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Article

The 'Mediating' Characteristics and Identity Reconstruction of Hong Kong Cultural Communication in the Context of Offshore Economy

Yinjuan Hu^{1,*} and Jingwen Sun²

¹ School of Economics and Management, Qinghai MinZu University, Xining, China

² School of Humanities and Communication, University of Sanya, Sanya, China

* Correspondence: Yinjuan Hu, School of Economics and Management, Qinghai MinZu University, Xining, China

Abstract: Hong Kong, China, with its unique offshore economic context, serves as a crucial hub for cultural exchange between the East and the West. Over the years, its cultural identity has evolved through various layers of foreign influence, local traditions, and global economic dynamics. This paper investigates the "mediating" role of Hong Kong, China, in the global cultural landscape, focusing on the intricate processes of identity reconstruction through continuous cultural transmission. Through a comprehensive examination of the role of Hong Kong, China, as a cultural mediator in the context of its offshore economy, the paper explores the multifaceted ways in which the city has navigated complex cultural flows. Furthermore, it analyzes how the region has negotiated local and global identities, thereby contributing significantly to the evolution of transnational cultural landscapes. The study highlights the profound complexities of the position of Hong Kong, China, as both a vital cultural bridge and a dynamic space where identity, power, and cultural narratives continuously intersect. By employing a multidisciplinary approach that integrates economic frameworks with cultural studies, this research provides a deeper understanding of how offshore economies facilitate unique forms of cultural mediation. Ultimately, the findings underscore the necessity of recognizing the ongoing identity reconstruction within Hong Kong, China, offering valuable insights into the broader mechanisms of global cultural communication and the enduring impact of economic structures on societal self-perception and transnational integration.

Keywords: hong kong, china; offshore economy; cultural communication; identity reconstruction; transnationalism

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1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background and Significance

The offshore economic role of Hong Kong, China, has significantly influenced its cultural environment, establishing it as a hub for diverse cultural exchanges. As a Special Administrative Region of China, it occupies a distinctive position in terms of cultural identity, shaped by a blend of Western and Eastern influences [1]. Examining the "mediating" characteristics of Hong Kong, China, in cultural communication is essential for understanding how global and local dynamics interact to redefine its cultural identity, particularly in the context of economic and geopolitical changes.

1.2. Current Research

Existing research on the cultural mediation of Hong Kong, China primarily examines the interplay of economic forces, cultural flows, and identity formation. Studies have highlighted how the unique status of Hong Kong, China as an offshore economy enables it to serve as a cultural bridge between Eastern and Western spheres. Research has demonstrated that the city's economic framework facilitates the exchange and transformation of cultural practices through trade, media, and migration. The role of Hong Kong, China in global trade and cultural exchanges has been extensively analyzed, particularly in terms of its ability to adapt and mediate cultural elements from diverse origins [2, 3]. The concept of "cultural hybridity" has been explored to illustrate how Hong Kong, China integrates Eastern traditions with Western modernity, creating a distinctive cultural environment with global resonance.

1.3. Research Methodology and Structure

This research employs a multidisciplinary approach, integrating cultural studies, economics, and sociology. The methodology encompasses historical analysis, case studies, and interviews with cultural practitioners and scholars [4]. The paper is organized as follows: an introduction to the offshore economy's influence on cultural transmission, the role of Hong Kong, China, as a cultural mediator, the mechanisms of identity reconstruction, application of cultural communication models, challenges encountered, and concluding observations.

2. Hong Kong's Offshore Economic Context and Cultural Landscape

2.1. The Offshore Economy: Definition and Characteristics

The offshore economy refers to economic activities conducted outside a nation's domestic framework, typically encompassing sectors such as trade, finance, and services, with operations that are not confined to the governance of a single country [5, 6]. In the context of Hong Kong, China, its offshore economy has thrived due to its strategic role as a global financial hub, its distinct economic policies, and a business-friendly environment characterized by low taxes, streamlined administrative processes, and advanced infrastructure. These policies are designed to attract foreign investment and strengthen trade relations, positioning the city as a vital conduit between Eastern and Western markets. Over time, these factors have solidified Hong Kong, China's role in international trade and finance, serving as a critical intermediary for mainland China and global markets. Beyond the financial sector, the offshore economy in Hong Kong, China also supports industries such as logistics, tourism, and professional services. These economic dynamics have bolstered the city's reputation as a global business center and have influenced its cultural exchanges, enabling it to act as a platform for the dissemination of ideas, products, and services across diverse sectors.

