Weathering the Storm: Navigating Urban Ecologies of Communication in Times of Crisis

Austin Hestdalen

Follow this and additional works at: https://dsc.duq.edu/etd

Part of the Applied Ethics Commons, Architectural History and Criticism Commons, Civic and Community Engagement Commons, Communication Technology and New Media Commons, Community-Based Learning Commons, Community-Based Research Commons, Continental Philosophy Commons, Critical and Cultural Studies Commons, Economic Policy Commons, Emergency and Disaster Management Commons, Environmental Policy Commons, Ethics and Political Philosophy Commons, Health Policy Commons, Human Ecology Commons, Infrastructure Commons, Place and Environment Commons, Politics and Social Change Commons, Public Affairs Commons, Public Policy Commons, Public Relations and Advertising Commons, Quantitative, Qualitative, Comparative, and Historical Methodologies Commons, Rhetoric Commons, Science and Technology Studies Commons, Social Justice Commons, Speech and Rhetorical Studies Commons, Urban, Community and Regional Planning Commons, Urban Studies Commons, and the Urban Studies and Planning Commons

Recommended Citation

This One-year Embargo is brought to you for free and open access by Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact beharyr@duq.edu.
WEATHERING THE STORM: NAVIGATING URBAN ECOLOGIES OF COMMUNICATION IN TIMES OF CRISIS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Austin D. Hestdalen

August 2022
Copyright by

Austin D. Hestdalen

2022
WEATHERING THE STORM: NAVIGATING URBAN ECOLOGIES OF COMMUNICATION IN TIMES OF CRISIS

By

Austin D. Hestdalen

Approved April 22, 2022

Janie Hardin Fritz, Dissertation Director
Professor
Communication & Rhetorical Studies
(Committee Chair)

Ronald C. Arnett, First Reader
Professor
Communication & Rhetorical Studies
(Committee Member)

Erik Garrett, Second Reader
Professor
Communication & Rhetorical Studies
(Committee Member)

Kristine L. Blair
Dean, McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Ronald C. Arnett
Chair, Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies
Professor of Communication
ABSTRACT

WEATHERING THE STORM: NAVIGATING URBAN ECOLOGIES OF COMMUNICATION IN TIMES OF CRISIS

By

Austin D. Hestdalen

August 2022

Dissertation supervised by Janie M. Hardin

This project explores cities as urban ecologies of communication in which crises emerge and are given significance within the dialogic relations cultivated among public actors attempting to make a living, together, within the shared historical-cultural contexts of everyday life. To describe cities as urban ecologies of communication is to describe them in terms of urban communication and its interdisciplinary foundations in the study of rhetoric, philosophy, planning, policy, architecture, sociology, geography, and media. The first chapter introduces the challenges of urban risk and crisis management within the complex ecologies of communication constituted by cities and reviews how ‘risk’ and ‘crisis’ have been defined in discourses of urban planning and policy which have largely only been understood in terms of the techniques of emergency risk and disaster management which advocate for top-down responses to crises predicated on systems of
prediction and control within cities. The second and third chapters of this project, review how cities throughout Europe and the United States have attempted to manage risk and crisis throughout history and provide a historical foundation developing of new theories and practices for urban risk and crisis management. Chapter four explores the philosophical and rhetorical foundations of a dialogic urbanism and urban communication praxis that are of requisite complexity for collaboratively managing the risks and crises made manifest within the dialogic complexity of urban ecologies of communication, elaborating how these phenomena become meaningful within the relations cultivated among individual and institutional actors dwelling within cities, themselves. This project concludes with a fifth chapter, returning to the 2005 case of urban risk and crisis management in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina in order to demonstrate how concepts of dialogic urbanism and urban communication praxis could have generated more participatory and collaborative forms of response that would have been of requisite complexity for the communicative challenges generated before, during, and after the disaster of the storm itself.

As will be shown, the orthodox literature in planning and policy often frames the crises generated by natural disasters, technical failures, socio-economic collapses as threats to the legitimacy of governing institutions. Such interventions are rarely able to account for the complexity of urban life, oversimplifying the challenges emergent therein and disregarding the communicative relations cultivated among publics dwelling therein. It is the purpose of this project to inquire into more participatory and collaborative forms of urban risk and crisis management that reflect public understandings of everyday life in cities as urban ecologies of communication.
DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my grandmother, Dolores Hestdalen, who taught me to appreciate the wonder of cities big and small; my many, many mentors who kept me situated within a public world of communication as a lived-practice; my colleagues in the Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies at Duquesne University; and my partner, Drue Denmon, whose wisdom, compassion, and creativity have always helped me orient myself through life’s many crises.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge the help and support of the faculty in the Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, PA, whose public facing scholarship helped me to keep this project grounded in the lived practices of communication that hold cities together. I would like to acknowledge the professional mentorship of Drs. Craig T. Maier, Erik Garrett, and Ronald C. Arnett each of whom welcomed me into the study of rhetoric and philosophy with open arms. I could not have completed this process without the help of Dr. Janie Harden Fritz, who agreed to chair my committee at the last minute. This project would not have been possible without generous opportunities for funding and furthering my education from the Urban Communication Foundation, the Media Ecology Association, and the Rhetoric Society of America, and Macanulty Family.

I would also like to acknowledge all of those people dwelling together in cities. Their understanding of others and the world are of as much if not more importance for responding to situated experiences of crises than the research produced in any academic setting. Their worldly philosophies of everyday communicative life are what is necessary to keep the practices urban planning and policy on the ground, where everyday life actually happens.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter One: <em>Sturm und Drang</em></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Two: <em>Best Laid Plans</em></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Three: <em>Do Oft Go Awry</em></td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Four: <em>Speaking the City: Dialogic Urbanism</em></td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five: <em>Urban Communication Praxis in Context</em></td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

_Sturm und Drang:_ An Urban Ecology of Communication in Decline

The storm made landfall on August 29th, 2005. Hurricane Katrina, now a well-documented case in emergency risk and disaster management, flooded nearly 93,000 square miles of coastal land, destroying over 300,000 homes and displacing nearly 1.5 million residents from communities along the U. S. Gulf Coast (M. Marable & K. Clarke 2008; J. I. Levitt & M. C. Whitaker 2009). Although initial estimates placed total property damages around $81 billion, it was only later discovered that the overall economic impact of the storm was closer to $161 billion, making Hurricane Katrina one of the costliest natural disasters in U. S. history (Office for Coastal Management, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 2021). Suffice it to say that the storm put significant strain on both the physical and economic infrastructures of cities along the United States’ Gulf Coast, leaving many of their residents in precarious circumstances.

The physical destruction and financial losses, however, were incomparable to the burdens borne by those attempting to navigate the complexity and contradictions of New Orleans, Louisiana. Hurricane Katrina displaced local communities, threatened the legitimacy of governing institutions, and brought the urban ecology of New Orleans close to full-scale social collapse (J. M. Nigg, J. Barnshaw, & M. R. Torres 2006). By the time the storm had subsided, over 1800 people were left dead and thousands more were injured or at risk of contracting life-threatening diseases from insects and water contamination (R. D. Knabb, J. R. Rhome, D. P. Brown, 2015). Further, the relations cultivated among individual and institutional publics, long neglected or overlooked by those working in planning and policy, generated circumstances in which dep-seeded conflicts spiraled into confusion, fear, and violence in the days and weeks following the storm (M. T. Fullilove, F. Bosman, H. Banker, P. De Wit, E. Noothorn, R.
Fullilove 2008). While state and federal authorities scrambled to render sufficient aid, New Orleans residents were forced to reckon with a highly complex and concentrated series of crises that could neither be predicted nor controlled by the conventions of emergency risk and disaster management that inform city planning.

In the case of Hurricane Katrina, what began as natural disaster quickly manifested as a series of human crises within the historical-cultural context of New Orleans and the urban ecology of communication the city constituted, straining everyday relations cultivated among individual and institutional actors dwelling, together, in the city. As Spike Lee’s (2007, 2010) award-winning documentary series If God Is Willing and Da Creek Don’t Rise demonstrated, disasters like Hurricane Katrina present city leaders with an interrelated series of a natural, technical, financial, and social crises that are difficult to understand, let alone manage, in timely and efficient ways. While technical expertise in emergency risk and disaster management often enables city governments to build resilient cities and address the immediate consequences of disastrous events, such expertise rarely accounts for how those disasters become meaningful for public actors as moments of crisis within the complex tangle of dialogic relations cultivated among public actors dwelling together in cities. As such, individuals and institutions are often left without sufficient means for navigating the complexities and contradictions of crises made manifest within the cities as urban ecologies of communication, struggling to maintain those relationships that are of value for restoring hope and charting a course toward a better future.

This project explores cities as urban ecologies of communication in which crises emerge and are given significance within the everyday relations cultivated among public actors attempting to make a living, together, within the shared historical-cultural contexts of crises themselves. To describe cities as urban ecologies of communication is to describe them in terms

The city, in this sense, not only serves as the historical-cultural context or ground against which experiences of risk and crisis are meaningfully figured in everyday forms of communicative engagement, but also functions as a medium that both facilitates and cultivates particular ethical orientations in communicating interpretations of and response to crises within toward a larger world of others. It is within the context of the city that public actors are confronted with the complex realities of a life lived in close proximity to others both similar to and different from themselves and are forced to reckon with them in their daily encounters with one another.

In this sense, questions of public participation become central for how leaders in planning and policy manage phenomena of risk and crisis made manifest within the historical-cultural context of cities, themselves. Where orthodox techniques of urban planning and policy often use the term ‘crisis’ to refer to disasters of a natural, technical, financial, or social origin that threaten the efficient and effective management of city systems, this project resituates urban manifestation of risk and crisis as phenomena that become meaningful for everyday life within the historical-cultural context of dialogic relations cultivated among public actors dwelling together in cities. Crises, and their antecedent risks, are not merely external or internal threats,
but revelatory experiences in which individual and institutional actors are forced to reckon with past failures and must choose how to respond before, during, and after a disaster actually occurs. Although studies in urban planning and policy often suppose that crises should be managed in top-down fashion that resists the fundamental realities of organic change in relations cultivated among public actors and reinforces a one-dimensional sender-receiver model of communication, this project provides a theoretical and practical foundation for managing urban manifestations of risk and crisis within the relations cultivated among public actors; actively participating in the urban ecologies of communication constitutive of and constituted cities themselves. In this sense, the city is not merely a geo-political region nor an economic aggregate of rational actors attempting to maximize their efficient utility within natural or cultural constraints, but a dialogically complex ecology of communication in which publics engage one another and come to meaningful understandings of crises within the contexts of their everyday lives, providing them with practical hermeneutics for cultivating relationships with one another and navigating the complexities of future crises.

This current chapter introduces the challenges of urban risk and crisis management within the complex ecologies of communication constituted by cities and reviews how ‘risk’ and ‘crisis’ have been defined in discourses of urban planning and policy. Planning and policy discourses have been informed by techniques of emergency risk and disaster management that advocate for top-down responses predicated on systems of prediction and control within cities. The second and third chapters of this project, review how cities throughout Europe and the United States have attempted to manage risk and crisis throughout history and provide a foundation building new theoretical orientations and practical frameworks for urban risk and crisis management. Chapter four explores the philosophical and rhetorical foundations of a dialogic urbanism and the
urban communication praxis which proceeds from it. It is argued that both are of requisite complexity for collaboratively managing the risks and crises made manifest within the dialogic complexity of urban ecologies of communication and understanding how these phenomena become meaningful within the relations cultivated among individual and institutional actors dwelling within cities, themselves. This project concludes with a fifth chapter returns to the 2005 case of urban risk and crisis management in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, demonstrating how a philosophy of dialogic urbanism and urban communication praxis approach could have generated more participatory and collaborative forms of response of requisite complexity for the communicative challenges generated before, during, and after the disaster of the storm itself.

