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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Conceptual Review of Crisis Management and Strategic Decision-Making Processes in a Risk Society*

(*Risk Toplumunda Kriz Yönetimi ve Stratejik Karar Alma Süreçleri Üzerine Kavramsal Bir İnceleme*)

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ÖZ

Bu çalışma, risk toplumu kuramı ile kriz yönetimi ve stratejik karar alma literatürünü bütünleştirerek kamu kurumlarının çağdaş risklere uyum kapasitesini incelemektedir. Araştırma, sistematik bir arama ve seçim sürecine dayanan bütünleştirici literatür incelemesi olarak tasarlanmıştır. Risk toplumu, kriz yönetimi, stratejik karar alma, kriz yönetişimi ve açık strateji ekseninde belirlenen ulusal ve uluslararası kaynaklar; kavramsal ilişkiler, karar alma dinamikleri ve kurumsal kapasite boyutlarında karşılaştırmalı olarak çözümlenmiştir. İnceleme sonuçları, dijital ve yapay zekâ kaynaklı risklerden afet, finansal, ekolojik ve jeopolitik risklere uzanan çağdaş risk alanlarının ortak biçimde belirsizlik, karşılıklı bağımlılık, hız ve sınır aşan etkiler ürettiğini göstermektedir. Kavramsal sentez, stratejik karar alma mekanizmalarının yalnızca hızlı karar verme kapasitesine değil; erken uyarı sistemlerine, davranışsal yanlılıkların sınırlandırılmasına, çok aktörlü kriz yönetişimine, açık veriye, dağıtılmış karar haklarına ve kriz sonrası kurumsal öğrenmeye dayanması gerektiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışmanın özgün katkısı, risk toplumu ve kriz yönetimi tartışmalarını stratejik karar alma mekanizmalarının kurumsal tasarımıyla ilişkilendiren; öngörücü uyum, koordineli ve açık müdahale ile kurumsal öğrenme aşamalarından oluşan bütünleşik bir uyum çerçevesi sunmasıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Risk Toplumu, Kriz Yönetimi, Stratejik Karar Alma, Kriz Yönetişimi, Açık Strateji.*

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the capacity of public institutions to adapt to contemporary risks by integrating risk society theory with the literature on crisis management and strategic decision-making. The research is designed as an integrative literature review based on a systematic search and selection process. The selected national and international sources—selected based on the themes of risk society, crisis management, strategic decision-making, crisis governance, and open strategy—were analyzed comparatively across the dimensions of conceptual relationships, decision-making dynamics, and institutional capacity. The findings indicate that contemporary risk domains—ranging from digital and AI-driven risks to disaster, financial, ecological, and geopolitical risks—collectively generate uncertainty, interdependence, velocity, and transboundary effects. The conceptual synthesis reveals that strategic decision-making mechanisms must rely not only on the capacity for rapid decision-making but also on early warning systems, the mitigation of behavioral biases, multi-actor crisis governance, open data, distributed decision rights, and post-crisis institutional learning. The study's original contribution lies in linking risk society and crisis management debates to the institutional design of strategic decision-making mechanisms, thereby presenting an integrated alignment framework comprising stages of anticipatory alignment, coordinated and open response, and institutional learning.

Keywords: *Risk Society, Crisis Management, Strategic Decision Making, Crisis Governance, Open Strategy.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary public administration operates in an environment where risks are increasingly produced by modernization itself and where crises move rapidly across organizational, sectoral, and national boundaries. Digital infrastructures, artificial intelligence systems, ecological degradation, financial interdependence, disasters, and geopolitical tensions differ in their immediate causes, yet they generate a common administrative problem: decision-makers must act under uncertainty while the information, actors, and consequences relevant to the decision are changing. The risk society thesis conceptualizes this condition as a transition from externally perceived dangers to manufactured and systemic risks whose probability, distribution, and effects are contested (Beck, 2006; Giddens, 2000: 40). Crisis management, in turn, concerns the institutional capacity to make sense of these threats, decide and coordinate under pressure, communicate meaning, terminate the acute phase, and learn from experience (Boin et al., 2017).

