

# Foreign-Related Mediation under the Fengqiao Experience: Zhejiang's Cross-Border Practice and International Narrative

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## Abstract

The "Fengqiao Experience" is China's grassroots social governance model with over sixty years of evolution, evolving from a mass education mechanism into a universal multi-dimensional dispute resolution system. Guided by Xi Jinping's Thought on the Rule of Law, the new-era Fengqiao Experience has been continuously enriched, and its foreign-related mediation practice serves as a critical micro case for coordinating domestic and foreign-related rule of law. Taking Zhejiang's cross-border mediation practice under the Fengqiao Experience as the research object, this paper sorts out its developmental history and grassroots inheritance & innovation, analyzes typical local cases including Shaoxing Keqiao's "Foreign Uncles" Mediation Team, Yiwu's "Foreign Parties Mediating Foreign Disputes" mechanism and Ningbo Maritime Court's Maritime Shared Court, and unpacks the internal operation logic of foreign-related dispute resolution. From the perspective of international communication, it explores paths to tell China's rule-of-law stories globally, clarifying the theoretical positioning and practical value of such mediation within the foreign-related rule of law system under Xi Jinping's Thought on the Rule of Law. The study concludes that foreign-related mediation based on the Fengqiao Experience features grassroots roots, source prevention and mediation priority. Supported by institutional innovations including professional outbound foreign dispute mediation, digital judicial confirmation, and multi-stakeholder litigation-mediation integration, it extends the "conflict containment at source" governance wisdom to cross-border scenarios, providing grassroots empirical evidence for the foreign-related rule-of-law discourse of Xi Jinping's Thought on the Rule of Law.

## Keywords

Xi Jinping Thought on the Rule of Law; Fengqiao Experience; Foreign-related mediation; International narrative.

## 1. Introduction

2023 marked two key milestones: the 60th anniversary of Mao Zedong's instruction to promote the Fengqiao Experience, and the 20th anniversary of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important guidance on inheriting and developing it[1]. Originated in Zhuji, Zhejiang, the Fengqiao Experience has grown into a core governance strategy under Party leadership and an iconic model of Chinese governance[2]. As China advances high-standard opening-up, cross-border civil and commercial exchanges surge, alongside rising cross-border trade and investment disputes. How to apply traditional grassroots governance to resolve foreign-related conflicts has become a prominent practical research topic[3].

Zhejiang took the lead in exporting the new-era Fengqiao Experience to international scenarios, pioneering foreign-related mediation models represented by Keqiao's foreign mediator team and Yiwu's cross-border dispute mediation committee[4][5]. These mechanisms efficiently

resolve cross-border disputes and act as vital carriers for international rule-of-law communication[6]. This paper addresses two core questions: how has the grassroots Fengqiao Experience broken local boundaries to adapt to foreign-related dispute resolution; and how does its mediation practice align with Xi Jinping's Thought on the Rule of Law's requirement of coordinated domestic and foreign-related rule of law construction[7].

Existing academic research on the Fengqiao Experience mostly focuses on domestic conflict handling, lacking in-depth linkage with foreign-related rule of law research[8]. This paper analyzes Zhejiang's cross-border mediation practice under the theoretical framework of Xi Jinping's cross-border rule-of-law thought, connects grassroots governance practice with national cross-border rule-of-law macro strategies, and expands micro-level research perspectives of foreign-related rule of law[7].

Systematic sorting of Zhejiang's operational logic, achievements and bottlenecks offers practical references for nationwide promotion of cross-border Fengqiao Experience and construction of internationally recognized Chinese rule-of-law discourse[9].

This work adopts a three-step research framework: theoretical interpretation – practical case analysis – theoretical feedback embedding. It first elaborates the cross-border rule-of-law connotation of Xi Jinping's Thought on the Rule of Law and the theoretical origin of the Fengqiao Experience[1][7]; secondly, based on Zhejiang typical cases, it dissects foreign-related mediation operation modes and practical dilemmas[4][10]; finally, guided by Xi Jinping's Thought on the Rule of Law, it proposes optimization paths for cross-border mediation and international communication strategies[9]. Research methods include literature research, case analysis and comparative analysis, with materials sourced from People's Daily Overseas Edition, Workers' Daily, official judicial cases and existing empirical studies[3][5].

