

"Dancing Yunnan": A Study of Sensory Communication and Local Identity - Using Bilibili's "Geometric Record" Yunnan City Image MV as a Case Study

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Abstract. In a communication environment increasingly dominated by digital media, sensory communication has emerged as a crucial pathway for shaping local images and stimulating collective identity. The digital dissemination of local culture urgently requires both appeal and locality. Taking the Yunnan city image MV produced by Bilibili's "Geometric Record" account as a case study, this paper explores how intense audiovisual language and local cultural symbols construct a vivid image of Yunnan, local festival elements, and platform interaction logic, thereby promoting the construction and extension of local identity. Research reveals that this series of MV works not only creates intense sensory stimulation through rapid editing, ethnic-language songs, and spectacular color schemes, but also leverages bullet-screen interactions to generate pathways for local identity. This approach evokes cultural belonging among local audiences and emotional resonance among distant viewers. Simultaneously, this paper reflects on the risk of cultural flattening that may arise when dominated by "viral songs" tendencies and "pleasure logic." This paper argues that ethnic-style MV works, as a new form of digital ethnography, demonstrate the potential for reconstructing local culture within digital media. They also remind us of the imperative to safeguard the spiritual warmth and local depth of culture.

Keywords: Yunnan culture, sensory communication, local identity, music video, geometric recording

1. Introduction

Yunnan Province, located in southwest China, is a cultural powerhouse rich in humanities, ethnic cultures, and natural resources. It was also among the earliest regions in China to produce city image promotional videos. Since the 1990s, these videos have predominantly taken the form of documentaries or microfilms featuring "urban landscapes + background music," carrying strong advertising attributes. Their functions primarily serve city tourism, investment promotion, major events, or comprehensive publicity [1]. In 2000, China Central Television aired Kunming's city image film *Every Day is Spring in Kunming*. By blending the children's song "Where Is Spring?" with ethnic-style chanting music and pairing it with visually striking scenes showcasing Yunnan's unique characteristics, the film successfully spread the imagery of "South of the Colorful Clouds"

nationwide. In recent years, driven by social media and short-video platforms, Yunnan's city image videos have continuously innovated. Creators have expanded beyond government and mainstream media to include more professional independent artists, diversifying dissemination formats. Among them, creators like the "Geometric Record" account have emerged, releasing a series of music videos themed around ethnic festivals—such as "The brainwashing divine song Ruli Jinwang of the Water Splashing Festival in Mangshi is coming, this is the Yunnan people who can sing and dance" and "Yunnan viral song Everything is good! of Dehong Water Splashing Festival is released ", etc. and has been forwarded and promoted by multiple official media platforms. However, despite their growing influence, theoretical research on city image music videos within the converged media environment remains in its infancy, with academic attention lagging significantly.

Guided by sensory communication theory and employing case study and textual analysis methods, this paper focuses on the Yunnan ethnic festival series MV works created by "Geometric Record." It systematically explores, from the dual perspectives of aesthetic value and communication effectiveness, how city image MV works can contribute to the construction of local identity within the new media context while enhancing a city's visibility and reputation.

2. Literature review

2.1. Current state of sensory communication theory research

The senses serve as vital organs for humans to perceive the external world, primarily encompassing the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and body, corresponding to vision, hearing, smell, taste, and touch respectively. Scholar Georg Simmel noted from sociological and philosophical perspectives that individuals rely on senses to receive external information, which is then processed by the brain to construct fundamental worldviews. Since the 1980s, sensory studies have rapidly emerged in social sciences and humanities, giving rise to new fields such as sensory anthropology, sensory sociology, and sensory geography. Marshall McLuhan proposed the core idea that "the medium is the extension of man," arguing that technological media like broadcasting expand human sensory boundaries, thereby reshaping cognitive and behavioral patterns [2]. Chinese scholar Wang Taili contends that television news often employs sensational themes and dazzling formats to attract viewers, leading to a tendency toward "sensationalization" in news presentation. By catering to audience sensory experiences, such content achieves higher ratings [3]. Paul Levinson, from a media evolution perspective, contends that media should adapt to human ecology, evolving toward more natural and human-centered communication forms. Future communication technologies will increasingly align with human sensory ratios, achieving comprehensive sensory extension [4].

