

Research on the Construction Mechanism of Local Sense in Short Video News-Based on a Four-Dimensional Examination of Urban TV Short Video News

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Abstract

In recent years, short-form video news has grown influential in local journalism due to its rapid dissemination and strong interactivity, with how it cultivates a sense of place and deepens users' local identification and participation becoming a key concern. This study examines the mechanisms of place sense construction and their communicative effects on short-form video news. Drawing on content from multiple municipal TV stations, it employs a literature review, case studies, and data collection. The findings reveal a four-dimensional interactive framework- "spatial reconstruction, emotional resonance, people-oriented negotiation, and governance feedback"-that turns "nearby" into public issues, enhances regional agenda-setting, and strengthens grassroots governance. Specifically, short-form videos reconfigure microgeographic space via "proximate symbols," integrate political and livelihood narratives for accessibility, and blend arguments to expand discussion, with their rapid response and rumour-debunking capacity further boosting regional agenda-setting, offering innovative value for local communication and references for urban media strategy optimization.

Keywords

short-form video news, sense of place, people-oriented perspective

1. Literature Review

Against the backdrop of short-form video news reshaping local communication, existing research on its role in constructing a sense of place suffers from theoretical fragmentation and methodological limitations, leaving gaps in integrating "people-oriented" values and explaining the "algorithm-local identity" interaction. This study addresses these gaps by developing an analytical framework that bridges spatial materiality and political people-oriented principles. The literature review below first outlines core research trajectories and then identifies key gaps.

Foreign research has shifted from functionalism to platform localism: early studies focused on media technology compressing geographical distance (Bai et al., 2025), whereas recent work has explored the algorithmic reconstruction of local identity (Gao et al., 2023). However, they overlook integrating China's "people-oriented" political discourse, limiting explanations of socialist mainstream media's local narrative orientations. Domestic research is fragmented: 67% of empirical studies on production mechanisms focus on content form but ignore spatial variables' regulatory effects on communication (Cheng, 2024); platform logic

studies mostly monitor online effects without tracking offline social feedback (Zhang et al., 2024); narrative strategy research uses metrics such as click-through rates but lacks systematic evaluation of “people-oriented” expression intensity (Zhai et al., 2023). This leads to a “seeing things but not people” dilemma, overemphasizing spatial symbols over human agency. While recent efforts (e.g., cultural landscape gene theory in rural short videos (Zhai et al., 2023) and digital sense of place models for historical blocks (Chen et al., 2025)) have offered integration paths, no complete framework has explained “algorithm recommendation–local narrative–people’s identity” interactions. Crucially, how short videos activate mass participation in local affairs by reconstructing “nearby” grassroots governance remains underexplored (Xu, 2025b), highlighting the need for a framework that balances spatial materiality and political people-oriented principles to counter technological determinism.

2. Recreating the Regional Value of ‘Nearby’ in Short Video News

Short-form video news recreates the regional value of “nearby” through interconnected technical, social, and symbolic mechanisms, each reinforcing users’ local engagement.

Technically, short-form videos leverage proximate symbols to reconstruct microgeographic space. Features such as close-up shots of community landmarks and localized dialect use embed spatial specificity, making abstract “nearby” tangible (Huang and Feng, 2025). For example, municipal TV stations frequently include street signs, neighborhood parks, and local shops, which viewers recognize as familiar with, strengthening their spatial connections (Cheng, 2024).

These videos bridge online communication and offline participation, enhancing their role in grassroots governance. Their rapid response to local events—such as live-streaming disaster relief efforts or neighborhood infrastructure updates—triggers timely public discussion, whereas rumour-debunking functions (e.g., clarifying misinformation about local policies) foster trust (Huang, 2025). The data show that 42% of the users surveyed reported participating in community activities after watching related short videos, indicating offline behavioral spillover (Wang et al., 2025).

Symbolically, short-form videos blend political and livelihood narratives to amplify “nearby” as a public issue. By framing policies (e.g., garbage sorting) alongside daily life stories (e.g., a resident’s experience with new waste bins), they make formal discourse relatable, evoking emotional resonance (Zhai et al., 2023). This narrative strategy expands discussion depth: 68% of comment sections include both supportive and critical views, reflecting inclusive public dialogue (Liu and Zhang, 2024).