Risk and crisis are related but analytically distinct concepts. Risk refers to a prospective condition in which potential harm, exposure, and uncertainty can be assessed before disruption becomes acute; crisis denotes a situation in which core values, essential systems, or institutional legitimacy are perceived to be under serious threat and consequential decisions must be made under severe time and information constraints. Risk therefore structures the pre-crisis horizon of anticipation, whereas crisis compresses that horizon into an urgent decision environment. Their contextual relationship is cyclical rather than linear: risk assessment shapes preparedness and prevention; crisis response reveals hidden vulnerabilities and interdependencies; and post-crisis learning redefines which conditions will subsequently be recognized as risks. This cycle explains why crisis management cannot be separated from strategic decision-making or reduced to operational intervention after an event.

The strategic decision-making mechanism has consequently undergone a conceptual transformation. Classical rational models assume that alternatives can be identified, consequences compared, and the optimal option selected. Risk society conditions weaken these assumptions because decision-makers confront incomplete information, cascading consequences, contested expertise, and interorganizational dependency. The relevant transformation is therefore not simply from slow to fast decision-making, but from closed, centralized, and episodic choice toward a continuous architecture combining foresight, bounded rationality, distributed expertise, behavioral awareness, data infrastructures, stakeholder participation, and organizational learning. International scholarship on transboundary crisis management, behavioral strategy, resilient institutions, and open strategy provides important components of this architecture (Ansell et al., 2010; Powell et al., 2011; Whittington et al., 2011; Boin and Lodge, 2016).

Despite these parallel discussions, the literature often treats risk society as a macro-sociological diagnosis, crisis management as an operational or leadership problem, and strategic decision-making as an organizational process. This separation leaves the mechanism connecting risk production to crisis decisions insufficiently specified. The present review addresses this gap by asking: How should strategic decision-making mechanisms in public administration be aligned with the uncertainty, interdependence, velocity, and legitimacy demands of the contemporary risk environment? The analysis focuses on cross-cutting requirements shared by digital and artificial intelligence risks, disaster risks, financial risks, ecological risks, and geopolitical risks rather than attempting to provide a separate sectoral review for each domain.

The study makes three contributions. First, it clarifies the contextual relationship between risk, crisis, and strategic decision-making by locating them within a recurring anticipation-response-learning cycle. Second, it integrates risk society theory with crisis governance, behavioral strategy, and openness-based approaches to explain why contemporary decisions require both analytical capacity and institutional inclusion. Third, it develops a risk-aligned strategic decision-making framework organized around proactive alignment, coordinated and open response, and institutional learning. The following section explains the integrative review design; subsequent sections revisit modern risks and crises, the transformation of crisis management and decision-making, risk-oriented governance, and the implications of the proposed framework.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This article is designed as an integrative literature review rather than an empirical research article. Integrative reviews are appropriate when a study seeks to connect mature but partly fragmented research traditions, clarify concepts, and develop a new analytical framework instead of estimating an effect or synthesizing a homogeneous set of empirical findings (Snyder, 2019: 333-339). The review therefore combines a structured search and selection procedure with theory-oriented conceptual synthesis.

The literature search was organized around five concept clusters: (1) risk society and manufactured risk; (2) crisis and transboundary crisis management; (3) strategic decision-making under uncertainty; (4) behavioral strategy and cognitive bias; and (5) crisis governance, openness, open data, and organizational resilience. English and Turkish combinations of the terms risk society, crisis management, strategic decision making, public administration, crisis governance, behavioral strategy, open strategy, digital risk, artificial intelligence risk, disaster risk, financial risk, ecological risk, and geopolitical risk were used. Peer-reviewed articles, scholarly books, and chapters directly addressing the conceptual relationship among at least two of these clusters were included; publications with only descriptive references to crisis or risk and no implication for decision-making mechanisms were excluded. Backward citation tracking was used to identify foundational works.

The final analytical corpus comprises the selected publications. The sources were read comparatively and coded under three questions: how risk and crisis are defined and related; which cognitive, organizational, and interorganizational factors shape strategic decisions; and which institutional arrangements strengthen anticipation, coordination, legitimacy, and learning. The synthesis is not a meta-analysis and does not claim statistical generalizability. Its validity rests on conceptual transparency, the explicit selection logic, comparison across complementary theoretical traditions, and the traceability of propositions to the reviewed literature.

The originality of the research lies in shifting the unit of analysis from the crisis event to the strategic decision-making mechanism. Instead of examining a single crisis type, it identifies the common institutional demands generated by contemporary risk domains and evaluates whether decision structures are aligned with these demands. This design enables the study to propose a transferable framework while recognizing that future empirical research should test its dimensions in particular institutional settings and crisis types.