As will be shown, the orthodox literature in planning and policy often frames the crises generated by natural disasters, technical failures, socio-economic collapses as threats to the legitimacy of governing institutions. While this framing is not necessarily false, it encourages city leaders to predict and control how risk and crisis phenomena are made manifest and become meaningful for publics actors within cities, abstracting them from their contexts and attempting to limit how publics should interpret and respond to them. Such interventions are rarely able to account for the complexity of urban life, oversimplifying the challenges emergent therein and disregarding the communicative relations cultivated among publics dwelling therein. It is the purpose of this project to inquire into more participatory and collaborative forms of urban risk and crisis management that reflect public understandings of everyday life in cities as urban ecologies of communication. The next section of this chapter begins that project by reviewing how risk and crisis have been defined and framed within the urban planning and policy literature, before situating these terms within the literature of risk and crisis communication writ broad.
Defining Urban Manifestations of Risk and Crisis

This section reviews how ‘risk’ and ‘crisis’ have been commonly understood within the urban planning and policy literature. While public health and safety remain central concerns for professionals working to monitor, regulate, and direct communication and transportations in cities, these concerns are often framed in statistical, economistic, and overly technical ways that abstract them from their historical-cultural context within the urban ecologies of communication constituted by cities. As will be shown, studies in planning and policy often fail to account for how disasters manifest as crises within the broader historical-cultural contexts of urban life and the rituals of collective memory that occur therein (M. Halbwachs 1941/1992; F. A. Yates 1966/2014; M. C. Boyer 1994; E. S. Casey 1998, 2000; D. Nikulin 2015; A. Assman, 2011; J. Assman 2011; M. T. Fullilove 2004, 2014). As such, experts in urban planning and policy often overlook how they, themselves, actively (if not unintentionally) generate the very conditions necessary for making crises manifest within cities; responding to the immediate circumstances of natural, technical, financial, and social disasters while overlooking the ethical implications their responses might have for how individual and institutional actors cultivate communicative relationships with one another in moments of crisis.

In this sense, many urban planners and policy-makers miss the forest for the trees, limiting their phenomenological horizon of attention to the discrete occurrence of disaster-level events, while overlooking the implications these events have in producing multi-dimensional experiences of crisis and revealing the complex tangle of dialogic relations that both constitute and are constituted by cities (J. Jacobs 1961/1992a, 2016; L. Mumford 1934, 1938/1966, 1961; R. Sennett 1969, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c, 1994, 2008, 2012, 2018; P. Sendra & R. Sennett 2020). Risks and crises, as such, are often reduced to the potential and actual threats related to the
emergence of natural, technical, financial, and social disasters and are rarely considered in terms of the meanings they have within the broader historical-cultural contexts of urban experience or the collective forms of remembrance they sustain in public narratives and communication.

Much of the urban planning and policy literature, therefore, fails to consider how disaster-level events manifest and become meaningful as crises within the complex tangle of dialogic relations constituted by and constitutive of cities as urban ecologies of communication and, ultimately, reinforce top-down, one-dimensional ethics of interpretation and response in urban risk and crisis management. This literature often legitimizes planning and policy responses that uphold techniques and technologies of risk and disaster management associated with movements advocating for ‘Smart Cities,’ ‘Green Cities,’ ‘Resilient Cities,’ ‘Global Cities,’ and ‘Restorative Cities’ while overlooking the communicative dimensions of urban life (W. J. Mitchell 1998, 2000, 2003; A. M. Townsend 2013; M. E. Kahn 2006; T. J. Campanella & L. J. Vale 2005; S. Sassen 1991J. Roe & L. McCay 2021). Each of these movements, however well-intentioned, are predicated on telling individual and institutional actors how to interpret and respond to urban manifestations of risk and crisis, rather than working with them to discover how public actors meaningfully situate experiences of risk and crisis as communicative phenomena made manifest within the complexity of a particular historical-cultural context.

Such orientations toward risk and crisis management often undermine public experiences of city life and determine the shape cities take, re-enforcing the implicit biases of urban environments that inform how individual and institutional actors communicatively engage one another within the conditions and constraints of city life. In this way, the techniques and technologies of urban planning and policy often orient public responses to perceived risk and crisis phenomena made manifest within cities, while overlooking the ethical implications they
have for how public actors engage one another and navigate the uncertainties of these phenomena within the urban ecologies of communication cities constitute. Without a proper means for engaging public actors in participatory forms of risk and crisis management, city governments can only ever have a limited understanding of crises themselves and are poorly equipped for generating responses of requisite complexity for the crises made manifest within cities, themselves.

**Crisis in Urban Planning and Policy**

It must be acknowledged at the outset of this literature review that, although the uncertainties of urban life have always occupied the attention of city leaders, discussions of risk and crisis in the urban planning and policy literature are surprisingly only date back to the turn of the twentieth century. It should, likewise, be acknowledged that concerns with urban forms of crisis emerge primarily within the work of German sociologists concerned with the economic, cultural, and mental dimensions of urban life (Sennett 1969). Max Weber’s (1958) work on *The City*, for example, provided one of the first conceptions of the city as a fusion of the fortress and the market, situating the city within discussions of social change that provided a philosophical foundation for later discussions of urban politics and economics at the local, state, regional, and national levels. The uncertainties of changing historical and cultural circumstances, likewise, extended to Georg Simmel’s writings on “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” which described urban life as an overwhelming experience of mental stimulation (H. H. Gerth & C. W. Mills 1950). In this way, Simmel’s work in this way provided a foundation for how many urban planners and policy makers continue to approach city management, whether it be in response to perceived risks or the actual crises that manifest before, during, and after the occurrence of disastrous events.
This orientation toward the complexities of urban experiences is best exemplified in the works of Oswald Spengler, which “parted ways with earlier thinkers by setting a course of urban growth inversely to the healthy growth of society, at a certain point” (R. Sennett 1969, p. 11). Spengler (1928), in this sense argued cities could become so highly concentrated and complex that they would succumb to their own internal contradictions, becoming cancerous for those dwelling within and between them. These understandings established the primary goal of many leaders in urban planning and policy; city management, in this way, became predicated upon simplifying the urban experience, reducing the complexities confronted by publics dwelling therein, and the crises that might emerge there. Such understandings of cities and their problems are carried throughout the urban planning and policy literature and have often resulted in the reducing the complexities of urban risk and crisis phenomena made manifest therein.

Such concerns those which emerged within the Chicago School of Sociology in the first half of the Twenty-first century, particularly in the studies of city culture conducted by Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, and Louis Wirth. As Sennett (1969) argues, where “Weber, Simmel, and Spengler all assumed the characteristics of city culture . . . to be qualities that pertain to the city as a whole,” the Chicago School sociologists instead, “asked questions about the internal character of the city, about how the different parts of the city functioned in relation to each other, about the different kinds of experience to be had within the same city at the same period of time” (p. 12). The first work of this kind approached the city and its problems from a perspective that attended to how moral orders were generated in everyday interactions among city residents (R. E. Park 1915, 1928). In this way Park provided a description for how the “functional, tangible character of the city would ultimately reveal the cultural and ethical possibilities for life within it” (Sennett 1969, p. 13). In this way, Park’s work, and the works of the Chicago School of urban
sociology as a whole, provided the first considerations of an urban ecology; considerations in which people, place, and practice were demonstrated as intrinsic to constitution of cities and allowed public actors to meaningfully situate understandings changing circumstances in everyday interactions with one another.

Louis Wirth (1938, 1964), likewise, laid the foundations for approaching urban political economies as ecologies in which communication and commerce cultivated relations among public actors within and between cities, providing a background against which everyday life could be meaningfully understood. Robert Redfield and Milton Singer (1954) also discussed “The Cultural Role of Cities” as one of mediating the public experience of change and providing an organically emerging rhythm that gave order and coherence to these experiences in the form of public ritual. In this way, Redfield and Singer (1954) provided a realistic foundation for experiences of change that accompany urban manifestations of crisis and generate sensations of uncertainty, ambiguity, and ambivalence which are framed as threats in the urban planning and policy literature.

While the Chicago School had provided a comprehensive view of the city as a complex ecology of human communication in which conflict and collaboration existed in tandem, more cynical interpretations of urban complexity and contradiction had also begun to emerge throughout both the United States and Europe. How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York by Jacob Riis (1890/2013) may be the most damning example of urban cynicism. While not a work in urban planning or policy, it painted a picture of the urban poor that motivated a number of top-down forms of government intervention in cities, including the establishment of the Tenement House Committee in 1894 and the publication of the New York Tenement House Act in 1895, both of which set presidents for the urban renewal movements that
would follow nearly half a century later (R. Plunz, 1990). Likewise, Upton Sinclair’s (1906) framing the city as an industrialized jungle shed light on the wasteful processes of mass production that became centralized in cities while also enabling urban growth, generating short- and long-term health challenges for those unfortunate to live within them. In both cases, urban manifestations of risk and crisis were revealed and compelled city leaders to provide adequate forms of response.

Such publications, among others, shifted the public discourses surrounding urban life from those related to the moral, cultural, and psychological challenges of living in close proximity with others, to those concerning the economic and political potential of cities as a whole. Works in cultural anthropology by scholars such as E. T. Hall (1959, 1966), likewise, promoted ideas that discouraged city leaders from concentrating urban populations, arguing that such population density would produce outbreaks of violent crime and limited resources. This ideological orientation toward the city promoted modelling cities in ways that favored open spaces and separated individuals, constructing cities in the image of the English countryside. It was argued that this ‘Garden City’ model provided publics with a simpler way of life and would reduce everyday encounters with the challenges of uncertainty, ambiguity, and ambivalence which characterized the city. This movement, however, only achieved such circumstances by removing the source of human error from the city itself and reducing it to an efficient machine that could be predicted and controlled.

In this way, the Garden City movement began a trend of urban renewal throughout the cities of Europe and the United States. Inspired by the work of Scots biologist and philosopher Sir Patrick Geddes, advocates for Garden City models sought to impose particular understandings of natural order upon the historical-cultural contexts of urban life, shaping and
reshaping the communicative relations cultivated among public actors. Individual architects, political scholars, and social scientists such as Lewis Mumford, Clarence Stein, Henry Wright, and Catherine Bauer sought to reshape the city and argued that good city planning should “aim for at least an illusion of isolation and suburban privacy” (Jacobs 1961/1992a, p. 20). As Jacobs (1961/1992a) argued in her Death and Life of Great American Cities, the advocates of Garden Cities believed that “the planned community must be islanded off as a self-contained unit, that it must resist future change, and that every significant detail must be controlled by planners from the start and then stuck to” (p. 20). Such arguments organized urban neighborhoods into what have been described by urbanists as ‘ethnic-enclaves,’ culturally segregating the city in ways the prevent complex forms of interaction and understanding. This top-down orientation in planning and policy set the precedent for other movements in urban renewal, reflecting Simmel’s idea that a highly concentrated urban environment was cancerous and would inevitably collapse under the weight of its own internal complexities and contradictions.

This presumption that the problems of cities derived from their inherent complexities and contradictions, however, was reiterated throughout the urban planning and policy literature of the Twentieth century. The works of Le Corbusier (1927/1987) are of particular note in this regard. Born Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, this French-Swiss architect, designer, planner, writer, and pioneer in modern urban development provided an intellectual rational for understanding the city as an efficient machine consisting of interchangeable parts that could be removed and switched out with others. While involved in the construction of numerous urban development projects, Le Corbusier presented an understanding of the city as a vertical space of enclosed towers in a great park in which transportation, housing, and employment worked in mechanical harmony with one another. This ‘Radiant City’ worked in tandem with the earlier ‘Garden City’ to shape discourses
of urban life into a what Jacobs (1961/1992a) described as a mechanical toy; a technical system of communication and transportation that only further isolated public actors and prevented them from collaboratively engaging one another in thoughtfully and actively managing the everyday challenges of urban life. In Le Corbusier’s vision, the city planner would become the manager of public life and was given the responsibility of showing people how they should live with one another.

Within these new models of urban life, it was easy to see how cities, as collections of places, peoples, and practices could easily be reduced to economic phenomena (Sassen 1991; J. H. Logan & H. L. Molotch 1987; D. Harvey 2013; Florida 2012, 2017). The commodification of place as space allowed city leaders to abstract experiences of risk and crisis from their communicative contexts in city life, rendering them easy to predict and control within the established techniques of urban planning and policy. While this understanding of cities often produced quality of life improvements for those dwelling within and between them, it also promoted a one-dimensional view of urban life as something which should be managed from above. There is no greater example of this orientation in urban risk and crisis management than the work of Robert Moses, one of the many city managers who observed the city from a 10,000-foot view and sought to reorganize it into a coherent whole with planning and policy (R. A. Caro 1975). This was a practice common to movements in urban renewal which rose to prominence in the early- to mid-Twentieth century. Much like Spengler, the leaders of urban renewal identified cancerous or aberrant regions within the body of the city and sought to cut them out, so they could be replaced by newer, ‘healthy’ growth.