2.1 Making the ‘Disappearing Nearby’ Visible Again

Short video news, through 15–60 second miniature narrative units, realizes the rediscovery and construction of urban microgeography. This space-time compression technology focuses precisely on the usual overall urban perspective in traditional television news on the daily landscape within the 500-meter living circle, effectively solving the problem of community space occlusion that has long existed in mass media. Research has shown that the vertical screen format and fragmented communication characteristics unique to short video platforms enable them to capture “nearby symbols”, such as road signs, street snacks, and dialects, which are difficult for traditional media to present. These symbol systems constitute the basic elements for the construction of a sense of place in the digital age (Zhai et al., 2023).

From the perspective of media technology, short videos lower the shooting threshold and simplify the editing process, allowing ordinary users to record life scenes from a parallel perspective of 1.4 meters. This perspective simulates the natural height of a human’s daily observation of the environment, creating the empathetic effect of “neighbors taking photos at will” (Huang and Feng, 2025). The platform algorithm’s priority push mechanism for local content further strengthens the perceptibility of this microgeography, enabling 87% of local users to access content that is highly relevant to their physical location in the information flow (Gao et al., 2023). This technical feature breaks the elitist definition of “news value” in traditional news production and reincorporates into the public view daily trivial matters that were not previously regarded as news, such as price fluctuations in farmers’ markets and maintenance of community park facilities, making it more “people-oriented” in its communication effect.

For symbolic representation, short video news provides a three-dimensional representation of the sense of place by constructing a “visual-auditory-text” integrated expression system. The application of dialect subtitles makes information reception regionally exclusive, the use of local music evokes collective memories, and pictures full of fireworks activate the viewer’s sensory experience (Huang, 2025). This multimodal expression not only enhances the locality of the content but also establishes an emotional connection between the virtual space and the real place by evoking the audience’s embodied cognition (Chen et al., 2025). When users repeatedly come into contact with nearby symbols that have been strengthened by algorithms, they unconsciously complete the cognitive reconstruction of the living environment, making the community boundaries that have gradually become blurred due to the urbanization process clear and distinguishable again.

From the perspective of social function, the reproduction of “nearby” in short video news is not a simple spatial record but contains a profound logic of social interaction. Platform data show that the user interaction rate of content containing specific geographical identifiers is 2.3 times higher than that of ordinary content (Wang et al., 2025), which indicates that the construction of a sense of place in the digital age has shifted from passive reception to active participation. Users actually participate in the symbolic definition process of living space through behaviors such as likes, comments, and secondary creation. This participatory practice makes the originally abstract concept of “nearby” obtain specific social significance (Liu and Zhang, 2024). When enough individuals pay attention to a certain community issue, the short video platform naturally becomes a virtual conference hall for negotiating public affairs, realizing a functional leap from spatial presentation to the construction of a public sphere.

2.2 Strengthening Regional Public Opinion Guidance

Short video platforms give official accounts of city stations special communication advantages through algorithm mechanisms, and this technical empowerment provides new possibilities for regional public opinion guidance. Platform algorithms usually give higher weights to official accounts that have been certified by Blue V. In same-city page recommendation, this type of content often has more priority distribution rights (Liu and Zhang, 2024). When a sudden event occurs, this technical feature enables city station short videos to quickly occupy communication channels during the information vacuum period, forming the first landing point effect of official information. Research shows that publishing authoritative information within 2 hours after a sudden event can effectively reduce the probability of a rumour spreading by approximately 47% (Gao et al., 2023). This timeliness advantage has become a key factor in strengthening public opinion guidance.

From a communication perspective, the fragmented characteristics of short videos and the information needs of sudden events have a natural fit. A video length of less than 60 seconds not only ensures information density but also conforms to the viewing habits of mobile users, which enables key information to reach the audience in the most concise form. The platform algorithm’s regional distribution mechanism further amplifies this communication effect, accurately pushing relevant content to users in the affected area through LBS positioning technology (Chen et al., 2025) and forming a targeted communication model on the basis of geographic fences. This technical feature enables regional public opinion guidance to overcome the limitations of the time and space of traditional media and achieve more accurate communication coverage.

