

Cultural Fusion: The Spread and Reception of Hip-Hop Music in China

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Abstract. Chinese hip-hop music combines the distinctive symbols of Eastern culture with the technical framework of hip-hop, creating a unique musical experience that offers a fresh perspective on the clash between Western and Eastern cultural characteristics. This study explores how Chinese hip-hop presents a "new" form of the genre that neither purely imitates the West nor conforms to traditional Eastern norms. By analyzing the interplay between hip-hop and Chinese culture, this study emphasizes the importance of sustaining cultural diversity and dialogue in an interconnected global context.

Keywords: Chinese Hip-hop; Cultural Fusion; Globalization; Local Adaptation.

1. Introduction

Hip-hop culture, which originated in the impoverished neighborhoods of New York City, embodies the ambivalence of people of color, particularly black adolescents, who are still not accorded equal status following the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Black Americans' complaints against social inequality and the hypocrisy of mainstream society are prevalent in hip-hop music. Hip-hop has now evolved into a globally pervasive cultural phenomenon that is both potent and influential. In the 21st century, under the direct influence of American hip-hop music, young people in mainland China have begun to comprehend and appreciate hip-hop music. The music spread to China in the 1990s, drew a small fan base to active clandestine music groups, and has only recently become mainstream for young Chinese. In 2017, China debuted *The Rap of China*, a hip-hop music talent shows that amassed billions of online views that summer, propelling niche music culture to new heights. As a result, hip-hop music's emergence and growth in China are both difficult and full of vitality, given that it is both a global phenomenon and a subcultural expression par excellence.

Western culture's origins are distinct from China's social and historical context. Consequently, the introduction of Western culture to China will result in a number of undesirable phenomena or issues. In order to adapt to China's social environment and population, Western culture will actively approach and assimilate Chinese indigenous culture when it enters and develops in China. This article emphasizes on the fact that, as a form of western culture, hip-hop music has adapted to Chinese culture in order to be better accepted and understood by Chinese people, and continues to do so. During the dissemination of hip-hop music in mainland China, what changes have occurred in accordance with the local real environment, and how to continuously adapt the spiritual core of hip-hop music to the prevalent issues in Chinese society are the issues that this paper seeks to investigate and draw conclusions about. However, Chinese localized hip-hop music still contains cynicism or dissatisfaction with society as well as the rebellious sentiments of hip-hop performers themselves, which attracts the attention and affection of urban youth and other subcultural groups. With the focus of commercial organizations on hip-hop music and the growing number of fans, this article will also examine whether commercial civilization and political influence will stimulate the mainstreaming of Chinese hip-hop music.

This study is divided into three sections: introduction, body, and conclusion. The principal section contains three subsections. The first section examines the genesis of hip-hop music and the factors that have contributed to its prevalence in the United States. The second section will investigate the

localization of hip-hop music in China. It describes how hip-hop music evolved from a foreign culture that covered the globe into one that was gradually influenced by traditional Chinese culture, and then into a music style with Chinese characteristics. The acceptance of hip-hop music in China and the tension with the Chinese government are analyzed in the third section of the text. From the initial free-form writing to the supervision of the dispute, Chinese hip-hop music has sought balance throughout the mixing process.

2. The Emergence of Gangsta Rap and Mainstream Integration

Numerous districts in New York City are home to distinct subcultural communities. Since the 1960s, the Bronx neighborhood of New York has been home to a significant number of African-Americans and Latinos from Central and North America, making it the city's poorest and most disorderly neighborhood. Although the civil rights movement of the 1850s substantially improved the political status of black Americans, over two centuries of racial discrimination in this country have caused them to lag behind whites in education, medical care, and other areas. After legal racial discrimination was abolished, the disparity between the rich and the poor replaced it, resulting in the resegregation of blacks and whites in the United States. This has led to a high level of ambivalence among young people of color in this social environment, specifically perplexity regarding their dual identities as Americans and blacks. Black adolescents in impoverished communities are acutely aware of their citizenship, but white Americans reject them. Consequently, they experience identity confusion, which in turn generates a sense of insecurity regarding their surroundings. As a result of unbalanced mentality and real-world obstacles, young people of color are dissatisfied and rebellious, making them eager to acquire self-identity and "armor" to confront white society.