3. RISK SOCIETY AND MODERN CRISES

The concept of risk society has gained significant importance in the social sciences literature, aiming to explain the new forms of threats that have emerged with the modernization

process. While in traditional societies risk was primarily associated with individual misfortunes, natural disasters, or uncontrollable external events, in modern societies risk has acquired the character of a structural phenomenon arising from human activities and systemic choices. This transformation has caused risks to take on a character that has not only individual but also societal, political and global consequences.

3.1. Risk Society and Modern Risks

According to Ulrich Beck, the risk society represents a new societal stage where the economic, technological, and environmental risks produced by industrial society can no longer be controlled by traditional safety mechanisms (Bayhan, 2011: 212). Beck argues that industrial society has generated new risk areas within its own developmental dynamics, making a reassessment of modernity necessary. In this context, the risk society represents a new era in which modernity confronts its own consequences (Çuhacı, 2007: 141).

One of the fundamental concepts of the risk society approach is "manufactured uncertainties". According to this, the increase in information and technological capacity in modern societies not only produces security and prosperity but also creates new, difficult-to-predict risk areas (Yıldırım, 2008: 77). In this process, which Beck defines as "reflexive modernization", modernity is forced to re-examine the risks it has produced (Çuhacı, 2007: 131). Therefore, risks no longer stem solely from external threats as in the past; they largely arise as a result of the technical, economic, and industrial activities of modern society. This situation makes it increasingly difficult to predict risks and control them using traditional methods (Çuhacı, 2007: 137).

Understanding traditional and modern risks is crucial for comprehending a risk society. In traditional societies, risks primarily manifest as natural threats beyond human control, such as earthquakes, epidemics, droughts, or floods (Akgül and Can, 2021: 539). These types of risks are often limited to specific geographical areas and are considered external risks.

In modern societies, risks are largely "manufactured risks" resulting from human activities. Industrialization, technological advancements, environmental interventions, and global economic relations are among the primary sources of modern risks (Koçak and Memiş, 2017: 254). Therefore, modern risks can have consequences that affect not only a specific region but also the global system.

One of the most prominent characteristics of modern risks is the "boomerang effect" as described by Beck. According to this, risks are not limited by class or geographical boundaries, and the actors who generate the risks are also affected by them over time (Duğan, 2021: 514). Beck's statement, "poverty is hierarchical, but the polluted air layer is democratic", reveals the transcendent nature of modern risks (Beck, 2011: 49). Environmental disasters, epidemics, nuclear accidents, and global economic crises, in particular, demonstrate that risks do not only produce local consequences but become threats spreading on a global scale. In this context, the "Chernobyl is everywhere" approach reveals that modern risks largely render geographical boundaries meaningless (Yıldız and Bek, 2025: 1409).

In conclusion, the risk society approach demonstrates that in the modern world, risks are no longer situations that are attempted to be compensated for after a crisis, but rather structural processes that need to be predicted, analyzed, and managed before a crisis occurs. This transformation necessitates new proactive and risk-oriented management approaches, especially in public administration and crisis management (Beck, 2006: 334).

3.2. Characteristics Of Modern Crises

Modern crises, unlike the traditional understanding of crises, exhibit a more complex, large-scale, and unpredictable structure. Traditional crises are often considered to be events confined to a specific area, with relatively controllable effects and more easily calculated costs (Pamuk, 2014: 311). In contrast, modern crises arise within the dynamics of modern society itself, such as technological advancements, globalization, the spread of communication networks, demographic transformations, and economic dependency relationships (Pamuk, 2014: 309). This situation makes not only the consequences but also the ways in which crises emerge more complex.

Charles Perrow's normal accident theory sharpens this distinction by showing that major failures in tightly coupled and interactively complex systems may arise not from a single extraordinary mistake but from combinations of ordinary malfunctions that cannot be fully anticipated or isolated (Perrow, 1984). In digital networks, critical infrastructure, financial systems, energy systems, and technology-intensive disaster response, the same properties can turn localized failures into cascading crises. From this perspective, complexity and tight coupling are not merely contextual difficulties; they are structural characteristics that limit prediction and require redundancy, modularity, decentralized expertise, and preparedness for inevitable surprise.

One of the most prominent characteristics of modern crises is their ability to spread rapidly to wide areas and grow by creating a "snowball effect" (Genç, 2009: 16-17). Global economic crises, environmental disasters, or epidemics, in particular, demonstrate that a problem arising in one area can quickly affect different sectors and societies. Such crises cause significant uncertainties in management processes, in addition to physical and economic losses (Pamuk, 2014: 311). During a crisis, lack of information, time pressure, and rapidly changing conditions directly affect decision-making mechanisms.

