uk
w: <https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/about-us/staff-profiles/emma-roberts-professional-and-social-studies/liverpool-school-of-art-and-design/emma-roberts>

Appendix 4-1: Copies of Recruitment Poster (English Version)

**Questionnaire of
'Chineseness' in Mandopop**

CHINESENESS
MANDOPOP **RESEARCH**

**• LISTENING to •
CHINESENESS
MANDOPOP**

Do you still remember
the Northwest Wind blowing on the Loess Plateau?
who is playing 'East Wind Breaks' with a pipa?
who accompanied you to conquer mountains and skies?
If these songs once warmed your Chinese heart
Please join us and voice for the "Chineseness" Mandopop!

As long as you are between
the ages of **20** and **59**,
and are **ethnic Chinese** in
China mainland, Hong Kong, Macao,
Taiwan and **overseas Chinese communities**
From what I can see in your eyes,
I know you are the one we are looking for.

Scan the QR code below
to participate in the questionnaire



Life is more than poems and dream
And we are waiting for you!

LJMU REC Reference number: 19HSS010

Appendix 4-2: Copies of Recruitment Poster (Chinese Version)

华语流行音乐
“中国性”概念调查问卷

CHINESENESS
MANDOPOP RESEARCH

倾听·中国风
CHINESENESS
MANDOPOP

你还记得黄土高坡上吹过的那阵西北风吗？
你还记得是谁在用琵琶弹奏东风破吗？
你还记得陪你度过三生三世走遍四海八荒的人吗？
如果这些歌曲曾经温暖了你的中国心
那么请加入我们，为“中国风”华语流行音乐发声吧！

只要你年龄在20-59岁之间，
并且是中国大陆地区、
港澳台地区及海外的华人华侨
确认过眼神，你就是我们寻觅的人

扫描下方二维码
参与问卷调查

生活不止有诗和远方，还有我们在等你！

利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学研究伦理委员会审核编号：19HSS010

Appendix 5-1: Participant Information Sheet (English Version)



LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Participant Information Sheet

**LJMU's Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference:
YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET**

Title of Study:

An Analysis of the Notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop in a Changing Society since the 1980s

Dear Participants:

You are being invited to take part in a study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the study is being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

1. Who will conduct the study?

Study Team:

Principal Investigator: Lushiqi He

Co-investigator: Dr Simone Krüger Bridge

School/Faculty within LJMU:

School of Humanities and Social Science, Faculty of Arts Professional and Social Studies

2. What is the purpose of the study?

Popular music genres reflecting 'Chineseness' emerged at different times since the 1960s while Mandarin pop music (Mandopop) was developing, and its representations, characteristics, functions, meanings and values have been transformed in different changing contexts according to its social and cultural backgrounds. Tracing the history of Chinese pop music or Mandopop, a variety of musical genres was produced with an obvious Chinese style, which is called 'Chineseness' in this research. In order to explain the notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, the historical background, characteristics of different genres, soundscape, identities, and representations of 'Chineseness' will be focused on. This research aims to examine how 'Chineseness' as an ideological notion is constructed and theorized in Mandopop. In relation to the textual analysis and structure of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, the linguistics, soundscape, instrumentation, and visuals will be discussed. From the historical background to the textual sounds, 'Chineseness' can be defined and analysed through the further study of applying ethnomusicological analytical and fieldwork methods. In order to explore the notion 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, there are three main research questions raised in this research: (1) whether the notion of 'Chineseness' exists in Mandopop music; (2) what is the meaning of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop; (3) what is the correlation between 'Chineseness', society and the music market.

3. Why have I been invited to participate?

Version 10 – March 2018 – non-tissue

You have been invited because you are engaged with post-1970s Chinese popular music as an audience, music researcher or music industry worker.

The inclusion criteria are choosing the audiences by generation into the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s who lived in China Mainland, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Overseas Chinese communities.

4. Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Your participation in this project is voluntary so you will not be paid for participation. You can withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You can withdraw at any time by informing the investigators without giving a reason and without it affecting your rights.

5. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be interviewed by the researcher about the concept of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop. Generally, the content will be in relation to the trajectory of Mandopop and how you think about its expressions of Chinese discourse. The interview will take up to 60 minutes for each, and the venue will be selected in the participants' workplaces. The interviews will be audio recorded in order to transcribe and analyse the data after the interview. You can decide if you want your names to be used in any reports produced using information obtained in the interview. This is optional and is not required. We will talk you through the study procedures and give you the chance to ask any questions.

6. Will I be recorded and how will the recorded media be used?

The audio recording is essential to your participation, but you should be comfortable with the recording process and you are free to stop the recording at any time.