2.2. Current research on place identity theory

The theory of place identity was first proposed by scholars such as Cyril, emphasizing that individuals establish psychological connections with places through emotions and symbolic representations. In 1983, Prochazka and others, while studying the process of individual socialization, further proposed that place identity is a concept distinct from social identity. It refers to the complex process by which individuals or groups achieve socialization through interaction with places, encompassing multiple dimensions including emotional, cognitive, and perceptual aspects [5]. Bernardo and Palma proposed that the essence of place identity encompasses spatial and physical environments, social interactions, as well as meanings, experiences, and emotions at both individual and societal levels [6]. Due to differences in research objectives and contexts, there is no

unified standard for defining the dimensions of place identity. Currently, the Chinese academic community predominantly adopts a three-dimensional framework comprising cognitive, affective, and intentional dimensions [7].

In empirical research, Tang Wenyue et al. used Jiuzhaigou as a case study, employing questionnaires and data analysis to explore how tourists' and residents' local identity influences attitudes toward resource conservation [8]. Zhu Hong et al. analyzed significant differences in local identity between native villagers and external artistic groups in Guangzhou's Xiaozhou Village, further revealing intergroup variations in local identity [9]. The core concern of place identity theory lies in the affective connection mechanism between "place" and "people." This theory has been widely applied in research fields such as city image construction, tourism communication, and cultural identity. Of course, in recent years, Yunnan has achieved remarkable results in promoting the consciousness of the Chinese national community through new media matrix platforms. It has developed a communication model integrating "new media + culture + ecology + industry + governance + prosperity," forming a distinctly local narrative style known as "Classic Yunnan" [10].

In summary, sensory communication and local identity have gained theoretical frameworks and empirical applications across multiple disciplines, while new media technology has opened fresh pathways for regional cultural dissemination. However, there is still a lack of case studies on specific regions, especially in areas where ethnic cultures are highly concentrated, such as Yunnan.

3. Analysis and findings

3.1. Case selection: overview of representative Yunnan MV works by "Geometric Record"

This paper selects the series of city image music short films launched by the local media account "Geometric Record" in Yunnan Province in 2025 as the core research sample. As of now, its six representative works include Ruli Jinwang, Happy Water Splashing Biubiubiu and Everything is Good! which promote the "Water Splashing Festival", Munaozongge Oh Ranran and Wangwang Zan Zan which promote the "Munaozongge Festival", and Dance of Water which promotes the "Lianghe Hulusi Culture and Tourism Festival". The cumulative number of plays on platforms such as Douyin, Bilibili and WeChat video number has exceeded 1.2 billion times, forming a phenomenal communication effect.

3.2. Sensory organization of audiovisual elements

3.2.1. Cinematic language

Marcel Mardin noted in *The Language of Cinema* that cinematography is not a simple replication of reality but an artistic expression and construction of meaning achieved through technical means. The six Yunnan-themed music videos produced by the "Geometric Record" account, while varying in content focus, maintain a consistent and high-level cinematographic logic throughout. Typical characteristics include high-frequency cuts, rapid pacing, and alternating shot sizes in combination, delivering intense visual stimulation to the audience. For instance, within the first 15 seconds of Ruli Jinwang, five pan shots and two push shots are employed to swiftly establish rhythm and captivate interest. In Wangwang Zan Zan, push shots highlight the silver necklaces and everyday ethnic attire of Jingpo women, while pull shots transition from dancing crowds to bustling streets, emphasizing the urban atmosphere where daily life and festivities intertwine. The treatment of the sacrificial scene in Munao Zongge Oh Ran Ran is particularly typical: the director naturally assembled close-

up shots with aerial large long shots, and after the close-up shots of ethnic musical instruments, the empty shots were connected to form a narrative jump and a picture contrast, constructing a grand sense of ritual.