The Covid-19 pandemic, in particular, has clearly demonstrated the multifaceted nature of modern crises. The pandemic has become a global crisis that simultaneously affects not only healthcare systems but also economic structures, educational processes, political decision-making mechanisms and social life practices (Akyüz, 2020: 161). This shows that modern crises are too complex to be controlled by a single institution or traditional management tools. Therefore, contemporary crises should be considered not as narrow intervention methods focused only on the crisis moment, but rather as processes requiring multidimensional analysis, coordination, and strategic planning.

The transboundary, unpredictable, and multi-actor nature of modern crises makes approaches relying solely on centralized public authorities questionable in crisis management. In this context, effective crisis management in risk societies necessitates the development of governance mechanisms based on cooperation and coordination among public institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations, and local actors.

4. CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING

The relationship between risk society and strategic decision-making is mediated by crisis management capacity. Risk society theory explains why uncertainty and manufactured interdependence become permanent features of the administrative environment; crisis management explains how institutions organize sense-making, choice, coordination, communication, and learning when those risks become acute. Strategic decision-making connects the two by translating prospective risk knowledge into priorities, resource allocations,

contingency arrangements, and response choices. Accordingly, the conceptual transformation is from episodic decision-making during exceptional events to an institutional mechanism that continuously links risk anticipation, crisis action, and organizational adaptation (Boin et al., 2017).

4.1. From Reactive to Proactive Crisis Management

One of the most significant transformations in crisis management is the shift from a reactive intervention approach to a proactive management approach. Traditional crisis management largely focuses on intervening after a crisis occurs and mitigating the resulting damage. However, the complex nature of modern risks means that this post-crisis approach is often insufficient. Therefore, today, crisis management is considered within a broader management framework that includes identifying and analyzing risks before a crisis occurs and making the necessary preparations (Doğan, 2025: 63).

From a strategic management perspective, proactive management approaches that can manage uncertainties, analyze risks in advance, and guide the process are gaining importance, instead of passive practices based solely on predicting the future (Karakaya, 2004: 228). In this framework, a proactive approach aims to prevent crises from occurring, mitigate their effects, and prepare organizations for crises (Akyüz, 2020: 163). Thus, crisis management is transforming from a process that only intervenes in extraordinary situations into a continuous management field integrated with strategic planning, risk analysis, and organizational preparedness processes.

The “Strategic Crisis Management” approach, which emerged in line with this transformation, treats crises not merely as operational problems, but as a holistic management model that considers them together with leadership, coordination, communication, and strategic decision-making processes (Durgun, 2025: 1670). Today, effective crisis management is based on a multi-stage structure that includes pre-crisis preparation, rapid and coordinated intervention during a crisis, and post-crisis learning and restructuring processes (Çamur, 2025: 159). This situation increases the importance of flexible, adaptable, and continuously learning management models in the management of modern crises.

International crisis research similarly emphasizes that contemporary crises are transboundary and cannot be managed through a single organization’s command structure. Ansell et al. (2010) identify scalability, surge capacity, boundary-spanning coordination, and shared situational awareness as central building blocks of effective response systems. Boin and Lodge (2016) further argue that resilient institutions must be designed to absorb disruption, adapt roles and routines, and preserve legitimate authority across jurisdictional boundaries. These findings locate proactivity not only in prediction, but also in the prior design of relationships and capacities that can operate when prediction fails.

4.2. Strategic Decision Making Under Uncertainty

Among the prominent approaches in the literature on decision-making processes, the rational decision-making model and the bounded rationality model hold significant importance. According to the rational decision-making model, decision-makers possess the information to evaluate all alternatives and can choose the most appropriate decision from among the available options (Özcan, 2021: 72). This approach assumes that the decision-making process proceeds systematically, predictably, and based on complete information.

However, the complex and uncertain structure created by the risk society significantly limits the application area of the rational decision-making model. According to the bounded rationality approach developed by Simon, decision-makers are not in a position to evaluate all alternatives due to the cost of accessing information, time pressure, and the limited information processing capacity of humans (Aslan, 2021: 3). Therefore, decision-making processes often take place under conditions of incomplete information, uncertainty, and limited evaluation capacity.

