

The Influence and Role of Convergences In the Development of China's Music industry

Introduction

As industries develop they often encounter moments when different industrial components converge and/or integrate and generate newer industry forms (Li, 2013: 63). China's music industry is such a typical industry that heavily integrated with other related industrial components such as culture, media, and information communication technology including their specific form and content components during different periods. The evolution of China's music industry from ancient to modern, and then, to contemporary times, experienced a complex convergence process that different industrial components integrated with the music culture and industry. Thus, convergence played an essential role in the evolution.

This paper will examine this influence and role of convergences, in particular industrial convergence in the development of China's music industry. It will specifically investigate how convergences significantly transformed the systems and structures of China's music industry during different periods, making them increasingly complex and forming the paradigms of China's music industry and business.

Theoretical Background: Major Perspectives of Convergence

This section concerns a theoretical base for the subsequent research. This research discusses the influence and role of convergence in the development of China's music industry from a

wider, rather than a narrow, perspective of convergence. The wider perspective of convergence refers to all kinds of convergence in relation to China's music industry, involving not only industrial convergence (mainly including technological, market, business and regulations perspectives) but also cultural and political convergences. However, the narrow perspective of convergence mainly refers to industrial convergence in general, which has been mainly applied in the field of general economics and management. Thus convergence is more often used, rather than industrial convergence in the thesis.

This thesis focuses on the wider, rather than the narrow, perspective, thus theoretical basis will specifically involve the following major concepts in relation to convergence in the music industry: convergence, industrial convergence, cultural convergence, culture and politics related convergence. The following text will specifically expand their meanings.

A. Convergence

It is essential to discuss convergence first. Convergence has been a buzzword in the information technology industries for many years (Lind, 2005; Stieglitz, 2002). It has particularly popularized in the media industries and the cultural industries for more than ten years (Maney, 1995; Fu, 2008). Convergence involves a wide meaning and extent. It is not only used in the domain of mathematics, natural science, computing technology, management, and economy (Lind, 2005; Ma, 2008), it is also used in the domain of social science such as culture, society and politics (Straubhaar and LaRose, 2002; Chen, 2007).

There are certain typical definitions of 'convergence'. The Oxford Dictionary defines 'convergence' as the movement towards the same point or the meeting of two elements (Stieglitz, 2002: 5). The definition of 'convergence' by Theobald (1999) is also representative:

Convergence is an amorphous evolutionary term that is used in somewhat different senses by different authors (or even by the same people at different times). It generally refers to similarities between organisms that evolved independently, i.e. similarities not directly inherited from a common ancestor.

Convergent similarities can involve structure, form, and function. Strict convergence of both function and structure is very rare. (1999-2003: 1)

According to the definitions above, three major points on convergence can be concluded. First, convergence does affect not only the telecommunication and broadcasting fields but also the entire Knowledge Intensive Business Service Sector (KIBSS)¹. Second, convergence is structural in nature, industry structural change is the most profound one. Third, convergence is enabled by technological change, but convergence is not driven by technology, convergence is mainly driven by the commercial purpose.

B. Industrial Convergence

Industrial convergence played an essential role in the evolution of China's music industry, it is essential to discuss it here. Industrial convergence involves a general perspective of convergence in the evolution of China's music industry; it includes not only technological and business convergence but also market, and regulation & policy convergence (Ma 2006; Zhou 2003). Mao and Ning point out the significance and meaning of industrial convergence from the general perspective:

The essence of the connotation of industrial convergence is that information technology and its industries impact other industries to generate a new integrated industry, this new industry contains new industry properties. This phenomena mainly reflects that the border disappears and integrates a different and new industry. This convergence does not simply add two or more industries, but it is a new division of labor based on integrating original industries. (2007: 25)

Industrial convergence is a major form of convergence that played an essential role in the

¹ KIBSS can be defined as services that involved economic activities which are intended to result in the creation, accumulation or dissemination of knowledge (Miles et al., 1995: 18)

evolution of the music industry in China.

C. Cultural Convergence

Cultural convergence was an essential form in the history of the music industry in China. The music industry integrated other cultural and media industries, such as radio, television, film, dance, drama, and literature. Thus the music industry was an essential part of the cultural and media industries, meanwhile it was an integrated industry.

