

An Analysis of Urban Communication Paths from the Perspective of Media Pilgrimage

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Abstract: *Since March last year, Zibo with "barbecue city" strong out of the circle, "into Zibo to catch barbecue" has become a hot topic on the Internet. This paper takes Zibo barbecue as an example, applies the theory of "media pilgrimage", and discusses the path of urban communication and the shaping of urban image of the city of Zibo in the era of new media from three aspects of media reproduction, embodied contact, and action feedback. The study points out that the landscape space in the media narrative is an important motive to attract the audience to come to "pilgrimage", agenda setting and symbolic construction strengthen the city image and stimulate the user's participatory practice, and at the same time, city managers should reflect and adjust under the media discipline to meet the audience's multiple needs. The success of the Zibo barbecue out of the circle provides a useful reference and reflection for the sustainable development of modern urban communication.*

Keywords: *Media pilgrimage; urban communication; Urban communication strategy*

1. Introduction

Since the full opening of the epidemic, travelling has become one of the ways for people to release themselves. Since March this year, Zibo, Shandong Province, with its unique barbecue culture - "grill, small cakes and dips" soul three-piece suit, set off a wave of social media, "Zibo Barbecue" quickly become the Internet's new favourite, attracting a large wave of people "into Zibo catch grilled" to form a huge "media pilgrimage".

Nick Kundry developed the theory of "mediated pilgrimage" from the traditional view of "pilgrimage" as proposed by Victor Turner. According to Kundry, "mediated pilgrimage" refers to the act of travelling to a site of significance presented in a mediated narrative.^[1] In this process, not only are the abstract features of the media production system integrated into the act of travelling, but the mediated pilgrimage itself is also part of the real tourist activity, and at the same time becomes a performance of the space of distance between the "ordinary world" and the "mediated world". Such performances satisfy people's spatial imaginations and have led to a wide range of practical behaviours. Nowadays, the media pilgrimage has completed the process of demystification and evolved into a popular entertainment carnival.

Zibo barbecue's out of the circle is not an accident, behind which deeply reflects the importance of urban communication. Therefore, this paper takes Zibo barbecue as an example and uses the media pilgrimage theory, aiming to explore the path of urban communication and the shaping of urban image in the era of new media, with a view to providing useful reference and thinking for the sustainable development of modern urban communication.

2. Media Reproduction: Reproducing Landscape Space under Media Narrative

When we analyse the 'media pilgrimage' as a tourism behaviour, the precondition for it to stimulate tourists to participate in it is that the publicity and promotion of a particular landscape space by the media narrative is generally accepted by the recipients, i.e. its 'mediated reproduction' is generally accepted by the tourists. The media reproduction is generally accepted by the tourists.^[2] In the new media era, short videos have become an important way for people to acquire new knowledge. The landscape space reproduced in short videos is an important motivation to attract tourists, and the audience will have a preliminary "fantasy" about the city image according to the landscape space reproduced in the media. Under the media narrative, the audience gives high attention to the city in a

short period of time through the network gaze and realises virtual presence.

2.1. Enhanced spatial mapping for agenda-setting

In the new media era, cyberspace has become freer and more open, discourse has been decentralised, and the main body of agenda-setting has diversified from monolithic to pluralistic, and Donald Shaw has put forward the concepts of "horizontal media" and "vertical media". The Internet stimulates the participation of ordinary users, the horizontal media of these users to establish a horizontal agenda and the vertical agenda of the mainstream media intertwined with each other, working together. Zibo use "mainstream media + opinion leaders + users" triple subject intertwined, in the social platform actively set the issue. In March 2023, college students traveled to Zibo to eat barbecue and spontaneously released a series of promotional short videos. This was the beginning of the popularity of Zibo Barbecue. Subsequently, jittery ten million fans blogger "Ullala" "B too" and so on have gone to Zibo, card shop, the video was sent out as many as one million likes, the Zibo barbecue heat pushed to a new level. In addition to the netizen tap water type publicity, Zibo official also seize the heat, has to create "into Zibo to catch grilled", "Zibo barbecue F4", "Zibo barbecue small fat child how lovely" and other youthful, Positive issues linkage, active momentum. Diversified agenda setting, "Zibo barbecue" all-round display on the Internet, strengthened Zibo's urban space image, to meet the audience for Zibo's urban imagination, so as to stimulate the audience to want to "close to the impulse".

2.2. Symbolic construction of urban image

Symbol, a symbol that refers to other objects. Symbolisation refers to the process of fully referring to complex things with simple symbols. The image communication of a city is essentially a process of symbolisation of its spatial intention.^[3]The process of symbolisation of a city's image is the process of constantly refining the city's characteristics and advantages. In the media narrative, the symbolic city dominates the audience's imagination, understanding and feeling of the city's image. Through symbolisation, the unique visual label of the city is constructed, forming the unique image and memory of the city. In the media narrative, the symbolic phenomenon of the city can be seen everywhere. For Zibo barbecue, "small cakes, grill, dipping sauce" has become the city symbol of Zibo official city propaganda. "Soul three-piece suit" has become a unique food culture and city symbol of Zibo. Zibo official media has been committed to the promotion of Zibo barbecue, Zibo barbecue as the city business card for publicity, the official government support to a large extent to promote the symbolisation process in Zibo. Food culture is one of the key focuses of the city's promotion. Zibo has prioritized promoting Zibo barbecue, making it a symbol of the city's image and successfully establishing a unique city brand with distinct Zibo characteristics.