The audio recordings of your activities made during this study will be used only for analysis. No other use will be made of them without your written permission.

Interviews will be audio recorded on a password protected audio recording device and as soon as possible. The recording will be transferred to secure storage on a password protected computer and deleted from the recording device.

7. Are there any possible disadvantages or risks from taking part?

People's perceptions in individual interviews or questionnaires may discuss any issues that might be sensitive or challenge the policy of the Chinese government. If there were the sensitive contents in the interview, the researcher will discuss it with the participants after the interview and let participants decide whether to keep their perspective or delete it from the storage device. If participants wanted to keep it, the researcher can decide whether to use this data in the report. And any perceptions in the open-ended questionnaire are anonymous, the researcher will decide whether or not to quote these perceptions in the report. If the data of individual interview or questionnaire contains social harm or the content which challenge the policy of the Chinese government, the researcher will delete these data from the storage device after participants agreed. And if the participants wish to rearrange another interview or recomplete the questionnaire, the researcher will respect their actions and rearrange by following their requirement.

Research where participants are persuaded to reveal information which they would not otherwise disclose in the course of everyday life. The details of personal data about occupation, location, age and ethnicity do not lead to individuals being identifiable. And all data during the fieldwork will be stored in a password protected device and only accessible to myself and my supervisors. Storage will be on a password-protected computer on the LJMU mainframe. If the individuals were indirectly identified, the

researcher will involve the participants in the decision-making process to decide whether the data of their interview be deleted from the storage device as well as the report.

8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst will be no direct benefits to you for taking part in the study. However, you might enjoy talking about your interest in and involvement with the subject.

9. What will happen to the data provided and how will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

The information you provide as part of the study is the **study data**. Any study data from which you can be identified (e.g. from identifiers such as your name, date of birth, audio recording etc.), is known as **personal data**. This includes more sensitive categories of personal data (**sensitive data**) such as your race; ethnic origin; politics; religion.

When you agree to take part in a study, we will use your personal data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the study and if necessary, to verify and defend, when required, the process and outcomes of the study. Personal data will be accessible to the study team only.

When we do not need to use personal data, it will be deleted or identifiers will be removed. Personal data does not include data that cannot be identified to an individual (e.g. data collected anonymously or where identifiers have been removed). However, your consent form, contact details, audio recordings etc. will be retained for five years. Thereafter it will be destroyed.

10. What will happen to the results of the study?

The investigator intends to complete a dissertation to satisfy the degree programme and publish the results in a PhD thesis and journal articles.

11. Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee (Reference number: 19HSS010).

12. What if something goes wrong?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact the relevant investigator who will do their best to answer your query. The investigator should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how they intend to deal with it. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact the chair of the Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee (researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk) and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate.

13. Data Protection Notice

Liverpool John Moores University is the sponsor for this study based in the United Kingdom. We will be using information from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. Liverpool John Moores University will process your personal data for the purpose of research. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the study to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the

study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible.

You can find out more about how we use your information by contacting secretariat@ljmu.ac.uk.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, please contact LJMU in the first instance at secretariat@ljmu.ac.uk. If you remain unsatisfied, you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Contact details, and details of data subject rights, are available on the ICO website at: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/>

14. Contact for further information

If you are unhappy, or if there is a problem, please feel free to let us know by contacting:

Principal Investigator

Lushiqi He

Email: L.He@2018.ljmu.ac.uk

+44 (0)7595969487

Co-investigator

Dr Simone Krüger Bridge

Email: S.Kruger@ljmu.ac.uk

+44 (0)151 231 5054

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering to take part in this study.

Note: A copy of the participant information sheet should be retained by the participant with a copy of the signed consent form.



利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学 参与者信息表

利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学研究伦理委员会批准参考编号：
您将获得本信息表的副本

研究题目：20 世纪 80 年代以来变迁社会中的华语流行音乐“中国性”概念分析

亲爱的参与者：

您被邀请参加此次研究，在您决定之前，您应先了解为什么我们要完成研究以及参与将涉及什么范围，这一点十分重要。如果您愿意，请花时间仔细阅读以下信息，如有任何不清楚的信息或者您是否想了解更多信息，请随时与我们联系。您可以自行决定是否愿意参加此次研究。感谢您抽出时间来阅读。