Decision-making processes become more complex, especially during times of crisis. Because problems arising during disruptive crises change rapidly and are often difficult to define precisely, decision-makers do not have the opportunity to evaluate all options in detail (Özcan, 2021: 73). In such situations where time pressure is high, decision-making processes are influenced not only by analytical evaluations but also by experience, intuition, and managerial foresight (Çelikten et al., 2019: 584). This demonstrates that intuitive evaluations in strategic decision-making processes are not entirely irrational; on the contrary, they function as complementary elements that facilitate decision-making in uncertain environments.

Behavioral strategy provides a more explicit account of this decision environment by examining how cognitive, emotional, and social mechanisms shape strategic choices (Powell et al., 2011). Under crisis conditions, availability bias may overemphasize vivid recent events, confirmation bias may filter contradictory warnings, escalation of commitment may sustain failing responses, and groupthink may suppress dissent. Behavioral strategy therefore does not reject data-driven analysis; it shows why analytical tools must be combined with structured challenge, diverse decision teams, pre-mortem exercises, scenario comparison, and explicit review of assumptions. In the age of algorithmic decision support, this requirement extends to automation bias and opacity: artificial intelligence can accelerate pattern detection, but it can also reproduce data bias and create unjustified confidence in model outputs.

The literature indicates that a significant portion of strategic decisions are made based on managers' past experiences, cognitive awareness, and intuitive assessments (Aslan, 2021: 11). The rapidly changing environment, particularly in risk societies, shows that decision-making processes based solely on technical analysis may not be sufficient. Therefore, effective strategic decision-making processes today require a more flexible structure that combines data-driven analysis with managerial experience and intuitive assessments.

The alignment problem varies across contemporary risk domains but rests on shared decision requirements. Digital and artificial intelligence risks require cyber situational awareness, model accountability, human oversight, and rapid updating; disaster and ecological risks require precaution, local knowledge, redundancy, and intergovernmental coordination; financial risks require real-time monitoring of systemic interdependence and credible contingency arrangements; geopolitical risks require scenario planning, intelligence integration, and decisions that remain robust under strategic ambiguity. The relevant mechanism must therefore be technologically capable without becoming technologically deterministic. Ertan’s (2026a) analysis of artificial-intelligence-based municipal feedback systems similarly underlines that digital tools create public value only when speed and analytical capacity are accompanied by transparency, equity, and accountable human judgment.

4.3. Decision Speed and Organizational Flexibility

Rapidly changing environmental conditions have made the time factor a strategic element in decision-making processes. Especially during times of crisis, slow decision-making mechanisms make it difficult for organizations to adapt to changing conditions and can further

exacerbate the effects of crises. Therefore, the strategic management approach emphasizes the capacity for rapid and flexible decision-making in an environment of uncertainty (Karakaya, 2004: 228).

The speed of strategic decision-making is directly influenced by organizational structure and environmental conditions. According to Wally and Baum, the speed of decision-making processes varies depending on managerial structure, organizational culture, and environmental pressures (Wally and Baum, 1994: 932-956). Especially during times of crisis, rapid access to information, coordinated decision-making processes, and maintaining implementation capacity are of paramount importance.

Centralization, a fundamental element of organizational structure, can create both advantages and disadvantages during times of crisis. Concentrating decision-making authority in a central location can, in some cases, increase the speed of decision-making by reducing the number of actors involved in the decision-making process (Wally and Baum, 1994: 937). However, in rigid hierarchical structures, the process of transferring information to higher levels can slow down, communication channels can become blocked, and information losses can occur (Karaağaç, 2013: 126). This situation can negatively impact management capacity, especially during crises requiring rapid intervention.

In a risk society, making organizational structures more flexible is crucial for effective crisis management. In particular, delegating operational decisions to middle-level managers facilitates swift action during crises (Özcan, 2021: 133). Increasing participation in decision-making processes and strengthening a decentralized management approach contributes to organizations' ability to adapt more quickly to environmental changes (Zehir and Özşahin, 2006: 152-153). Therefore, in a risk society, strategic decision-making processes require not only the making of the right decisions but also the timely and appropriate organizational structure of those decisions.

5. RISK-ORIENTED GOVERNANCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The uncertainties and multifaceted crises brought about by the risk society have necessitated a reassessment of traditional management approaches in public administration. This process has paved the way for the development of new approaches in public administration centered on governance, cooperation, and institutional flexibility.