## **2. Theoretical Foundation of Cross-border Mediation under the Fengqiao Experience and Xi Jinping's Thought on the Rule of Law**

### **2.1. Cross-border Rule of Law Theory in Xi Jinping's Thought on the Rule of Law**

Cross-border rule of law is an original theoretical category of Xi Jinping's Thought on the Rule of Law, transcending the simple domestic-international binary analysis framework[7]. Foreign-related rule of law refers to all rule-of-law activities conducted by China's legislative, law enforcement, judicial organs, legal service practitioners, natural and legal persons in handling foreign-related affairs, in compliance with domestic foreign-related laws and international treaties China has signed or acceded to[8]. It bears distinct national stance: under unified Party leadership, all entities apply rule-of-law thinking and methods to handle foreign affairs, conduct international cooperation, participate in global governance, and safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests[7].

Three interrelated concepts must be distinguished: foreign-related legal system (static normative system), foreign-related rule of law (whole-process legislation, law enforcement, judicature and law-abiding practice), and international rule of law (global order perspective)[8]. Unlike international rule of law, foreign-related rule of law stands on national interests and actively exports Chinese governance experience[9].

The 2020 Central Conference on Comprehensively Advancing the Rule of Law identified "coordinating domestic and foreign-related rule of law construction" as a core proposition of Xi Jinping's Thought on the Rule of Law[7]. The 2023 Political Bureau collective study further emphasized that strengthening foreign-related rule of law is a long-term requirement for Chinese-style modernization and an urgent task to expand opening-up and defuse external risks[8]. China's peaceful development path demands active participation in global governance;

deepening opening-up requires rule-of-law safeguards for overseas Chinese citizens and market entities' legitimate rights and interests[3].

Coordinating domestic and foreign-related rule of law balances the constructive and defensive functions of rule of law: on one hand, align with international universal rules and promote global governance reform; on the other hand, respond to unilateralism and protectionism to realize balanced opening and security stability[7]. The Central Committee clearly proposes accelerating the modernization of foreign-related rule-of-law system and capacity. As a systematic project, foreign-related rule of law integrates domestic and international, development and security affairs, advancing coordinated foreign-related legislation, law enforcement, judicature, compliance and legal services to build multi-party collaborative mechanisms[8]. Its five core pillars cover comprehensive foreign-related normative systems, efficient implementation systems, specialized legal service systems, standardized international judicial cooperation systems and full-coverage overseas interest protection systems. The Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee further called for integrated working mechanisms covering foreign-related legislation, law enforcement, judicature, legal services and talent training, highlighting systematic construction demands[7].

## **2.2. Theoretical Connotation and Contemporary Evolution of the Fengqiao Experience**

The first phase, the origin stage dating back to 1963, took shape amid the nationwide Socialist Education Movement in Fengqiao, Zhuji City of Zhejiang Province[1]. Local cadres and residents jointly built a grassroots governance model centered on "mobilizing and relying on the masses, resolving conflicts locally without escalation, minimizing arrests and maintaining social order". This indigenous practice won official approval from Mao Zedong and was promoted nationwide in a short period. The core logic of this early version relied on mass-oriented persuasion and ideological education to cut reliance on compulsory punitive measures, with its primary governance target being the standardized transformation of at-risk social groups[1].

The second phase corresponds to the Reform and Opening-up transformation stage, when drastic restructuring of social relations continuously spawned new types of civil, economic and neighborhood conflicts[1]. The original Fengqiao model was therefore upgraded into a systematic governance framework defined as "Party and government leadership, division of responsibilities, mass participation, conflict mediation, stability maintenance and development promotion", with the "Four Priorities" work mechanism as its core operational tool. Three profound shifts occurred during this transitional period: the Fengqiao Experience evolved from an auxiliary tool of political campaigns into a normalized whole-cycle conflict governance mechanism; its coverage expanded beyond rural villages to towns, industrial enterprises and public institutions; its single ideological guidance approach transformed into an integrated system combining people's mediation, administrative mediation and judicial mediation[1].

