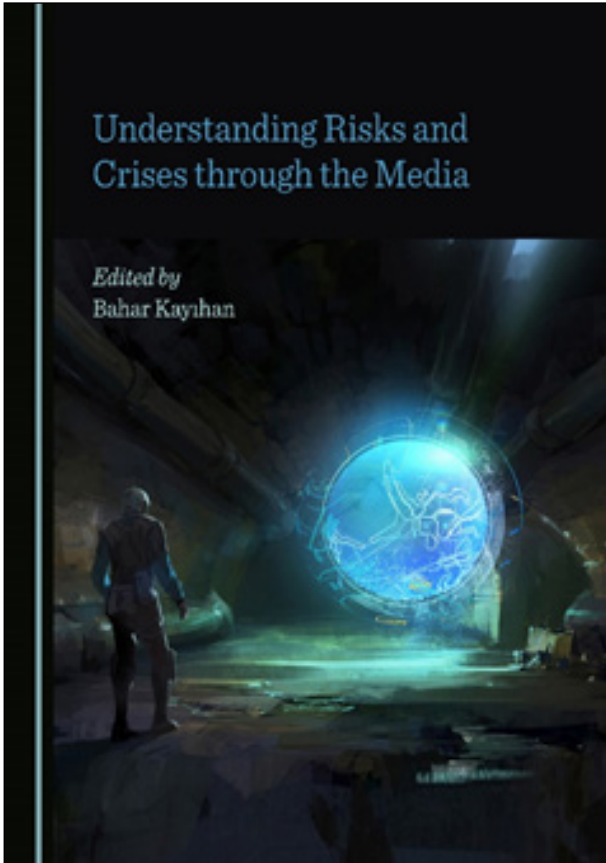# Book Review: Understanding Risks And Crises Through The Media

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Kitap İncelemesi Book Review

The development and growth of any democratic society or a country is sometimes seen by how it manages its risks and crises. In modern times, however, risks have become incalculable and uncontrollable (Beck, 2006). They have also become a means of maintaining biopolitical power. The discourses of risk that circulate in the media legitimize various policies (Kayıhan 2020; Kayıhan & Hülür 2019). Cottle (1998) emphasizes that world risk theorist Ulrich Beck's emphasis on risk in the media is not enough. Lupton (1999), on the other hand, argues that there is a need for more research on risk discourses. This book fills this gap in the literature by discussing risk through the media. The multi-authored book Understanding Risks

and Crises through the Media, edited by Bahar Kayıhan and published in 2022 by Cambridge scholars says that traditionally managing crises and risks was attributed to authorities, public institutions and policies. And people relied on central bodies for risks and crises prevention. Today, problems in societies are individualized and people are equally responsible for societal crises and risks management because of their ability to freely use media, especially digital media as a third sphere where people can discuss general and personal issues (Ercansungur & Erbay, 2022: 30), thanks to technology. Kayıhan (2022), continue to look at media as a tool needed in every activity where it is due to combat crises and risks because, media is a platform on which people create and share content that motivates citizens to work on their societal crises and disasters.

The book also takes a worldwide view of using digital media by highlighting its influences, threats, the relationship between risks and media, and the effects that may result from appropriately or inappropriately using digital media in managing disasters. Although this book provides a substantial contribution to the field of journalism and communication, it also contributes to the literature of different disciplines in academia. It practically shapes our daily lives in digital societies since it talks about things people go through on a daily basis in their digital-based political, economic, social, and cultural communications and activities. And researchers, scholars and students whose interests differ from journalism, can get lessons and knowledge from this book on various issues pertaining digital media and risks and crises management among others, to enable

them change their general daily lives. The book has limitless content for all in various sectors.

Even though we can hardly live without technologies like digital media due to their countless benefits, not every piece of information on digital media is beneficial. On this ground, this book appeals to the readers to think critically before believing in messages found on digital media platforms, and not to transmit unverified information which may negatively influence risks, crises and disasters in digital societies. This is because, some digital media content creators undermine citations of sources, and also exaggerate issues or fail to explain some technical words to laypeople (Kayıhan, 2022: 3). As a result of technology, sharing fake information on crises or risks on digital media comes with modernity hence the crisis of modernity (Ercansungur & Erbay, 2022: 30) which is extremely challenging. According to the book, it is our total responsibility to use digital media appropriately and to know how to overcome the rise of risks and crises that come as a result of media influence.

