

# **Exploring the Path of Mediatized Governance in a Global Risk**

**Society:** A Review of *Exploring the Evolution of Risk Issues in Mobile Communication*

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**Abstract**

In today's global risk society, mobile communication plays a central role in shaping public understanding of risks. *Exploring the Evolution of Risk Issues in Mobile Communication* focuses on three categories of global risks: health, technology, and environment. The book introduces the Platform Amplification/Attenuation of Risk Mechanism (PARM) to explain how user actions and platform algorithms interact to influence the visibility of risk issues. From the perspective of mediatized governance, this book broadens the scope of risk communication research and offers a practical framework for understanding the role of media as actor, object, and tool in risk governance.

**Keywords**

Mobile communication, Issue salience, Mediatized governance

# **1. The Dilemma of the Global Risk Society in the Mobile Communication Age**

The *Human Development Report 2025* released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Nations, 2025) points out that human development is experiencing an unprecedented slowdown. While modernity has created immense wealth, it has also generated unprecedented risks (Beck, 1992). From the shadow of global tariff wars to the shocks of extreme weather events, from the continued spread of infectious disease threats to the ethical challenges posed by AI deepfakes, “black swan” and “grey rhino” events occur repeatedly. These risks not only expose the fragility of systems of social governance, but also fill everyday life with anxiety. Uncertainty in the global risk society has become increasingly salient, and governance failures occur more frequently.

Systemic risk refers to risks that are highly interconnected and difficult to predict. Its core features include global impact, complexity and uncertainty (Huang, 2025). Such risks spread beyond territorial boundaries and reshape political, economic, and social structures. They also have profound effects on human well-being. At the same time, the increasing level of mediatization makes this issue more challenging. Media not only represent risks but also construct and generate new risks. In the era of mobile communication, the internet and algorithms dominate information flows. Once a risk event occurs anywhere, related information spreads immediately on a global scale. Risks that were once invisible become visible through mobile media. Through the joint construction of multiple actors, these risks quickly gain salience. As a result,

people outside the affected area can experience a strong sense of risk as if they were present (Huang, 2025).

Against this background, the book *Exploring the Evolution of Risk Issues in Mobile Communication* seeks to answer a set of questions: In the mobile communication era, how do risk issues shift from being invisible to becoming salient? What factors shape these changes? How can the new mechanisms identified in this book provide theoretical support for the mediatized governance of risk? Rather than offering a descriptive account of risk issues, the author tries to answer how risks are constructed, maintained, and amplified on digital platforms. The book proposes a new mechanism to explain patterns of risk communication on mobile platforms, and offers fresh perspectives for the mediatized governance of risk.

## **2. Mediatized Governance as a New Approach to Risk Governance**

In contemporary social governance, media function not only as instruments of governance, but also as a basic logic guiding governance. Mediatization refers to the growing dependency between media communication and sociocultural change, in which media become increasingly powerful in shaping social life (Hepp, 2013). Building on this perspective, mediatized governance refers to a process in which multiple actors, including the state, the market, and the public, collaborate through mediatized negotiating networks to reconcile interests and achieve jointly agreed actions (Dai et al., 2025).

Existing studies mainly identify two approaches to the role of media in mediatized governance. The first approach emphasizes the mediating and instrumental

role of media in social governance. Media are seen as tools for timely and accurate information delivery, as well as channels for public participation. In crisis situations, they mobilize the public, collect public opinion, ensure information supply, and enable government–public collaboration through connection, interaction, and coordination in virtual space (Lyu et al., 2023). The second approach focuses on the deep co-construction of media and society. Media are understood as a logic embedded in the overall process of governance. Media operate through specific symbols, perspectives, and forms. These elements are adopted by audiences and help shape social reality. Media not only guide individual behavior, but also influence institutional processes. They sustain a dynamic process of mobilizing and integrating information and actors. In doing so, media ensure both efficiency and effectiveness. They also have the power to define what counts as normal, typical, or socially accepted (Dai et al., 2025; Nowak-Teter, 2019) .