It must be acknowledged, however, that cities are not made up of any one body, nor was it appropriate to view them merely as a fabric that could be cut and re-sown at will. As Jacobs,
Mumford, and Sennett have argued, the city is a complex medium of human communication, a tangle of dialogic relations in which individuals and institutions figure their identities and situated figure experiences against a historical-cultural background in which they find meaning. The urban renewal movement inspired the dislocation and fragmentation of a number of human communities that primarily composed of impoverished ethnic and racial minorities, all in the name of managing a crisis known as “urban blight.” While the planning and policy proposals for urban renewal rid cities of their blighted areas, these forms of direct, top-down intervention managed to produce areas that were lifeless and devoid of human texture (R. Sennett 1992b, 1994). In many cases, the areas where urban renewal projects were developed ended up being worse off, lacking communities necessary for cultivating trust among public actors dwelling together within the urban ecology of communication constituted by the city itself.

While the term ‘crisis’ was used to describe urban blight during earlier decades of the Twentieth century, it did not find its way into the official planning and policy literature until some-time around the 1970’s and 1980s, just as many urban renewal projects were being demolished by the governments who had commissioned them (C. Klemek 2011). The term ‘crisis’ did however retain its relation to questions of social and economic disruption, changes in the relations cultivated among publics and the circumstances in which they engaged one another. For many cities the question of crisis concerned issues of public health and safety in areas that had been historically depressed or financially precarious. Abstract considerations of property, rental, and land-use regulations left much of the planning and policy literature unable to understand cities as anything more than the geo-political regions occupied by economic aggregates of rational actors attempting to maximize their efficient utility. That is, cities were often reduced to objects that could be understood within the areas of political and economic
Reducing cities and their problems to a series of political and economic challenges not only prevented city leaders from being able to grasp the broader communicative implications of planning and policy aimed at managing urban manifestations of crisis, but also forced them address everyday challenges of urban life in overly technical ways. Such understandings are captured in a 1993 volume edited by Henry G. Cisneros entitled *Interwoven Destinies: Cities and the Nation*, in which the urban ecologies of communication constituted by cities are understood purely in terms of their ability to produce and concentrate financial capital, regulating its flow into and out of the United States. While many of the essays within this volume discussed how major cities have changed since 1960, the function of these cities within the national economy, and their strategic role in fiscal strategy, the essays also include considerations of how changes in the urban landscape perpetuate distress in urban neighborhoods, the strain these changes put on cities and their immediate dependencies, and the significance of community development within cities themselves. In the chapter titled, “Stopping the Hemorrhaging” (p. 125), emergency medical physician and clinical instructor Kneeland Youngblood directed our attention to how many human problems are brought to a crisis point in urban contexts, arguing that, “[w]hile often these problems are characterized as “health care” or “urban” issues, in fact they are broader social, economic, and educational issues that confront our entire society” (p.126). Although Youngblood’s chapter in *Interwoven Destinies* attempted to “put a human face on the statistics we often see and hear in the news” (p. 126), it is questionable as to how much this could be done by only viewing these challenges from the general understandings of leaders in urban planning, policy, development, and design.
The analyses of problems confronting urban populations found in *Interwoven Destinies* would, likewise, provide descriptive interpretations for a number of interventions undertaken by the Metropolitan Assembly. Organized by Burton A. Weisbrod and James C. Worthy (1997), the Assembly attempted to bridge the gaps between theory and practice by linking scholarly research to actionable forms of urban development and economic intervention. The challenge, however, was that the Assembly framed cities and their problems merely in terms of fiscal considerations, relying primarily upon research from experts in political and economic science that often overlooked, covered up, or outright denied the realities of risk and crisis experienced by publics within the urban ecologies of communication that constituted cities. Within this limited horizon of attention, the Assembly provided strategies for direct intervention that relied upon increased use of federal funding, but did not necessarily provide any means for distributing this funding in ways that reflected the situated concerns of individual and institutional actors who called the city home.

Rather than acknowledging the realities of crisis within the historical-cultural contexts of urban life, the Assembly provided abstract solutions based on a limited understanding of cities and their problems. The arguments in *Interwoven Destinies* provided the philosophical foundation for yet another edited volume in 1997 entitled, *The Urban Crisis: Linking Research to Action*, published by the Northwestern University Press in which urban manifestations of risk and crisis were primarily defined in terms of financial concerns. As such, many of the chapters found in *The Urban Crisis* advocated for overly-simplistic, top-down forms of economic development that demanded increased federal funding for cities across the nation, but failed to provide frameworks for distributing this funding in ways that reflected the complexity of urban crises as experiences situated within the historical-cultural context of dialogic relations among
public actors in cities. As such, these proposals often did little more than reinforce the status quo without questioning the fundamental assumptions embedded within urban environments that brought the crises about.

**Confronting the Complexity of Crises in Urban Contexts**

As Jacobs (1961/1992a) argued, urban planning and policy that fail to be of requisite complexity for the ecologies of communication constituted by cities often do more harm than good, turning money into a destructive, rather than constructive force of change. The Metropolitan Assembly, in this way, produced expert opinions about cities and their problems without accounting for how crises became meaningfully situated within the everyday lives of those dwelling within cities as urban ecologies of communication. Kuniko Fujita’s (2013) edited volume, *Cities and Crisis: New Critical Urban Theory*, drives this point home, arguing that: “While history and theory tell that common patterns in the nature of a crisis emerge across nations and regions as well as very divergent institutional settings, urban crisis experience differs from city to city as does from nation to nation . . .” (p. 3, emphasis added). Josef Konvits (2016), likewise, argued in *Cities and Crisis* that “[e]xplanations which focus on finance and regulation are not enough to satisfy the public’s need to understand” (p. ix, original emphasis). Indeed, the tendency to reduce urban manifestations of risk and crisis to discussion of fiscal planning and policy in cities overlooks how crises are contextually situated as communicative phenomena in the tangle of dialogic relations cultivated among public actors dwelling in cities, complicating urban risk and crisis management as a practice.

This limited horizon for understanding prevents city leaders from approaching crises as the wider manifestations of disastrous events and limits the degree to which they can recognize innovative forms of response that incorporate a public sense of what matters in moments of
uncertainty. Without frameworks for confronting the complexity of crises made manifest within urban contexts, city governments will always struggle to manage them in ways that reflect the organized complexity of dialogic relations cultivated among public actors dwelling together within cities. The inadequacy of financially oriented concerns in urban planning and policy is most evident in descriptive accounts of disaster-level events that have occurred in urban contexts over the past thirty years. In 1994, Uriel Rosenthal and colleagues published a book length study of the Amsterdam’s response to the Bijlmer air disaster entitled, *Complexity in Urban Crisis Management*. According to Rosenthal et al. the Bijlmer Air disaster, a technical failure that could neither be predicted nor controlled by city leaders, not only strained Amsterdam’s systems of public government and disaster response, but also caused increased levels of stress among the individual and institutional actors dwelling within the city, triggering breakdowns in networks of trust that bound publics together and mediated communication among them within the city. As Rosenthal et al. argued, the complex and highly concentrated nature of urban environments, like Amsterdam, present conditions necessary for making any number of human crises manifest when disaster-level events occur, threatening the viability of a city’s physical infrastructure and the relations cultivated among publics dwelling within them.

The arguments of Rosenthal et al. are supported by scholars in organizational crisis management, as well. Charles Perrow (1999, 2011) has argued that the frequency and impact of disasters—be they natural, technical, financial, or social in origin—often increased with the complexity of a given system and the concentration of its parts, causing cascading failures in which one problem triggered another until the system collapsed under its own weight. Paul Wieck (1985), likewise, understood systemic failures in more social and political ways, approaching them as cosmology episodes in which the foundations of shared understanding or
institutional legitimacy were brought into question, causing public actors to question taken for
granted assumptions about who they were, what they knew, and what truly mattered to them.
Such perspectives have relevance for how crises manifest and become meaningful within urban
contexts of public life, foregrounding how these contexts provide publics with ground for
figuring the meaning crises have in their everyday lives.

It is unsurprising, then, that recent studies in urban planning and policy have focused on
addressing questions of urban risk and crisis management in recent years. Ashley Dawson’s
(2017) work on *Extreme Cities: The Promise and Peril of Urban Life in the Age of Climate
Change*, is exemplary of such concerns. Dawson’s work argues that “[c]ities . . . are at the
foreground of the coming climate chaos” (p. 5) and that “so-called natural disasters are actually the
product of all-to-tangible social inequalities” (p. 10). While Dawson’s is correct in understanding
how cities magnify the challenges natural disasters create the solutions to this problem proposed
in *Extreme Cities* do little more than perpetuate the idea that cities can plan their way out of
crieses without collaboratively engaging publics in the contexts where crises are experienced.
That is, Dawson’s work reinforces top-down solutions for redeveloping urban environments in
ways that may be more resistant to threats of natural disaster, but nevertheless reduce the
complexity of the cities as urban ecologies of communication in which individual and
institutional actors cultivate meaningful relationships and discover opportunities for responding
to crises in ways that eschew the conventions of planning and policy.

Richard Florida’s (2017) work in *The New Urban Crisis* continues this trend, arguing that
the challenges of urban life are primarily economic and must be addressed within the limited
horizon of economic and political science. While it cannot be denied that economic and financial
concerns related to employment, transportation, and housing are of great significance for the
crises made manifest within urban contexts, these crises cannot be reduced these to the singular
dimension economic and financial causes. Such interpretations of urban risk and crisis would
only produce solutions that address commercial concerns at the expense of communicative
relations cultivated among public actors in cities, creating rigid and fragile systems incapable of
accounting for the complexity of cities and their crises.

Research in the sociological, physiological, and psychological dimensions of urban risk
and crisis management, however, are helpful in this regard. Such perspectives demonstrate how
assumptions embedded within physical infrastructure of cities become habituated in the psycho-
social relations of urban actors, conditioning and constraining the communicative relations
cultivated among public actors dwelling therein. Eric Klinenberg’s (2002) social autopsy of the
1995 Chicago heatwave disaster in which 739 residents—many of them from poorer and more
ethnically diverse areas of the city—perished between July 14th and July 20th, 1995. Excessive
use of air conditioners caused power grids and electronic equipment to fail, and many city
residents were left alone to die of heatstroke or other heat related complications alone.
Klinenberg’s analysis noted that “[t]he 1995 heat wave was a social drama that played out and
made visible a series of conditions that are always present but difficult to perceive” (p. 11). The
urban conditions described by Klinenberg were, in this sense, the physical manifestations of
planning and policy proposals that failed to account for how publics would respond to the events
of the heatwave and, as such, provided the necessary and sufficient conditions for manifesting
crises within the everyday relations cultivated among public actors dwelling together in the city.

In reflecting upon how the disaster occurred and manifested as experiences of crisis in
public life, Klinenberg (2002) states that “[w]e have collectively created the conditions that made
it possible for so many Chicagoans to die in the summer of 1995, as well as the conditions that
make these deaths so easy to overlook” (p. 11). Klinenberg’s closing point is significant because it demonstrates how the 1995 Chicago heatwave disaster did not begin or end after the days of its occurrence, but how the necessary conditions for the disaster existed for decades and manifested as crises in the weeks, months, and years that followed. Many such conditions were perpetuated by planning and policy that were based upon commercial interests without concern for how sociopolitical networks were formed among public actors engaging one another in the city.

The physical infrastructure of the city of Chicago, in this way, failed to provide the sufficient conditions for cultivating what Klinenberg would later describe as “social infrastructure” (p. 5). In his 2018 book entitled, *Palaces for the People*, Klinenberg’s argues that urban infrastructures are not merely physical, political, or economic but, as Jacobs (2016) thought, fundamentally ethical in nature, providing a ground or center for orienting public responses to crises and their interactions with one another. The work of Mindy Thompson Fullilove (2004, 2013), likewise, demonstrated urban development often undermined the historical-cultural foundations of collective remembrance necessary for sustaining relationships among public actors dwelling within the very communities they were intended to protect. Without fertile ground for cultivating relations with one another, publics lack necessary means for confronting the complexity of cities as urban ecologies of communication together, casting them adrift and leaving them to weather the storms and stresses of crises made manifest within cities before, during, and after disasters actually strike.

