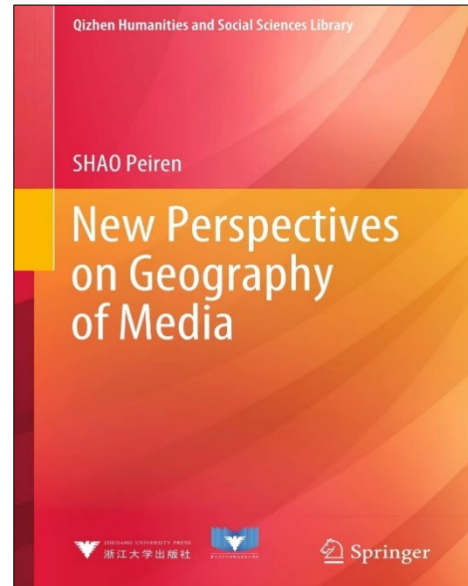


Peiren Shao, **New Perspectives on Geography of Media** (G. Wang, Trans.), Hangzhou, China: Zhejiang University Press; Singapore: Springer, 2023, 225 pp., \$119.99 (hardcover), \$89.00 (e-book).

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The monograph ***New Perspectives on Geography of Media*** is an English rendition of the initial Chinese edition published by Zhejiang University Press in 2021. Its English version was published in 2023 through a collaboration between Zhejiang University Press and Springer Publishing. The author, Peiren Shao, examines the traditional Chinese conception of the cosmos, emphasizing the unity between Heaven and Man (天人合一, *tian ren he yi*) and the importance of following the rules of nature. From the angle of holism, Shao employs this concept to encompass the interdisciplinary fields of communication geography and media geography and develops a systematic framework in which he incorporates the essential laws that dictate the connections between Heaven, Earth, Man, and the media. He emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balanced and harmonious interaction between these four elements. By employing his suggested framework, Shao offers China innovative and pragmatic solutions for addressing complex communication problems on both national and international levels.

Chapter 1 provides a comprehensive examination of the scope, theoretical structure, research methodologies, and significance of media geography. Shao delineates the intricacies of this discipline that combines the examination of media and geography. In his view, this field focuses on analyzing how individuals in a certain geographic and sociocultural context perceive and use media and how individuals portray, evaluate, summarize, shape, and transcend territorial boundaries. He also presents a methodical framework for understanding the spatial arrangement of media, encompassing its historical background, theoretical basis, and practical application. The framework comprises the four essential components of individuals, media technology, society, and geography as well as the five fundamental principles of time, space, location, topography, and magnitude. According to Shao, media geography aims to do two things:

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first, provide a comprehensive, multifaceted, hierarchical framework for analysis, and second, use this framework to investigate media phenomena and resolve globalization-related issues in the real world.

Chapter 2 explores the evolution of the field, examining its roots in cultural geography and human geography in both China and the West. Shao provides a concise overview of the historical progression of Chinese calligraphy, painting, literature, and the print media industry to demonstrate how they embody the distinct attributes of the local milieu. This chapter provides a detailed account of the development of geography in ancient and modern China, focusing specifically on the significant contributions made by eminent geographers and their notable literary works. The author contends that one of the main advancements in contemporary geographic studies in Western countries is centered around cultural landscape and media culture. He incorporates such concepts as sense of place, place attachment, and media spectacle borrowed from Western scholarship into the framework developed in the book, utilizing them as analytical tools to examine media geographic phenomena in China.

Chapter 3 centers on the objectives and aspirations of Chinese research in this field. Shao urges scholars to contemplate the elements that contribute to the interconnectedness of individuals, geography, and the media in the digital era. Furthermore, he underscores the growing importance of mass media as a potent and all-encompassing influence in shaping our lives and outlines five goals for Chinese researchers to follow in their future research endeavors. The objectives encompass the analysis of local societies, cultures, and media through a Chinese lens, enlightening Chinese media about the significance of geographical elements that impact media creators and target consumers, and suggesting strategies to enhance profitability while simultaneously elevating the overall standard of media products.