The third phase is the new-era innovation stage starting from 2013 to the present, marked by General Secretary Xi Jinping's important instructions on persisting in and innovatively developing the Fengqiao Experience and fully implementing the Party's mass line[2]. In response to the transformation of China's principal social contradictions, theorists and political and legal authorities summarized five core tenets for the new-era Fengqiao Experience: Party building leadership, people-centered subjectivity, three-governance integration, four-dimensional prevention, and co-construction and shared benefits. These core principles have been formally incorporated into intra-Party regulations and central policy documents[2]. The Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission positioned the updated model as a typical embodiment of the "Two Combinations", fully demonstrating the institutional strengths of socialism. It advocates flexible mediation procedures, prioritizes repairing damaged social

relations over merely settling individual cases, and ultimately targets long-term social harmony[2].

The mass line runs through the entire evolutionary course of the Fengqiao Experience[1]. Mass participation under this framework is not temporary emergency mobilization, but an institutionalized design that embeds diversified social forces into every link of conflict prevention and resolution. Different from post-dispute litigation remedy, the Fengqiao model prioritizes source prevention to reduce conflict occurrence from the root, lower overall social governance costs, and avoid adversarial judicial procedures that permanently damage commercial and interpersonal social ties[2]. The new-era institutional arrangement builds a unified "mediation first, litigation second" operation framework, linking multi-type mediation bodies to form a full-coverage grassroots governance network, which lays solid theoretical foundations for its cross-border expansion into foreign-related dispute resolution scenarios[4]. International academia has sustained research interest in China's grassroots mediation institutional innovations[11]. Research published by Cambridge University Press confirms that grassroots communities and judicial authorities can formulate localized governance policies that fit national institutional and cultural contexts[11]. Global comparative governance studies generally recognize the people-centered, pluralistic co-governance and harmonious coexistence values embedded in the new-era Fengqiao Experience, which are highly consistent with global trends featuring diversified governance subjects and transnational public affairs[11]. In Zhejiang's local foreign-related mediation practice, the core original concepts of the Fengqiao Experience realize creative adaptive transformation: the traditional principle of "relying on the masses" evolves into introducing foreign overseas merchants to conduct cross-border mediation; the requirement of "on-site resolution" leverages digital judicial tools to break geographical and cross-border spatial limits; the core logic of "source prevention" upgrades into proactive cross-border commercial risk early warning and control, fully proving the model's strong adaptability to foreign-related dispute governance scenarios[4][5].

**Table 1.** Summary of Three Developmental Stages of the Fengqiao Experience

| Stage                                      | Time Period  | Core Governance Features                                                                                          | Key Institutional Innovations                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Origin Stage                               | 1963         | Mass mobilization, in-situ conflict resolution, minimal compulsory punishment, ideological education as core tool | National promotion of mass mediation, conflict containment at grassroots villages                                    |
| Reform and Opening-up Transformation Stage | 1978–2012    | Multi-scenario coverage, coordinated three types of mediation, standardized daily conflict governance             | "Four Priorities" work method, integration of people's, administrative and judicial mediation                        |
| New-era Innovation Stage                   | 2013–Present | Party-building leadership, people-centered governance, source prevention priority, pluralistic co-governance      | Mediation-first litigation-second linkage, digital mediation, cross-border foreign-related mediation pilot mechanism |

Source: Collated from Zhejiang Provincial Research Institute for the 'Fengqiao Experience' in the New Era[1] and research by the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission[2]

### 2.3. Theoretical Basis and Institutional Boundary of Cross-border Mediation

Mediation has thousands of years of historical roots in Chinese legal culture, often summarized as a typical "Eastern institutional experience" in Western academic circles, yet mature

mediation and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms exist across all major legal systems globally[11]. The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) has continuously updated international commercial mediation procedural rules, and the entry into force of the Singapore Convention on Mediation marks the rising institutional status of mediation within cross-border commercial dispute resolution systems[11]. Mediation prioritizes win-win negotiated settlements and sustainable long-term commercial cooperation, which fully conforms to the inherent logic of international commercial operation, and it shares cross-culturally universal value consensus across different civilizations[11]. The global boom of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) arises as a targeted response to the inherent defects of formal litigation: excessive litigation costs, confrontational adversarial relations, and lengthy case hearing cycles[11]. China's traditional harmony-oriented mediation culture overlaps substantially with the core value orientations of global ADR systems, laying a solid dialogue foundation for cross-border mediation practice and international rule-of-law narrative communication[9].