While Fullilove’s work demonstrates the how urban planning and policy have implications for the cognitive, emotional, and mental health of those dwelling within cities, the work of epidemiologists such as Kevin Fitzpatrick and Mark LaGory (2000) provide a rationale for understandings cities as ecologies of risk in which public health is primarily at stake. In this
sense, crises are recognized as embodied phenomena of health before they are made manifest in public experience and often emerge as do not occur because of disasters, but are brought forth by the occurrence of a disaster. That is, such crises are always already potentials extant within the physical, economic, and social infrastructures of a city, but are actualized by the extreme conditions of disaster-level events. Such manifestations of risk and crisis are difficult for city governments to understand, let alone manage, and often grow out of control because planning and policy have either neglected to account for or actively destroyed the centers of public life that once mediated communicative relations among public actors dwelling together in the city. Both planning and policy responses to crises have failed to account for the communicative implications of their interventions in urban experience, producing crisis responses that ignore public experiences of crisis at best, and outright deny the realities of them at worst. Without a fuller grasp of risk and crisis as communicative phenomena that emerge within the relations cultivated among publics dwelling in cities, leaders in planning and policy will be unable to engage in adequate forms of risk and crisis management.

The next section re-frames risk and crisis management in cities as a communicative practice of participating in the everyday lives of public actors dwelling within cities and facilitating situated responses to them. In this sense, cities and the crises that emerge therein are foregrounded as communicative phenomena; manifestations of the complex tangle of dialogic relations cultivated among public actors as they engage one another in negotiating what crises mean and how they can best respond to them. As such, it presents a review of literature in risk and crisis management, before situating these understandings within the interdisciplinary foundations of urban communication and the participatory methods used by scholars therein. Although participatory and communicative methodologies of urban planning and policy exist
within the current literature and have become more popular in recent years (R. Weber & R. Crane, 2015; K. Mossberger, S. E. Clarke, P. John 2012; N. Brooks, K. Donaghy, G-J. Knaap 2012), few city leaders have seen fit to incorporate insights from this literature practices of urban risk and crisis management.

This is likely because participatory methodologies decenter the institutional authority of city governments, putting the tools of urban planning and policy in public hands (C. T. Maier 2021). Facilitating such a transition is challenging for the established mechanisms of urban governance, particularly those predicated upon efficient means of statistical prediction and hierarchies of control often reduce opportunities for human error alongside human participation. Reframing crises as participatory moments of communicative interaction in which individuals and institutions are given the chance to engage one another in collaboratively managing the uncertainties of urban life, however, creates opportunities for re-forging networks of trust and mutual understanding that have always been essential to the healthy functioning of cities as urban ecologies of communication.

**Re-framing Urban Crisis Management: A Communication Approach**

While it could be argued that experiences of risk and crisis are part of the human condition, studies of risk and crisis management as a professional practice did not emerge until the mid-1980s (M. J. Palenchar 2010; J. Tansey & S. Rayner 2010; W. T. Coombs 2010). At that time, discussions of risk and crisis were primarily isolated to scholars in corporate and organizational management who locating their intellectual foundations in the works of scholars in public relations and strategic communication such as James Dewey (1954), Edward Bernays (1961), and Walter Lippmann (1993). These scholars sought new ways of managing public opinion and protecting institutional legitimacy corporate-organizational actors in a rapidly
expanding global marketplace of industrial production and commerce. Such scholarship was essential the management of political campaigns in local and national government, particularly where it concerned questions of personal image, the press, and institutional legitimacy; producing theoretical models that defined crisis communication in terms of corporate apologia (G. N. Dionisopolous & S. L. Vibbert 1988; K. M. Hearit 1995, 2001, 2006), focusing events (D. A. Fishman 1999), and image repair theory (W. L. Benoit 1995, 2005; W. L. Benoit & S. Brinson 1994; W. L. Benowit & A. Czerwinski 19997; W. L. Benoit & A. Pang 2008). As such, it is important that this project reframe urban manifestations of risk and crisis as communicative phenomena within the historical-cultural contexts of cities.

Many of these models were influenced by Steven Fink’s (1986, 2013) managerial approach to organizational crisis, one of the first to acknowledge the communicative dimensions of crisis. Fink’s managerial approach not only brought discussions of risk and crisis management to the foreground of corporate and organizational life, but mirrored the strategic orientations toward public relations established by earlier practitioners in politics. Integrating discussions of public image, issues management, media relations, Fink’s managerial approach to crisis allowed for simple, direct, and efficient responses to crisis that allowed leaders in a variety of contexts to guide public perceptions and account for their expectations. It was in this sense that Steven Fink (1986) defined a crisis as “[a]n unstable time or state of affairs in which decisive change is impending—either one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome or one with the distinct possibility of a highly desirable and extremely positive outcome” (p. 15, emphasis original). In Fink’s sense, the experience of a risk or crisis is not necessarily understood as a harmful or threatening experience, but a test or crucible; a turning point in which taken for granted understandings of what we are and may become, what is known and unknown, and what
truly matters are clarified and offer any number of potential futures for publics to pursue. While risk and crisis management as a field is often concerned with how organizations and corporations manage public perceptions of risk and crisis phenomena, Fink’s (1986) definition of crisis provided the foundation for understanding risk and crisis management in ways that are strategically relevant for considerations found within the urban planning and policy literature. Understanding crisis as having potentially positive outcomes positions city leaders in a place to win favor by properly managing crises themselves.

**Corporate-Organizational Models of Risk and Crisis Management**

Fink’s (1986) definitions of crisis and crisis management provided a foundation for common understandings of risk and crisis within the literature of public relations and strategic communication. Within this literature, risk and crisis management were usually predicated on predicting the likelihood of certain events (*risk management*), controlling how these harmful events develop and the outcomes they will have (*crisis management*), surveying public perceptions of these events as represented in the media and actively controlling how they are defined (*crisis communication*). The literature of public relations and strategic communication provides methods for managing public understandings of risk and crisis phenomena, whether they emerge in urban contexts or not, reinforcing a technocratic orientation toward urban planning and policy that presupposes a rational responses to these phenomena and undermines the efficacy of relations cultivated among public actors caught within them, ultimately limiting what public forms of responses are considered appropriate in times of crisis. It must be acknowledged, however, that Fink gives considerably less attention to the communicative dimensions of crisis than more recent scholars; often reducing communication to a sender-receiver model in which communication is a linear process of clearly and efficiently transmitting
information between two parties (C. E. Shannon & W. Weaver 1949/1998; N. Wiener 1948/1961, 1989). In fact, Fink’s (2013) follow-up work entitled *Crisis Communications: The Definitive Guide to Managing the Message* argues that “crisis management is not synonymous with crisis communications, and vice versa” (p. 7, emphasis orig.). While a crisis, in Fink’s (2013) sense, “is a fluid and dynamic state of affairs containing equal parts danger and opportunity” (p.7) and crisis management “deals with the *reality* of crisis . . . the actual management of a precarious situation that is rapidly unfolding” (p. 8), Fink argues that crisis communication is little more than “managing the perception of that same reality” (p. 8, emphasis original). In this sense, Fink understands crisis communication as the practice of *shaping* how publics both understand and respond to experiences of crises made manifest in their relations with others is considered secondary to the particular events of the crisis.

While this perspective may be valuable it denies the reality that crises only become meaningful within the relations cultivated among mutually implicated communicative actors. Crises, much like cities, are, in this sense, essentially communicative phenomena and crisis communication is much more than merely managing the perceptions of those realities. Fink’s distinction between crisis management and crisis communication, however, is complicated by the ways in which crises manifest and become meaningful for public actors dwelling together within the historical-cultural contexts of cities and the ecologies of communication they constitute. The crises made manifest within the complex tangle of dialogic relations constituted by and constitutive of cities often go beyond the simplistic models of linear, sequential, and singular causes. Urban manifestations of risk and crisis do not emerge in any uniform or regular way, often being caused by multiple, interrelated circumstances that began at different times and in different locations. As historical-cultural contexts, cities present the necessary conditions for
making crises manifest in human experience because cities are essentially human and therefore exhibit all of the promise and peril of human thought and action in public relations. Because cities are constituted by and constitutive of the communicative practices that bind them together, Fink’s definition of “managing perceptions” goes far beyond controlling the public conversations related to crises. Managing perception is, in this sense, managing reality and encapsulates planning and policy as interventions in the urban ecologies of communication that define crises as crises, in public experience.

Although Fink’s work set the tone for discussions of risk and crisis management in public and professional contexts, the complexity of crises emerging in the Twenty-first century have motivated scholars to question Fink’s reduction of the communicative dimensions of crisis. Christine M. Pearson and Judith A. Clair’s (1998) multidisciplinary review of literature in organizational crisis management summarize the influence of Fink’s understanding of risk and crisis management as a practice of predicting and controlling the emergence of harmful events in professional contexts. In reviewing the literature in corporate and organizational management, Pearson and Clair found that crises are often discussed as (1) unlikely and surprising events that (2) cause confusion and (3) pose significant threats for organizational member who must (4) act quickly and decisively find a solution in the literature of business and organizational management. In this sense crises become problems that threaten individual and institutional livelihoods and demand quick and efficient responses that are narrowly tailored for the task.

Synthesizing arguments found in the organizational crisis management literature, Pearson and Clair note that a crisis is often defined in ways similar to Fink’s, as “a low-probability, high-impact event that threatens the viability of the organization and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made
swiftly,” (p. 60). Pearson and Clair demonstrate how this definition has led scholars in studies of corporate and organizational management to focus on predicting, preparing for, and controlling perceptions of crises rather than confronting crises as communicative phenomena, themselves. Such models for crisis management influenced how city governments utilize planning and policy as tools for risk and crisis management in cities, shaping not only the reality of such phenomena occurring, but how such phenomena become meaningful in public life.

Alternatively, Pearson and Clair understand organizational crises not as narrow threats, but multidimensional situations. By reframing crises communicative phenomena, Pearson and Clair provide a more constructive way of understanding crises that reflects the complexities and contradictions of crises in urban contexts:

“An organizational crisis is a low-probability, high-impact situation that is perceived by critical stakeholders to threaten the viability of the organization and that is subjectively experienced by these individuals as personally and socially threatening. Ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution of the organizational crisis will lead to disillusionment or loss of psychic and shared meaning, as well as to the shattering of commonly held beliefs and values and individuals' basic assumptions. During the crisis, decision making is pressed by perceived time constraints and colored by cognitive limitations” (p. 66, emphasis added).

Understanding crises as situations, rather than threats foregrounds a particular spatial-temporal context of crises in human experience, literally positioning individuals and institutions as thoughtful public actors engaging one another as situated in a crisis. This definition is significant because it eschews conventionally narrow understandings of crises as threats, hazards, or
emergencies which often connote only negative outcomes and experiences. For Pearson and Clair crises are communicative phenomena; both-and scenarios in which all public actors communicatively engage one another in figuring crises as meaningful against the background of particular historical-cultural context.

Crises, as such, not only redefine public relations within a given time and place, they create moments of uncertainty in which multiple paths for thought and action are revealed, presenting both the peril and promise of human action within limited understandings of ourselves and a larger world of others. To be uncertain is to not know what to think or how to act. Such feelings share much with the experiences of ambivalence and ambiguity that are often used to describe crises. Ambivalence denotes a certain torn-ness between two or more choices, where ambiguity indicates being understood in more than one way. Because crises create conditions of uncertainty, ambivalence, and ambiguity, they also open human experiences to the revelatory potentials of change, enabling publics to think and act otherwise than convention. In crisis, publics are charged with the task of re-evaluating taken for granted meanings, testing relationships with one another, and crafting new ways of understanding their place in a world of others different from themselves. Such are the revelatory potentials of crisis, in which publics come to recognize what matters in communicative relation with one another.