5.1. Transformation And Governance in Public Administration

The understanding of public administration has undergone a significant transformation, particularly since the last quarter of the 20th century, driven by globalization, technological advancements, economic transformations, and changes in societal expectations. The diversification of risks and the multifaceted nature of crises in modern societies have made the capacity of traditional public administration to respond to crises questionable. In particular, centralized, rigid bureaucratic, and hierarchical structures face various challenges in terms of rapid decision-making, coordination, and adaptability to changing conditions. This situation has led to the increasing importance of new, more flexible, participatory, and collaborative management approaches in public administration.

The traditional public administration paradigm is based on a centralized management approach that prioritizes bureaucratic organization and the separation of politics and administration. In this approach, public administration aims to deliver public services through adherence to rules, hierarchical structures, and standardized practices. However, the dynamic

and volatile nature of modern crises reveals that this rigid management approach cannot provide sufficient flexibility during crisis situations. Especially in situations requiring rapid intervention, such as disasters, epidemics, and economic crises, the slow pace of bureaucratic processes can create serious problems in crisis management (Özler, 2019: 144-145).

The new threats emerging in a risk society make it difficult for public administration to remain a passive structure that merely enforces rules. Therefore, a transformation is taking place in the understanding of public administration, moving from the classical bureaucratic model towards more flexible and results-oriented management models (Özel, 2010: 12-13). The New Public Administration paradigm prioritizes a performance-oriented, flexible, and participatory management approach with more horizontal relationships, replacing centralized structures (Özler, 2019: 144). The aim is to enable public institutions to adapt more quickly to changing environmental conditions and to act more effectively during crises.

Especially when evaluated from the perspective of crisis management, large-scale and rigid hierarchical structures often limit the capacity for rapid response. Therefore, smaller, more coordinated, and flexible units are seen to come to the forefront in crisis processes (Özler, 2019: 145). This transformation enables crisis management to move beyond being a structure that only includes post-crisis intervention and become a holistic management approach encompassing risk analysis, preparation, coordination, and recovery processes (Özler, 2019: 145-146).

The complex nature of modern crises makes it increasingly difficult for crisis management processes to be carried out solely by public institutions. This situation has made the concept of governance more important in crisis management. The governance approach is based on the principle that decision-making processes should be carried out not only by the central authority but also with the participation of different actors (Belli, 2022: 105). Thus, the aim is to strengthen cooperation and coordination among public administration, the private sector, civil society organizations, and local actors.

The multifaceted nature of modern crises, in particular, necessitates the collaborative action of different areas of expertise and institutional capacities within the same process. Establishing an effective communication and coordination mechanism between public institutions, the private sector, and civil society organizations is of great importance in crisis and disaster management processes (Belli, 2022: 105). This is because public resources alone are often insufficient during crises; social solidarity, volunteerism, and multi-actor cooperation play a significant role in mitigating the effects of crises.

Civil society organizations play important roles, especially during times of crisis, in raising public awareness, shaping public opinion, and rapidly identifying needs (Karakoç, 2014: 375). In addition, the logistical capacity, technical capabilities, and organizational skills of the private sector become complementary elements in crisis management processes. Therefore, a collaborative governance approach necessitates the use of the knowledge, resources, and experiences of different actors in a coordinated framework in crisis management.

Including stakeholders in the preparation, response, and recovery phases of crisis management contributes to evaluating crises from different perspectives and developing more functional solutions (Çamur, 2025: 151). This institutional arrangement is more precisely described as crisis governance: authority remains indispensable, but effective action emerges through coordinated networks that combine public mandate, private capacity, scientific expertise, civil-society knowledge, and local experience. Crisis governance enhances operational effectiveness and the social legitimacy of difficult decisions, provided that roles,

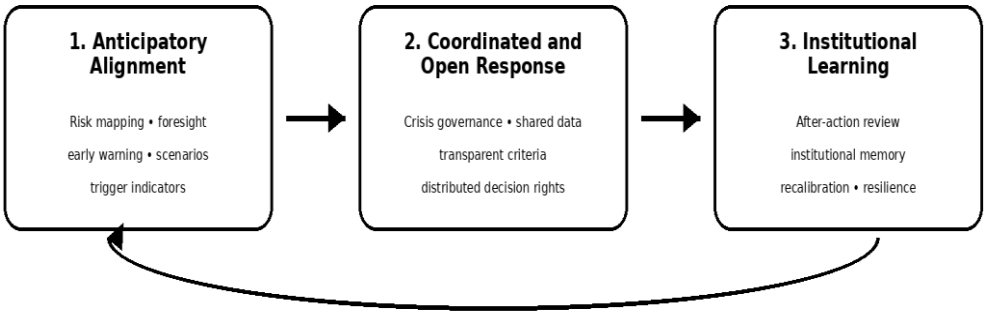
accountability, information-sharing rules, and conflict-resolution mechanisms are specified before disruption occurs. Therefore, success in managing modern crises depends not on unilateral public action, but on a governable architecture of multi-actor cooperation and shared responsibility (Ansell et al., 2010; Bravo-Laguna, 2024).