In 1977, a power outage in New York caused havoc for the businesses in the Bronx neighborhood. Overnight, black adolescents in the area stole tens of thousands of records and numerous home appliances. Although the incident caused incalculable economic losses, it was a crucial factor in the evolution of hip-hop. Before the outage, the Bronx had few DJs who could host dance events. Many local adolescents seized turntables, mixers, and speaker equipment from video stores after the power outage, prompting more people to host their own musical dance party and DJ themselves. As a result, a group of black vocalists emerged from this environment.

The group N.W.A, whose name contained racial slurs, originated gangsta rap in 1987 by producing songs filled with profanity, slang, and the glorification of alcoholism, drugs, and womanizing. In gang rap, blacks are no longer depicted as victims of white subjugation, but as "tough guys" who are loaded with cash, flirt with women, and disregard the law. Strangely, the audience for gang rap no longer consists exclusively of black adolescents from impoverished communities; rather, white adolescents from middle-class backgrounds have become devoted admirers. This is due to the fact that these white adolescents have a strong desire for rebellion and thrills, but do not dare to act too boldly in reality. The only thing they can do is express their admiration for this "rebellious" hip-hop music. Realistic protest and an adventurous spirit.

Despite the double-platinum triumph of gangsta hip-hop, executives at major record labels were not content to rest on their laurels. They wished for hip-hop to become more "popular," signifying that people of all ages could enjoy it. Hip-hop music must therefore eradicate its excessively exciting edges and corners and merge with mainstream music. This is the origin of rap music, which subsequently dominated the conventional music market in North America. "MC Hammer" is both one of the most successful examples and the first "authentic" hip-hop artist heard by Chinese audiences. As a result of MC Hammer's series of hit hip-hop songs, hip-hop became the uncontested mainstream of the American commercial music industry.

Hip-hop refers, in a restricted sense, to four art forms centering around MC (rap), DJ (record technique), hip-hop, and graffiti, among which hip-hop music or MC rap art is the most emblematic of hip-hop culture. Hip-hop signifies a subcultural way of life and subcultural behavior in a broad sense. As a result of the rebellious, cathartic, and provocative nature of hip-hop's social and traditional

values, black people no longer enjoy hip-hop music exclusively. Numerous white people, especially white adolescents, are captivated by hip-hop music in an attempt to find rare excitement in real life. Moreover, adolescents can meet peers with similar interests through hip-hop music and then form their own exclusive group. In this group, adolescents can develop a shared sense of identity by discussing topics of cultural interest.

3. Localization of Hip-hop Music in China

Since its inception in the Bronx neighborhood of New York City over half a century ago, hip-hop music has undergone numerous spontaneous evolutions and updates, as well as shifts in cultural connotation and musical form. More than a century has passed since hip-hop music's infancy, during which it has steadily evolved. Hip-hop music has established a distinct branch in every cultural landscape, whether it be the most traditional old school or the pervasive trap style that has permeated the globe in recent years. Hip-hop music is immensely inclusive as a result of its continuous exchanges and integration with local culture, which is influenced by the distinctive cultural values of the American nation.

Since its introduction to China in the 1980s, hip-hop music has introduced Chinese people to a new form of entertainment and given Chinese youth new cultural feelings. The inherent cultural characteristics and value concepts of hip-hop music. Additionally, it is continuously incorporating traditional Chinese culture. Nonetheless, hip-hop music, a foreign emerging music paradigm, is entirely dissimilar to the aesthetics and thought patterns of my nation. Due to the popularity of hip-hop music in China, the general public is now able to recognize and spread hip-hop. The efforts of modernization and the determination of hip-hop performers to attain traditional cultural identity. A hip-hop composition with soul and attitude cannot simply be an imitation of American hip-hop. Therefore, when hip-hop music is localized in China, it is always necessary to include more Chinese-specific elements. This is the only way for Chinese hip-hop music to become more recognizable, develop its own characteristics, and reach the international market. Accept and treasure.

