

# Audio-Visual Media's Reconstruction of Urban Space

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doi:10.56397/SAA.2024.06.04

## Abstract

Urban space is composed of intertwined materials, consciousness and society. Audio-visual media has developed rapidly in the city, playing a huge role in guiding and promoting the reconstruction of urban space, affecting all aspects of urban life. By analyzing the importance of audiovisual media in the process of urban space reconstruction, promote the healthy development of audiovisual media and urban space.

**Keywords:** symbols, diversity, feminism

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, urban space has become an important research object in urban geography. In many cases, when referring to a geographical place, it often not only refers to a certain spatial location it represents, but also includes the social culture, history, ethnicity, and group concepts of the area. In a broad sense, urban space is divided into three levels. One is the physical space of the city that people usually understand: streets, buildings, attractions, etc.; the second is the ideological space of the city that is opposite to the physical space: race, gender, culture, politics, etc.; the third is the epitome of urban space — or the basic unit — personal space in the city.

The contemporary city is a complex of environment and media. The audio-visual media such as movies, TV, and advertisements that have developed in the city, with their perfect unity of visual and auditory recording, completely record and reproduce the movement,

history and details of the city, changing the way people obtain information, enriching People's information and entertainment life. In addition to recording and dissemination, the spread of audiovisual media also accelerates the expansion and integration of urban space. From a dualistic perspective, media is material, but the information transmitted by the media is conscious. Therefore, when discussing the reconstruction of urban consciousness space by audio-visual media, the city's material space and consciousness space are usually combined.

## 2. Symbolization: City Image in Audiovisual Media

The image of a city portrayed by audiovisual media plays a key role in shaping our perception and understanding of cities. Through various forms such as movies, television programs and advertising, audiovisual media construct symbolic representations of urban spaces, influencing how we perceive, interact with and interpret cities. After the emergence of

electronic media, people's communication is no longer hindered by physical space, and spatial boundaries become blurred. However, film and television works have been deconstructing the concept of *global village* and constantly emphasizing regional boundaries and cultural differences. In TV series, cities and villages are clearly separated: *Rural love story* (Zhao Huizhong, 2006), *Liu Laogen* (Zhao Benshan, 2002), *Cherry* (Wang Zhenhong, 2011) and other rural dramas show the simplicity and simplicity of farmers. The joy of peasant life, urban life TV series such as *Swan Dive for Love* (Li Jun, 2015), *iPartment* (Wei Zheng, 2009), *Naked Wedding* (Teng Huatao, 2011), etc. have constructed the city's high-rise buildings and fast-paced lifestyle. On the one hand, these film and television works promote the development of farmhouses and the expansion of urban physical space; on the other hand, audio-visual media builds an invisible wall for the city, making the city's outline more distinct, becoming a symbol of development and trends (and also crime and corruption), isolated from the countryside.

Since the 20th century, media communication has paid more attention to the local characteristics of the city. *Crazy Stone* (Ning Hao, 2006) uses dialects to awaken people's sense of regional belonging. Chongqing's most representative temples and upward streets also show local geographical characteristics; *Hi-Pipe Talk Show* Zhou Libo, a representative figure of Shanghai dialect, uses the form of talk show to promote the spirit of Shanghai style. The program language is mainly Shanghainese, supplemented by dialects and Mandarin. His humor is based on Shanghainese, which is also the dissemination of Shanghai culture and the promotion of the city. Although *Mr. Six* (Guan Hu, 2015) does not use Beijing dialect, it uses typical Beijing specialties to create a strong Beijing atmosphere: Hutongs, Beijing slang, food, etc., and strives to create an image of Beijingers who value loyalty and open-mindedness. Film and television works with local characteristics have changed the homogeneity of urban construction to a certain extent and highlighted the personality of the city.

In order to further increase the city's popularity and attract more tourists and foreign investment, city managers and media workers improve the city's brand competitiveness through city promotional videos: *Enticement of Tibet* (Liu Lang, 1989) tells the mystery of Tibet and