5.2. A Risk-Aligned Strategic Decision-Making Framework

The manufactured uncertainties emphasized by risk society theory and the transboundary dynamics identified by crisis scholarship demonstrate the inadequacy of separating strategic planning, risk management, and crisis response. A risk-aligned mechanism must connect these functions before, during, and after disruption. The proposed framework is therefore not a universal operational plan for every crisis type; it is an institutional design that aligns decision processes with four demands of the contemporary risk environment: anticipation under uncertainty, coordinated action across boundaries, legitimate openness, and continuous learning.

The risk-aligned strategic decision-making framework treats crisis management not as a mechanism activated only after disruption, but as a continuous structure integrated into strategic choices. As shown in Figure 1, the framework comprises three connected stages. The arrows indicate that learning from one crisis recalibrates future risk recognition and preparation.

Figure 1. Risk-Aligned Strategic Decision-Making Framework



Source: Created by the author based on the conceptual synthesis of the literature.

The first stage is anticipatory alignment: integrating corporate risk management, foresight, early warning, and scenario analysis with strategic planning. Public strategic plans commonly prioritize goals and performance indicators, yet goals, activities, indicators, and risks must form a coherent decision chain. Ertan's (2026b) analysis of municipal strategic planning shows that strong activity-indicator alignment may coexist with weaker risk-activity and risk-indicator connections, limiting the incorporation of risk into monitoring and evaluation. In the proposed framework, each strategic objective is therefore linked to risk assumptions, trigger indicators, responsible actors, contingency options, and thresholds for escalation.

In this context, decision-makers should view the strategic planning process as a holistic risk assessment process that includes both the determination of future goals and the analysis of potential crisis areas that the organization may face. This approach makes it possible to identify the organization's areas of vulnerability before a crisis occurs (Durgun, 2025: 1663). Within the framework of a proactive management approach, establishing early warning mechanisms is of

critical importance. These mechanisms reduce the impact of crises by enabling the early detection of potential risks and allowing decision-makers to intervene in a timely manner (Özcan, 2021: i). Thus, the strategic management system transforms from a structure that only analyzes the current situation into a dynamic system that can also manage uncertainties that may arise in the future (Karakaya, 2004: 228).

The second dimension of the model is the transformation of decision-making processes from a single-centered structure to a multi-actor governance model (Belli, 2022: 105). The complex nature of modern crises makes it difficult for public authorities to manage the entire process alone. Therefore, a collaborative structure in which public institutions, the private sector, and civil society organizations act together has become a necessity in crisis management processes.

The second stage is coordinated and open response. Decision-makers should view crisis management as a collective governance space in which different knowledge, experiences, and resources are combined without obscuring accountability. Openness consists of strategic transparency, stakeholder inclusion, and distributed decision rights (Whittington et al., 2011). In public administration, these principles are operationalized through open government, open data, interoperable information systems, public explanation of decision criteria, and the delegation of operational authority within a clear strategic mandate. Open data can improve shared situational awareness, but disclosure must be balanced against privacy, security, misinformation, and information overload. Accordingly, top management should define public values, legal limits, priorities, and escalation rules, while operational and technical decisions are delegated to qualified units close to the problem. This arrangement combines speed with expertise and inclusion with responsibility.

The third stage is institutional learning and recalibration. Crisis management includes the systematic analysis of decisions, outcomes, coordination failures, unequal impacts, data quality, and unexpected consequences after the acute phase. Lessons should be transferred into institutional memory through after-action reviews, revised scenarios, updated risk registers, redesigned indicators, training, and changes in decision rights. Learning is meaningful only when it modifies future assumptions and routines; otherwise, post-crisis evaluation becomes ceremonial. The cycle therefore returns to anticipatory alignment, allowing organizations to revise what they define as risk and to develop more resilient structures against similar or newly emerging threats (Çayak and Kurt, 2024: 124).