While the revelatory potential of crisis has been given some consideration in the risk and crisis communication literature, it is rarely discussed in studies of corporate-organizational management studies more generally and, therefore, has had little impact on studies of risk and crisis management in cities (T. L. Sellnow & R. R. Ulmer 2004; R. R. Ulmer, T. L. Sellnow, & M. W. Seeger 2007; R. R. Ulmer, T. L. Sellnow, & M. W. Seeger 2010; R. R. Ulmer, T. L. Sellnow, & M. W. Seeger 2015). Pearson and Clair’s re-definition of crisis and crisis
management bring forth questions of how crises both generate and are generated by experiences of uncertainty, ambivalence, and ambiguity. As such, crises provide a necessary condition for how individuals and institutions learn to think and act otherwise than convention within the ever-changing contexts of human communication. Crises force publics to question the ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions that orient communicative actors in their everyday engagements with one another (R. L. Heath 2004; Sellnow & Seeger 2013). In this way, the experience of crises could be understood as an essential part of cultivating ethical orientations and identities in situated experiences within ecologies of communication cultivated among public actors and the larger world of others in which they dwell.

Only by recognizing the ethical significance of crises in the communicative engagements that occur among diverse stakeholders can such phenomena be recognized as emerging in urban spaces where they have been overlooked, denied, and forgotten. Such considerations are consistent with Pearson and Clair’s re-definition of crisis management, as well:

“Effective crisis management involves minimizing potential risk before a triggering event. In response to a triggering event, effective crisis management involves improvising and interacting by key stakeholders so that individual and collective sense making, shared meaning, and roles are reconstructed. Following a triggering event, effective crisis management entails individual and organizational readjustment of basic assumptions, as well as behavioral and emotional responses aimed at recovery and readjustment,” (p. 66, emphasis added).

Minimizing risk, for Pearson and Clair, requires building relationships of existential trust among with others before, during, and after crises. Such activities include recurring communicative engagements that assure individuals and institutions their relationships are stable. These
activities also include public rituals, festivities, celebrations, and memorial events that literally situate individuals and institutions in a value-laden context.

Triggering events, in this sense, are exemplified by moments (be they minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, or years) in which individuals and institutions sense uncertainty, ambivalence, and ambiguity and must intuit (improvise) responses that protect and promote what matters most for them, namely the relationships with those who they rely on. Established relationships, contextual needs, and collective memories, as such, help stakeholders to literally come to their senses in moments of crisis, they provide stability in uncertain times. Coming to one’s senses, as such, means making and re-making one’s sense of a changing situation, or being in a state of constant learning and doubt in which what really matters for ourselves and those we love is actively and thoughtfully recognized through pragmatic forms of judgment. In doing so, meanings are reinterpreted, roles are redefined, and relationships with others are re-forged stronger than before or at least reforged differently.

**Crises as Communicative Phenomena**

Much like in Shakespeare’s (1936) *The Tempest*, the storms and stresses of crises not only cause confusion, but reveal what has long been concealed, ignored, denied within the communicative contexts of human experience. That is crises bring forth what has been taken for granted in human experience and force us confront the present realities of past actions. In planning and policy this demands recognizing cities as complex historical-cultural contexts of collective thought and action rather than static spaces of capital accumulation and circulation. Matters of significance are revealed to public actors in times of crisis (Sellnow & Seeger 2013; Seeger & Sellnow 2016; Arnett, Deluliis, & Corr 2017). Revelatory understandings of crisis management not only emphasize how publics respond before, during, and after a crisis is
triggered, but orient their attention toward managing crises in everyday experiences. Such considerations are important for those leading communities through urban manifestations of risk and crisis because the complexities and contradictions of communicative relationships that constitute cities make it difficult to predict or control how such phenomena will emerge. Effective crisis management in urban contexts must work within these conditions to facilitate public understandings of what matters and learning from those individuals and institutions who have the greatest stake in how governments respond.

It is surprising, then that so few studies in urban planning and policy have discussed participatory methods of risk and crisis management in ways that highlight their communicative dimensions. Such oversights could easily result from a misreading, or partial reading, of the literature in risk and crisis management. Studies in urban economics, planning, and politics have often defined risk and crisis in ways that reflect understandings found in the corporate-organizational management literature critiqued by Pearson and Clair (1998). In this way, planning and policy responses often address risks and crises without actually accounting for what they are or how they are understood by individual and institutional actors in within the historical-cultural contexts of communicative practice. One crucial issue with incorporating management literature into urban planning and policy is that it often oversimplifies understandings of risk and crisis. By privileging direct, simplistic, and hyper-efficient forms of response, city governments often presume understandings where none exist, solve problems in ways that contradict public values, and impose ways of response upon communities that fail to be of requisite complexity for the crises made manifest therein. In this sense, planning and policy make poor tools for urban risk and crisis management because they overlook, eschew, or outright deny the implications they have for cities as urban ecologies of communication.
Studies in crisis communication, however, have accounted for the complexity of crises by highlighting the etymological roots of the term in the Greek *krisis*. For the ancient Greeks, *krisis* was indicative of a turning point in a disease, or moment in which one’s fate made uncertain, resulting in death or life, calling them to think and act in ways that were otherwise than convention (R. L. Heath & H. D. O’Hair 2010). The elaboration of crises as *krisis*, a both-and scenario in which individuals and institutions come face to face with the ethical demands of their circumstances and must decide best course of action from a myriad of potential paths, is consistent with rhetorical and philosophical treatments of uncertainty found in the work of classical scholars in communication as well (Aristotle 1984a, 1984b, 2009, 2018; Isocrates 2000; Millar & Heath 2004; Palenchar 2010; Tancey & Rayner 2010). Questions of how to best manage risk and crisis are, in this sense, fundamentally questions of how to best reckon with the uncertainties, ambivalences, and ambiguities of human thought and action and is only realized in communication with others (S. A. Groom & J. H. Fritz 2012). As such, crisis communication is not merely an extension of crisis management, but vice-versa. Communicating about crises is a means of coming to understand what they mean in context and the significance they have for everyday practices of a life lived with others. This, alone, decenters practices of risk and crisis management and resituates it as a collaborative activity in which publics engage one another in collectively determining how they should response within the limits of local experience.

While the classical teachers of rhetoric and philosophy demonstrated competing views on the subject of *krisis*, all of them recognized issues of uncertainty, ambiguity, and ambivalence as central for meaningfully participating in human life and culture. Such influences can be found in the risk and crisis communication literature more generally and have retained their significance for the study of risk and crisis communication in urban contexts (Millar & Heath 2004; R. S.
By privileging considerations found in managerial sciences, city leaders have approached risk and crisis as one-dimensional threats to the institutional legitimacy of urban governments, the public image of city leaders, and the procedural mechanisms of urban development, resisting the changes demanded by the publics whom they serve. Narrowly defining risks and crises as threats, hazards, and emergencies limits how urban governments can work with their publics to interpret and respond to these situations, resulting in strategies in which city leaders tell publics what, how, and when to think and act in times of crisis when city leaders should truly be listening and attending to how these crises are experienced in public life. Narrowly defining risks and crises, in this way, prevents urban governments from working creatively and collaboratively with stakeholders to craft responses of requisite complexity for urban ecologies of communication in which risk and crisis phenomena emerge and limits responses to those deemed appropriate by city leaders.

Much like Fink, city governments often adopt sender receiver models of risk and crisis communication, in which a speaker has direct access to a listener, can perfectly communicate information with clarity and precision, and the speaker/listener relationship, itself, remains static and unchanging (Shannon & Weaver 1998). Communication, in this model, is primarily about predicting and controlling how a message is understood by the singular individual who receives it, directing their attention and enforcing limited means for the message to be understood (Wiener 1961, 1989). In this sense, the sender-receiver model provided an ‘ideal’ description of communication as a process, but failed to account for the complex realities of communication as a situated form of human practice. The sender-receiver model’s persistence as a means of making urban risk and crisis management more efficient has, therefore, produced planning and policy strategies that are woefully inadequate for managing the complexities of risk and crisis in
any meaningful way. The rigidity of such technical systems for urban governance are reflected in movements advocating for smart, green, resilient, and restorative city systems that ultimately perpetuate hierarchical forms of city management and advocated for urban interventions that do little to include publics in the process of decisions making.

Understanding risk and crisis as both-and scenarios allows individual and institutional actors to engage one another in discerning multiple possible responses and choosing those that will most adequately meet the contextual demands of risk and crisis experience. As I. I. Mitroff, M. C. Alpaslan, and S. E. Green (2004) have argued, the corporate-organizational management scholarship has developed frameworks that fail to meet public demands for contextually situated forms of crisis experience in public contexts. The failures of corporate-organizational approaches to risk and crisis management are reiterated in Pat Gehrke’s (2012) considerations of the defensive orientations such literature contains; reflecting the tendency for cities to build ‘defensible spaces’ in order to manage crises and public relations as a means of deflecting critiques from urban residents. Communication approaches in this way allow for more creative and dynamic forms of risk and crisis management that cultivate relationships among public actors, restore institutional legitimacy, and renew public understandings of what really matters in times of uncertainty (M. W. Seeger & D. G. Padgett 2010; C. M. Pearson & S. A. Sommer 2011). In this sense, communication and rhetorical studies open up questions of uncertainty underlying urban risk and crisis management in ways eschew convention, allowing for the re-evaluation of planning and policy priorities from a stakeholder perspective.

The significance of communication approaches for urban risk and crisis management is easily recognized in the Center for Disease Control’s 2014 and 2018 publications of the *Crisis and Emergency Communication guides* (or CERC). While urban governments have implemented
the CERC guides’ strategies for risk and crisis communication, few have adapted these strategies for the specific conditions of complexity and contradiction that characterize how risk and crisis manifest within urban ecologies of communication constituted by cities (Jacobs 1961/1992a; R. Venturi 1977). In this sense, practitioners of urban risk and crisis management frequently overlook how methods of risk and crisis communication have changed over time and with emerging circumstances (Palenchar 2010; W. T. Coombs 2004, 2010, 2012, 2014). Methods of accepted wisdom, focusing events, corporate apologia, and public image repair often associated with managerial techniques have been recognized by many in communication and rhetorical studies as insufficient for the complexities of risk and crisis phenomena in this historical moment (D. Gilpin & P. J. Murphy 2008, 2010; P. Murphy 2000; Ulmer, Seeger, Sellnow 2007, 2010, 2015; W. T. Coombs 2004, 2010, 2012; F. Frandsen & W. Johansen 2010a, 2010b). Such techniques of “governing by public relations” (Klinenberg 2002, pp. 165-167), however, often remain central for strategically managing public perceptions of risk and crisis in urban contexts resulting in planning and policy proposals that suppress the meaningful experience of crises as situated within the communicative contexts of relations cultivated among public actors. Consequently, many urban governments privilege managerial techniques and information technologies that allow for more efficient means of telling publics how to react, whether than providing contexts for them to act.

Risk and crisis communication scholars, however, have tended to locate their origins in areas of the liberal arts and humanities, particularly those concerned with discussions of rhetoric, phenomenology, hermeneutics, political economy, sociology, history, cultural studies, and ethics (Millar & Heath 2004; Tansey & Rayner 2010; L. Aldoory 2010; Scarry 2011; Groom & Fritz 2012; Littlefield & Sellnow 2015; Arnett, Deluliiis, & Corr 2017). As these works suggest, the
communicative dimensions of risk and crisis have only become more apparent as the complexity and concentration of technical, scientific, and economic systems have increased (Perrow 1999, 2011). Alternative considerations of public risk and crisis communication (particularly in European Union) have integrated the sociological and anthropological understandings interpretations of risk and crisis as experiences of uncertainty situated within specific historical-cultural contexts of disaster (U. Beck 1992, 2000; U. Beck & E. Beck-Gernsheim 2001; M. Douglas & A. Wildavsky 1983; M. Douglas 1984, 1992). These broader considerations of risk and crisis contrast the managerial orientations frequently found in the planning and policy literature and provide theoretical ground for understanding how risks and crises become meaningful within the tangle of dialogic relations constituted by and constitutive of urban ecologies of communication.