1. 谁将进行研究？

研究小组：

首席研究员：何吕诗琦

联合研究员：Simone Krüger Bridge 博士

所属学院及二教学院：人文社会科学学院，艺术专业和社会研究学院

2. 研究的目的是什么？

反映“中国性”的流行音乐流派自 20 世纪 60 年代以来不同时期出现，而华语流行音乐正在发展，其表现形式，特征，功能，意义和价值观根据其社会和文化背景在不同的变化背景下进行了转变。追溯中国流行音乐的历史，所产生的各种具有明显中国风格的音乐类型，在本研究中称为“中国性”。为了解释华语流行音乐中“中国性”的概念，将重点关注“中国性”的历史背景，不同类型的特征，音景，身份和表现。这项研究旨在研究如何在华语流行音乐中构建和理论化“中国性”作为一种意识形态概念。关于华语流行音乐中“中国性”的文本分析和结构，将讨论语言学，音景，编曲配器和视觉效果。从历史背景到文本声音，通过进一步研究应用民族音乐学分析和实地工作方法，可以定义和分析“中国性”。为了探索华语流行音乐中的“中国性”概念，本研究提出了三个主要的研究问题：（1）华语流行音乐中是否存在“中国性”的概念；（2）华语流行音乐中“中国性”的含义是什么；（3）“中国性”，社会与音乐市场之间的相关性是什么？

3. 为什么我被邀请参加？

你被邀请是因为你作为观众，音乐研究员或音乐产业工作者参与了 20 世纪 70 年代后的中国流行音乐。纳入标准是选择在 1970 年代，1980 年代，1990 年代和 2000 年代居住在中国大陆，香港，澳门，台湾和海外华人社区的观众。

4. 我必须参加吗？

不，您可以自行决定是否参加。如果您决定参加，您将收到此信息表副本以保留并需要签署同意书。您参与此项目是自愿的，因此您不会因参与而获得报酬。在研究过程中，您可以随时退出或停止参与，您无需告知其原因，且您的权益不会收到任何影响。

5. 如果我选择参加，接下来会发生什么事？

您将接受研究人员关于华语流行音乐中“中国性”概念的采访。一般来说，内容将关于华语流行音乐的发展轨迹以及您如何看待中文话语的表达。面试每次最多需要 60 分钟，场地将选择在您的工作场所或其他您认为方便的场所。采访将录音，以便在采访后转录和分析数据。您可以决定是否希望在使用面试中获得的信息生成的任何报告中您的姓名。这是可选的，不是必需的。我们将通过学习程序与您联系，让您有机会提出任何问题。

6. 我是否会被录音或录像？以及如何录制后的文件将会被如何使用？

音频录制对您的参与至关重要，但您应该对录制过程感到满意，并且您可以随时停止录制。

本研究期间您的活动的音频录制仅用于分析。未经您的书面许可，不得对其进行任何其他用途。采访将在受密码保护的录音设备上录制，并且录制完成后将尽快传输到安全的设备上存储并从录制设备中删除。

7. 如果我选择参与，是否存在任何对我不利的地方或存在风险？

您在个人访谈或问卷调查中的看法也许会出现任何敏感言论或对中国政府政策提出质疑的问题。如果面试中有敏感内容，研究人员将在面试后与您讨论，让您自行决定是保持观点还是将其从存储设备中删除。如果您希望保留它，研究人员可以决定是否在报告中使用时数据。在开放式调查问卷中的任何看法都是匿名的，研究人员将决定是否在报告中引用这些看法。如果个人访谈或问卷的数据包含社会危害或挑战中国政府政策的内容，研究人员将在您同意后从存储设备中删除这些数据。如果您希望重新安排另一次访谈或重新填写调查问卷，研究人员将尊重您的行为并按要求重新安排。

研究参与者被说服透露他们在日常生活中不会透露的信息有关职业，地点，年龄和种族的个人数据的详细信息不会导致个人被识别。现场工作期间的所有数据都将存储在受密码保护的设备中，并且只能由我和我的导师访问。存储将位于利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学的主机上且是受密码保护的计算机上。如果间接识别个体，研究人员将让您参与决策过程，以决定是否从存储设备以及报告中删除您的访谈数据。

8. 如果我选择参与，是否有任何好处？

参加本研究对您没有直接的好处，您的参与将属于志愿行为。但是，您可能会喜欢谈论您对于此项目的兴趣并乐于参与。

9. 我所提供的数据会被如何处理？我参与此项目将如何保密？

您作为研究的一部分提供的信息是**研究数据**。您可以识别的任何研究数据（例如，您的姓名，出生日期，录音等信息）被称为**个人数据**。其中包括更敏感的个人数据类别（**敏感数据**），例如您的种族、民族血统、政治、宗教等信息。