In summary, the framework links three stages—anticipatory alignment, coordinated and open response, and institutional learning—through a continuous information and accountability cycle. Its central proposition is that strategic decision quality in a risk society depends on the fit between the properties of the risk environment and the institutional architecture through which information is interpreted, authority is distributed, and experience is converted into revised capacity.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The review shows that the conceptual transformation of strategic decision-making is best understood as an alignment problem. Risk society theory establishes that contemporary threats are increasingly manufactured, systemic, contested, and unevenly distributed. Crisis management research demonstrates that these threats become acute decision environments characterized by urgency, uncertainty, threat to core values, and coordination pressure. Strategic decision-making connects the two domains by determining how institutions convert uncertain warnings into priorities and how they distribute authority when risks escalate. The

key transformation is therefore not merely from reactive to proactive management, but from a closed decision episode to a continuous institutional cycle of anticipation, response, and learning.

This synthesis also clarifies why no single decision model is sufficient. Rational analysis remains essential for comparing scenarios, resources, and expected consequences, but bounded rationality and behavioral strategy show that data do not enter decisions neutrally. Cognitive biases, organizational routines, political incentives, and algorithmic opacity influence which warnings are noticed and which alternatives are considered. Conversely, intuition and experience can accelerate decisions but may reproduce overconfidence or familiar solutions. A risk-aligned mechanism must institutionalize cognitive diversity, dissent, review of assumptions, and human oversight of automated systems. In this respect, decision quality should be evaluated not only by speed or ex post success, but by whether the process was evidence-sensitive, contestable, proportionate, and capable of revision.

The comparison of contemporary risk domains supports a cross-cutting framework while also revealing limits to uniformity. Digital and artificial intelligence risks develop at a pace that challenges regulatory and technical expertise; disasters and ecological risks expose territorial inequality and the importance of local capacity; financial and geopolitical risks involve strategic behavior, contagion, and high uncertainty. Nevertheless, all these domains require interoperable information, early warning, scenario-based planning, redundancy, coordination beyond formal boundaries, and legitimate communication. The proposed three-stage framework captures these common requirements without assuming that identical operational instruments apply to every risk.

The governance dimension is particularly important. Centralization may provide clarity and political authority, yet complex crises exceed the informational capacity of a single center. Pure decentralization, on the other hand, can fragment responsibility and produce inconsistent action. Crisis governance and open strategy point to a conditional solution: strategic priorities, public values, legal boundaries, and escalation rules should remain explicit at the center, while information gathering and operational decisions should be distributed to qualified actors. Transparency, inclusion, and open data can improve legitimacy and shared situational awareness, but they require safeguards for privacy, security, reliability, and accountability. Openness is therefore a designed property of the decision architecture, not the indiscriminate disclosure of all information.

The study's main theoretical contribution is to connect risk society, crisis management, behavioral strategy, and openness within one institutional mechanism. Its practical implication is that public administrations should audit the alignment among strategic objectives, risk registers, warning indicators, decision rights, data infrastructures, stakeholder networks, and learning procedures. The framework also identifies an empirical research agenda. Future studies may operationalize its dimensions and compare how they perform in artificial intelligence governance, disaster management, financial stability, ecological emergencies, or geopolitical disruption. Comparative case studies could test whether different combinations of central authority, network coordination, and openness produce variation in speed, legitimacy, equity, and resilience.

The review has limitations. Its integrative design prioritizes conceptual synthesis over exhaustive bibliometric coverage and does not estimate causal effects. The broad comparison of risk domains also necessarily abstracts from sector-specific legal and technical conditions. These limitations do not invalidate the framework, but define the level at which its claims

should be interpreted: it is a theory-informed model for institutional alignment that requires contextual empirical testing.

In conclusion, public administrations in the age of risks cannot treat crisis management as an exceptional function detached from ordinary strategy. Strategic decision-making must continuously anticipate manufactured and systemic risks, organize coordinated and open action when disruption occurs, and convert experience into revised institutional capacity. The proposed framework defines this alignment through three stages—anticipatory alignment, coordinated and open response, and institutional learning—and through a common accountability cycle connecting them. Its central conclusion is that resilience depends less on predicting every crisis than on designing decision mechanisms capable of recognizing uncertainty, mobilizing distributed knowledge, making legitimate choices under pressure, and learning before the next risk becomes a crisis.

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