China's music industry manifested not only the cultural characteristics but also the technical and political characteristics in the evolution and development. Thus cultural convergence is not only the theoretical foundation of music industry related convergence. Cultural convergence involves two meanings here. The first is proposed from the perspective of law by Lee (2007). He points out that cultural convergence is very related to interest convergence; interest convergence needs to meet cultural defense (ibid). Interest convergence, is the idea that the interest of African American in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites (Bell, 1980: 523) while the term is used to refer to a criminal defendant's use of cultural evidence to support a traditional criminal defense, to mitigate a charge or sentence, or to support a plea bargain (Lee, 2007: 912). Lee specifically states on it that:

Cultural convergence is the idea that the interests of minority and immigrant criminal defendants in obtaining leniency seem most likely to receive accommodation when there is convergence between dominant majority cultural norms and the cultural norms relied upon by the immigrant or minority defendant. (2007: 914)

Lee's definition mainly applies to explain the phenomena of cultural convergence from the law perspective rather than this phenomena in the cultural domain. Thus, it is essential to propose the second meanings of it here. The second meaning of this term refers here to cultural fusion, in particular between different arts forms, such as music, dance, film, literature, television, and fine arts (Li, 2010). For instance, the Ancient Music and Dance as

the music performance industry during the ancient period of China's music industry involved the integration of music, dance, and literature. This thesis mainly applies the second meaning of cultural convergence rather than the first one.

Cultural convergence can be regarded one of the most essential foundations of the theory of convergence in China's music industry in this research. Thus it is essential to discuss the meanings of cultural convergence here. Cultural convergence involves two meanings in this research. Lee (2007) proposed the first meaning of it from the perspective of law; he points out that cultural convergence is highly related to interest convergence. The second meaning of it refers to 'cultural fusion', in particular between different arts forms, such as music, dance, film, literature, television and the fine arts (Li 2010). For instance, China's music performance industry, during the ancient period, is mainly referred to the Ancient Music and Dance, which involved the integration of music, dance and literature. This research predominantly applies the second meaning of cultural convergence, rather than the first meaning.

D. Culture-politics Convergence

Culture-politics related convergence was also a major integration form in the evolution of the music industry in China. This convergence was a major feature that mainly involved the integration between culture and politics in the development of China's music industry. For instance, 'the red songs' and/or 'the revolutionary songs' is a typical form of this convergence. General industrial convergence, however, is not concerned with this culture - politics related convergence perspective. This convergence played an essential role in the evolution of China's music industry.

In short, essentially, the evolution of China's music industry is a complex phenomena of convergence, It is difficult to explain this complex phenomenon in the development of China's music industry only in terms of the general theory of industrial convergence. Thus it is significant to propose and establish the theory of convergence to explain the nature and law of the evolution of China's music industry.

Initial Research on Convergence in China

This section concerns the research status of convergence in the music industry in China. Although there is abundant research on general industrial convergence both in the West and in China, there is a paucity of research on convergence in relation to the music industry, in particular to China's music industry. Mao Zhongfei and Ning Xuanxi (2007), Mao Zhongfei and Zhuang Yuan (2007) and my own research (2010) are the only Chinese research concerning convergence in relation to both the music industry and China's music industry.

Mao and Ning (2007) is the first related research on industrial convergence in relation to the music industry particularly to the digital music industry. It discusses the phenomenon of convergence in the music industry from the economic and management perspectives. This research proposes a definition of industrial convergence and points out the significance of industrial convergence in the music industry.

Certain valuable points of view on the digital music industry are proposed by Mao and Ning in this research. Firstly, it points out that the digital music industry is closely related to the telecommunications and computing information technology industries. Secondly, it also contends that the digital music industry has not completely replaced the recorded music industry, but in a sense, has played a complementary role in China's music industry. Thirdly, the digital music industry has created certain new music businesses and/or markets, such as mobile ringtones, polyphonic ringtones, MP3, wireless music and online music; they have greatly complemented the shortcomings of the recorded music industry (Li, 2006).

Mao and Zhuang (2007) is the second research in relation to industrial convergence in the music industry. This research has certain research values. Firstly, it points out that the phenomenon of industrial convergence has also often occurred on the border between the music industry and other information communication technology industries such as telecommunication and computing. Secondly, this research also points out the influence of

new digital technologies during the early 21st century, from the perspective of music industrial chain. This influence specifically manifests in certain major segments of the music industrial chain, such as music production, music sale and music consumption, which have transformed due to industrial convergence. Thirdly, this research also indicates that China's music industry has undergone a major transformation in the century; traditional music industries such as the recorded music industry have decreased, the digital music industry, however, has increased.

The third related research is the author own research (2010). Although this research mainly reviews the status of music industry research in China, it, however, discusses the influence of industrial convergence from both the perspective of the music industry in general as well as and the perspective of China's music industry. Thus, this research is significant in the area of convergence in the music industry.