3. Embodied Encounters: User Participatory Practices in the Midst of Media Frenzy

According to Bakhtin's theory of carnival, human lifestyles can be divided into two types: the official, hierarchical and rule-filled life, and the opposite, known as "carnival".^[4]This division highlights the diversity and complexity of human life and helps us to better understand the lifestyles and values of people in different cultures and societies. In postmodern society, audiences are no longer satisfied with virtual media orgies. They pay more attention to real experience and physical presence. "Carnival" has long been gradually freed from the obstacles of time and space, and has begun to penetrate every aspect of the public. The "special forces style travel" is a concrete manifestation of the rave theory, which is not only a ritualised process of participation, but also the pursuit and aspiration for the rave life. No matter how people carry out their bodily practices in the city, they inadvertently come into physical contact with the landscape space. The participatory practices of users become an important part of urban communication, accelerating the birth of the "Netroots City".

3.1. Participatory culture of check-in frenzy

At the end of the last century, Henry Jenkins put forward "participatory culture", he believed that the arrival of the digital age provides opportunities for ordinary individuals to participate in media narratives. In the new media era, everyone has a microphone and the right to speak. Social media platforms provide users with an open and transparent sharing and narrative space, and in order to enhance group identity and identity, users take the initiative to transform their daily life practices into creative media texts. With the explosion of Zibo barbecue, tourists will take the initiative to post hit

videos on social platforms such as Jieyin. At this time, mobile devices become part of their bodies, and they use their mobile phones or cameras to record and share their consumption experience full of rituals on online platforms, so as to obtain identity and circle identity. Not only do check-in videos satisfy tourists' desire for expression, but cities can also use punch card videos to shape their city image. The accumulation of check-in videos has led to the emergence of new "internet celebrity cities", sparking enthusiasm for checking in among users, and encouraging more users to join the frenzy via social media.

3.2. Consumer reproduction of symbolic meaning

Baudrillard was the first to introduce the concept of the symbol into the study of social consumer behaviour, arguing that the consumption of things presupposes that they are seen as symbols. Consumption is no longer the consumption of objects, but the consumption of symbols. The essence of symbolic consumption lies in people's pursuit of identity construction. On the one hand, the strong topic degree of Zibo barbecue makes Zibo barbecue become a new "social currency" and an important talking point in group interaction. The circulation of Zibo barbecue as a social currency is mainly reflected in the user's participation in practical activities, including travel, community discussion and so on. Just as people use currency to buy goods or services, the use of social currency can gain more goodwill and more positive impressions from others. Having eaten Zibo BBQ becomes a social bonus, unconsciously forming a unique social circle. On the other hand, users' participatory practices further symbolise Zibo. From the point of view of the comments posted by users, "full of gold and quantity", "hospitality" and "fireworks" have become the key words of Zibo. Users take the initiative to personalise the city in the process of physical practice, shaping the media landscape.

4. Feedback on Action: Reflections on "Space Ballet" and "Sincerity" under Media Discipline

Firstly, the theory of "space ballet" is a development of the theory of "place ballet", which focuses on the individual's physical practice in the open urban space and even in the global space. The "space ballet" breaks free from the closed confines of the "local" and places the needs of individual interaction in a wider perspective. "Spatial Ballet is based on a trans-regional physical practice that examines how individuals interact with unfamiliar spaces and individuals in open movement. From the perspective of the "spatial ballet" theory, the feedback of users' actions towards the city often comes from their real experiences in urban space, that is, the "spatial ballet" performed by users in the landscape space. Secondly, according to Habermas, sincerity is a condition for effective communication, establishing rationality of interaction, and is a kind of "self-guarantee".^[5]For city managers, sincerity means that they have to make a "guarantee" to the tourists, "i.e. a sincere 'performance' of the authenticity and difference of the local culture".^[6]In the face of users' feedback on their actions, city managers need to grasp the signals, continuously improve their cities based on users' feedback on their actions, respond in a timely manner, listen to users' voices, and satisfy users' needs.