2.2. Hong Kong as a Cultural Nexus

Hong Kong, China, as a former British colony and its current position as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China, has developed a unique blend of Eastern and Western influences. This has positioned the city as a cultural nexus where traditional Chinese customs and contemporary Western practices coexist and interact dynamically. The population is ethnically diverse, including significant communities of Cantonese, Mandarin speakers, English-speaking expatriates, and others. This multicultural environment is further enriched by the city's role as a major international business and trade center, attracting individuals and organizations from across the globe. The dual heritage of the city is evident in its cultural landscape, encompassing food, festivals, arts, and entertainment, which integrate both Chinese and Western elements. This fusion of cultures fosters cross-cultural dialogue, enabling the city to act as a bridge between the East and the West, facilitating the exchange of cultural practices, ideas, and innovations. Additionally, the cosmopolitan atmosphere and rich cultural history make it an appealing destination for artists, creatives, and cultural entrepreneurs who aim to engage with global trends while maintaining local roots [7].

2.3. The Role of Economic Factors in Cultural Mediation

The growth and development of Hong Kong, China's offshore economy have significantly contributed to cultural mediation by providing the necessary infrastructure and platforms for the exchange of cultural ideas, media, and practices. As a major financial and trade center, Hong Kong, China has positioned itself as a conduit for global cultural flows [8, 9]. The city's media, education, and entertainment sectors are highly advanced, creating a dynamic environment where cultural products—such as films, television shows, music, and literature—can be produced, adapted, and disseminated both locally and internationally. The economic landscape of Hong Kong, China enables the fusion of global cultural trends with local traditions, resulting in a distinctive cultural output that reflects both global and local dimensions of its society. Its role as a media hub facilitates the distribution of Chinese-language films, television programs, and other cultural products worldwide, while also serving as a platform for introducing Western cultural exports to the Chinese-speaking world. Furthermore, the economic prosperity of Hong Kong, China has fostered an environment where international cultural events, such as art exhibitions, music festivals, and theatrical performances, can flourish, attracting audiences and artists from across the globe. Through these economic and cultural exchanges, Hong Kong, China serves as a vital mediator of cultural understanding and innovation, bridging cultural divides and promoting cross-cultural collaboration on a global scale.

3. Mediating Role in Global Cultural Communication

3.1. Intermediary Function in Transnational Cultural Flows

Hong Kong, China's economic success has firmly established it as a key intermediary in transnational cultural flows, where the convergence of local traditions and global cultural influences is not only welcomed but actively fostered. Positioned strategically at the crossroads of East and West, Hong Kong, China serves as a conduit for the exchange of cultural ideas, products, and practices. Over the years, the city has played an essential role in introducing Western cultural products, such as films, music, and fashion, to Asian markets, where they have been adapted and embraced. At the same time, Hong Kong, China has acted as a platform for the export of Chinese culture, particularly Cantonese traditions, to Western audiences. This dual role enhances the city's position as a cultural bridge, connecting disparate regions and facilitating the flow of cultural goods, ideas, and experiences internationally. Through its media, education, and entertainment sectors, Hong Kong, China enables the dynamic exchange of cultural content, acting as an intermediary that not only integrates global influences into local contexts but also promotes local culture to the wider world. In this way, the city's economic prosperity supports its function as a central hub in the global circulation of culture, facilitating the blending of regional identities within the framework of globalization.

3.2. Cultural Adaptation and Hybridization in Hong Kong

As an intermediary between global cultures, Hong Kong, China plays a crucial role in the adaptation and hybridization of foreign cultural elements. This process of cultural transformation is evident in multiple areas of life in the city, where Eastern traditions are integrated with Western ideas, creating unique and innovative cultural products. In the realm of cinema, the city has long been recognized for its ability to merge Western filmmaking techniques with Chinese storytelling traditions, producing films that resonate with both local and international audiences. Similarly, in fashion, traditional Chinese aesthetics are blended with modern Western trends, resulting in a style that is distinctly cosmopolitan yet rooted in local culture. The music scene also showcases this fusion, where Cantonese pop music incorporates Western influences while retaining its cultural essence, creating a genre that has achieved widespread popularity in both Asia and abroad. The culinary scene is another prime example, where local dishes are influenced by global flavors, resulting in a dynamic food culture that has gained international recognition. These processes of cultural adaptation and hybridization not only produce cultural products that are globally appealing but also ensure that they remain relevant to

the local context. In this way, the city has become a space where cultural boundaries are fluid, allowing for the continual reinvention and reinterpretation of cultural traditions in response to the changing dynamics of global and local forces [10, 11].