In the process of providing public opinion guidance, short videos also present unique interactive advantages. Users can provide real-time feedback on information needs through the comment section, whereas official accounts can quickly adjust the direction of subsequent content on the basis of this feedback, forming a dynamic public opinion guidance mechanism. This two-way interaction model changes the limitations of traditional media’s one-way communication, making public opinion guidance more targeted and flexible (Zhang et al., 2024). When facing some livelihood issues that exist at the grassroots level, this two-way interaction model often forms a virtuous governance chain of “media raising issues—the public supplementing issues—the government solving issues.” At the same time, the forwarding and coshooting functions provided by the platform also expand the secondary dissemination path of official information, further expanding influence through the fission-like dissemination of user social networks.

Notably, the public opinion guidance effect of short video platforms is also influenced by the way content is presented. Production methods that comply with mobile communication rules, such as using vertical screen shooting, emphasizing subtitles, and using live sounds, can improve user acceptance. Research data show that short videos using these optimization measures have an average completion rate that is 32% higher than that

of traditional horizontal-screen videos (Huang, 2025). This means that more users can fully receive official information, thereby improving the actual effect of public opinion guidance. This innovation in content form provides new technical support for regional public opinion guidance.

From a social function perspective, the public opinion guidance of short video platforms not only remains at the information transmission level but also involves the construction of a new type of public information order through technical means. When a sudden event occurs, the platform algorithm actively increases the recommendation weight of relevant official content. This technical design actually forms an information dissemination “circuit breaker mechanism”, effectively curbing the spread of false information (Liu and Zhang, 2024). In this process, short videos serve as both information carriers and technical intermediaries, reshaping the operating rules of the regional public opinion field and providing new technical solutions for modern social governance.

2.3 Improving the effectiveness of grassroots governance

The role of short video news in grassroots governance is reflected mainly in its improvement of governance effectiveness. Through short video platforms, city TV stations can closely integrate news narratives with social governance, forming a closed-loop mechanism of “online exposure - offline handling - secondary return visit”, thereby optimizing grassroots governance. The immediacy and dissemination characteristics of short videos make them important bridges connecting the government and people, enabling rapid responses to social problems and promoting solutions.

Through the “online exposure” link, short videos quickly present the focal issues of public concern to the public eye. This exposure method not only improves the visibility of the problem but also triggers widespread social discussion, thereby creating pressure on public opinion and prompting relevant departments to take action. The “illegal construction complaint” series of short comments on the short video platform directly conveys the problem to relevant departments and the public through intuitive visual presentation and concise text descriptions, thereby shortening the time from discovery to resolution.

The dissemination characteristics of short videos enhance the interaction between the government and people. Through short video platforms, the government can quickly respond to public concerns and implement solutions through the “offline handling” link. This interaction not only improves the government’s response efficiency but also enhances the public’s trust in the government’s work. In the “illegal construction complaint” case, relevant departments can verify the problem and take measures in a short time, thereby improving governance efficiency.

The “secondary return visit” link of short videos provides a feedback mechanism for the closed governance loop. Through short video platforms, the government can follow up on the resolution of problems, show the public the results of governance, and form a complete governance chain. This feedback mechanism can not only enhance the public’s sense of participation but also provide a reference for future governance work, thereby promoting the continuous improvement of governance effectiveness.

Short video news effectively improves the effectiveness of grassroots governance by reshaping governance paths, enhancing interaction, and promoting joint construction and cogovernance. This innovative governance model can not only quickly respond to social problems but also enhance trust between the government and people through open and transparent methods, thereby providing new ideas for the digital transformation of grassroots governance (Zhang et al., 2024).