In recent years, China's domestic mediation institutional system has accelerated its international opening and innovative transformation[4]. In 2023, the new-era Fengqiao Experience was officially presented at the Conference on Dialogue of Asian Civilizations as a representative Chinese grassroots governance model, becoming a benchmark institutional sample for cross-civilization governance exchange[9]. From the institutional legal perspective, the People's Mediation Law and Civil Procedure Law together constitute the basic domestic legal framework supporting cross-border mediation work[8]. Yiwu pioneered China's first specialized foreign-related dispute people's mediation committee in 2013, recruiting overseas foreign mediators to resolve more than 1,500 cross-border commercial disputes with a 96% comprehensive settlement rate, forming a replicable standardized prototype of cross-border Fengqiao Experience[4][10].

### **3. Practical Forms and Predicaments of Cross-border Mediation under the Fengqiao Experience**

#### **3.1. Generation Background and Realistic Conditions of Cross-border Mediation**

Zhejiang boasts a highly developed export-oriented economy and extremely frequent cross-border commercial cooperation and transactions[10]. Shaoxing Keqiao, known as the "International Textile Capital", accounts for nearly one quarter of total global textile trade volume; its 2025 Light Textile City annual transaction volume exceeded 440 billion yuan, with textile products exported to more than 200 countries and regions, and over 5,000 permanent foreign merchants residing locally[10]. Fabric color difference disputes, arrears of trade payments and intellectual property conflicts emerge on a daily basis. As the world's core small commodity trading hub, Yiwu maintains trade links with over 230 countries and regions, generating disputes with diversified transnational parties and highly complex cross-border legal relations[5].

Cross-border commercial disputes carry three inherent unique characteristics: first, disputing parties from separate jurisdictions face obvious language barriers, conflicting commercial customs and cross-cultural communication obstacles; second, legal relations are extremely complicated, involving multiple layers of jurisdiction selection, applicable law confirmation and overseas evidence admissibility rules; third, cross-border enforcement faces systematic obstacles, with cumbersome formal procedures for the recognition and enforcement of domestic civil judgments and international arbitral awards[12]. Compared with formal litigation and international commercial arbitration, mediation possesses prominent comparative advantages: flexible procedural rules that balance statutory legal norms and local

commercial customs; negotiated consensual settlements that preserve long-term bilateral business partnerships; voluntary performance of mediation agreements that bypass complicated cross-border judicial enforcement procedures[11]. These combined realistic economic and legal conditions jointly drove Zhejiang's judicial and administrative authorities to explore the localized adaptation of the Fengqiao Experience to foreign-related dispute resolution fields[4].

### **3.2. Keqiao's "Foreign Uncles" Mediation Team: Foreign Parties Mediating Foreign Disputes**

In 2018, Keqiao People's Court took the national lead in launching the foreign mediator employment mechanism, appointing long-term local foreign business operators with bilingual capabilities and deep industry familiarity as professional mediation staff[10]. In 2021, public security, judicial administration, commerce bureau and local court departments jointly established the formal "Foreign Uncles" mediation team, expanding the initial five mediators to nine practitioners originating from South Korea, Pakistan, Yemen, India and multiple other nations[10]. The participation of foreign mediators substantially improved the case resolution efficiency of grassroots comprehensive service stations for foreign merchants. Typical practical cases fully demonstrate its complete internal operation logic[10].

Lebanese businessman Li Tianming has engaged in Sino-foreign textile trade for nearly 20 years and masters multiple foreign languages; he integrates Chinese and Western cultural perspectives into every mediation procedure. In a 2025 fabric color difference dispute between a Bangladeshi buyer and a domestic textile supplier, Li clarified bilateral liability allocation standards, guided both sides to share partial economic losses, and converted a portion of direct losses into future long-term cooperation deposits to achieve a complete win-win reconciliation[10]. Yemeni mediator Anter owns 20 years of frontline textile industry operation experience, and he applies China's traditional "harmony priority" governance concept to break negotiation deadlocks between Chinese suppliers and overseas purchasers. For a USD 70,000 fabric loss dispute between a Jordanian buyer and a domestic trading firm, Li Tianming adopted tiered targeted persuasion strategies, proposing a mixed settlement plan including partial cash compensation and long-term order discounts to reach a fully voluntary mediation agreement[10].