当您同意参加研究时，我们将以所需的方式使用您的个人数据来进行和分析研究，并在必要时验证和保护研究的过程和结果。只有本研究的研究团队可以访问个人数据。

当我们不需要使用个人数据时，它将被删除，个人数据不包括无法识别个人的数据（例如匿名收集的数据或已删除标识符的数据）。但是您所签署同意书、您的联系方式、采访过程的录音录像等将保留 5 年，直到本研究结束。

10. 研究结果会被怎样应用？

研究者将把研究结果用于博士学位论文，以及与之相关的被发表的期刊文章中。

11. 谁检查审阅过了这项研究？

本研究已通过利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学研究伦理委员会（参考编号：19HSS010）审核并获得伦理学许可。

12. 如果采访过程中出现了任何问题怎么办？

如果您对本研究的任何方面有疑虑，请联系相关的研究人员，他们将尽力回答您的问题。调查员应在 10 个工作日内确认您的疑虑，并告诉您他们打算如何处理。如果您想投诉，请联系利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学研究伦理委员会主席（researchethics@ljam.ac.uk），您的来文将酌情转发给独立人士。

13. 数据保护须知

利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学是这项研究的担保单位，总部设在英国。我们将使用您的信息进行此项研究，并将作为本研究的数据控制者，这意味着我们有责任保护您的信息并正确使用它。利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学将处理您的个人数据以进行研究，研究是我们为公众利益而开展的一项任务。

您的访问、更改或移动信息的权利是有限的，因为我们需要以特定方式管理您的信息，以使研究可靠和准确。如果您退出研究，我们将保留您已获得的有关您的信息。为了保护您的权利，我们将尽可能使用最低限度的个人身份信息。

您可以通过 secretariat@ljam.ac.uk 与我们取得联系以获得有关我们如何使用您的信息的更多信息。如果您担心如何处理您的个人数据，请首先通过 secretariat@ljam.ac.uk 与利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学联系。如果您仍然不满意，您可以联系信息专员办公室（ICO）。有关数据主题权的详细联系方式和详细信息，请访问 ICO 网站：<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/>

14. 联系以获取更多信息

如果您不满意或有任何问题，请随时通过以下方式告知我们：

首席研究员

何吕诗琦

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+44 (0)7595969487

联合研究员

Simone Krüger Bridge 博士

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感谢您阅读本信息表并考虑参加本研究。

注意：参与者信息表的副本应由参与者保留，并附上签署的同意书副本。

Appendix 6-1: Gatekeeper Information Sheet (English Version)



LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY GATEKEEPER INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Project:

An Analysis of the Notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop in a Changing Society since the 1980s

Name of Researcher and School/Faculty:

Lushiqi He

School of Humanities and Social Science, Faculty of Arts Professional and Social Studies

1. What is the reason for this letter?

We are doing the research on the notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop. In order to understand the audiences' perspectives, we plan to conduct the open-ended qualitative questionnaire, and your staff and students meet the inclusion criteria (knowledge of and interest in Mandopop).

2. What is the purpose of the study for the project?

Popular music genres reflecting 'Chineseness' emerged at different times since the 1960s while Mandarin pop music (Mandopop) was developing, and its representations, characteristics, functions, meanings and values have been transformed in different changing contexts according to its social and cultural backgrounds. Tracing the history of Chinese pop music, or Mandopop, a variety of musical genres were produced with an obvious Chinese style, which is called 'Chineseness' in this research. In order to explain the notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, the historical background, characteristics of different genres, soundscape, identities, and representations of 'Chineseness' will be focused on. This research aims to examine how 'Chineseness' as an ideological notion is constructed and theorized in Mandopop. In relation to the textual analysis and structure of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, the linguistics, soundscape, instrumentation, and visuals will be discussed. From the historical background to the textual sounds, 'Chineseness' can be defined and analysed through the further study of applying ethnomusicological analytical and fieldwork methods. In order to explore the notion 'Chineseness' in Mandopop, there are three main research questions raised in this research: (1) whether the notion of 'Chineseness' exists in Mandopop music; (2) what is the meaning of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop; (3) what is the correlation between 'Chineseness', society and the music market.

3. What we are asking you to do?

We are inviting you to assist with handing out the open-ended qualitative questionnaire for collecting the perspectives of your staff and students on 'Chineseness' Mandopop. We expect you to hand out the recruitment materials via the university email account or the WeChat public account (A Chinese social media platform). Once the potential participants would like to participate, we would like you to send the participant information sheets and questionnaire via emails.

4. Why do we need access to your staff or students?

The inclusion criteria of participants will be the audiences who by generation into the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s (age from 20 to 59 years) and lived in China Mainland, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Overseas Chinese communities. Your staff and students meet the inclusion criteria so that we are inviting them to attend the questionnaire.