attracts many tourists. Enthusiasts are exploring it one after another; *A bite of Guangdong* (Li Yiping, 2016) makes Guangzhou a food paradise. The city has been dubbed *ancient cultural capital*, *city of fashion* and other titles, which have become a single symbol, and urban construction has also been carried out according to this fixed symbol. Anyang built the Text Museum in 2009, which catered to the *ancient capital of seven dynasties*. This urban positioning and this trend have severely fragmented urban functions. Audiovisual media have the unique ability to convey complex ideas and emotions through visual and auditory means. In the context of urban imagery, this medium is a powerful tool for symbolization, encapsulating the essence of a city and communicating it to audiences around the world. Whether through the splendor of cinematic landscapes, the intimacy of television drama, or the persuasive power of advertising, audiovisual media shape our understanding of urban environments and influence our perceptions of urban life. Urban images in audiovisual media are a multifaceted phenomenon that have profound consequences for how we perceive, experience and understand cities. Through the power of symbolization, audiovisual media construct rich and nuanced representations of urban space, shape public perceptions and influence cultural narratives. Urban development provides new themes and content for audio-visual media. At the same time, audio-visual media also accelerates the deconstruction and reintegration of urban space. Therefore, in order to make the city develop healthily and steadily, audio-visual media should not only tap into the city's unique regional culture, but also pay attention to the construction of urban diversification.

### 3. Audiovisual Media Promotes Diversified Urban Development

The urban landscape of the 20th century: tall buildings, straight roads, rational and scientific functional areas, life proceeds in an orderly manner under certain rules, and the city is like an indifferent machine that is constantly and accelerating. In recent years, urban architecture has become more personalized, and audio-visual media has played a big role in promoting it. The loft-style bedroom in *Naked Wedding* (Teng Huatao, 2011) and the open office space in *City Still Believe In Love* (Li Jun, 2016) are all in Subtly affecting the audience's aesthetics and even the construction of the entire

city. Lefebvre believed that the man-made environment was a crude condensation of social relations and that planners are situating themselves in dominant spaces, arranging and classifying spaces to serve specific classes. Judging from the changes in the content of audio-visual media, it is a process of transformation from national economy to people's livelihood and then to entertainment. TV works such as *Shanghai Dawn* (Li Xing, 2017) and *In the Name of the People* (Li Lu, 2017) explain politics from the perspective of the people, and audio-visual thinking passes through Hints can stimulate inner emotions, thereby achieving the purpose of film and television creation and making the concept of democracy deeply rooted in the hearts of the people. Our country's audio-visual media has always been around the people.

At the end of the last century, China focused on economic construction. In the 21st century, cultural construction has risen rapidly. Local TV stations have more say and gradually prospered. Audio-visual media has gained greater space for development. Audio-visual media elements such as advertising, LED large screens, and digital architecture have the continuous influx into urban space shapes the visual image of the city, changes people's perception and understanding of the city, and promotes urban diversity by presenting the diversity of different cultures, identities, and perspectives. Through film, television and digital media, cities are portrayed as rich pictures of the human experience, in which people of all backgrounds coexist and interact. By showcasing the richness and complexity of urban life, audiovisual media challenges stereotypes, dismantles barriers, and fosters empathy and understanding between diverse communities. From multicultural festivals to grassroots narrative projects, audiovisual media platforms provide marginalized groups with opportunities to speak out and celebrate, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable urban society. The city's consciousness space continues to expand, and feminism, special groups, etc. begin to enter people's field of vision.

Feminism is constantly being discussed, and the audio-visual media is also actively participating in it. Women are increasingly participating in social work and construction, and their status is constantly rising. TV advertisements pay attention to the development of women's

personality. For example, clothing advertisements are no longer designed from a male aesthetic perspective, but highlight women's liberation and their status in society; in the variety show *Running Man China* (Lu Hao, 2014), actress Yang Ying is the only female in it. Actor, but her dramatic role in the program is even greater than that of other male actors; she even produced a public female dating program *Perfect Dating* (Hu Shu, 2011), and the center of women's activities has also moved from the family to society. It deconstructs the gender space in the past where *men were the masters outside and women were the masters inside*. As feminism becomes more and more intense, and the gay community, especially the male gay community, receives more attention, women begin to lean towards gender neutrality. In the 2013 Spring Festival Gala, Qin Hailu played a costumed Fang Qingping plays the androgynous, successful female manager as a long-haired transvestite, blurring the gender space in the city. But fundamentally speaking, women acting as men to assume social responsibilities is essentially a compromise to male chauvinism, and the development of feminism has deviated. Media workers are also aware of this tendency and actively lead feminism in the right direction. In various audio-visual media, they emphasize that women achieve achievements through hard work and with the help of their own advantages, while no longer avoiding the gender advantages of men in social development, role and status, such as producing a male dating program *If You Are the One* (Wang Shaobin, 2010) corresponding to a female dating program, and placing advertisements for men's toiletries, etc. Audiovisual media have the potential to be a powerful catalyst for urban diversity, promoting cultural expression, social inclusion and economic vitality. Contributes to the creation of vibrant, inclusive and resilient urban environments by amplifying diverse voices, empowering marginalized communities and promoting cultural innovation.