The chapters in this book also reveal the following consideration: The risks especially in digital societies are unavoidable, and we generally face them in our daily lives. Some existed before, media just uncover them. To make it certain, it was articulated in the book that everyone is threatened by risks at different levels regardless of rank, class, state, and boundaries which makes risks a unifying factor of a risk society and turns the world into a public sphere (Ercansungur & Erbay, 2022: 40). Still on the risks but from a health perspective, the book talks about digital media and digital risks in the Covid-19 pandemic and it states that misuse or overuse of digital media in the health sector mostly during the pandemic leads to health risks through information pollution, digital media addiction, anxiety and psychological problems which lead to other crises of "digital pandemic" and other health risks (Güner, 2022: 19). Positively, the same book highlights various benefits of using digital media during pandemic time. For example, digital sites including applications, websites, and other online forums promoted self-care and a healthy lifestyle, provided entertainment, and provided accurate information and strategies to help individuals create and maintain emotional well-being during the COVID-19 process (Güner, 2022: 22).

Furthermore, Understanding Risks and Crises through the Media talks about the connection between Canadian media, peacekeeping, and risks, and it develops an informed understanding on how media information should be used to help countries navigate from conflicts to peace (Ouellet, 2022). In the political line, a section on Thinking Digitalization with Risk Society: Sub-Politics in Digital Space in this book explains that every social action is affected by digital space including political actions. However, in digital societies, digitalized political actions become independent and personalized rather than collective ones. Interestingly, although this book seems to be particularly journalism-based, it can also help in marketing, communication, information sharing, connections, health, politics, science, businesses, and culture among others. On the economy, for example, the book elaborates Gig economy and explains that digital media opens up online business opportunities through which people generate incomes and make profits. However, negatively, it continues that sometimes digital businesses may manipulate and mislead employees and customers. The book goes on and explain the origins of technology, technology originates from science, and science has become the religion of modernity worldwide today, and as a result, this has also made science and technology a language of modernity (Ercansungur & Erbay, 2022 : 34).

On Understanding Risks and Crises through the Media, it was reminded that we are living in the post-truth era in which digital media information is not fully reliable. Extensively, the book advices people to find another course of action by visiting other alternative media to verify the authenticity of information found on digital media, which undoubtedly maintains the effectiveness of traditional media despite digital media booming.

Media is also seen as a magic bullet that directly affect individuals, but it has been lightened in this book that media just represents the status quo of society like economic crises that already exist. In the chapter focusing on Knowledge Crisis in Digital Age: Towards the Loss of the Essence Value of Knowledge, Olgun (2022) navigates the knowledge gap theory and expounds that accessing information in the digital society is simple and difficult, because, content is rapidly created on digital platforms but some online users have no ideas about how to access and how to use some information due to factors like low education levels, income gap, geographical locations, resource inequality, etc. Some digital citizens are obstructed by generational gap or digital gap.

One of the last sections of the book connects migrants, and immigrants with risks, and it lightened that media is the main cause of social risks in migrant areas like refugee camps alongside sociological dimensions (Yurdakul, 2022). Finally, the book also shared some literature on art crises in the digital age. Biçer Olgun (2022) argued that although the digital public domain and the internet provided hope by eliminating institutional structures, the struggles among the digital public actors continue.

Since digital communication came to stay, we should learn how to fit in the current technological era before it forces us to fit into it. According to the book, this should be done by conducting digital literacy and media literacy training to allow societies cope up with digital information. Based on Kayıhan's observations of unreliable digital information, I suggest that social media journalists (citizen journalists) should also try to follow journalism ethics when doing online activities to reduce on the publication of fake-biased news, because, fake news is spread very quickly, especially on closed platforms such as WhatsApp (Kayıhan, p. 17). Disinformation control units were proposed in this book to control disinformation cultures. Public institutions should also implement social media policies to guide some users like digital immigrants and some digital citizens to enable them balance

between virtual life and real life. Finally, although the book is confusing in its arrangements at the beginning as it's a bit difficult to identify the first chapter since the introduction part looks like a chapter itself, the book brainwashes us to know the influence of media in digital risk societies, to understand risks as the dark side of using digital media, and happily, how to find solutions to some digital risks and crises.

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