Although these studies address this issue of industrial convergence in the context of the music industry, they lack a systemic analysis thus have limitations. The major limitations of them are as follows: first, they do not address a specific concept, to explain the phenomenon of convergence in the context of the music industry, in particular in China's music industry. Second, they also do not establish a systematic theoretical framework that is able to better explain how convergence has influenced China's music industry to develop. Third, this research does not indicate the differences between general industrial convergence and convergence. Fourth, it does not discuss the relation between the development of China's music industry and industrial convergence. Further, those research do not discuss the nature of convergence in the music industry and the major forms of convergence. Thus, it is essential to discuss the phenomenon of convergence in the development of China's music industry.

Convergences in the Evolution of China's Music Industry

Convergence played an essential role in the development of China's music industry. More

specifically, convergence influenced the systems and structures of China's music industry to evolve. Particularly, it greatly influenced the role and status of major music industry sectors, such as music performance, recorded music and digital music, during different periods. This section mainly concerns convergence during different periods of the evolution of China's music industry.

a. The Ancient Period

The occurrence of the integrated Ancient Music and Dance form indicated the commencement of convergence. The origin of this convergence can, therefore, be tracked back to the periods of the Zhuxiang Clan, the Getian Clan and the Yiqi Clan, in primitive society, approximately 2,800 BC–2,500 BC. They presented an integration and development of music, dance and poetry, and developed up to the Song Dynasties (Qin 2002; Zeng 1997).

The ancient music and dance that converged poem, song and dance was one of the earliest forms of music culture and industry related integration during the early phase of the ancient period. This music culture and industry integrated with other cultural and performing arts industries such as dance, culture, and literature. The music of the Zhuxiang Clan, the Getian Clan, and the Yiqi Clan, the Six Dynasty Music and Dance (also referred to as the 'Music Dance of the Zhou Dynasty')² are typical integrated performing arts industries activities. This indicates that music, dance, and poetry developed in an integrated way in China's ancient music industry.

The 'Wasi' and 'Goulan', as main music and entertainment industry clusters and/or venues mainly during the Song Dynasties³ (996–1279 AD), were also integrated music industry form

2 The Six Dynasty Music and Dances specifically include 'Yunmen Dajun' (the period of Emperor Huang, about 4000 years ago), 'Dazhang' (the period of Emperor Yao, about between 3000-2000 years ago), 'Dashao' (the period of Emperor Shun, later than Yao, also during 3000-2000 years ago), 'Daxia' (the period of Xia Dynasty, the 22nd Century BC-the 17th Century BC), 'Dahuo' (the period of the Shang Dynasty, the 17th Century-the 11th Century BC), and 'Dawu' (the period of the Zhou Dynasty, the 11th Century BC-256 BC) (Chi, 1987).

³ The Song Dynasties includes the Northern Song Dynasty (996–1127) and Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279).

that greatly influenced the music industry to develop during the Sui, Tang, Song periods. Certain commercial music-related performance activities (such as song and dance) also intensively integrated other cultural culture and industry forms, such as dance and drama. These main entertainment venues promoted the music performance industry, including the for-profit music industry sector, to develop, with dance, drama, music and poetry integrating with music (Zhang, 2006).

During the Song Dynasties, drama was a major comprehensive art form. It integrated music and literature, but music played a leading role in this comprehensive art (Qin 2002). This art form was often performed in the 'Wasi' and 'Goulan' (Zhang 2006). Similarly, performance forms, such as Song-Dance Performance in the Song Dynasty, also integrated dance, music and poetry (Zeng 1997).

The 'Wasi' and 'Goulan', as a unified art performance market cluster, greatly promoted music integration with artistic forms (Liang 2009). The term 'unified', refers in this instance to market convergence. This market convergence, in 'Wasi' and 'Goulan' venues, specifically integrated different contents, products, forms, markets, audiences and industry sectors, such as music, dance, drama, literature and so on. This music performance industry also integrated with the tourism industry, and they promoted each other in the Song Dynasties (Liang 2009). This music culture and industry related convergence greatly facilitated the music performance industry.

The convergence of art forms and contents was the main form of convergence during the ancient period. Moreover, the music performance industry often integrated with other arts performance industries and formed a larger cultural industry system and structure during this ancient period (Qin 2002; Zeng 1997). These integrated arts industries such as song-dance, music-drama and music-literature were essential parts in the entire music performance industry during this period.

It is important to discuss why these cultural and arts industry sectors, such as dance, drama

and poetry, integrated with the music culture and industry during the ancient period. The complementary relation between them was the main reason for their convergence. Milgrom and Roberts (1995) contend that this complementary relation can occur if the growth of one asset or activity in one industry increases the returns to expanding another asset or activity in a different industry.