5. If you are willing to assist in the study what happens next?

You will be invited to assist with handing out the open-ended qualitative questionnaire, and your staff and student can decide whether they take part or not. If you do decide to assist, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. Your assistance in this project is voluntary so you will not be paid for participation. You can withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You can withdraw at any time by informing the investigators without giving a reason and without it affecting your rights.

6. How we will use the questionnaire?

We will collect the data of open-ended qualitative questionnaires and analyse them, and the results of the questionnaires will be disseminated in the thesis and research articles for publication. The questionnaire will be anonymous.

7. Will the name of my organisation taking part in the study be kept confidential?

The name of your organisation taking part in the study will be kept confidential. The information you provide as part of the study is the study data. Any study data from which you can be identified (e.g. from identifiers such as your name, date of birth, audio recording etc.), is known as personal data. This includes more sensitive categories of personal data (sensitive data) such as your race; ethnic origin; politics; religion. When you agree to take part in a study, we will use your personal data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the study and if necessary, to verify and defend, when required, the process and outcomes of the study. Personal data will be accessible to the study team. When we do not need to use personal data, it will be deleted or identifiers will be removed. Personal data does not include data that cannot be identified to an individual (e.g. data collected anonymously or where identifiers have been removed). However, your consent form, contact details, audio recordings etc. will be retained for five years.

8. What will taking part involve? What should I do now?

- Sign and return the **Gatekeeper Consent Form** provided

Should you have any comments or questions regarding this research, you may contact the researchers:
Lushiqi He, L.He@2018.ljmu.ac.uk

This study has received ethical approval from LJMU's Research Ethics Committee

REC reference number: 19HSS010

Date of approval: 12/08/2019

Contact Details of Researcher

Lushiqi He

Email: L.He@2018.ljmu.ac.uk

+44 (0)7595969487

Contact Details of Academic Supervisor (*student studies only*)

Dr Simone Krüger Bridge

Email: S.Kruger@ljmu.ac.uk

+44 (0)151 231 5054

If you have any concerns regarding your involvement in this research, please discuss these with the researcher in the first instance. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate.



利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学 把关者信息表

研究题目：20 世纪 80 年代以来变迁社会中的华语流行音乐“中国性”概念分析

研究员：何吕诗琦

所属学院及二级学院：人文社会科学学院，艺术专业和社会研究学院

1. 您为什么会看到这份信息表？

我们正在研究华语流行音乐中的“中国性”概念。为了了解受众的观点，我们计划进行开放式调查问卷，您的员工和学生符合纳入标准。

2. 研究的目的是什么？

反映“中国性”的流行音乐流派自 20 世纪 60 年代以来不同时期出现，而华语流行音乐正在发展，其表现形式，特征，功能，意义和价值观根据其社会和文化背景在不同的变化背景下进行了转变。追溯中国流行音乐的历史，所产生的各种具有明显中国风格的音乐类型，在本研究中称为“中国性”。为了解释华语流行音乐中“中国性”的概念，将重点关注“中国性”的历史背景，不同类型的特征，音景，身份和表现。这项研究旨在研究如何在华语流行音乐中构建和理论化“中国性”作为一种意识形态概念。关于华语流行音乐中“中国性”的文本分析和结构，将讨论语言学，音景，编曲配器和视觉效果。从历史背景到文本声音，通过进一步研究应用民族音乐学分析和实地工作方法，可以定义和分析“中国性”。为了探索华语流行音乐中的“中国性”概念，本研究提出了三个主要的研究问题：（1）华语流行音乐音乐中是否存在“中国性”的概念；（2）华语流行音乐中“中国性”的含义是什么；（3）“中国性”，社会与音乐市场之间的相关性是什么？

3. 我们需要您协助做什么？

我们邀请您协助分发开放式问卷，以收集您的员工和学生对“中国性”华语流行音乐的看法。我们希望您可以通过学校电子邮件或者微信公众号来发布参与对象的招募信息，一旦有人同意参加，希望您可以通过电子邮件将知情同意书及调查问卷发送给他们。

4. 为什么我们需要接触您的员工和学生？

参与者的入选标准是 1970 年代，1980 年代，1990 年代和 2000 年代（年龄 20 至 59 岁）的观众，并居住在中国大陆，香港，澳门，台湾和海外华人社区。您的员工和学生符合纳入标准，因为我们希望可以邀请他们来参加此次问卷调查。

5. 如果您愿意协助研究，接下来会发生什么？

您将被邀请协助分发开放式调查问卷，您的员工和学生可以自行决定他们是否参加。如果您决定提供帮助，您将收到此信息表以保留并被要求签署同意书。您在此项目中的帮助是自愿的，因此您不会因参与而获得报酬。在研究过程中，您可以随时退出或停止参与，您无需告知其原因，且您的权益不会收到任何影响。