Chapters 4 through 8 go into the five themes of time, space, place, landscape, and scale, which offer different viewpoints on this emerging area. Chapter 4 delves into the notion of time from multiple perspectives, incorporating disciplines such as physics, geography, and sociology. This chapter showcases a collection of illustrations from other cultures and eras, including ancient Chinese philosophy and narratives, to illustrate the relationship between time and space. It also explores the effects of technological advancements on the compression and convergence of time, as well as the influence of societal institutions and media developments on individuals' perceptions of time.

Chapter 5 discusses the notion of media distance, encompassing its several forms and the potential impact it exerts on the audience's interpretation of media material. Furthermore, it explores the need to uphold a clear differentiation between communicators and receivers to attain the greatest effective communicative effect. Shao highlights the significance of media representations and the influence of cultural and racial or ethnic disparities in influencing the audience's impression of the gap between themselves and the media.

Chapter 6 examines the notion of place, investigating the interplay between location, locality, and media consumption within the framework of modernity and globalization. Place widely acknowledges its role as a medium for creating social conceptions and safeguarding cultural memories. The media has a significant influence on place and locality, shaping the identities and viewpoints of its audience. This chapter also investigates the rise of local media in China and the United States, highlighting their crucial role in promoting

and safeguarding local culture and distinctiveness. Simultaneously, it is highlighted that the media's influence on individuals' lives is becoming more prevalent due to digital technologies like mobile phones and the Internet, which are transforming the speed and extent of worldwide communication.

Chapter 7 digs into several sociocultural interpretations of landscape and how landscape influences the formation and representation of the world and reality. Additionally, it analyzes several categories of media spectacles and their impact on contemporary consumer-oriented society. Upon analyzing the disparities in geographical features among villages, suburbs, towns, cities, and subways, it is argued that the media plays a substantial role in shaping the spectacle society (Debord, 1967/1995). The mass media serves as both a technological instrument and a social spectacle. This chapter concludes by emphasizing the detrimental effects of the spectacle society.

Chapter 8 examines the concept of scale within the context of globalization and the tensions that arise between localization and globality in the media industry. This chapter expounds on the development of measurement systems in ancient China and analyzes how individuals from Western cultures comprehend the notions of size, location, and globality concerning heterogeneity and homogeneity. Shao contends that attaining a precise and scientifically substantiated balance between local and global viewpoints holds paramount significance in China's local media. To achieve this goal, he outlines six strategies aimed at fostering an equitable and impartial relationship between the local and global spheres, with the ultimate aim of establishing a global community that shares a common destiny for humanity.

The author's concluding remarks emphasize the significance of media geography, focusing on humanism, holism, dialectical materialism, and multidisciplinary approaches. He illustrates these concepts through his investigation into the dialectical relationship between the distribution of Chinese film industry clusters, regional cultural variations, and rapid urbanization in China. He also examines how these interconnected factors intersect with China's major media industry clusters, evolving rhythms of daily life, and the broader dynamics of China's population distribution, culture, and economy. Additionally, Shao asserts that media geographic phenomena follow a natural course, evolving and giving way to new developments driven by the acceleration of globalization. This process is marked by the growing interconnectedness and interdependence of nations, leading to a shared destiny. He concludes that by following the ancient Chinese principles of the harmony between humanity and nature and harmony in diversity, and deeply respecting nature and its natural ways, we can achieve the coprosperity of Heaven, Earth, Man, and the media and promote our diverse cultures and ways of life.

The author, Professor Peiren Shao, is a widely respected authority in communication studies in China. With a focus on reconciling Eastern and Western perspectives, he has developed a comprehensive theoretical framework of his own. He had a dual role in the development of communication studies by bringing traditional Chinese knowledge and Western communication theories and methodologies to the Chinese academic community (Liu & Wang, 2023). This book is the first academic publication in the field of journalism and communication to receive financial backing from the Chinese Fund for the Humanities and Social Sciences. All things considered, this monograph is a necessary resource for scholars, doctoral students, and postgraduate students who specialize in media and communication, cultural geography, or

media sociology. Furthermore, practically every chapter has ideas that will challenge the minds of readers who have a keen interest in ancient Chinese culture.

### References

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