In this sense, communication and rhetorical studies shift practical questions of predicting and controlling for crises to more fundamental questions of an ontological, epistemological, and axiological nature. In this sense, crises are not merely threats to proper operations or institutional legitimacy, but significant manifestations of taken for granted assumptions embedded within communicative contexts of everyday life (Sellnow & Seeger 2013; C. T. Maier & J. R. Crist 2017). Such questions orient practitioners of urban risk and crisis management away from prescriptive models for telling publics when, how, and why to respond and toward the questions inherent to an existential and hermeneutic phenomenology of urban risk and crisis. Discussing risk and crisis as communicative phenomena emergent within the complex and contradictory relations cultivated among publics dwelling together within urban contexts reorients leaders in planning and policy toward consideration of the deeper significance crises possess as signs of the times (G. Lakoff & M. Johnson 1980; F. E. Millar & D. B. Beck 2004; Seeger & Sellnow, 2016).
Metaphorical understandings of crisis open urban risk and crisis management to understanding urban life from multiple perspectives, engaging multiple voices while attending to how they fit within a larger communicative whole. Situated experiences of risk and crisis, in this sense, suggest how cities become communicatively constituted as value-laden contexts of public life that provide a historical-cultural background for meaningfully understanding crises as *krisis*. It is in this sense, then, that many crisis communication scholars have called for decentering the practice of crisis management and reframing it around public and participatory forms of collaborative response.

Meaningful experiences of risk and crisis, however, become increasingly difficult to parse as the human world grows more complex and concentrated. These concerns are foregrounded in Charles Perrow’s (1999, 2011) considerations of how risk and crisis emerge within highly complex and concentrated organizational systems. As Perrow states, when the complexity of an organizational system (be it ecological, technological, scientific, economic, or social) increases, so too does the frequency with which that system will experience accidents. The more highly determined the relationships between the parts are, the greater the risk that something will go wrong. Likewise, Perrow demonstrates a similar relationship between the concentration of parts within a system and the impact any one accident may have within it. In this sense, the more complex a system is, the more likely it will be to produce risk and crisis phenomena; the more concentrated the parts of that system are, the more severe the incidents of a risk and crisis. The complexity and concentration of human relationships that make urban experiences so rich and engaging, in this sense, necessarily produce encounters with risk and crisis phenomena. Further, urban risk and crisis phenomena are, therefore, often of equal if not greater complexity than the environments in which they emerge, extending the impacts of urban
risk and crisis phenomena to affect stakeholders beyond the city limits and even in other cities. As such, urban risk and crisis phenomena present city leaders with what Horst J. Rittel and Melvin W. Webber (1973) described as “wicked” problems, wide-ranging challenges that offer no simple solution, are easily misunderstood, and eschew conventional approaches from urban planning and policy. Urban manifestations of risk and crisis, in this sense, call city governments to account for the inherent biases of urban planning and policy, as well as the value-laden contexts of communicative experience the participate in making a reality.

Contrary to managerial approaches predicated upon techniques of statistical prediction and top-down methods of control, studies in urban communication provide hermeneutic frameworks for approaching cities and their crises as complex media in which meaningful cultural understandings inform the relations cultivated among public actors and provide stable ground for responding to questions of uncertainty. Approaching cities and their problems as dynamic and interdependent phenomena of communication, research in urban communication allow city leaders to enter into and actively manage crises in collaboration with the publics whom they serve. The next section provides a review of the literature in urban communication, before situating discussions of urban risk and crisis management within them. In doing so, three foundational concepts, or guiding metaphors, in urban communication are shown as significant for improving how city governments engage publics in times of crisis. The first of these was introduced by Lewis Mumford, founder of what was described as the study of human ecologies, or the symbolic-material contexts proper to human flourishing and culture. The second was found in the works of Jane Jacobs where public participation in urban planning and policy are given consideration and cities are framed as problems in organized complexity that can only be understood by actively participating in them. The last concept—the dialogic relation between the
city-as-built and the city-as-lived—is derived from the works of Richard Sennett, which
demonstrate the influence of both Mumford and Jacobs and provide a theoretical foundation for
what this dissertation describes as a dialogic urbanism, an approach to urban planning and policy
that accepts the communicative constitution of cities as complex tangles of relations cultivated
among individual and institutional actors in which crises become meaningfully situated and are
collaboratively managed.

The Communicative Constitution of Cities and their Crises

Approaching cities as urban ecologies of communication in which risk and crisis are
made manifest requires city governments to accept the reality that cities and their crises are
always already experienced as complex and contradictory phenomena of human communication.
As previous sections of this chapter have shown, attempts to manage urban manifestations of
crisis often employ techniques and technologies that reshape the city into an efficient machines
of capital accumulation and protection. Such approaches reinforce one-dimensional, top-down
orientations to urban risk and crisis management that are common in the corporate and
organizational management. By ignoring public experience of crises as meaningfully situated
within the urban ecologies of communication cities constitute, planning and policy techniques
often perpetuate the very crises they are intended to resolve. Studies in planning and policy
intended to improve the management of urban risk and crisis phenomena require the insight of
scholars in communication if they are ever to grasp how such phenomena emerge and become
meaningful within the communicative constitution of cities. Where planning and policy
literature continues to interpret crises merely as physical and financial threats, the literature in
urban communication offers alternative frameworks for approaching crises as meaningfully
understood within the interdisciplinary foundations of rhetorical theory, continental philosophy,
urban sociology, and media studies. Studies in urban communication, in this way, offer an alternative hermeneutic framework for exploring questions of risk and crisis management in urban contexts, opening discussions of planning and policy to the publics whom they necessarily implicate and can benefit the most.

This section demonstrates how studies in urban communication might inform urban risk and crisis management in ways that both incorporate orthodox techniques of planning and policy and go beyond them to create innovative and dynamic ecologies of response in collaboration with the individuals and institutions dwelling in urban environments. Work in urban communication approaches life in cities as a form of what this project identifies as a dialogic urbanism, a sense of dwelling within the conditions and constraints of urban context in communicative relation with others informed by a recognition of “the human will-to-order,” “organized complexity,” and building/dwelling together (Mumford 1934, 1966, 1989; Jacobs 1992a, 2016; Sennett 2018). The crises that emerge in such contexts only become meaningful within the relations cultivated among publics dwelling therein, calling individual and institutional actors to engage one another in what this project describes as an urban communication praxis. Urban communication praxis consists of theory informed communicative action that consciously participates within the dialogic relation of nature and culture, reframing city life as a continuous and ongoing dialogue between people and place, self and other, past and future, society and economy, local and global, presence and absence; such relations provide the historical-cultural ground by which crises are meaningfully re-figured and become significant as krisen in everyday life, experiential moments that present multiple ways of response and compel publics to judge what truly matters for a life lived together with others different from ourselves.
Toward a Dialogic Urbanism: Dwelling within a Multiplicity of Voices

To understand the city in terms of dialogic urbanism is to approach it in terms of the many continental philosophies of dialog the emerged in the early Twentieth century. These include the works of Martin Buber (1953, 1965, 1966, 1970), Emmanuel Levinas (1969, 1985, 1987, 1998a, 1998b, 2003), and Mikhail Bakhtin (1981, 1984a, 1984b, 1986, 1990, 1993) among others. Leslie A. Baxter and Barbara M. Montgomery (1996) provide insights for understanding human communication as dialogically complex, particularly in terms of its unpredictability and transformative potential. Such insights have even informed scholarship in risk and crisis communication, suggesting their potential for providing useful insight in urban risk and crisis management (Littlefield & Sellnow 2015; Arnett, Deluliis, & Corr 2017). Many of these insights have been collected by scholars in urban communication ethics and have particular relevance for discussions of civility (J M. H Fritz 2013). Civility itself is a fairly significant term for understanding how publics collaboratively engage one another in managing crises within urban contexts. While civility is often associated with politeness, an association that only emerged in Sixteenth century Europe, the term is derived from the Latin civilitas, meaning or pertaining to a normal citizen. In ancient Greece and Rome, this citizenship would be to a city-state or polis and would apply to the local organization of response based on mutual need. Aristotle (1984b), in The Politics would even go so far as to argue that the constitution of a city was not merely a literal document or set of policies written into law that regulated urban life, but the very people who made up that city and the relations they cultivated within one another based on public rituals of collective remembrance and mutual understanding. And it was this constitution, an urban ecology of communication, that provided the formal principle for ordering the city as a medium of communication, itself.
More recent understandings of civility and dialog have been compiled and summarized in the scholarly works of communication ethicists from the past thirty or so years. In particular, the work of Ronald C. Arnett and Pat Arneson (1999) in *Dialogic Civility in a Cynical Age* offers numerous insights into how scholars in dialog have navigated the emergent within an increasingly complex public sphere. When disasters strike and our systems for mutual understanding or common ground fail, all we have to rely on are the relations of *existential trust* that give meaning to human experience and inform our understandings of self, other, and world (R. C. Arnett 2017). In this sense, the complex dialogic relations cultivated among publics dwelling together within urban contexts not only increase the potential for crises to emerge, but also provide multiple opportunities for contextualizing those crises within narrative forms of public ritual and collective remembrance, allowing publics to respond in ways that reflect their situated experiences of everyday life. Such ways of response work within the practical, theoretic, and poetic constraints of communicative engagement and acknowledge the taken for granted in ways that go beyond simple monologic forms of communication in corporate and organizational management (Fritz 2013; P. Arneson 2014). A dialogic urbanism, in this sense, is not merely an optimistic platitude that calls others to be ‘nice’ to or speak calmly with one another, but an ethical orientation that receives that city and its problems as complex phenomena of human communication in which crises play a necessary part and present publics with multiple opportunities for refiguring their relations with others and a larger world.

Although studies in urban communication are relatively recent, having only been conducted during the past twenty years of media and communication studies (Burd, Drucker, Gumpert 2007), it could be argued that studies in urban communication date back to the study of rhetoric in the *poleis*, or Greek city-states during the Classical period of Western history (E.
Haskins 2004; T. Poulakis 2008, T. Wareh 2012). As such, urban communication studies often rely upon multiple perspectives from rhetorical theory, urban sociology, continental philosophy, and media ecology, making the field as vast and complex as the cities it attempts to understand. Studies in urban communication often define the city in a multidimensional way, understanding it as “a complex environment of interpersonal interaction, a landscape of spaces and places that shape human behavior, and an intricate technological environment” (Urban Communication Foundation 2020). To this definition this project adds that cities exist as historical-cultural contexts in which risk and crisis phenomena manifest and inform the relations cultivated among public actors as they engage one another in making a living together. Cities, in this sense, exist as complex self-organizing networks of trust, cultivated among individual and institutional actors as actors as they publicly engage one another in situating meaningful experiences of everyday life. Such an understanding reflects the work of urban scholars such as Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs and Richard Sennett as well as the communicative constitution of cities presented in the urban communication scholarship. That is to say that cities and their problems are, first and foremost, communicatively constituted and, therefore, demand responses of requisite complexity for the risk and crisis phenomena emergent therein.

The majority of research in urban communication has been collected in edited volumes published by scholars associated with the urban communication foundation itself, entitled The Urban Communication Reader. While the first few volumes of the Urban Communication Reader describe how everyday media of communication (newspapers, street signs, telephones, and streets) facilitated the meaningful transference of information and knowledge throughout cities, more recent scholarship un urban communication has focused on how cities have both shaped and been shaped by everyday practices of communication (Jassem, Drucker, & Burd
In this sense, the city is understood as communicatively constituted, literally made up of the relations cultivated among multiple communicative actors as they go about their daily lives (Matsaganis, Gallgher, & Drucker 2013). As an ecology of communication, the city not only mediates communication, but cultivates a certain ethics of communicative practice, providing the ground by which publics figure their communicative engagements with one another (Sennett 1992a, 1992b, 1992c, 2018). As such, later volumes of the urban communication reader parsed the varying ways in which cities mediate communicative practices and cultivate ethics of communication, including: urban communication regulation and issues of free speech/protest in cities; the communicative constitution of cities themselves in public negotiation of planning and policy; cities as infrastructures of communication in which identities and relations take shape; discussions of social justice related to race, class, and gender identities in cities. By elaborating the relation between the physical environment of the city and its communicative significance, studies in urban communication provide way of expanding the limited horizon of urban planning and policy.