Stieglitz (2003) points out that 'complementary relations' imply the integration or merging of assets or activities in two industries. This convergence is considered as 'complementary convergence' by Stieglitz. During the ancient period, complementary convergence involved music products and market convergence. Music product convergence specifically referred to the integration between some arts and culture forms, such as dance, drama, literature and music; music market convergence specifically referred to audience, entertainer and consumer integration between these other arts cultures and music, in the 'Wasi' and 'Goulan' venues. Thus, the main purpose of this complementary convergence was to increase the integrated and/or comprehensive effect of arts and entertainments, and attract more audiences.

The commonality of capital, and the complementary nature of culture and entertainment, were main pre-conditions and driving forces to promote this convergence (Stieglitz, 2003). For instance, the commonality of capital mainly involved common performance stages for the integrated arts culture and industries, in the 'Wasi' and 'Goulan' (Liang 2009). The complementary nature of culture and entertainment mainly involved all kind of integrated arts forms such as music, drama, dance, and poetry. Thus, these arts are also called the 'integrated arts' or 'comprehensive arts'.

b. The Modern Period

During the 20th century, the music industry integrated with other cultural industries, in particular with the media industry. The recorded music industry was closely related to the integration between the music industry and the media industry. The recorded music industry was the secondary major music industry form, following the first major music industry – the music performance industry of the ancient period. Major convergence with the music industry,

in particular with the recorded music industry, involved some major media industries, such as radio, television, publishing and film, during the 20th century.

Why did the media industry intensively integrate with the music industry? One of the major reasons for this was because both the media industry and the music industry had a very close relationship, particularly during the modern period. They developed interdependently (Li, 2011). Music, on the one hand, was an essential content form in the media industry, and this greatly promoted the media industry to develop during the 20th century; in other words, the media industry was very dependent on the recorded music industry. Media, on the other hand, was an essential channel and/or place to display and transmit music, music performance and music records during both the 20th and 21st centuries. Therefore, the recorded music industry and the media industry were interdependent on each other.

During the 1990s, the music industry, in particular the recorded music industry, greatly integrated with the media industry in Shanghai. The occurrence and development of independent music radio and television stations was the result of this convergence. For instance, the Shanghai East Music Station and the Shanghai Music Television Station were established in the 1990s. Music radio, music television, and music film were the convergence products of these industries. Thus, the convergence between the media industry and the music industry also reached a peak during 1990s.

c. The Contemporary Period

During the 21st century, China's music industry experienced more intensive integration with other cultural and media industries, in particular with information communication technology industries. The digital music industry can be regarded the result of the integration between the music industry, in particular the recorded music industry, and the information communication technology industries, such as telecommunication and computing technology.

During the 21st century, the recorded music industry became the traditional music industry while the digital music industry has become the newer music industry. The recorded music

industry gradually began to lack the capability to innovate using new technologies; it particularly lacked the ability to use digital distributing channel technologies which were developed by the external information communication technology industries (Li 2010).

However, the status of the music industry, as a whole, has been in a disadvantaged position during the contemporary period, affecting its development. The recorded music industry, as the traditional music industry, was at the absolute disadvantage and in passive position in this integration process; conversely, the information communication technology industries possessed the digital distribution channels and had an absolute advantage and active position in this process. This has not been conducive to the healthy development of the music industry during this period.

Thus, convergence, in particular industrial convergence, played a vital role in the development of the China's music industry, particularly during the 21st century. Due to the influence, penetration, and integration of the music industry with other larger industries, such as the information communication technology industries, the systems and structures of China's music industry became more complicated and large in scale in this century. Convergence greatly promoted China's music industry, although it also had a negative effect due to a serious lack of related law. Thus, convergence has been a main developmental dynamic related to China's music industry.

Conclusion

Convergence, in particular industrial convergence, has greatly influenced China's music industry during different periods. Convergence became more in-depth along with the evolution of China's music industry. This convergence initially appeared in the period of the Yan Emperor (about 2,800 B.C). The Zhu Xiang Clan's Music was one of the earliest music culture and industry related convergence phenomena in China. The music performance industry, as the main music industry form, often integrated with dance, drama and literature

during the ancient period.

The recorded music industry, as the most representative industry during the modern period, greatly integrated with the media industry during the 20th century. Convergence between the music industry (particularly the recorded music industry) and the media industry became more in-depth, particularly during the period from the 1920s–the 1930s and the late 1980s–1990s (Li, 2013). Music radio and television stations, including MTV and music films, were major music industry related convergence forms during this century.