Longmenzhen was founded in 2004 as the first independent hip-hop label on the mainland. After announcing their establishments, Luanzhanmen from Xi'an, Jingqishen from Guangdong, and GOSH from Chongqing began releasing original hip-hop music. Dialect hip-hop, a subgenre of hip-hop music with Chinese regional characteristics, was spawned by the establishment of these local labels. Longjing rap from Beijing, C-BLOCK group from Changsha, Heisa band from Xi'an, Bridge from Chongqing, and other representatives of dialect hip-hop may have created a hip-hop song with local characteristics, such as "Changsha Strategy Changsha", or used dialect rhymes to create lyrics, thus contributing numerous works with local characteristics and Chinese characteristics to Chinese hip-hop music. The leader of Chengdu CDC Rap Club, Xie Di, performed "I will not go to work tomorrow" in Chengdu dialect, introducing hip-hop music for the first time from the underground music scene to the stage of CCTV. Moreover, this is the first hip-hop music to be produced in China. It issued the first strident call to attack the traditional music industry.

The midsummer 2017 broadcast of the hip-hop music program "The Rap of China" further ignited the Internet and propelled the complete hip-hop music ecosystem to the forefront of public interest. From producers to contestants, hip-hop was the most popular topic during the 2017 summer. From the outset, when contestants questioned Wu Yifan's professionalism, to Hip-Hop Man's enigma, to the final battle between double champions PGOne and Gai, Chinese hip-hop music has never received so much attention. Not only did a number of hip-hop songs with Chinese influences, such as "Empty City Plan" and "Hot Pot Bottom," become popular as a result of "The Rap of China," but the public and commercial market also witnessed the accelerated growth of Chinese hip-hop groups. Whether they are affiliated with the independent label Gosh in Chongqing (Gai and Bridge) or the Xi'an Red Flower Club (PGOne and Xiaobai), they rely on an experienced hip-hop production team and their own distinctive hip-hop style. Numerous commercial performances and endorsements targeted the Chinese hip-hop market after the conclusion of the show, and all of the popular contestants went from

unpopular underground vocalists to overnight sensations. Also propelled by this type of commercial capital, hip-hop music has erupted in the past six months and dominated the Chinese mainstream music landscape for a time. Chinese hip-hop music is now a form of music that attracts the interest of commercial capital and mass markets; it has permeated the public consciousness.

Lyrical content is central to hip-hop music, and the choice of lyrics language is the most prevalent localization characteristic of Chinese hip-hop music. Even though Chinese hip-hop music is still characterized by rhythmic chanting, it typically does not employ the black English used in traditional hip-hop and instead employs Chinese to produce music. The vast majority of lyricists write and perform in Mandarin. The Chinese and English linguistic systems are wholly distinct from one another. Chinese is a monosyllabic language with four tones, whereas English belongs to the western subgroup of the Germanic subgroup of the Indo-European language family. Difficulties. In the beginning phases of the localization of Chinese hip-hop music, many vocalists were able to speak Chinese with English tones and attempted to reduce the tones to two. Such a change in pronunciation is likely to result in articulation difficulties.