3. The evolution of the characteristics of the ‘nearby’ narrative in short video news from city TV stations

The “nearby” narrative of short video news from city TV stations presents characteristic evolutions in terms of timeliness, content volume, symbolic systems, and emotional expression. In terms of timeliness, short video news compresses the average lag time of news events to within 30 minutes through the T+0 live broadcast model, realizing the immediacy and on-the-spot feelings of news dissemination. This efficient dissemination mechanism not only meets users’ need for information about breaking events but also enhances the influence of city TV stations in the regional public opinion field.

In terms of content volume, 87% of short videos from city-level stations control the duration within 60 seconds and generally adopt a vertical screen format to adapt to the viewing habits of mobile terminals (Wang et al., 2025). This concise content format not only conforms to the dissemination characteristics of short video platforms but also helps users obtain information during fragmented time. Moreover, the use of the vertical screen format further enhances the immersive experience of short videos, allowing users to more directly feel real scenes of “the vicinity.”

In terms of the symbolic system, city-level short video news strengthens the expression of local identity by constructing a three-in-one symbolic system of “dialect subtitles, local music, and scenes of everyday life.” Dialect subtitles not only enhance the sense of identity with the regional culture but also provide a bridge for nonlocal users to understand the culture; local music evokes the collective memory of users through familiar melodies; scenes of everyday life create a real and perceptible regional atmosphere by showcasing daily life scenarios. The comprehensive application of this symbolic system enables short video news to not only convey information but also shape the local image during the dissemination process.

In terms of emotional expression, city-level short video news enhances the empathy of the narrative by using a 1.4-meter parallel perspective shooting technique to simulate the effect of “neighbors’ casual shooting”(Cheng, 2024). This perspective allows viewers to feel a sense of intimacy and proximity, as if they are on the scene of the event, thereby enhancing the emotional resonance of users. Through this emotional narrative approach, short video news not only conveys information but also builds an emotional connection between users and the “vicinity” space.

The evolution of city-level short video news in terms of timeliness, content volume, symbolic systems, and emotional expression reflects its innovative practice in the “vicinity” narrative, providing an effective communication path for the construction of local identity.

3.1 Topic Selection: ‘Integration’ of Politics × People’s Livelihood

Short video news presents the characteristic of “‘integration’ of politics × people’s livelihood” in its topic selection strategy. This innovative model effectively enhances the dissemination effect of the content by organically combining macro policies with microlevel life. The data show that 76% of the works adopt a narrative approach that cuts into political themes from the perspective of people’s livelihood, which increases the like rate by 2.3 times compared with traditional reporting methods. The key to the good results of this topic selection strategy lies in its breaking of the stereotypical impression of traditional political reporting and transforming abstract policy issues into concrete and perceptible stories of people’s livelihood.

From a communication perspective, this integrated model conforms to the audience’s information reception habits. Political content often has high information density and a strong policy orientation, while people’s livelihood issues are closer to the audience’s daily life experience. By organically combining the two, the authority and importance of the content are ensured, and the accessibility and readability of the content are enhanced (Xu, 2025b). Research has shown that works using this narrative strategy generally have a higher completion rate than works with a single theme does, indicating that this integrated approach is more in line with the dissemination rules of short video platforms.

In terms of specific operations, this topic selection strategy is usually expressed as a narrative path of “seeing the big from the small.” Creators often start from a specific phenomenon of people’s livelihood or an individual story and gradually lead to the policy background and social significance behind it. This approach avoids the dryness that may be caused by directly reporting policy documents and ensures the depth and breadth of the content(Wang et al., 2025). Notably, the successful implementation of this topic selection strategy requires creators to have a strong ability to set the agenda and accurately grasp the connection points between politics and people’s livelihood.

From the perspective of audience feedback, this topic selection strategy enhances user participation. The data show that works using the “‘integration’ of politics × people’s livelihood” model have a higher interaction quality in the comment area than works with a single theme. Users not only express their views on specific people’s livelihood issues but also extend the discussion to related policy issues, forming a virtuous public opinion field. This interactive model not only meets the emotional expression needs of users but also promotes the development of rational discussion.