The scope and degree of convergence greatly increased during the early 21st century along with the development of digital information communication technologies. This convergence happened between the information communication technology (ICT) industries, such as computing communications and telecommunications, and the music industry, particularly the recorded music industry. The digital music industry has become the result of their convergence. The ICT industries established and dominated the market channel of the digital music industry while the recorded music industry as the traditional music industry, mainly provided music content for the digital music industry. Thus, the development of the digital music industry in China has been in an unhealthy environment.

Thus, in this sense, convergence was the major dynamics that facilitated the music industry in China to evolve. In other words, convergence played a leading role in the evolution of China's music industry, convergence can be regarded as the essence of the development of China's music industry.

References:

Chen, Q. (2007). The Exploration of Music Culture Operation: Reviewing the Series of Activities of 'the Music Works Collection of Chinese Contemporary Composers'. *People's Music*, (7).

Chi, K. Al. et 1987, *The Collection of Arts*. Beijing China: The Popular Science Press, retrieved on 02/12/11 from:
http://202.198.141.13:8080/RESOURCE/CZ/CZLS/DGJC/ZGGDS/XQBF/ZHWMDBX/3080_SR.htm.

Fu, Y. 2008, *The Mega Media Industry: From Media Convergence to Industrial Convergence - A Comparative Study of China and America's Telecommunication and Media Industries*, Beijing: China Radio and Television Publishing House.

Lee, C. 2007, Cultural Convergence: Interest Convergence Theory Meets the Cultural Defense, *Arizona Law Review*, (49).

Liang, S 2009, 'A study of Wasi and Goulan in the Northern Song', Unpublished Master's thesis, Henan University.

Li, F 2010, 'A study of research activity in China's music industry since the reform and opening-up and some other related issues', *Huangzhong: Journal of Wuhan Conservatory of Music*, (3), pp.12-23.

Li, F 2011, 'The development of China's music industry during the first half of the 20th century', *Journal of NEO*, (1).

Li, F 2013, *China's Music Industry: Evolution, Development and Convergence*, unpublished PhD thesis, Macquarie University, Sydney.

Lind, J. 2005, *Ubiquitous Convergence: Market Redefinitions Generated by Technological Change and the Industry Life Cycle*, presented in the DRUID Academy Winter 2005 Conference, January 27-29, 2005, retrieved August 10, 2011 from http://www.druid.dk/uploads/tx_picturedb/dw2005-1624.pdf.

Li, S 2006, *The digital entertainment industries*, Sichuan University Press, Sichuan.

Ma, J. 2006, *The Study on Industrial Convergence*, Nanjing, China: The Press of Nanjing University.

Maney, K. 1995, *Megamedia Shakeout: The Inside Story of the Leaders and the Losers in the Exploding Communications Industry*, Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Mao, Z & Ning, X 2007, 'The study of industrial convergence in China's music industry', *Reform and Opening-up*, (1), pp. 25-27.

Mao Z & Zhuang Y 2007, 'The impact of digital technology on the music industry', *Hundred Schools in Arts*, (6).

Miles, I.; Kastrinos, N.; Flanagan, K.; Bilderbeek, R.; and den Hertog, P. (1995): *Knowledge-intensive business services. Users, carriers and sources of innovation*. Manchester: PREST.

Qin, X 2002, *The history of Chinese music*, The Literature and Art Publishing House, Beijing.

Stieglitz, N. 2002, Industry Dynamics and Types of Market Convergence: The Evolution of the Handheld Computers Market in the 1990s and Beyond, presented at the DRUID Summer Conference on "Industrial Dynamics of the New and Old Economy - Who is Embracing Whom?", Copenhagen/Elsinore 6-8 June 2002, retrieved on August 2, 2011 from: www.druid.dk/uploads/tx_picturedb/ds2002-651.pdf.

Straubhaar, J., and LaRose, R. 2002, *Media Now: Communications Media in the Information Age*, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson.

Theobald, D. 1999-2003, Exploring the Creation/ Evolution Controversy, Retrieved on December 12, 2011 from: <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/comdesc/glossary.html>.

Zeng, S 1997, *Introduction to sociology of music: a study of the contemporary music producing system operation*, Art and Literature Press, Beijing.

Zhang, N 2006, Chinese Ancient commercial music culture from the perspective of the 'Wasi' market in the Song dynasty, *Chinese Music*, (4).

Zhou, H. (2003). *Network Economy*. Beijing, China: The Economic Management Press.

Author: John Fangjun Li,

Affiliations: Macquarie University/the Australian - Chinese Music Industry Network,

Email: lifangjun17@gmail.com

Telephone: 0061-418 800 922,

Postal address: 35 Keeler St., Carlingford, NSW 2118 Australia