The popularity of audio-visual media has changed people's lifestyles and behavioral habits. Urban residents are increasingly inclined to obtain information and entertainment through mobile phones, tablets and other devices, which not only changes people's transportation methods and consumption behaviors, but also affects people's use and experience of urban

space. The material space and ideological space of the city interact and develop continuously, and are not static. Postmodernism has developed in various fields of society, and audio-visual media are also making more use of postmodernist language and techniques to deconstruct the original city. Space to build a more active and healthy lifestyle.

#### 4. Extension of Audiovisual Media: Private Space

What I mentioned earlier is the public space in the city, and the opposite is the private space in the city. The two are conceptually opposite, but as audio-visual media extends to every corner of the urban space, from televisions to smartphones, from digital surveillance to social media, the boundaries between public and private spaces are blurring and interpenetrating, and family events and personal behaviors are more exposed to the public eye.

Take reality TV as an example. People have been watching highly realistic but still highly virtual film and television works for a long time, and their aesthetic demand for authenticity is getting higher and higher. Reality shows have emerged as the times require. The famous reality TV show *Survivor* (Jeff Probst, 2000) exiles a group of strangers to a desert island to survive and participate in a competition. The final winner will win a prize of US\$1 million. The show has been broadcast since 2000 and is still popular today. Lasts forever. Compared with outdoor survival reality shows such as *Survivor* (Jeff Probst, 2000), parent-child programs such as *Dad came back* (Cen Junyi, 2014) and *Super Mom* (Yuan Baili, 2016) put the camera into a more private space — the family. Internal spaces in homes such as bedrooms, bathrooms, and study rooms are very private, but with the development of audio-visual media today, private spaces are made public. But reality shows are still conducted under certain restrictions. People in the show are more like performers, and all performances are based on prescribed situations. More importantly, performers actively participate. Through the perspective of the camera, the audience can get a glimpse into the participants' private emotions, family relationships and daily life. However, the popularity of reality TV has also led to controversies over privacy and moral boundaries. Some believe that these programs violate the privacy rights of participants, exposing their private lives to public scrutiny

and potentially causing problems with personal dignity and social interaction.

However, as people's digital behavior increases in urban spaces, individual privacy and information security are facing greater challenges. For example, the popularity of surveillance cameras has brought potential threats to personal privacy. As shown in the movie *The Truman Show* (Peter Weir, 1998), private space is completely swallowed up by public space, and performers are passive participants. Since the 21st century, outdoor public screens have become part of urban space. Cameras film everyone passing by, and the images or videos are played on the big screen in the square. People passing by are both viewers and passive performers. In addition, surveillance cameras placed in every corner are also recording people's lives. Surveillance videos will be cut into fragments and spread through audio-visual media. From security cameras to smart home devices, digital surveillance has penetrated into our private lives. These technologies provide real-time monitoring and recording of personal and household activities, but also raise concerns about privacy protection and personal freedoms. With the continuous development of surveillance technology, people have begun to reflect on how to balance the relationship between security and privacy, and how to regulate the use of digital surveillance to protect individual privacy and dignity.

*The Truman Show* (Peter Weir, 1998) is a warning to the serious weakening of urban private space in today's society. The audio-visual media should be vigilant and guide the healthy development of society. In addition, the influx of a large number of commercial advertisements has flooded urban space with excessive commercial information, affecting the overall environmental quality of the city and the quality of life of residents. The rise of platforms such as social media has made people more inclined to virtual social interactions, leading to a reduction in real social interactions in urban spaces and a weakening of the cohesion and social trust of urban communities. The reconstruction of urban space by audiovisual media brings both opportunities and challenges. Only by strengthening management and rational utilization can the optimization and development of urban space be realized. In the future, all sectors of society will need to work together to promote the positive interaction

between audiovisual media and urban space and make greater contributions to the sustainable development of the city.

To sum up, in contemporary society, with the rapid development of information technology, audio-visual media has penetrated into every aspect of people's lives. It is reconstructing urban space, affecting the lifestyle, social relations and individual behaviors of urban residents. It especially plays a great guiding and promoting role in the mutual penetration, reconstruction and integration of urban material space and consciousness space. It is precisely because of its huge influence, media workers should pay attention to the development of urban space from a certain height, examine media dynamics, and promote the healthy development of both.

### **Fund Project**

This research was supported by "Research on the construction of ideological and political education in film and television courses under the background of integration of industry and education," 2023 Guangdong Industry and Trade Vocational and Technical College School-Level Project, Project number: 2023-JKJ-12.

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