6. 我们将如何使用问卷？

我们将收集开放式问卷的数据并进行分析，问卷的分析结果将用于博士学位论文及其他相关的发表的学术论文中。调查问卷将是匿名的。

7. 如果我的组织参与研究，组织名称是否会保密？

参与本研究的组织名称将予以保密。您作为研究的一部分提供的信息是**研究数据**。您可以识别的任何研究数据（例如，您的姓名，出生日期，录音等信息）被称为**个人数据**。其中包括更敏感的个人数据类别（**敏感数据**），例如您的种族、民族血统、政治、宗教等信息。

当您同意参加研究时，我们将以所需的方式使用您的个人数据来进行和分析研究，并在必要时验证和保护研究的过程和结果。只有本研究的研究团队可以访问个人数据。

当我们不需要使用个人数据时，它将被删除，个人数据不包括无法识别个人的数据（例如匿名收集的数据或已删除标识符的数据）。但是您所签署同意书、您的联系方式、采访过程的录音录像等将保留 5 年，直到本研究结束。

8. 参与的内容是什么？我现在应该怎么做？

- 签署并返还把关者同意书

如果您对本研究有任何意见或问题，可以联系研究人员：何吕诗琦，L.He@2018.ljmu.ac.uk

该研究已获得利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学研究伦理委员会的道德批准

利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学研究伦理委员会批准参考编号：19HSS010

批准日期：2019 年 8 月 12 日

研究员联系信息

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研究员导师联系信息

Simone Krüger Bridge 博士

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+44 (0)151 231 5054

如果您对本研究的任何方面有疑虑，请联系相关的研究人员，他们将尽力回答您的问题。调查员应在 10 个工作日内确认您的疑虑，并告诉您他们打算如何处理。如果您想投诉，请联系利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学研究伦理委员会主席（researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk），您的来文将酌情转发给独立人士。



利物浦约翰摩尔斯大学 参与者同意书

研究题目：20 世纪 80 年代以来变迁社会中的华语流行音乐“中国性”概念分析

研究员：何吕诗琦

所属学院及二级学院：人文社会科学学院，艺术专业和社会研究学院

1. 我确认已阅读并理解上述研究提供的信息。我有机会考虑这些信息，提出问题并得到了令人满意的答复
2. 我理解我的参与是自愿的，我可以随时退出，无需给出理由，这不会影响我的合法权利。
3. 我了解在研究期间收集的任何个人信息都将被匿名并保密
4. 我知道采访将录制音频，我很乐意继续
5. 我理解我们的部分谈话可能会在未来的出版物或演示文稿中逐字使用，我可以选择被归因或被识别。但如果我选择匿名，这些引用都将按我的要求被匿名化。
6. 我同意参加上述研究

参与者姓名 日期 签名

研究员姓名 日期 签名

注意：本同意书一式两份，参与者完成同意书后保留一份，研究员保留一份

Appendix 8-1: Gatekeeper Consent Form (English Version)



**LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY
GATEKEEPER CONSENT FORM**

Title of Project: An Analysis of the Notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop in a Changing Society since the 1980s

Name of Researchers: Lushiqi He

We are doing the research on the notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop. In order to understand the audiences' perspectives, we plan to conduct the open-ended qualitative questionnaire, and your staff and students meet the inclusion criteria. We are inviting you to assist with handing out the open-ended qualitative questionnaire for collecting the perspectives of your staff and students on 'Chineseness' Mandopop.

Please tick to confirm your understanding of the study and that you are happy for your organisation to take part and your facilities to be used to host parts of the project.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that participation of our organisation and students/members in the research is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect legal rights.

3. I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential.

4. I agree for our organisation and students/members to take part in the above study.

5. I agree to conform to the data protection act

Name of Gatekeeper:

Date:

Signature:

Name of Researcher:

Date:

Signature:

Note: When completed 1 copy for participant and 1 copy for researcher

Appendix 9: Non-validated questionnaires



华语流行音乐中的“中国性”概念调查问卷
The Questionnaire of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop

研究主题 Title of Project:

自 1980 年代在变迁社会中的华语流行音乐中的“中国性”概念研究

An Analysis of the Notion of 'Chineseness' in Mandopop in a Changing Society since the 1980s

研究者 Researcher: 何吕诗琦 Lushiqi He

所在大学 University: 利物浦约翰摩尔大学 Liverpool John Moores University

所在院系 School/Faculty: 艺术专业与社会研究学院 School of Humanities and Social Science, Faculty of Arts Professional and Social Studies

填写问卷日期 Date Received: _____年_____月_____日

知情同意书

The Statement of Implied Consent

1. 我确认已阅读并理解为上述研究提供的信息。我有机会考虑这些信息。
I confirm that I have read and understand the information provided for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information.
2. 我理解我的参与是自愿的，我可以随时退出，不给出任何理由，这不会影响我的合法权利。
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and that this will not affect my legal rights.
3. 我了解在研究期间收集的任何个人信息都将被匿名并保密。
I understand that any personal information collected during the study will be anonymised and remain confidential.
4. 我 18 岁以上，我同意参加上述研究。
I am over 18-year-old and I agree to take part in the above study.