The ethnic and geographical diversity of Yunnan offers a rich visual reservoir for music video production, while "geometric recording" cleverly uses lens focal length, lens aperture, shooting distance, shooting angle, light effect, etc. to create a visual alienation experience. For example, Ruli Jinwang shows the geometric formation of dancers arranged thru aerial photography; Everything is Good! The empty mirror overlooks the iconic buildings of Dehong, "One Village, Two Countries" and "Meng Huan Grand Golden Pagoda"; and Dance of Water uses a large number of wide-angle lenses (fisheye lenses) to create edge deformation and central highlighting visual effects, enhancing the fun and visual tension of the picture. The audience jokingly said in the bullet screen that "it looks like the picture seen after eating Yunnan wild mushrooms and poisoning", which shows its strong visual and auditory impact. In addition, the asteroid perspective shot by the sports camera and selfie stick is cleverly applied to the chorus section of Happy Water Splashing biubiubiu, breaking the conventional restrictions of the flat perspective, enriching the traditional shooting angle and the audience's sensory experience.

In today's fragmented viewing landscape dominated by small screens, "Geometric Record" proactively adapts its composition to mobile viewing habits. Employing a visual strategy centered on medium and close shots, the abundant use of close-ups and medium close-ups allows viewers to capture facial expressions and movement details, amplifying the transmission of character charm. For instance, the singing, dancing, body language, and eye contact of Dehong locals during the festival are showcased through large close-ups. As Hugo Münsterberg observed: "Close-ups simulate human attention, making them well-suited for the precise expression of audiovisual content in fragmented communication contexts."

3.2.2. Music and rhythm

Ethnic languages serve as carriers for transmitting minority cultures, histories, customs, and personalities, while also acting as vital bonds for ethnic identity and belonging [11]. The soul and creative wellspring of the "Geometric Recordings" series lies in its use of minority languages for singing and its profoundly moving music. Except for Dance of Water, all works in the "Geometric Record" series feature singing in minority languages such as Dai and Jingpo. This linguistic choice effectively avoids homogenized dissemination while reinforcing local identity and ethnic expression.

The lyrics articulate ethnic cultural values through three main dimensions: First, they highlight ethnic unity. Lines like "Fine traditions, passed down through generations. Ancient customs, radiating new brilliance" in Ruli Jinwang and "United as one, creating a better life" in Everything is good! reflect the values of national unity and multi-ethnic integration. Second, they convey blessings. Lines like "Holding clear blessing water, splashing blessings upon you" in Happy Water Splashing Biubiubiu and "Wishing everyone all the best" in Wangwang Zanzan showcase the warm and hospitable spirit of Yunnan's people. Third, vividly depicting ethnic life scenes. Examples include "Mangshi dances gracefully at the market fair" in Ruli Jinwang, "The sound of gongs awakens the sleeping earth" in Everything is good! and the mention of "elephant-foot drums" in Happy Water Splashing biubiubiu. These concrete imagery activate regional cultural memories.

Notably, the "Geometric Record" music strategy deeply borrows from "viral songs" structures—emphasizing repetitive melodies, strong rhythms, and accessible lyrics to create "earworm effects" [12] that distinguish it from other music. For example, in Ruli Jinwang, the phrase "Where people

long for, good luck and auspiciousness", in *Everything is good!*, the phrase "The time to splash water has arrived", and in *Wangwang Zanzan*, the frequent repetition of "Everything is good, everything is good", make the audience form emotional memories and emotional associations in a short period of time.

These works also employ simple, repetitive physical movements and subtitles to lower language barriers, enhancing audience comprehension and acceptance. In *Happy Water Splashing*, the onomatopoeic "biubiubiubiubiu" mimics the rhythmic pulse of the festival; while "Ora Ora Ora" in *Munaozongge Oh Ranran* carries no specific meaning but possesses rhythmic and ethnic phonetic qualities, becoming a highly contagious verbal expression.