Due to the fact that the concept of a country is always local and specific enough to be highly motivating, Martha Nussbaum contends that a love for a city or region can enhance a love for a country. Consequently, dialect hip-hop has developed in China as a consequence of hip-hop's localization. As a result of China's vast geographical diversity, there are more than 80 regional dialects; therefore, hip-hop performers from various regions prefer to use regional dialects in their music. In dialect hip-hop music, vocalists not only use dialect for hip-hop rap, but also a great deal of local vernacular, some of which have a long history and some of which are fashionable terms today, but these words are all from the language form of local folk, so they resonate with young people more readily. Dialect hip-hop is not only the discovery and transmission of local culture, but also the transformation of hip-hop music by local culture. In the contemporary Chinese hip-hop music landscape, team composition is largely determined by geographical location. Sichuan, Chongqing, Beijing, Shanghai, Shaanxi, Changsha, and Guangdong all have rap groups with regionally distinct characteristics and greater popularity. Their endeavors Additionally, local dialects are employed as a distinct creative technique. For instance, the Chongqing underground rap group Gosh, represented by Gai, the champion of "The Rap of China," gained popularity due to the slogan "Le is the city of fog," which has a dialectically-specific meaning and characteristics. Hip-hop songs combined with Chongqing dialect are more likely to attract the attention of residents due to their distinct regional tone. Dialect hip-hop music utilizes dialects and social issues with very folk characteristics, not only creating a distinct regional identity and consciousness among young people, but also enhancing the musical appeal of the tracks. Incorporating regional dialect characteristics into hip-hop music and popularizing it is the most important step for local culture to transform foreign cultures in the process of cultural interaction, as well as a more specific and thorough method in the localization process. Regional characteristics of hip-hop music Divide China into distinct regions based on dialects and independently localize each region. When individuals are in familiar places and hear familiar sounds, it is easier to induce feelings of security and relaxation.

Aesthetically, as well as linguistically, much hip hop takes inspiration from China. As an example, the opening of "This Is China" features a montage of classical Chinese symbols and instruments used in Chinese opera. Some examples include the Great Wall, tea, porcelain, the Forbidden City, Chinese opera, and religious and cultural practices including worship and ceremonies. There are brief passages of Mandarin singers singing "What's your name" in a way reminiscent of Chinese opera, followed by the English lines "This is China/We love this country." The video juxtaposes scenes of contemporary urban life, such as crowded city streets and towering skyscrapers, with scenes of traditional Chinese culture, such as the Sichuan face-changing show, lion dance, Chinese calligraphy and tea culture, traditional buildings, and rice terraces. The video for "Come to Chengdu, Around Chengdu" also uses this technique to highlight the city's blend of ancient customs and cutting-edge development. Shopping malls, industry, and office complexes mix alongside traditional pavilions, Sichuan opera performances, and bamboo woods. The lyrics include extravagant themes, such as fast trains, high-

tech districts, and huge pandas lounging in bamboo seats while drinking jasmine tea and shooting fireballs. Traditional symbols are being incorporated into the bustling, neon-lit environment of contemporary China in an effort to bridge the gap between the two eras. The wind components represented by these many Chinese symbols all have deep ideological roots. The spectacle of modernity symbolizes the amazing socioeconomic success over the previous few decades, while the employment of traditional symbols awakens the imagination of a common national history and concretizes abstract national notions.

4. The Acceptance and Dilemma of Hip-Hop Music in China

After its introduction to China, the procedure of the foreign musical genre hip-hop was not simple. The Chinese government penalized underground hip-hop when it was still popular because its lyrics threatened social development. Such as MC David from Beijing, MC Majun from Urumqi, In3 (Yin saner), and Nasty Ray. These groups discussed social issues and expressed their dissatisfaction with authority, whether it was official, familial, or educational. The lyrics of "Teacher Hello", which harshly criticize academic institutions, convey the discontent of a significant number of young Chinese.

Didn't take my stuff I don't fucking want the stuff you confiscated, I don't fucking need them and nothing else. I have nothing but hatred for you and no one else.

I only hate you for the fact that you lost my school bag I will always remember you for throwing my school bag away I will never forget that I was biased against you because I didn't change my seat If I was biased against you it was because I never change seat

Squeeze the trash can all year round and ask if you can forgive me, sit next to the trash can all the year round,

No wonder I'm vulgar. The cracks on the blackboard are the cracks where I smashed the blackboard. I did it.