The foreign mediator model embodied by Keqiao's "Foreign Uncles" carries three core institutional values. First, it builds reliable cross-cultural trust bridges: foreign mediators share identical cultural backgrounds with overseas disputants, effectively eliminating psychological resistance and cultural distrust toward Chinese judicial bodies[6]. Pakistani mediator Adil once noted that the elder-led mediation tradition prevalent in his homeland forms natural resonance with China's grassroots mediation culture, greatly reducing communication barriers between transnational parties[10]. Second, it diversifies governance subjects in foreign-related affairs, shifting the single administrative management model toward multi-stakeholder collaborative co-governance and alleviating the heavy case pressure on grassroots judicial and law enforcement organs[3]. All foreign-related disputes in Keqiao concentrate on international sales contracts; pre-litigation mediation effectively diverts mass cases away from formal court procedures, and the "Foreign Uncles" team has resolved more than 210 cross-border disputes cumulatively[10]. Third, it disseminates Chinese harmony-oriented mediation culture to global commercial actors: Indian mediator Niraj formed a balanced mediation style integrating emotion, reason and statutory law that fits the cognitive customs of overseas merchants, sustaining an annual mediation settlement rate above 90%[6].

3.3. Yiwu’s "International Old Uncle" Mediation Model

Yiwu Jimingshan Community accommodates nearly 1,500 permanent foreign residents originating from 74 countries, widely known as the "United Nations Community"[5]. In 2019, Iranian merchant Hami founded the specialized "International Old Uncle" mediation studio, recruiting 15 foreign mediators from more than ten different nationalities under the standardized "foreign mediators handling foreign disputes" institutional mechanism[5]. The studio has mediated over 350 cross-border disputes involving a total disputed value of 96 million yuan, with an overall settlement rate exceeding 95%. Hami has resided in Yiwu for 20 consecutive years and masters six foreign languages; he discovered strong inherent parallels between China's grassroots elder mediation culture and the respected white-bearded elder mediation tradition widely practiced in Iran and West Asian countries[5]. In a 2024 Sino-foreign labor dispute, he applied the classic Chinese proverb "Taking a step back broadens the horizon" to resolve the conflict between both sides within only two hours[5].

Back in 2013, Yiwu established China's first independent specialized foreign-related dispute people's mediation committee, formally institutionalizing standardized cross-border mediation work nationwide[4]. The committee now employs 20 full-time foreign mediators from 15 countries providing multilingual full-cycle mediation services. Yiwu's foreign mediation institutional system was officially recognized as a national demonstration model of the new-era Fengqiao Experience, with a branch office launched in Pujiang County in 2024[5]. Local judicial bureaus, people's courts and Ningbo Maritime Court jointly built an integrated litigation-mediation linkage center, standardizing judicial confirmation procedures to strengthen the legal binding force of signed mediation agreements[12]. Meanwhile, Yiwu pioneered online cloud mediation innovation, breaking time-space cross-border limits via shared virtual digital courtrooms and drastically shortening the overall resolution cycle of transnational commercial disputes[12].

Table 2. Comparative Analysis of Keqiao and Yiwu Foreign-Related Mediation Modes

| Comparison Dimension             | Shaoxing Keqiao "Foreign Uncles" Mediation Team                                         | Yiwu "International Old Uncle" Mediation Model                                                                                 |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mediator Composition             | 9 foreign mediators from South Asia, Middle East, South Korea; textile industry focused | 20 full-time foreign mediators covering 15 nationalities + 15 studio mediators; small commodity trade & labor dispute oriented |
| Dominant Dispute Types           | Textile quality disputes, payment arrears, international sales contract conflicts       | Cross-border small commodity trade disputes, Sino-foreign labor disputes, cross-border tenancy conflicts                       |
| Core Institutional Design        | Court-led mediation team, linkage with textile market management committee              | City-level formal Foreign-Related Dispute People's Mediation Committee, community mediation studio dual system                 |
| Comprehensive Settlement Rate    | Over 90% cumulative settlement rate                                                     | Exceeding 95% overall mediation success rate                                                                                   |
| Unique Characteristic Mechanisms | Industry matching foreign mediators for textile trade cases                             | Online cloud mediation, cross-border digital judicial confirmation, Pujiang branch replication mechanism                       |
| Launch Timeline                  | Formal team established in 2021; pilot foreign mediator policy in 2018                  | First national foreign-related mediation committee founded 2013; "International Old Uncle" studio launched 2019                |