3.2.3. Color and editing

In the "Geometric Record" music video, vibrant, high-saturation colors create intense visual impact and emotional resonance. Dehong and Mangshi in Yunnan, naturally rich in green vegetation, provide a lush backdrop. Costumes predominantly feature red, yellow, and white, complementing the greenery to evoke a romantic, fantastical, and passionate atmosphere. In *Ruli Jinwang*, ethnic costumes predominantly feature muted, low-saturation Morandi tones with rich layering, emphasizing a fresh aesthetic. The night scenes of *Munaozongge Oh Ranran* create visual tension through the interplay of firelight and high-saturation black attire. In *Dance of Water* the contrasting red and blue costumes stand out vividly against the blue sky backdrop, conveying a festive celebratory mood.

In terms of editing, the work switches a shot every 1 to 2 seconds on average, with a tight rhythm and enhanced audiovisual stimulation. With the strong rhythm music, the editing techniques are flexible and diverse, including matching editing, foreground occlusion, and slow-motion shots, creating a distinct sense of rhythm. The beginning of *Everything is good!* uses a group portrait of the same action but different ages and clothing, and the slow-motion shots pave the way for the festive atmosphere; in *Wangwang Zanzan*, the Jingpo woman covered the lens with a cloth to complete the transition, followed by a delicate close-up of the silver ornaments colliding, cleverly guiding the change of sight. Similar to this kind of exquisite transition, the audience will not feel that the editing is excessive, but it will well outline the grand occasion of the Dehong people singing and dancing.

3.2.4. Yunnan cultural elements

Susan Langer said: "All those tasks that are difficult to complete with language - the task of presenting the nature and structure of emotional and emotional activities - can be completed by works of art." MV is the ideal medium for presenting emotions and culture thru the art of video. "Geometric Records" focuses on the Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province, a region where many ethnic groups live together. It deeply explores its rich ethnic festivals and folk customs resources, and uses video language to show the scenes of festivals such as the Water Splashing Festival, the Munao Zongge Festival, and the Kuoshi Festival, outlining a unique ethnic cultural style.

The MV incorporates numerous local and ethnic elements, such as Dai opera, Jingpo wood carving, and Lisu paper cutting. The choreography blends traditional movements like slash-and-burn farming and hunting with contemporary dance elements like street dance and modern dance, enhancing expressive tension and a sense of the times. Dancers frequently perform within everyday settings, using intangible cultural heritage crafts like the De'ang people's sour tea, the Achang people's brocade weaving, and the Dai people's bamboo weaving as props to showcase the authentic

life and cultural heritage of Dehong's people. Spatially, the video features iconic landmarks like Menghuan Golden Pagoda, One Village Two Countries, and Lianghe Hulusi Culture Square, while also delving into bustling streets and residential neighborhoods. This approach infuses the footage with a vibrant, everyday atmosphere, evoking a sense of belonging among locals and presenting audiences with the most ordinary, unadorned, and deeply moving scenes of Dehong life.

3.3. Platform engagement and audience response

A pseudo-environment is different from objective reality. It is an information environment constructed by mass communication activities. Bilibili (referred to as "B station") is a typical pseudo-environment. It is not only famous for its youthful and circle-based community atmosphere, but also builds a unique interactive communication space with the "bullet screen" function. The six Yunnan city image MV works released by "Geometric Records" have caused extremely high popularity on B station. In order to effectively evaluate its sensory communication effect and local identity construction ability, this paper selects the high-frequency bullet screen vocabulary and representative comment samples of the six MV works, analyzes them from the three dimensions of "cognition", "emotion" and "intention", and classifies and summarizes them as follows:

Table 1. Cognitive dimension bullet screen content classification and examples

No.	Category	Content
1	Questions and Confusion	"When is the Water Splashing Festival?" "Is this the Dai language?"
2	Answers and Explanations	"The subtitles are in Dehong Dai script, which differs from that used in Xishuangbanna." "The long knives used by the Jingpo people in the video are the Husa knives of the Achang ethnic group in Yunnan."
3	Supplement and Extension	"My relatives in Dehong celebrate not only national holidays but also 'Prefecture Day,' 'Water Splashing Festival,' 'Munao Song Festival,' and 'Bobo Festival'—so many holidays!"
4	Interpretation and Analysis	"The subtitles are great! They're neat and tidy, and they're bilingual. They're much better than most music videos in recent years!" "The picture is very textured, and the camera movement is like eating mushrooms."
5	Comparisons and Associations	"Just finished watching the Mangshi video and now it recommends Dehong to me." "The style feels similar to the earlier video 'Gengma'."

From a cognitive perspective, viewers showed keen interest in linguistic elements, attire, festivals, and artifacts featured in the video. Many users spontaneously provided explanations or expanded on local customs. As Collins noted, "When people transition from silent observers to active participants, feelings of collective solidarity and identity become significantly stronger." [13] Local users actively assume the roles of "interpreters" and "disseminators" in the comment streams, leveraging their knowledge and experience to respond to others' questions. This process subtly enhances their cultural confidence and sense of identity.

Table 2. Emotional dimension classification and examples of bullet screen content

No.	Category	Content
1	Appreciation/Admiration	"It feels like things are really taking off" "Beautiful person, sweet voice"
2	Fun/Entertainment	"So good to listen to! So joyful!" "Looks so fun"
3	Anticipation/Excitement	"Well shot! So lively—even if I don't understand the language, I can feel the passion, hahaha"
4	Pride/Resonance	"Which country can match our vibrancy?" "I love all 56 ethnic groups of China"

On an emotional level, viewers achieved resonance and energy transfer through the bullet comments. Collins's theory of the interactive ritual chain suggests that when elements of an interactive ritual effectively combine to create high mutual attention and emotional sharing, outcomes such as group solidarity, individual emotional energy, group symbols, and a sense of morality emerge [14]. The bullet comments reveal that a large number of viewers expressed positive emotions toward the visuals, music, and atmosphere, forming numerous positive sentiments such as "admiration, joy, pride, and excitement." This achieved a kind of "collective excitement," even elevating local identity to an emotional resonance at the national and ethnic levels.

Table 3. Classification and examples of bullet screen content by intentional dimension

No.	Category	Content
1	Interaction Intent	"Am I the only one who noticed the clothes all have centipede-style buttons and factory-style lapels? I distinctly remember Dai ethnic tops having a cross-lapel design. Does this mean it represents two distinct branches of the Dai people?"
2	Purchase Intent	"After watching the promo video, I feel like I'm already in Mangshi." "It would be great if they could mark the filming locations on the video. I want to visit each one afterward."
3	Creative Intent	"Ruli Jinwan literally means 'live well, eat well,' which we call 'delicious and satisfying' around here." "This is too competitive. When will our Tourism Bureau produce something worthwhile?"
4	Communication Intent	"It's going viral on WeChat Moments." "WeChat Moments is flooded with it, and it pops up as soon as you open Bilibili—turns out it's another Geometry production."

From an intent perspective, audience engagement has transcended mere emotional expression, extending into tangible action. This manifests as strong participation willingness, tourism consumption inclination, secondary creation impulses, and dissemination behavior. Overall, the city image MV creates a closed loop of "emotional resonance—cognitive deepening—action triggering," transforming digital spectatorship into tangible cultural transmission. Through the visible resonance, curiosity, imitation, and action intent in the bullet comments, the Yunnan cultural landscape constructed by "Geometry Records" is transcending the temporal and spatial constraints of the video itself, continuously expanding its influence through interactive dissemination on online platforms.