His mother has my spit in every sip of water you drink every time you drink your glass you fucking drink my saliva.

On August 10, 2015, the People's Daily announced that 120 songs had been blacklisted by the Chinese Ministry of Culture, thereby removing them from all music distribution channels and banning the performers from public performances. The songs were banned by the ministry because they incited "obscenity, violence, and crime, and threatened morality." There is a disproportionate number of rap acts that have been banned: Seventeen songs by In3 made it to the top of the charts, with "Morning Teacher" at the top and "Beijing Evening News" (Beijing Wanbao) close behind, maybe owing to the song's contentious phrase, "Some people sleep in the underground passage, while others rely on government spending to eat." The cost was too high for In3. Members of In3 were detained by Beijing police in September 2015 after returning from a performance in Kunming. According to media reports, the detention of the rapper and the censorship of certain hip-hop groups demonstrated that prior to 2012, Xi Jinping was relatively tolerant under Hu Jintao. Jintao reclaimed authority over the Chinese cultural domain in 2015. Since Xi Jinping's ascension to power, he has ordered intellectuals and artists to propagate the "positive energy" of socialist values, and rap's propensity for decadence and social problem-solving appears to contradict these "values" at all times. On January 19, 2018, Sina Agency issued a brief piece introducing Gao Changli as the head of the Propaganda Bureau within the State Administration of Press. Media guests in China are expected to behave politely and not "disobey party rules, use vulgar language, or display low-level ideology."

In 2018, after the triumph of "The Rap of China," the general public still has an unfavorable impression of hip-hop artists that make a living as their career. Hip-hop artists are seen as "hooligans" and "potential criminals" by the general public because of their shady economic dealings and unsteady personal lives. They are a disturbance to society and create problems. Hip-hop artists are stereotyped for a number of reasons, including their tendency to dress flashily and use a lot of makeup, as well as

their reputation for being quick to anger and live a nonconformist lifestyle that runs counter to traditional Chinese norms. For the sake of social stability and harmony, mainstream culture limits the growth of hip-hop music; in schools, teachers view students who listen to hip-hop music or aspire to become hip-hop singers as "monsters"; in society, people subconsciously avoid people who dress in hip-hop style because they believe they are dangerous and easy to hurt oneself. In conclusion, hip-hop's subcultural elements put it on the periphery of mainstream society.

As previously mentioned, the Chinese government prioritizes political over economic considerations when formulating germane cultural policies. Consequently, some hip-hop musicians realize they must make concessions to the Chinese government if they wish to cultivate hip-hop music in Chinese society. Hip-hop must pass as a foreign musical form and cultural phenomenon. Local dialects, current events, musical genres, etc., have been modified to adhere to the party line. After hip-hop musicians experienced the difficulty of entering the mainstream commercial market and after mainstream music extended an olive branch for mutual cooperation and integration, a great number of Chinese hip-hop musicians began to seek additional commercial benefits and sensational market effects. Nevertheless, the commercial market has specific requirements for hip-hop music. Although the anger and rebellion of hip-hop music initially attracted the public and the commercial market, the resistance and color tolerance of subculture on the mainstream stage is extremely low; therefore, hip-hop singers who wish to enter the mainstream stage must let go of their anger and the past. At clandestine performances, emotional obscenity and violence.

In response to the exploding development of the hip-hop music industry, the government and the mainstream media are enacting restrictive policies. PGOne (Wang Hao), one of the double champions of "The Rap of China", had a series of vulgar lyrics that demeaned women unearthed after a scandal with actress Li Xiaolu, resulting in the removal of the songs of his group Honghuahui from the entire network; A champion, Gai (Zhou Yan), tried his best to show his favor to the mainstream media, but was nevertheless withdrawn from the Hunan Satellite TV music program. "For a time, stringent policies precluded a significant number of recently debuted hip-hop artists from appearing in mainstream media. Therefore, when Chinese hip-hop music encountered rejection and setbacks, Chinese hip-hop musicians began to reflect on themselves and took the initiative to integrate their music into the mainstream. Gai (Zhou Yan), one of the champions of "The Rap of China," is actively accepting the constraints of mainstream society in order to gain recognition within that society and achieve integration and change.