In the era of mobile communication, risk is not only an event or condition, it is also a socially constructed process shaped by media presentation, interpretation, amplification, and attenuation. Media function as the central hub in networks of risk governance. The use of mediatized outcomes is a necessary condition for effective risk governance. As a new form of governance, mediatized governance plays a key role in managing risk (Jiang et al., 2022). In response, this book reveals the mechanisms through which the salience of risk issues dynamically evolves in mobile communication environments. It explains not only why certain risk issues enter the public agenda, generate social resonance, and attract policy attention, but also the

conditions underlying attention allocation. By integrating media logic with risk logic, the book highlights the central role of media in governance, that is, media serve as a key channel for user participation and information transmission, as well as arbiters of salience that shapes how information circulates. This mechanism reveals that governance actors are becoming more diverse, risk issues are growing more varied, while risk dynamics are increasingly complex. In this process, media and governance—once studied in separate disciplines—are gradually converging (Schillemans & Pierre, 2019). It offers a clear and operational theoretical framework for understanding the foundational and significant role of media in contemporary risk governance.

### **3. Patterns of Risk Issue Salience Across Three Global Risks**

The *Global Risks Report 2025* shows that the global landscape is becoming increasingly fragmented. Environmental, health, and technological challenges rank among the top risks that threaten social stability and progress (World Economic Forum, 2025). Against this background, the book focuses on three types of global risks that pose fundamental threats to human development: health risks, technological risks, and environmental risks. Specifically, it examines Alzheimer's disease, artificial intelligence, and climate change. Together, these cases represent some of the most urgent and widespread risk issues facing human society, and demonstrate the broad applicability of the study.

Across these three issues, the author adopts a cross-issue comparative approach, which identifies a common pattern of salience evolution. In mobile communication

environments, the salience of risk issues does not evolve in a linear or singular way. Instead, it follows a dynamic process marked by cyclical fluctuations and the interaction of multiple factors. This process is continuously reshaped by the interaction of user action logic and platform technological logic. First, user action logic plays a central role in the evolution of issue salience. Specifically, users' capacity to produce posts serves as the primary source of momentum for risk issue salience. Meanwhile, platforms' technological design plays a moderating role in this process. Through recommendation algorithms and content distribution systems, platforms shape users' attention and issue visibility. As a result, they influence the spread and impact of risk issues. In other words, salience is jointly constructed by platform algorithms and user behavior. It reflects both users' engagement with risk issues and platforms' strategic choices in content distribution.

The book also invites us to rethink how risk is redefined in an algorithm-driven information environment. In traditional contexts, risks attract attention because of their real-world urgency or policy relevance. On social media platforms, whether an event evolves into a major risk depends largely on its emotional intensity. The information flow of the three risk issues show that even events critical to human survival may quickly sink in shifting attention cycles if they fail to trigger user engagement and algorithmic recommendation.

Methodologically, the author uses post view counts as a key indicator of issue salience. Drawing on big data analysis, web scraping, and textual analysis, the study tracks and extracts data on three issues across three major platforms: WeChat, TikTok,

and Toutiao. This approach effectively captures the interaction between user content production and platform recommendation mechanisms, and reveals the full process of issue salience evolution. Through cross-platform comparison, the author shows that different platforms vary significantly in how they amplify risk issues. These differences stem from variations in algorithmic logic, user composition, and content ecosystems. TikTok relies more heavily on algorithmic recommendation, quickly pushing emotional and highly visual video clips into trending topics. WeChat is better suited for in-depth narratives and knowledge transmission. It requires greater cognitive effort from users and has strong social features. Toutiao serves as an important platform for professional journalists, scholars, and public officials to publish newsworthy content. On this platform, risk issues often gain attention through the presentation of expert knowledge (Huang, 2025). This research approach, which focuses on shared issue characteristics, platform differences, and communication mechanisms, enhances the book's methodological originality. It also transforms the concept of issue salience from a static description into a dynamic process that can be tracked and measured. In doing so, the book opens new avenues for future research on risk communication from a platform-comparative perspective.

#### **4. PARM as a New Framework to Explain Risk Issue Salience**

##### **Evolution**

The book offers an in-depth analysis of the dual meanings of mobile media from a mediatization perspective. On this basis, it proposes the concepts of user action logic and platform technological logic. By focusing on the interaction between these two

logics, the author proposes the *Platform Amplification/Attenuation of Risk Mechanism* (PARM). This new framework stems from a nuanced understanding of the dual nature of mobile media under mediatization.

On the one hand, mobile media function as a process of content and meaning production. This highlights users' agency in the construction and dissemination of risk issues. User action logic refers to users' active production, sharing, commenting, and interaction based on their needs, cognition, and emotions. It serves as the primary driving force behind the evolution of risk issue salience. This productive capacity is shaped by factors such as risk perception, emotional involvement, needs for social interaction, and attention to specific risk issues. On the other hand, mobile media operate as communication technologies. This perspective underscores the profound influence of platform technological logic on the circulation of risk issues. Platform technological logic includes recommendation algorithms, content moderation mechanisms, and social network structures. These features render platforms non-neutral tools. As non-human actors, platforms embody inherent biases and value orientations, shaping the evolution of issue salience (Huang, 2025).