4. Discussion

4.1. Yunnan city MV works achieve the transition from sensory spectacle to local identity

The public's local identity is built on the local imagery produced by cultural tourism short videos. Imagery is the imagination and image produced in people's minds by the symbols of social space landscape and lifestyle, and it is a clear, stable and practical common psychological picture of a specific region formed in the historical accumulation. The Yunnan city image MV represented by the works created by "Geometric Records" effectively guides the audience to complete the construction of the local identity of "Yunnan Dehong" with the help of highly sensual communication strategies. First of all, the MV transforms the complex "local" into a symbolic "Yunnan imagination" thru audiovisual language. The camera consciously focuses on the splashing water droplets of the Water Splashing Festival, the shocking group dance queue, the slight trembling of the fingertips of the peacock dance, and the colorful national costumes, creating a sensual and pleasant audiovisual spectacle, and constructing a "exotic Dehong" that can be consumed and imagined. This process presents the communication logic from "pleasure organization" to "sensory-driven viewing" to "internalization and dissemination of local image". The MV creators consciously extract the most pleasurable fragments such as festivals, songs and dances, and food from the local culture to form a joyful imagination similar to "Bollywood", inspiring the audience to enter Dehong culture thru sensory pleasure. In the end, the strong audiovisual experience was internalized by the audience into a clear "Dehong image". The camera deliberately emphasizes the ethnic costumes, religious rituals and group dances that are in sharp contrast to the daily life of the audience, and evokes imagination and yearning in the expression of exoticism. Thru sharing, likes and comments, the audience is prompted to turn to active communication and tourism participation, and the closed loop of internalization and externalization of local identity is completed.

4.2. Ethnic-style "viral songs" as a new communication strategy for local identity

The great social influence of the "Geometric Records" works shows that the ethnic-style "viral songs" are gradually becoming an efficient strategy for shaping and strengthening local identity with their unique artistic and communication characteristics. It transcends the one-way indoctrination of traditional promotional films, and transforms abstract local identity into a perceptible, participatory, and communicable cultural practice by creating infectious "auditory logos", and then "gradually expands into a social phenomenon of mass participation." [15] Especially in the lyrics, it highly refines and strengthens the core information: for example, Ruli Jinwang repeatedly sings "the place where people yearn for, the beautiful Mangshi", which is both straightforward and positive; at the same time, it incorporates onomatopoeia and catchphrases, which greatly reduces the cognitive threshold of audiences with different language backgrounds, and transforms "listening" into "singing along", and "understanding" into "feeling".

What needs to be guarded against is that when ethnic-style "viral songs" pursue the ultimate in communication power, they inevitably extract the deep context of local culture, focus on spectacular and superficial symbols, and thus hide the risk of "cultural flattening" while creating pleasure. As Relph said, mass media makes geographical landscapes the same by advocating and spreading universal and standardized tastes and fashions, and dilutes the uniqueness of the place [16]. Over time, external audiences may only simplify "Dehong culture" into "biubiubiu" water droplets and "oraora" dance steps, and the religious spirit, historical connotation and social structure behind it are

obscured. Although this "symbol carnival" can quickly establish identity, it may also build new cultural barriers and become a communication phenomenon that needs to be carefully reflected.

5. Conclusion

Research has found that the success of the "Geometric Records" series of MV works lies not only in their high-level audio-visual language and strong sensory stimulation, but also in their respect, translation and reconstruction of local culture. With the help of new media platforms and popular communication methods, it has transformed the original regional festival scenes into cultural expressions facing the whole country and even the world, awakened the cultural pride of local residents, and stimulated the interest of audiences in other places. The collective emotions and cultural belonging of local identity flow in the bullet screen, sing in the notes, and spread in the sharing.

However, we also need to be soberly aware that while pursuing the pleasure of "explosive models" and "viral songs", we should be wary of the dilution of cultural depth and the alienation of symbols. How to maintain the audio-visual charm while keeping the cultural background and spiritual thickness is a question that must be answered in the future communication of urban image. The truly vital local communication is not only about the senses, but also about going deep into the hearts of the people and moisturizing things silently.

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