More recent studies of urban communication discuss how communication directly relates to questions of public health and safety, resituating risk and crisis management squarely within considerations of public relations. While these considerations range from theoretical to the practical, they often emphasize the considerations of the field’s founders, Gary Gumpert and Susan Drucker, including questions of how cities function as human ecologies in which neither part nor the whole but their necessary relation to one another is of the utmost importance; discussions of how cities are communicatively constituted as problems of organized complexity in which little can be gleaned by observing them from the outside; and explorations of how
planning and policy are negotiated by public actors dwelling within cities themselves. of the
communicative constitution of cities themselves. In this sense, more recent understandings of
urban communication have moved beyond a merely technical understanding of distributing
information within and between cities to one that grasps the texture of city life as essential for
meaningful forms of public experience. In this sense, cities both mediate and cultivate, condition
and constrain, how public actors engage one another in meaningfully situating crises and
collaboratively responding to them.

A dialogic urbanism approaches cities as urban ecologies of communication in which
individuals and institutions engage one another in actively negotiating thoughtful responses to
crises made manifest within cities. Urban risk and crisis management, in this sense, is far more
than the mere application of theories from communication studies to questions of how crises are
addressed in planning and policy. Urban risk and crisis management consists of a form of urban
communication praxis in which individual and institutional actors accept crises as realities of
urban life and seek to make livings within them. Such an approach brings everyday uncertainties
to the forefront of public deliberation and discourse, allowing publics to thoughtfully and
actively participate in cultivating relationships of mutual trust that enable them to collaboratively
respond to crises as they emerge in local experience. This participatory approach to urban risk
and crisis management requires a radical reinterpretation of planning and policy as that which no
one person or team, alone, can accomplish. Urban risk and crisis management demands listening
to the multiplicity of voices that constitute it as an urban ecology of communication and seeing it
in the multiple perspectives inform everyday experience. The remainder of this section
introduces the literature in urban communication, before framing discussions of planning and
policy within the conceptual metaphors of a dialogic urbanism: the human will-to-order,
organized complexity, and building/dwelling together. Such metaphors provide a hermeneutic framework for approaching cities as urban ecologies of communication in which individual and institutional actors engage one another in cultivating ethical orientations toward one another in their risk and crisis communication.

**Urban Communication Praxis: Being in Relation with a World of Others**

If dialogic urbanism provides a hermeneutic framework for understanding the significance of dwelling together in cities, then urban communication praxis provides a way of situating oneself in relation with others and a larger world of communication undefined by the limited horizon of statistical analyses. Urban communication praxis, in this sense, how publics intuitively respond to experiences of uncertainty in ways that protect and promote what matters for them in relation to one another. Such communicative action are not arbitrary, but are the result of thoughtful consideration in verbal and nonverbal communication with one another that situated experiences as meaningful within the historical-cultural context where crises emerge. Such an approach reflects the many works in philosophy of communication, particularly Calvin Schrag’s (2003) in *Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity*. For Schrag (1969, 1997, 2003, 2010), drawing on the understandings of Aristotle, praxis goes beyond its common definition as ‘practice’ in professional contexts to include action guided by practical wisdom, or an intuitive knowledge of being in relation with others in a larger world. In this sense, being is figured and given significance in communication with others and a larger world beyond them, giving historical and cultural significance to experiences when all else might seem uncertain, ambivalent, or ambiguous. Such understandings build upon those found in Okakura Kakuzo Tenshin’s (1906/2018) *The Book of Tea*, which established being as a dialog between the self, a multiplicity of others, and a natural world in which we participate as a condition for our very
existence. These notions of dialog suggest how planning and policy, as the forces that attempt to coordinate and shape urban life can be opened to participation from the actors whom they serve, yielding greater insight than conventional methods of political and economic science. By opening the city to the publics who dwell there, urban governments could facilitate and cultivate relations among publics that might allow them to situate meaningful forms of experience and build existential trust with one another.

While studies in urban planning and policy rarely consider issues of public dialog outside of townhall meetings in which city residents engage district representatives and contest plans for urban development, scholars in continental philosophy have contributed considerable insights to studies of urban communication (Matsaganis, Gallagher, Drucker 2013). These philosophical foundations often reflect what was described as the discursive turn in continental philosophy initiated by Martin Heidegger’s (1953/2010) phenomenological hermeneutics in Being and Time. Hermeneutic phenomenology, in this sense, consisted of how one interpreted their own existence, their being or becoming, as situated within the conditions of a world beyond themselves. Such perspectives extend to include considerations of the other, as an interruption in the regular relation of self and world, prompting a crisis in which the self is implicated in the needs and existence of multiple others figured against the ground of a world. While hermeneutics was often relegated to the areas of biblical, legal, and literary analysis, Heidegger’s work brought hermeneutics to the forefront of discussions in continental philosophy, culminating in an existential philosophy of dialog in the works of Buber, Levinas, and Bakhtin. Such notions suggest that there may be a dialogic relation between publics dwelling together within the complex historical-cultural contexts of cities and that such a relation has practical implications for fully understanding both the emergence of crises and how city governments might work with
publics in discovering effective ways of responding to them. These ways of response would embody the tensions of urban life, recognizing them as realities of a life lived in close relation with others different from ourselves, while also finding fruitful ways of participating in them.

Urban communication praxis, in this sense, would embody the practical wisdom of urban life, a form of ‘street smarts,’ an embodied form of relational knowledge communicated between and beyond people, place, and practice to establish a purpose for urban risk and crisis management that give meaning to life in the midst of crisis. As such, urban communication praxis would incorporate participatory research methodologies into urban planning and policy, putting the tools of urban research into the hands of publics whom that research should serve. This form of planning and policy would reverse the orientation of techniques in prediction and control, allowing cities to be planned in ways that regenerate their ecologies of communication from the bottom up and cultivate localized relations of existential trust in the midst of crisis.

Where many city governments currently practice planning and policy as something done for urban communities, urban communication praxis argues that they should practice planning and policy with urban communities, facilitating relations and actively participating in the cities they are supposed to be serving.

Charting a Better Course for Urban Risk and Crisis Management

This section concludes the introductory chapter of this project. As has been shown, conventional approaches to urban risk and crisis management often reduce crises to mere disastrous events and fail to account for how these phenomena are meaningfully experienced by publics dwelling together in urban contexts. Such contexts shape and are shaped by proposals for urban planning and policy, reframing the city as an ecology of communication in which individual and institutional actors figure their identities and experiences against the background
of a particular historical-cultural circumstances, cultivating ethical orientations for communicative engagements within a larger world of others. Understanding urban risk and crisis management within the dialogically complex constitution of cities as urban ecologies of communication demands a far more nuanced form of inquiry than that conventionally used in urban planning and policy, one which stands upon the interdisciplinary foundations of urban communication and the considerations of a dialogic urbanism. Such understandings foreground the conceptual metaphors of “the human will-to-order” and “organized complexity” found in the works of Lewis Mumford and Jane Jacobs. These metaphors are synthesized in the ethics of building-dwelling together in dialog elaborated by Richard Sennett discussions of cite and ville, providing a guide for developing crisis responses of requisite complexity for the urban contexts in which crises actually emerge. Dialogic urbanism and urban communication praxis reframe cities as narrative mosaics of crisis; complex, hypertextual media in which publics come to their senses in communicative engagements with others that meaningfully situate crises within the historical-cultural contexts of urban life.

This chapter has reviewed the numerous challenges facing city leaders in their attempts to manage the risks and crises emergent in urban contexts. The complexity of cities, the concentrated flows of people and capital they mediate, and the numerous contradictions and conflicts they contain challenge orthodox forms of planning and policy predicated on techniques of prediction and control. The next two chapters conclude the first section of this project by exploring how cities throughout the United States and Europe have managed manifestations of risk and crisis throughout history, elaborating how top-down forms of planning and policy became reified in the value-laden contexts of urban life. The theme of ordering natural or chaotic forces of external nature and internal culture recurs throughout these chapters, bringing into
question the best laid plans of city leaders and the human desire to impose an order where extant orders had organically emerged. The next chapter reviews urban risk and crisis management in the ancient and medieval world, marking the transition between methods common to an *ancien régime* of public ritual that protected and promoted the public life of collective memory and those that sought to ensure a continual sense of linear progress in the manifest destiny of human civilization. Chapter three emphasizes how these tendencies shifted during modernity to favor the scientific, economic, and technical mechanisms of the ruling classes in cities throughout Europe and the United States, resulting in cities that were planned to protect profit at the expense of people. In this way, the first three chapters of this project demonstrate how current challenges facing leaders in urban risk and crisis management emerged, took shape, and changed over time.

The second part presents a theoretical foundation for developing more participatory forms of urban planning and policy that are of requisite complexity for the communicative constitution of cities and the crises emergent therein. Chapter four parses the elements of dialogic urbanism as an ecologic philosophy of communication ethics in which crises are recognized as ever-present forms of public experience within the dialogic relations cultivated among those individuals and institutions dwelling together in the varying communicative contexts of city life. A dialogic urbanism, in this sense, approaches cities as urban ecologies of communication, historical-cultural contexts of collective memory in which the constitutive relations of individual and institutional actors are figured in public deliberation and debate, foregrounding what matters for public actors as they manage everyday manifestations of risk and crisis in their communicative engagements with one another.

Narratives of crisis are, in this sense, hypertextual in nature, bringing past and future understandings of being, knowing, and acting together in the momentary present(s) of risk and
crisis experiences (U. Eco 1979, 1984). This theoretical foundation is then extended into practical considerations of planning and policy by incorporating participatory research methodologies that situate crises within the communicative contexts of cities as media of human communication. Participatory methodologies are demonstrated as necessary for improving how city leaders facilitate engagements among individual and institutional publics, allowing them to determine how crises emerge within the complex and, often, contradictory contexts of urban communication, rather than seeking to predict and control public responses to them.

Where conventional methods of urban risk and crisis management impose systems of prediction and control upon cities in order to monitor and direct the emergence and public interpretation of crisis in top-down fashion, this project presents an understanding of dialogic urbanism and urban communication praxis that works with publics to understand how crises manifest and what truly matters in the management of them. This project then concludes by returning to the case of Hurricane Katrina and applying an urban communication praxis approach to the urban ecology of communication constituted by New Orleans and the crises made manifest within its historical-cultural context. While considerations of Hurricane Katrina are common in the risk and crisis management literature, the application of an urban communication praxis presented in this final chapter allows city governments and the people whom they serve to discover alternative ways of response that meaningfully situate crises within the complex tangle of dialogic relations cultivated among public actors dwelling together within the city.

It is ultimately found that an urban communication praxis approach encourages the active cultivation of networks for communication engagement in which publics cultivate dialogic relations of existential trust with one another and support public needs in collaborative ways. This approach not only provides city governments with a new way of understanding the crises
made manifest within the historical-cultural context of relations cultivated among the publics, but provides city leaders with a hermeneutic framework for working within the conditions and constraints of those relations, facilitating collaborative responses in moments of crisis. The city, as an urban ecology of communication, constitutes the contextual ground for figuring collective memories of crisis emergent within everyday relations among individual and institutional actors, preparing for their recurrence, and cultivating an ethics of response of requisite complexity for cities and their many challenges.
CHAPTER TWO

_Best Laid Plans: A History of Urban Risk and Crisis Management_

Urban planning and policy encompass a broad array of theories, methodologies, and principles governing the organization and regulation of everyday life in cities. While notions of an ‘urban crisis’ or ‘crisis of the city’ do not appear in the literature of urban planning and policy until the Nineteenth century, the use of crises as a justification for organizing cities in accordance with abstract rational principles is far older (K. Harper 2017, 2021; A. Newitz 2021). The architect Hippodamus of Miletus created the first planned grid system around 500 BCE in response to crises of public governance that emerged as a consequence of damage suffered by Greek city-states during the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars (E. L. Glaeser 2011; Aristotle 1984b). With streets that intersected at right angles and equally sized plots of land for building construction, the Hippodamian plan provided Greek city-states with an order, regularity, and predictability that could not be achieved by traditional methods of organizing cities around a central Acropolis or Agora (Mumford, 1966, 1989; E. H. Cline 2021). Although the Hippodamian plan would provide generations of city leaders with a predictable guide for building and rebuilding cities, its inherent assumptions about cities as phenomena of commerce established its legacy for the professions urban planning and policy. Much like in Plato’s _Republic_, Hippodamus believed that cities should cultivate a certain sense of rational discipline among those dwelling within it and give physical form to abstract, universal, or principles of order.