Hip-hop music's political leanings mirror this phenomenon worldwide. Hip-hop has been used to challenge established norms, speak out against wrongdoing, and promote unity within a shared cultural background. With over 400 million views on YouTube, the hip-hop music video *This is America* raised awareness of gun violence, police brutality, and prejudice against African Americans and ignited a worldwide remix frenzy. The movie was rapidly reworked and localized to reflect the political climates of countries ranging from Iraq and Nigeria to Kenya and India, as well as Greece and Brazil. Local concerns like corruption and organized crime are often highlighted in songs like *This Is Nigeria* by Nigerian rapper Falz. Hip-hop is a counter-hegemonic activity, therefore an in-depth examination of hip-hop and politics should also look at how dominant forces have reacted to it. Hip-hop music and culture are often met with repression and assimilation from the government. Both democratic and authoritarian countries often repress hip-hop by, for example, censoring its content or imprisoning its artists. Collaboration, on the other hand, is a strategy for ideological administration that sidesteps the resistance/control binary. In order to cement their hegemony, the authorities have matched some types of hip-hop music with official slogans via cooperative techniques.

As the cultural policy in China tightens, as the market and society pay more attention to Chinese hip-hop, and as the Chinese hip-hop music scene takes the two-pronged approach of compromise and persistence, the meanings ascribed to Chinese hip-hop have expanded. And with much more emphasis on local flavor. Popular participant Jony J released "Slave," an expression of his life philosophy of resisting destiny and working hard, after "The Rap of China" closed; Gai joined with Changsha hip-hop singer Dasha to produce "Long River," a tranquil tune. The emotional toll of life's inevitable ups

and downs can't be overstated. However, under the new cultural policy, works that may be distributed and heard cannot include offensive language or unwarranted hatred against society.

5. Conclusion

Through the unique symbols of eastern culture and the technical framework of hip-hop, Chinese hip-hop music offers hip-hop fans around the world a one-of-a-kind musical experience, examining the cultural characteristics of western culture with obvious resistance and individualism from a more reserved and conservative perspective. The "new" hip-hop it presents is neither Western nor Western-inspired. The health of world cultures and the survival of cultural variety depend on our ability to keep the dialogue between civilizations going in today's more interconnected globe.

Hip-hop's encounter with Chinese local culture is a prime illustration of the clash of sameness and difference that characterizes formal cultural fusion. Overall, hip-hop music is met with neutral reception in Chinese society. Traditional black hip-hop's subversive elements are unfamiliar to Chinese culture because of its early exposure to hip-hop from Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Since traditional cultural components, such as language and regional features, are not readily adaptable to China's local hip-hop environment, Chinese hip-hop artists continue to change parts of hip-hop music that cannot be combined with China's local cultural context. The relevance of hip-hop music has grown as a result of these changes. Cultures may be "re-exported" back to their original locations when their content is successfully adapted to the local context and thrives more aggressively than at its place of origin.

As an example of the vigor and originality of cross-international cultural contacts, hip-hop music has shown its influence not just in China but all around the globe. In the context of globalization, my country has always pushed for cultural localization; it wants to benefit from the growth potential of both foreign and native cultures; therefore, it welcomes cultural exchange. However, Western culture's invasion may sometimes be fierce, and haste might result in the destruction and loss of indigenous culture. Therefore, the hip-hop supervisory unit and hip-hop singers should freely and consciously exploit local cultural traits to make legitimate alterations and transformations to the spiritual core of hip-hop music in the process of integrating hip-hop music with Chinese culture.

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