Source: Collated from China News Network field research[10], Yiwu Government official releases[8] and Ministry of Justice policy document[4]

### 3.4. Practical Dilemmas Facing Cross-border Mediation

First, the specialized institutional and legal framework remains incomplete[8]. No targeted independent laws or administrative regulations have been formulated specifically for cross-border mediation work, which can only rely on general principle clauses within the People's Mediation Law and Civil Procedure Law, lacking detailed procedural rules tailored to transnational dispute scenarios[8]. Although the Singapore Convention on Mediation provides international legal support for cross-border enforcement of commercial mediation agreements, China has not yet completed its ratification procedures, leading to insufficient international legal guarantee foundation for domestic cross-border mediation outcomes[13]. Standardized unified operation guidelines governing the linkage of cross-border litigation, arbitration and mediation bodies are also absent nationwide[8].

Second, there exists a severe shortage of compound cross-border mediation professional talents[3]. Qualified cross-border mediators must integrate multiple composite capabilities: systematic domestic and international legal expertise, mature mediation negotiation skills, proficient multilingual competence and professional cross-cultural communication literacy[8]. Outside pilot regions including Keqiao and Yiwu, most prefecture-level cities lack basic conditions to build stable professional foreign mediation teams. Judicial frontline practitioners report incomplete overseas disputant identity verification materials, complicated overseas document service procedures, persistent language and cultural communication barriers, all of which substantially increase the overall difficulty of foreign-related dispute resolution[3].

Third, the international recognition of the Fengqiao Experience cross-border mediation mechanism remains insufficient[9]. Global large-scale commercial entities lack systematic awareness of China's indigenous cross-border mediation institutional system, still prioritizing traditional arbitration hubs such as London and New York when handling high-value cross-border commercial conflicts[11]. International mainstream legal circles simplistically label China's mediation mechanism as a localized "Eastern regional institution", ignoring its universal adaptability as a consensual ADR method for global dispute resolution[11]. Western mainstream media frequently interpret the Fengqiao Experience through biased ideological lenses, deliberately distorting its core institutional connotation and creating multi-layered barriers for international rule-of-law narrative communication; accordingly, narrative transformation and discourse construction become the core bottleneck restricting global promotion of cross-border mediation[9].

## 4. Optimization Paths for Cross-border Mediation under the Fengqiao Experience

### 4.1. Institutional Perfection: Construct Specialized Cross-border Mediation Regulatory System

Based on the basic framework of the People's Mediation Law, national authorities should formulate targeted implementation rules exclusively for cross-border mediation work, clearly defining its applicable scope, transnational jurisdiction standards, qualification assessment criteria for foreign mediators, standardized multilingual mediation procedures, applicable law confirmation rules and admissibility standards for overseas cross-border evidence[8]. Legislative and diplomatic authorities should accelerate the formal ratification process of the Singapore Convention on Mediation to establish unified international legal foundations for the cross-border enforcement of domestic commercial mediation agreements[11]. Policymakers should explore fast-track judicial recognition mechanisms fully matching the Convention's procedural requirements, streamline domestic judicial review formalities and continuously elevate the international credibility of China's cross-border mediation outcomes[11].

Authorities should improve supporting litigation-mediation linkage and standardized judicial confirmation mechanisms[12]. National judicial administrations should popularize Yiwu's case diversion model centered on integrated litigation-mediation linkage centers, establish regular case referral cooperation systems between people's courts and professional mediation organizations to fully implement the "mediation first, litigation later" governance principle[5]. Cross-border judicial confirmation procedures need targeted optimization; judicial organs should replicate the mature "same-day acceptance, same-day confirmation" practice in pilot regions, simplifying formal document review links while strictly guaranteeing the voluntariness and legal validity of mediation agreements to stabilize the procedural expectation of transnational disputants[12].