一、个人基本信息 Personal Information

1. 年龄段 Age: 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59
2. 性别 Gender: 男 Male 女 Female
3. 所在地区 Region: 中国大陆 China Mainland 香港/澳门 Hong Kong / Macau
台湾 Taiwan 海外 Overseas
4. 是否有音乐相关专业背景? Is your major related to music? 是 Yes 否 No
5. 是否从事与音乐相关的工作? Is your job related to music? 是 Yes 否 No

二、“中国性”华语流行音乐的认知 The Perception of ‘Chineseness’ Mandopop

6. 您是否听过“中国性”流行音乐?
Did you listen to any piece of ‘Chineseness’ Mandopop?
是 Yes 否 No

如果您回答“否”，请简述您认为“中国性”流行音乐应该有什么特点。

If you have answered **No** to this question, please indicate what characteristics you think the popularity of "sex in China" music should have.

如果您回答“是”，请简述您在何时何地第一次听到的，以及您最喜欢或印象最深刻的一首“中国性”流行音乐。

If you have answered **Yes** to question 6, please indicate your favourite or most impressive ‘Chineseness’ Mandopop, and where and when you first listen to it.

7. 您是否听过西北风，中国风或古风歌曲?
Have you ever listened to any genre of Northwest Wind, Chinese Wind or Ancient Wind?
是 Yes 否 No

如果您回答“否”，请跳答到问题 8。

If you have answered **No** to this question, please proceed to question 8.

如果您回答“是”，请简述您听过以上 3 中曲风的哪几种，第一首听过的该区风的歌曲是什么。
(如果您听过不止一种曲风，请分别回答。)

If you have chosen **Yes** to question 7, please briefly describe which of the three genres you have listened to and what the first song is that you have listened to in this genre. (If you have listened to more than one genre, please answer them separately.)

三、“中国性”华语流行音乐的消费 The Consumption of ‘Chineseness’ Mandopop

8. 您曾经购买过包含“中国性”华语流行音乐的实体唱片或数位专辑吗?

Did you purchase any piece of album which contained ‘Chineseness’ Mandopop, including the digital album?

是 Yes 否 No

如果您回答“否”，请简述您不购买的原因。

If you have answered **No** to this question, please describe your reasons for not purchasing.

如果您回答“是”，请简述您何时购买的以及您购买的第一张购买的包含“中国性”华语流行音乐的实体唱片或数位专辑是什么

If you have answered **Yes** to question 8, please briefly indicate the time when you purchased the album and which the first album (including digital album) of ‘Chineseness’ Mandopop is that you purchased.

9. 如果有人向您推荐“中国性”华语流行音乐，您会购买吗？请简述原因。

If someone recommend 'Chineseness' Mandopop to you, will you purchase it? Please indicate the reason why you purchase it or not.

10. 您是否会向其他人推荐“中国性”华语流行音乐吗？请简述原因。

Will you recommend 'Chineseness' Mandopop to others? Please indicate the reason why you recommend it or not.

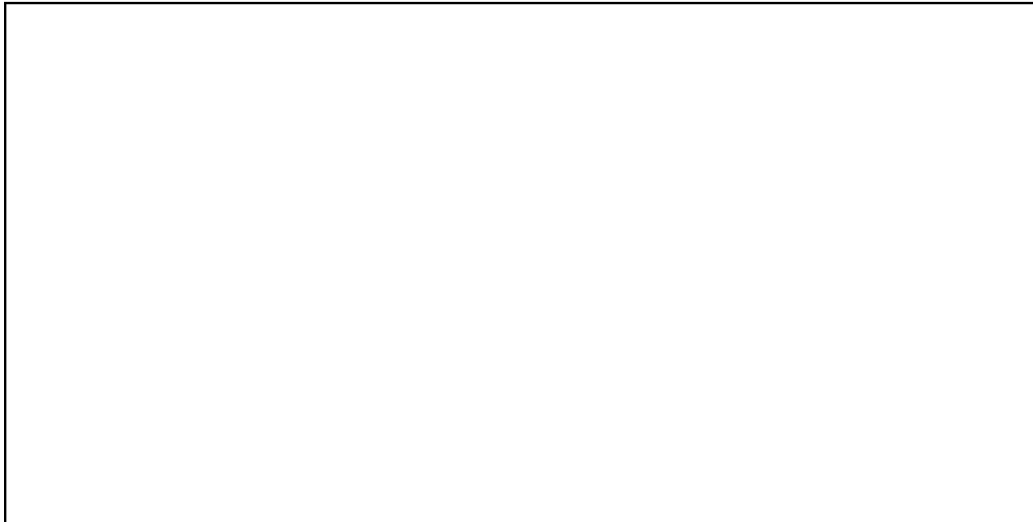
四、“中国性”华语流行音乐的案例调查 Case Study of 'Chineseness' Mandopop