3.3. Cultural Policy and Governance in Mediation

Hong Kong, China's cultural policies have evolved to reflect its role as a mediator of cultural exchanges between the East and the West. Government efforts to support cultural development have been evident in various initiatives designed to promote Hong Kong, China's distinctive cultural heritage while fostering international collaboration. For example, the promotion of Cantonese as a key element of Hong Kong, China's identity has been an important aspect of cultural policy, helping preserve and celebrate local traditions amid increasing global influences. In addition, the government has supported the organization of cultural festivals, such as the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the Hong Kong International Film Festival, which attract international artists and audiences and further position the city as a hub for cultural dialogue and exchange. These events not only showcase Hong Kong, China's cultural diversity but also provide a platform for artists and creative professionals from around the world to collaborate and share their work. Moreover, policies in Hong Kong, China also include collaborations with international cultural institutions, such as museums and universities, fostering deeper cross-cultural connections [12]. Cultural governance in Hong Kong, China is also shaped by broader policy considerations, particularly in relation to mainland China. The balance between preserving local traditions and coordinating with broader national cultural frameworks has influenced the city's cultural policies and generated discussion about cultural continuity and integration. This complex balance reflects Hong Kong, China's distinctive position as both a global city and a part of China, navigating the dynamics between local characteristics and broader national frameworks.

4. Identity Reconstruction in Hong Kong's Cultural Communication

4.1. The Dynamics of Cultural Identity in a Globalized Context

The process of cultural identity reconstruction in Hong Kong, China, is shaped by a complex interplay of internal and external forces, reflecting the territory's unique historical, political, and economic circumstances. This identity reshaping occurs within the broader context of globalization, where the rapid flow of people, goods, and ideas has influenced how individuals and communities perceive themselves. Central to this transformation is the negotiation between traditional Chinese identity and the various global influences that have permeated Hong Kong, China's culture over the years. Historically, the territory's exposure to Western ideals during a specific period created a distinctive hybrid identity that has evolved further in subsequent years. Its economic prosperity and position as a global financial and cultural hub have only intensified its engagement with international cultures. The continuous influx of foreign ideas and the blending of Western and Chinese traditions have led to an ongoing negotiation in which local identity is not static but constantly reshaped. As a result, Hong Kong, China's identity is fluid, continually defined and redefined through economic and cultural exchanges, reflecting both its unique heritage and its aspirations in a globalized world. This ongoing negotiation of cultural identity is essential in understanding how cultural narratives—rooted in historical traditions—are constructed, deconstructed, and redefined in response to external forces and local dynamics.

4.2. The Role of Media and Popular Culture in Identity Formation

The media landscape in Hong Kong, China, plays a pivotal role in shaping and reflecting local identity, serving as both a mirror of cultural values and a mechanism for influencing public perception. Various media outlets, including television, film, and digital platforms, have been instrumental in portraying Hong Kong, China, as a distinctive fusion of Chinese traditions and Western influences. For example, the city's film industry has historically combined Chinese storytelling techniques with Western

cinematic styles, creating works that resonate with both local and global audiences. This blending of cultural elements has contributed to the city's image as a cosmopolitan hub where cultural boundaries are fluid and adaptable. Television programming often explores the interplay between traditional Chinese values and the evolving realities of globalization, reinforcing local identity while engaging with broader cultural trends. The emergence of digital platforms has further expanded this dynamic, offering new opportunities for cultural exchange and identity expression [2, 13]. Social media and streaming services, in particular, have facilitated the global reach of local content and diversified the range of voices within Hong Kong, China. These platforms enable individuals to interact with, challenge, and reshape cultural narratives in real time. Consequently, media and popular culture in Hong Kong, China, function not merely as sources of entertainment but as powerful tools for identity formation, influencing how the city is perceived both domestically and internationally. They also provide a space for individuals to explore and redefine their own sense of self in an increasingly interconnected world.

4.3. Social Movements and Cultural Reclamation

Social movements in Hong Kong, China have played a significant role in the ongoing process of cultural identity reconstruction, serving as platforms for the preservation of local culture and the expression of cultural distinctiveness. In recent years, various collective actions have emerged as expressions of concern regarding external influences and local efforts to maintain Hong Kong, China's unique cultural identity. These initiatives have been driven by a desire to safeguard freedoms and cultural heritage, emphasizing the importance of traditions, language, and history as key elements of identity. For example, the promotion of the Cantonese language, cultural festivals, and efforts to preserve heritage sites reflect a conscious effort to highlight the distinctiveness of Hong Kong, China. These movements advocate for a multifaceted understanding of identity, emphasizing the importance of local cultural narratives. By engaging in these activities, individuals contribute to the redefinition of cultural and societal frameworks, further shaping the relationship between local identity and broader national discourses. In this context, collective actions serve as important mechanisms in the process of cultural mediation, where activism, culture, and identity intersect to influence the future of Hong Kong, China's cultural landscape.