All regions should accelerate digital intelligent cross-border mediation infrastructure construction[12]. Judicial authorities should promote full-scale application of online cloud mediation tools, build a unified national integrated cross-border mediation digital platform integrating remote video mediation, standardized electronic seals, real-time multilingual machine translation and centralized case big data databases[12]. The Supreme People's Court and Ministry of Justice should release unified remote cross-border mediation operation guidelines, standardizing online disputant identity verification, electronic cross-border evidence submission and digital mediation record signing procedures to fully safeguard procedural justice in online transnational mediation activities[12].

#### **4.2. Talent Cultivation: Build Compound Foreign-related Mediator Teams**

Judicial administrations nationwide should optimize and comprehensively replicate the mature "foreign mediators handling foreign disputes" institutional model[4]. All export trade-intensive prefectures should absorb and localize Keqiao and Yiwu's pilot experience; establish systematic standardized long-term training systems to fill foreign mediators' gaps in domestic foreign-related legal knowledge[5][10]. Policymakers should refine complete rules covering foreign mediator appointment, regular assessment and daily management, clarifying clear entry qualification thresholds and matching power-responsibility boundaries for all overseas mediation practitioners[4].

The state should establish a long-term tiered training system for compound foreign-related legal talents[8]. Domestic comprehensive universities and political-legal colleges should launch specialized practical courses covering foreign-related commercial mediation; judicial bureaus should organize targeted regular training programs for in-service grassroots mediators, covering professional foreign language training, cross-cultural communication theory and international commercial mediation procedural rules[8]. Authorities should leverage chambers of commerce and industrial trade associations to cultivate industry-specific mediation capacity for cross-border commercial disputes; recruit practicing lawyers, certified accountants and senior industry experts to form professional vertical mediation teams for high-value transnational disputes[3]. Policymakers may draw on Zhuji's Hongye economic crime volunteer police model to fully mobilize social professional forces to conduct front-end cross-border commercial risk prevention and preliminary dispute mediation before formal case filing[1].

#### **4.3. Narrative Transformation: Upgrade Cross-border Mediation International Discourse Power**

1.Shift narrative positioning from "Eastern regional characteristics" to "Chinese institutional contribution to global governance".

Current international communication work on China's rule-of-law construction easily falls into the trap of self-referential domestic discourse that fails to resonate with global audiences, requiring comprehensive narrative reorientation[9]. First, researchers and foreign publicity

organs must embed cross-border mediation practice into the overall global ADR development context, systematically highlighting how China's grassroots institutional innovation enriches the diversified toolbox of global transnational dispute resolution[11]. Second, international narrative work should center on institutional operation mechanisms, standardized implementation procedures and measurable practical governance effects, objectively displaying foreign mediator teams, cross-border litigation-mediation linkage systems and digital cloud mediation models, avoiding one-sided propagandistic emphasis on institutional comparative advantages[9]. Third, communication channels should prioritize third-party objective perspectives — including foreign mediators, overseas merchants and neutral international comparative law scholars — to substantially enhance narrative credibility through authentic first-hand practical experience and case testimony[6].

2. Build internationally compatible discourse based on shared cross-cultural value commensurability.

All international communication activities must accurately identify universal value consensus shared between China and the global commercial community[9]. Institutionally, China's litigation-mediation linkage and multi-stakeholder collaborative coordination mechanisms can conduct equal institutional dialogue with mainstream international commercial mediation procedural rules[11]. Empirically, objective quantifiable data including mediation settlement rates, total resolved dispute value and voluntary agreement compliance ratios can strengthen the persuasive power of international narrative[6]. From the value dimension, cross-border mediation's core pursuit of win-win negotiated outcomes and sustained long-term commercial partnership protection fully aligns with the core demand of global cross-border merchants[11]. Authentic cross-cultural case stories recorded by foreign mediators serve as high-quality, easily accepted international communication materials[5][10].

Authorities should expand diversified international exchange channels relying on the Belt and Road Initiative, SCO rule-of-law high-level dialogues and global academic conferences to systematically share the institutional achievements of cross-border Fengqiao Experience mediation[9]. While acknowledging short-term ideological prejudice and institutional misunderstanding in Western legal circles, the source prevention and grassroots mediation core logic of the Fengqiao Experience has drawn extensive research attention from developing countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America, possessing enormous potential for cross-civilization institutional exchange and mutual learning[9].