11. 您最喜欢的一首“中国性”华语流行音乐是什么？请从文本（如歌词、意境、韵脚、平仄等）、音景（如旋律、编曲、调性、配器等）和视觉效果（如专辑封面、宣传、演出服装、音乐录影带等）等方面简述原因。

What is your favourite "Chineseness" Mandopop? Please briefly explain the reasons from the aspects of literature space (including the lyric, artistic conception, rhyme and tone pattern), sonic space (including the sound, melody, tonality and instrumentation) and visual material space (including leaflet, poster, CD cover, performing costume and music video) etc.

12. 您认为哪一首“中国性”华语流行音乐是最正宗的？请从文本（如歌词、意境、韵脚、平仄等）、音景（如旋律、编曲、调性、配器等）和视觉效果（如专辑封面、宣传、演出服装、音乐录影带等）等方面简述原因。

Which is the most authentic "Chineseness" Mandopop in your mind? Please briefly explain the reasons from the aspects of literature space (including the lyric, artistic conception, rhyme and tone pattern), sonic space (including the sound, melody, tonality and instrumentation) and visual material space (including leaflet, poster, CD cover, performing costume and music video) etc.



The "Ethics Review Method for Biomedical Research involving People" was discussed and approved by the National Health and Family Planning Committee on September 30, 2016, and will be implemented from December 1, 2016.

This "Ethics Review Method" shown that the Chinese Government required the ethics approval only if do the biomedical research.

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主题分类		文号	第11号委令
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涉及人的生物医学研究伦理审查办法

第11号

《涉及人的生物医学研究伦理审查办法》已于2016年9月30日经国家卫生计生委主任会议讨论通过，现予公布，自2016年12月1日起施行。

主任: 李斌
2016年10月12日

涉及人的生物医学研究伦理审查办法

第一章 总则

第一条 为保护人的生命和健康，维护人的尊严，尊重和保护受试者的合法权益，规范涉及人的生物医学研究伦理审查工作，制定本办法。

第二条 本办法适用于各级各类医疗卫生机构开展涉及人的生物医学研究伦理审查工作。

第三条 本办法所称涉及人的生物医学研究包括以下活动：

(一) 采用现代物理学、化学、生物学、中医学和心理学等方法对人的生理、心理行为、病理现象、疾病病因和发病机制，以及疾病的预防、诊断、治疗和康复进行研究的；

(二) 医学新技术或者医疗新产品在人体上进行试验研究的；

(三) 采用流行病学、社会学、心理学等方法收集、记录、使用、报告或者储存有关人的样本、医疗记录、行为等科学研究资料的活动。

第四条 伦理审查应当遵守国家法律法规规定，在研究中尊重受试者的自主意愿，同时遵守有益、不伤害以及公正的原则。

第五条 国家卫生计生委负责全国涉及人的生物医学研究伦理审查工作的监督管理，成立国家医学伦理专家委员会。国家中医药管理局负责中医药研究伦理审查工作的监督管理，成立国家中医药伦理专家委员会。

省级卫生计生行政部门成立省级医学伦理专家委员会。

县级以上地方卫生计生行政部门负责本行政区域涉及人的生物医学研究伦理审查工作的监督管理。

第六条 国家医学伦理专家委员会、国家中医药伦理专家委员会（以下称国家医学伦理专家委员会）负责对涉及人的生物医学研究中的重大伦理问题进行研究，提供政策咨询意见，指导省级医学伦理专家委员会的伦理审查相关工作。

省级医学伦理专家委员会协助推动本行政区域涉及人的生物医学研究伦理审查工作的制度化、规范化，指导、检查、评估本行政区域从事涉及人的生物医学研究的医疗卫生机构伦理委员会的工作，开展相关培训、咨询等工作。