5. Challenges and Opportunities in Hong Kong's Cultural Mediation

5.1. Political and Economic Pressures on Cultural Expression

Hong Kong, China's unique political status as a Special Administrative Region has placed the city in a delicate position regarding the preservation of cultural characteristics. Since its return in 1997, the region has operated under a framework that has allowed it to maintain certain distinct features. However, the increasing integration of Hong Kong, China with Mainland China has introduced significant challenges to the region's cultural expression. Political influences to align more closely with broader national narratives often impact the ability to freely express diverse cultural identities. In recent years, there have been concerns about growing oversight and the diminishing space for critical cultural voices. These influences have been particularly evident in the arts and media sectors, where there is a growing sense that cultural products and expressions must align with broader expectations. The complex relationship between Hong Kong, China's desire to maintain its distinct cultural identity and the broader integration with national ideologies presents ongoing challenges for cultural mediation. As the region continues to navigate this landscape, the balance between cultural expression and alignment with broader frameworks remains a key factor in shaping its cultural future.

5.2. The Influence of Globalization on Local Culture

Globalization has brought both immense opportunities and significant challenges to Hong Kong, China's cultural identity. On one hand, the city's open economy and strategic

position as a global financial hub have allowed it to serve as a gateway for global cultural exchange [14]. The influx of foreign media, entertainment, and technological innovations has facilitated engagement with global cultural currents, enriching the cultural landscape. However, this process has also led to concerns about cultural homogenization. As global cultural products, particularly from Western countries, become prevalent in media and entertainment industries, there is growing apprehension that unique cultural traditions, values, and practices may be overshadowed or diluted. The rapid spread of global consumer culture, coupled with the widespread influence of foreign media, poses a challenge to the preservation of local traditions, language, and customs. In response, efforts have been made to maintain a delicate balance between embracing global influences and preserving cultural heritage. This balance remains a central issue in the ongoing process of cultural mediation, as the region navigates the pressures of globalization while striving to maintain its distinct identity. The challenge lies in fostering a cultural environment that remains open to international ideas without losing sight of the traditions that define its uniqueness.

5.3. Economic Uncertainty and Cultural Sustainability

Economic fluctuations, particularly in the wake of global financial crises and political instability, have raised pressing concerns about the sustainability of Hong Kong, China's cultural industries [6]. The city's cultural sectors, including film, arts, and entertainment, have long been a source of economic and cultural vitality. However, as global economic conditions evolve and competition from other international cities intensifies, challenges in maintaining cultural prominence have grown. Economic downturns and the advancement of digital technologies have significantly impacted traditional cultural industries, raising questions about their long-term viability. Additionally, ongoing political uncertainties have further complicated the financial sustainability of cultural ventures, as both local and international investors may hesitate to support projects perceived as vulnerable to shifting circumstances. In response to these challenges, there is increasing recognition of the need for cultural mediation to align with economic realities while safeguarding the long-term health of the city's cultural sectors. As Hong Kong, China, strives to maintain its cultural relevance on the global stage, the role of cultural communication and mediation becomes increasingly critical in ensuring the continued vitality of its cultural industries. Balancing economic considerations with cultural sustainability will be essential in shaping the future of the city's cultural landscape.

6. Conclusion

This paper has explored the complex relationship between Hong Kong, China's offshore economy, its role as a cultural mediator, and the reconstruction of its identity. Hong Kong, China's distinctive position as both a financial and cultural hub enables it to mediate between global and local cultural forces, although this role also involves significant constraints in the context of economic and institutional pressures. The reconstruction of identity in Hong Kong, China is an ongoing process shaped by internal cultural developments and external global trends. The city's capacity to navigate these dynamics will influence its future as a cultural nexus and a mediator in global cultural exchange. This paper offers insights into how Hong Kong, China uses its offshore economy to facilitate cultural communication and reshape its identity. It also provides a framework for understanding the interconnectedness of economy, culture, and identity in a globalized world, while suggesting pathways for strengthening its role as a cultural bridge in the 21st century.

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