4.1. Prompt Response to Public Opinion Monitoring

Internet public opinion refers to the summary of views, remarks and opinions expressed by the public on the Internet on popular issues and focal points in daily life. In the Internet era, any negative event has the risk of evolving into a public opinion event, which, if not prevented and controlled in time, will seriously jeopardise the social environment and government credibility. Therefore, there must be a strong awareness of risk. "Water can carry the boat, can also cover the boat" for Zibo, the media narrative of every negative event may become a crisis event to damage the city's image. 15 April, a tourist said in Zibo barbecue restaurant encountered mandatory consumption of a specific skewer. 16 April, Zibo City Market Supervision Bureau quickly issued "standardise the price of operators to remind the conduct Caveat emptor", emphasising strict self-discipline and operating in accordance with the law. For the behaviour of hotel rooms to inflate prices, Zibo Zhangdian District Market Supervision Bureau issued a letter to expose the typical cases of price violations, a hotel to start a case investigation. Zibo officials monitor public opinion in real time and handle it openly and transparently. In the response and handling of online public opinion, the official should uphold the attitude of honesty and straightforwardness, the courage to take responsibility, and make urgent verification, rapid disposal of practical actions expected to be eliminated at the initial stage of the risk, eliminating it in the invisible.

4.2. Sincere valet riding the wave

The government is the most important body in the process of urban communication, sincerity is always the city communication must kill. Zibo is the representative of industrial cities in Shandong, now transformed into a "net red tourist city". The reason for this, it is not difficult to find Zibo fire behind the implied Zibo government and Zibo people's sincere heart. In order to facilitate the tourists to play, the Zibo government introduced a series of related policies such as traffic, security, prices, and the opening of the "Zibo college student card" to give college students attractions ticket discounts. In order to reward college students "into Zibo to catch up with the enthusiasm of the grill", Zibo government also introduced to Zibo internships, internships, employment and other related policies. May Day holiday is coming, Zibo City Culture and Tourism Bureau, a "letter to the majority of tourists and friends" fire all over the network, the text not only mentioned Zibo's local customs, but also wrote about the unique charm of the sister cities, reflecting Zibo's passionate and sincere attitude as well as the pattern of the world. In the process of Zibo constantly out of the circle, tourists are no longer just attracted by the barbecue, but gradually immersed in the atmosphere outside the barbecue to form a simple emotional connection.

5. What the "Go to Zizi and Catch the Bake" Craze Says about Urban Communication Today

5.1. City cards: setting the agenda to create a unique city label

Each city has each city's unique culture and history. How to dig them out and create an exclusive city business card is the key to city communication. In city communication, the local government official media should deeply excavate these special elements and integrate them into the communication content, so as to enhance the public's awareness and sense of identity of the city. Zibo barbecue" is the Zibo government to comply with the trend of the new media era to create a food memory business card, from the beginning of the "college students group back to Zibo to eat barbecue" to later "into Zibo to catch the grill", the Zibo government seized the opportunity to create the "Zibo barbecue". Zibo government seized the opportunity to catch the flow, continue to promote Zibo barbecue, Zibo with "Zibo barbecue" this business card completely become "top stream".

5.2. Infrastructure: government support to improve service quality

The role of the government is very important in urban communication. The government should play its leading role, show government credibility and be a good spokesman for the city's image. In the process of urban communication, the local government should take its own city characteristics as the cornerstone, from the citizen's needs, to improve the quality of service. For example, the local government of Zibo has offered preferential policies for tourists, providing free shuttle services and opening customized barbecue tour routes. They also organized the "Zibo Barbecue Festival" to further promote Zibo's barbecue culture and make it more popular. The various initiatives taken by the Zibo government not only enhance tourists' satisfaction and experience, but also subtly showcase the "human touch" of the city of Zibo to the public.

5.3. Close to life: simple narratives create empathetic communication

Compared with the elitist discourse of mainstream media, media narratives based on social media platforms are more inclined to simple, grassroots information exchange and presentation of daily life. Expressions that are close to reality, life, and the masses are more likely to trigger the emotional resonance of the audience. The reason why "Zizi Catch Roast" can be strong out of the circle is precisely because the public in the media narrative felt the real interaction between people full of fireworks that was lost because of the epidemic. In the new media era, the traditional "temple-style" language gradually eliminated, urban communication using "Jianghu-style" simple media narrative, in order to be closer to the audience's life, to meet the audience's city image "fantasy". The city's image can be more closely related to the audience's life and satisfy their "fantasy". Successful urban communication should achieve internal cohesion to stimulate the citizens' sense of belonging to the city, sense of self-confidence, and external social recognition to enhance the city's popularity and popularity of the topic, to find points of empathy, the formation of empathetic communication.

6. Conclusion

Urban communication is a complex and diversified process, "Zibo barbecue" is not an accident, is to make full use of the flow effect of the media era, the depth of their own advantages to create a city business card, with efficient, humane service results of the concerted efforts of many parties. Tourism is equivalent to "contemporary pilgrimages," and the landscape space presented by media narratives serves as an important driving force attracting audiences to "pilgrimages." Agenda setting and symbolic construction strengthen the city image and stimulate the participatory practices of the audience. Meanwhile, urban managers need to reflect and adjust under media discipline to satisfy the diverse needs of the audience. Urban communication is a long-term and sustainable process, and the active participation of society as a whole is needed in order to turn "Netflix" into "Everlasting Red" and to build synergies together.

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