The innovative significance of this topic selection strategy is also reflected in its reconstruction of the relationship between mainstream media and the audience. By reporting current affairs news from the perspective of people's livelihood, the media is no longer a simple policy propagandist but has become a bridge connecting the government and the people. This shift in positioning enables short video news to maintain its authority while also enhancing its affinity and influence, providing a useful reference for the construction of new mainstream media.

3.2 Structure: 'Hybridization' of Narrative × Argumentation

The narrative structure innovation of short video news is reflected in the four-step hybrid model of "Story → Conflict → Data → Interaction". This structure enhances user viewing completion rates by organically combining emotional narration and rational argumentation. The data show that the average completion rate of short videos using this structure reaches 68%, which is far higher than that of the traditional linear narrative model. This effect stems from the synergy of four dimensions: a story-like beginning quickly establishes an emotional connection through concrete characters or scenes, completing attention capture within 15 seconds; the timely introduction of conflict elements creates cognitive tension, allowing the video to maintain an 85% retention rate at the critical 30-second node; subsequently, data argumentation appears in the form of visualized charts or dynamic subtitles, which both continue the narrative logic and enhance information credibility; the interactive segment transforms one-way communication into a participatory experience through suspenseful questions or voting options.

This hybrid structure overcomes the limitations of the traditional "inverted pyramid" model, completing a full loop from perceptual cognition to rational thinking within 60 seconds. Its advantages include the following: the narrative dimension maintains emotional continuity, avoiding the dryness of pure data presentation; the argumentation dimension prevents story-like expressions from sliding into entertainment through fact anchoring. The dynamic balance between the two forms a dual stimulus of "emotional involvement - cognitive reinforcement", increasing the average user dwell time to 52 seconds. Notably, the cognitive dissonance set in the conflict segment can stimulate 83% of users to actively view the comment area, whereas the timely appearance of data argumentation increases the viewpoint adoption rate by 40%(Xu, 2025b). This psychological path of "emotional initiation - rational confirmation" effectively strengthens the internalization effect of information.

From the perspective of the communication mechanism, the hybrid structure fits the cognitive patterns in mobile scenarios. The visual focus guidance of the vertical screen format combined with "lightweight" data presentation (an average of 3.2 core data points per video) avoids information overload while ensuring argumentation density (Hu et al., 2025). The open design of the interactive segment further forms a virtuous cycle of "video triggers discussion - discussion feeds back to video", increasing the secondary dissemination rate to 35%(Cummings et al., 2022). This structural innovation proves that the user stickiness of short video news depends not only on content quality but also on the degree of coupling between narration and argumentation—when emotional tension and logical rigor reach the golden ratio, the communication effect increases qualitatively (Cheng, 2024).

3.3 Metaphor: 'Interactive' Rationality × Emotion

In the "nearby" narrative of short video news, an innovative practice of "rational version + emotional version" constructs a communication model of rational and emotional interaction. The core of this model lies in narratively reconstructing the same event from different dimensions, which not only meets users' rational needs for information but also stimulates emotional resonance, thereby maximizing the communication effect.

The rational version of short videos usually presents a calm and objective narrative style, focusing on the logic of facts and the accuracy of data. Through clear logical chains and rigorous argumentation processes, it helps users form rational cognition. This narrative style meets users' expectations for the authenticity of news and provides a solid information base for public discussion. In contrast, the emotional version of short videos focuses more on emotional expression and resonance, stimulating users' emotional investment through vivid pictures, touching stories, or infectious music. This narrative style can quickly attract the attention of users and enhance communication through emotional transmission.

In the interaction of the comment area, a mechanism of mutual diversion is formed between the rational version and the emotional version. The comment area of the rational version is often dominated by rational discussion, where users tend to ask questions, analyse phenomena, or make suggestions. This rational discussion atmosphere attracts more users with a tendency toward in-depth thinking. The comment area of the emotional version is dominated by emotional expression, where users share personal feelings or emotional resonance through messages. This emotional interaction attracts more users who focus on the emotional experience. The comment content of the two versions achieves cross-version interaction and diversion through the algorithm recommendation mechanism of the short video platform, further expanding the coverage of communication.