#### **4.4. Theoretical Value of Grassroots Cross-border Mediation Practice to Foreign-related Rule of Law Theory**

The innovative foreign-related mediation practice derived from the Fengqiao Experience expands the research boundary of China's foreign-related rule of law theoretical system, carrying three layers of core theoretical significance[7][8].

First, it verifies the scalable expandability of the Party's mass line into foreign-related governance fields[7]. Traditional foreign-related rule of law academic research long focused excessively on macro-level institutional domains such as bilateral treaty negotiation and extraterritorial jurisdiction allocation; cross-border mediation fully proves that grassroots micro-governance scenarios constitute equally vital research arenas within the overall foreign-related rule of law system[8]. The mass line realizes innovative adaptive evolution in cross-border contexts: governance participant subjects expand beyond domestic local residents to overseas foreign merchants and expatriate mediators, pushing domestic academia to strengthen empirical research targeting grassroots cross-border rule of law practice[7].

Second, it breaks the long-standing Western academic stereotype that mediation institutional systems only fit Eastern cultural contexts[11]. Multiple foreign mediators from diversified national, religious and cultural backgrounds achieving consistent high settlement rates in

Zhejiang's pilot regions fully verify that mediation, as a consensual dispute resolution institution, possesses strong cross-cultural universal adaptability. It provides authentic Chinese grassroots empirical samples for global ADR institutional development and equal cross-national institutional comparative dialogue[11].

Third, it enriches diversified methodology for modern global governance[9]. Cross-border mediation advocates equal consultation, bilateral dialogue and mutual benefit as core operational logic, fundamentally differing from the single coercive rule-based governance model dominant in traditional Western global governance theories[11]. It conforms to the general transformation trend of global governance shifting from one-way top-down control to pluralistic multi-stakeholder co-governance, providing valuable Chinese grassroots micro institutional cases for reconciling formal rule-based governance and negotiated collaborative co-governance mechanisms worldwide[9].

## 5. Conclusion

The sixty-year sustained vitality of the Fengqiao Experience originates from its continuous adaptive innovation responding to evolving social governance challenges of each historical era. Amid China's deepening high-standard opening-up and continuous growth of cross-border commercial disputes, the indigenous grassroots governance model completes another round of boundary-breaking innovative expansion into foreign-related legal affairs. New institutional platforms including Keqiao's "Foreign Uncles" foreign mediator teams, Yiwu's "International Old Uncle" cross-border mediation studios and digital maritime shared courts successfully extend China's traditional grassroots conflict resolution wisdom to transnational dispute governance fields.

This series of cross-border mediation practice carries three distinct layers of theoretical and practical significance. First, China's indigenous grassroots governance wisdom represented by the Fengqiao Experience possesses inherent cross-cultural adaptability; its core concepts of harmonious settlement, source risk prevention and win-win cooperation have obtained widespread recognition from overseas transnational disputants. Second, cross-border foreign-related mediation realizes grassroots-level concrete implementation of the core deployment of "coordinating domestic and foreign-related rule of law construction" within Xi Jinping's Thought on the Rule of Law, completing endogenous innovative transformation under China's existing political and legal governance system. Third, it provides a feasible, operable international narrative communication path for China's rule-of-law construction; quantifiable objective operational data and authentic personal experience testimony from foreign mediation participants deliver far stronger persuasive power than abstract theoretical institutional publicity.

Nevertheless, cross-border mediation institutional systems based on the Fengqiao Experience remain in the preliminary exploratory pilot stage nationwide. Multiple core research and practice issues require sustained in-depth theoretical and practical research: balancing mediation procedural flexibility and standardized cross-border procedural fairness; eliminating potential cultural bias risks inherent within the foreign mediator participation model; upgrading scattered fragmented local pilot practices into unified national standardized institutional frameworks; and continuously elevating global institutional recognition of China's cross-border mediation mechanism. Undoubtedly, the cross-border extension of the Fengqiao Experience via foreign-related mediation opens a brand-new critical path to showcase China's grassroots governance wisdom on the global governance stage, enabling international legal practitioners, merchants and scholars to form a comprehensive, objective and unbiased understanding of new-era Chinese rule-of-law grassroots institutional practice.

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