The model further reveals the complex interaction between platform technological logic and user action logic. It offers a detailed analysis of how algorithmic recommendation operates. Platform algorithms do not function independently of user actions. Their amplifying effects emerge only when user post production is high and when many posts align with algorithmic criteria. As a result, the amplification and attenuation of issue salience display stage-based patterns.

Platform technological logic exerts influence only on the basis of user action logic, which plays a decisive role in this process (Huang, 2025). Technology is not a simple amplifier. It is selective and filtering in nature. Platforms integrate user behavior with algorithmic rules to regulate the evolution of risk issue salience.

PARM not only critically builds on existing risk communication theories, but also introduces theoretical innovations. The book systematically reviews and creatively integrates three classic theories: the *Social Amplification of Risk Framework* (SARF), the *Issue Lifecycle Theory*, and *Agenda-Setting Theory*, upon which PARM is constructed. PARM seeks to move beyond the centralized assumptions about media organizations in agenda-setting theory, treating agenda-setting outcomes as the product of human–machine collaboration. Compared with SARF’s emphasis on linear information channels and signal reception (Kasperson et al., 1988), PARM goes beyond technological determinism, challenges the stereotype of algorithmic control, and updates the unidimensional explanations of media effects in traditional research, placing particular emphasis on the importance of user communication behavior. Against the backdrop of a mediatized society, the book reminds us to analyze technological logic within the context of user actions, thereby addressing the complexity of contemporary risk governance.

The PARM also has some practical implications for the mediatized governance of risk in the era of mobile communication. First, with regard to media as a governance actor, PARM reveals the intervention capacity of platform recommendation in the cycles of risk issue salience. By dynamically monitoring user behavior and their own

algorithms, platforms can identify potential risk issues earlier, predict their salience evolution, develop response plans, and release authoritative information in a timely manner. This effectively guides public opinion and prevents amplification of risk from triggering public panic. Second, PARM moves beyond fragmented understandings based on single cases and offers a dynamic model grounded in platform ecosystems. This model explains why some issues quickly gain algorithmic recommendation while others remain not significant, providing a basis for platform-informed policy and the regulation of public discourse. Third, when media are treated as governance tools, the interaction between user action logic and platform technological logic allows for the design of more targeted risk communication strategies. These strategies can stimulate user post production to enhance the salience of a particular risk issue, thereby encouraging active public participation in risk governance.

## **5. Conclusion: Using Communication to Respond to Global Risks**

Under the dual pressures of the deepening risk society and the rapid evolution of the media ecosystem, the generation mechanisms of risk issues, the logic of social cognition construction, and the flow of information are undergoing fundamental transformations. Against this backdrop, the research presented in this book is both timely and important. The PARM embodies the wisdom of communication, providing theoretical guidance for responding to global risks and practical strategies for risk governance. Furthermore, it offers a unique entry point for the mediatized governance of risk, emphasizing the significance of mobile platforms as governance actors,

objects, and tools. Future risk governance should continue to focus on the public sphere, follow the trajectory of mediatization, and base its strategies on the interaction of the two logics. This approach can properly guide public emotions and foster a rational awareness of risk.

However, the book has several limitations. First, the author has not yet analyzed the drivers behind user action logic of PARM, nor systematically considered factors behind platform technological logic, such as governance policies, business models, and government regulation. This makes the two logics somewhat simplified. Future research should incorporate political, economic, and cultural factors to provide a more in-depth theoretical explanation. Second, introducing the psychological dimension of risk perception to explore how users' perceptions influence their action logic, and in turn affect the evolution of issue salience, would help improve the theoretical framework. Third, the scope and geographic coverage of the data in this study need to be further expanded. Future research could consider global risk events, collecting and analyzing mobile communication data from different countries and regions to examine similarities and differences in the evolution of risk issue salience across cultural contexts and media ecosystems, thereby enhancing the generalizability of the PARM.

The risk society calls for rational governance, and communication scholars should serve as a bridge connecting the public with institutions, and technology with values. The problem-driven research of this book fully demonstrates the author's academic commitment and sense of public responsibility. In the mediatized risk

society, effective governance requires the public's rational and timely participation on communication platforms.

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