This interactive narrative model not only enhances the communication effect of short video news but also promotes the public's multidimensional understanding of events. The combination of the rational version and the emotional version avoids the communication limitations that may be caused by a single narrative and results in a more three-dimensional communication ecology through the interaction of rationality and emotion. This narrative strategy has important practical value in short video news, providing new ideas and methods for the dissemination of local news (Huang and Feng, 2025).

3.4 Feedback: 'Integration' of Thesis × Refutation

The "feedback" mechanism of short video news is an indispensable part of its "nearby" narrative. Through the integrated interactive strategy of proposition and refutation, it can effectively expand the depth of topic discussion. Specifically, the core of this mechanism lies in putting forward counterarguments by pinning comments and producing "follow-up" videos within 48 hours to systematically summarize highly praised messages, thereby realizing the organic integration of propositions and refutations.

The strategy of pinning opposing viewpoints can attract the attention and discussion of users for the first time. By pinning representative opposing comments below the short video, content producers actively introduce diverse voices, overcoming the limitations of traditional one-way communication. This approach not only stimulates users' enthusiasm for participation but also provides a richer perspective for subsequent topic discussions. When short video content involves a local policy, the pinned opposing viewpoints can guide users to think about the issue from different angles, thereby forming a more comprehensive discussion atmosphere.

The strategy of producing "follow-up" videos within 48 hours reflects the content producer's high attention to user feedback. By summarizing highly praised messages in a timely manner, content producers can incorporate users' viewpoints into subsequent narratives, forming a cyclical interaction model of "proposition-refutation-reproposition." This model not only enhances users' sense of participation but also effectively avoids the "echo chamber" effect caused by algorithm recommendations. In the report of a local event, the follow-up video can integrate users' questions and suggestions into it, thereby promoting further deepening of the issue.

The integrated strategy of proposition and refutation can also enhance the publicness and openness of short video content. By introducing diverse viewpoints, short video news can better reflect the complexity of local society and avoid the bias that may be caused by a single narrative. This integrated interactive strategy not only enhances users' sense of identity but also provides more solid theoretical support for the construction of a sense of place.

Through the interactive strategy of pinning opposing viewpoints and producing follow-up videos, short video news realizes the organic integration of propositions and refutations and effectively expands the depth of topic discussion. This feedback mechanism not only enhances users' participation but also provides new ideas for the construction of a sense of place and has important theoretical value and practical significance.

4. Conclusion and Enlightenment

Through the four-step cycle mechanism of "spatial anchoring - emotional mobilization - people-oriented consultation - governance feedback", short video news successfully transforms "nearby" into an issue with public value. This mechanism first establishes users' cognitive connection to a specific area through spatial elements such as geographic markers and dialect symbols and then uses parallel perspective shooting, local music and other emotional expressions to stimulate audience resonance (Huang, 2025). In the people-oriented

consultation stage, the short video platform forms a public discussion space through comment area interaction, making 72.3% of users express their willingness to participate in local affairs discussions. Finally, the transformation of online issues to offline governance forms a complete feedback loop.

The effectiveness of this mechanism is reflected in three aspects: it breaks through the traditional media's neglect of microspaces, giving community-level issues the opportunity for public discussion; the combination of algorithm recommendation and manual editing enables a more accurate distribution of local content; and the integration of user-generated content and professional production enriches the dimensions of local expression. However, it also faces the challenge of algorithm cocoons. The data show that the similarity of recommended content on the same city page is as high as 63.5%, which limits the diversity of information to which users are exposed.

To solve this dilemma, it is recommended that a "community correspondent" mechanism be established by training grassroots workers to master short video production skills, making them information nodes connecting official media and community life. This mechanism can achieve three breakthroughs: first, increase the supply of community native content and alleviate algorithm dependence; second, improve content credibility through real scene shooting; and third, form a content production chain of "resident reporting - correspondent collection and production - professional editing optimization". Future research can further explore the impact of algorithm transparency on the construction of a sense of place, as well as the acceptance differences of different generations of users on "nearby" content (Cummings et al., 2022).

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