In this sense, cities constructed outside of the rational order of a Hippodamian plan were deemed chaotic, disorderly, aberrant, barbaric, or irrational. While few leaders in urban planning and policy would describe cities or their neighborhoods as ‘barbaric,’ ‘irrational,’ or ‘aberrant’ as
a whole, descriptions of urban areas as blighted or cancerous proliferate in discourses of urban renewal and reconstruction throughout the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries. Such discourses reinforce orientations of prediction and control common in urban risk and crisis management, often ignoring the significance of public relations cultivated among individual and institutional actors as they engage one another in responding to urban manifestations of risk and crisis. This chapter reviews the history of discourses in urban planning and policy, tracing their ethical implications for risk and crisis management in cities. Throughout this chapter, reference will be made to what Lewis Mumford (1934) described as the human “will-to-order” (p. 3), the will, following Hippodamus of Miletus, to impose a rational order upon that which is viewed as irrational, chaotic, or disordered. Throughout history, city leaders have used urban planning and policy to manage urban manifestations of risk and crisis by imposing order where they found chaos in urban life, standardizing experiences of the city and rendering them easy to predict and control. It must be recognized, however, that one often finds chaos where one looks for it and can rarely impose order without harming whatever has been deemed disorderly, aberrant, or chaotic.

This chapter begins by situating the theory and practice of urban planning within the Western history and the practices of communication and commerce gave cities their distinctive character within it. Beginning with the architectural principles of city building in the Classical period and tracing their influence through the Medieval and early Modern periods in Western history, this chapter provides a firm foundation from which to understand the will-to-order in Nineteenth and Twentieth century urban planning. From the outset of this historical overview, it will be recognized that even in the Classical world there were two distinct but highly interrelated understandings of what ‘a city’ in fact was and how cities shaped the everyday activities of
communication and commerce that took place within them. It is in this sense that the history of cities, and therefore urban risk and crisis management, is really understood as a history of how human actors have understood cities as places in which to might scratch out a living. Such understandings are significant, for figuring our identities in place-based communities of practice clarifies what really matters for ourselves and others in moments of crisis. Cities, as dialogically complex ecologies of communication and commerce, are constituted within the relations individual and institutional actors cultivate as they thoughtfully engage one another in addressing the challenges of everyday life. Whether these interactions are collaborative or conflictual, they open revelatory spaces in which uncertainties, ambiguities, and ambivalences of human existence are encountered and must be reckoned with. Such spaces are the spaces of risk and crisis and must remain central concerns for city leaders preparing cities for the crises that emerge as a consequence of natural, fiscal, and socio-political disasters.

**Foundations of Planning and Policy in Classical Cities**

As the Hippodamian plan demonstrated, classical cities were intended to physically embody the universal principles of a rationally or divinely ordered universe. In this sense city walls provided rigid barriers between the inner order of human culture and the outer chaos of a natural world, giving human communities a means of managing what risk and crises they encountered in everyday life (Sennett 1992c, 1994). While city walls, streets, and blocks standardized how city residents comprehended their physical place in the city, communal rituals and ceremonies rooted in the culture of cities established the routines, habits, and practices demarcated the temporal dimensions of city life (M. Smith 2019; B. Wilson 2020;). Rituals, ceremonies, and festivals provided temporal borders or backgrounds against which publics could orient themselves in time and the importance of new circumstances. Place-based communal
rituals provided ground in which relationships among individuals and institutions were cultivated in everyday forms of communicative and commercial activity that constituted and shaped the city. Within the historical-cultural context of the city as an ecology of communication, the phenomenal dimensions of space, time, and mind would begin to take on new meanings and become signified in more complex ways. Public goods and civic values would become foregrounded in the relations cultivated among individuals and institutions as the confronted emergent realities of a life lived with others in cities. It is in this sense, then, that the historical-cultural contexts of classical cities provided a background for meaningfully understanding urban manifestations of risk and crisis as well as protecting the knowledge, values, and commitments essential for reckoning with uncertainty.

This understanding is supported by Lewis Mumford’s (1989) work in *The City in History*, which argues that the transition from village into the city life “needed an outer challenge to pull the community sharply away from the central concerns of nutrition and reproduction: a purpose beyond mere survival” (p. 29). Mumford states:

“From its origins onward, indeed, the city may be described as a structure specially equipped to store and transmit goods of civilization, sufficiently condensed to afford the maximum amount of facilities in a minimum space, but also capable of structural enlargement to enable it to find a place for the changing needs and the more complex forms of a growing society and its cumulative social heritage. The invention of such forms as the written record, the library, the archive, the school, and the university is one of the earliest and most characteristic achievements of the city” (pp. 30-31)
Cities, as such, were not only means of protecting populations and their resources from the physical harm of war or the unpredictability of a natural world, but as historical-cultural contexts in which everyday life could be situated in space and time and given significance beyond mere survival. As Kevin Lynch (1981) concluded in his writings on *Good City Form*, “cities arose as ceremonial centers—places of holy ritual which explained the risky forces of nature and controlled them for human benefit” (p. 73). In this sense, the history of risk and crisis management in cities must be understood as more than a mere history of how urban populations protected themselves from physical harm and navigated their everyday lives (Lynch 1960). The history of urban risk and crisis management is, therefore, the history of how individual and institutional actors held the interwoven collection of public meanings, values, and relationships together in the urban fabric together and oriented themselves through the moments of uncertainty, ambiguity, and ambivalence.

**The Poleis of Ancient Greece**

The everyday practices of preserving historical-cultural memory in urban forms and their relevance for individual and institutional actors responding to risk and crisis, in this way, provide a strong foundation for approaching classical cities as ecologies of communication. Urban communication, as previously defined concerns the interrelated practices of communicative engagement often taken for granted in urban planning and policy, but ultimately constitute how individual and institutional actors experience one another and the city as a whole, what urban goods and values become significant for everyday life, and what matters in responding to urban manifestations of risk and crisis. In this sense, urban communication studies how urban forms condition and constrain communicative engagements with others (or the avoidance of such engagements), how cities are communicatively constituted as intricately woven networks.
technique and technology, and the policy landscapes that provide the foundations for and ultimately shape human behavior in urban contexts. In this sense, the practices of communication and commerce have historically served as the activities around which cities were organized not just as means for survival, but as means for giving deeper meaning and purpose to that survival. More than mere aggregates of mutual interests or economic capital, cities were constituted by interwoven collections of meanings, understandings, and relationships rooted in the particularly circumstances of a given place and time and the historical-cultural memories made by the communities that dwelt there.

Understanding the communicative dimensions of everyday life in classical cities as such not only demands understanding what activities of communication and commerce public actors engaged in, but how those activities were symbolically, materially, and praxiologically mediated. Cities, as such, were not only dialogically complex ecologies of communication and commerce but necessarily existed as media ecologies, environments in which various media of are put to use in human activities of communication and commerce, conditioning and constraining those activities in everyday practice and orienting them towards particular purposes or ends. How individuals and institutions dwelling within classical cities engaged one another is, therefore, of as much importance for understanding the history of urban risk and crisis management as the purposes these activities served and the various goods they involved. As dialogically complex ecologies, cities grounded the figurative practices of communication and commerce that cultivated relationships between self and other, situating these relationships within a larger world and orienting responses to urban manifestations of risk and crisis. While these understandings might be foreign to leaders in urban policy who often focus on the explicit content of messages in urban risk and crisis communication, studies of urban planning, design, and architecture
provide practical ground for exploring how the shape cities take both condition and constrain the activities of communication and commerce that take place within them. Such considerations open discussions of urban planning and policy to the insight from media ecology that have been essential for understanding the communicative dimensions of urban experience.

Comparative work within the field of media ecology is particularly helpful for understanding the communicative dimensions of urban contexts and their historical significance (H. M. McLuhan 1969, 1994, 2011; H. M. McLuhan & Q. Fiore 1968; H. M. McLuhan, K. Hutcheon, & E. McLuhan 1977; N. Postman 1985, 1993; W. J. Ong 1971, 2012; E. Lamberti 2012; Rogers 2021). As urban ecologies of communication, urban forms condition and constrain the communication of meaningful content and provide lived-contexts for human activities of communication and commerce (J. Meyrowitz 1984; J. D. Peters 2015). Media ecology, as previously stated, is the study of media as environments and environments as media, however this definition becomes more complex within the context of cities. The city is itself a medium of communication and commerce, composed of a multitude other media of communication and commerce. The city, in this sense, is both an environment that mediates communicative engagements among public actors, as well as an ecology constituted by the relations among multiple forms of symbolic, material, and embodied media. Further, the inherent biases of the various mediating forms that constitute cities—how these forms mediate the relations of space and time, society and economy, history and culture, self and other—also orient how public understandings of and responses to urban manifestations of risk and crisis change over time. Cities as such not only organize themselves in accordance with the inherent biases of whatever mediating forms dominate a given historical period but mediate the everyday activities of communicative engagement and commercial exchange in which public actors participate,
orienting how individuals and institutions engage one another in times of uncertainty. The spatial-temporal dimensions of urban experience are therefore understood within a complex ecology of mediating forms that situate communication and commerce and constitute the historical-cultural contexts of the city as it orients public activities.

Arguments for the origins of cities provided by urbanists such as Mumford, Lynch, and Jacobs (1970, 1985, 1989, 1992b, 2000) are, in this sense, supported by media ecological studies of oral culture and the emergence of literacy in ancient Greece. That is, the organization of classical cities around sites of communal practice related to maintaining historical-cultural memory in communication and commerce such as the Acropolis or Agora resulted from the conditions and constraints of an oral speaking culture. As the works of classicists Eric A. Havelock (1963, 1989) and Walter J. Ong (1971, 2012) demonstrate, the conditions and constraints of oral cultures prevented villages from becoming larger than could feasibly be recognized by one of the people dwelling within them. Oral cultures were necessarily conservative, insular, and consisted of relatively few relations. Life within ancient villages was simple in this sense, not because it was uncivilized or unintelligent, but because individual villagers would only be compelled to act within a known set of collective understandings and relations in their immediate context. Thought within this context was only ever concrete, what was known was seen and embodied, and what was unknown was beyond perception by the human senses.

The Greek alphabet, however, provided a means of breaking from this lived experience, separating body and mind, allowing for not only the emergence of abstract thought, but abstract understandings of how one is implicated in and relates themselves to the lives of others. Literacy, it is important to note, emerged from innovations in record keeping and accounting for livestock
and other goods brought to market and retained the tendency for regulation, standardization, and abstraction when it used in human communication. The tendencies toward regulation, standardization, and abstraction carried over from accounting, in this sense, not only allowed for the accumulation of material goods and the formation of empires throughout Egypt, Babylonia, and Greece, but also provided the means necessary for weaving urban fabrics together and giving them a coherent civic character. Organizing around a central acropolis or agora was necessary for preserving the historical-cultural memory of a city at its center. In Mumford’s (1934, 1966, 1989) sense, the city literally functioned as a sort of container technology that protected and promoted local knowledge in the everyday contexts of communication and commerce. Within the ancient Greek city states, one was always aware of the known and unknown, who people were and what they were expected to be, and of how they were to live everyday life in a community of others different from oneself. Within the context of classical cities, literacy would be both shape and be shaped by the practices of communication and commerce that constituted urban forms, themselves.

How classical cities emerged within intertwining networks of communication and commerce is most easily recognized within the work of economic historian Harold A. Innis (1951/1995, 1952/2007), particularly where it considers questions of how ancient civilizations utilized various media to regulate the access, understanding, and preservation of historical cultural memory. For Innis, the inherent biases of media were not only constraints limiting when, where, and how one could engage in communication or commerce, but the very conditions by which such practices would become necessary and take shape in everyday experiences of the city. In this sense, the techniques and technologies of writing emerged in response to the ecologies constituted by various material forms for communication and commerce: the stone,
papyrus, reeds, and clay that allowed for the accounting, documenting, and regulating human activities in cities. The media of communicative engagement and commercial exchange, as such, established the boundary conditions for cultivating relationships among individuals and institutions in which public values could be recognized and used as guides for communal responses to the world of uncertainty beyond a city’s walls. Such values became embedded in the historical-cultural memory of individual and institutional actors dwelling within cities and would be continually reaffirmed in the everyday practices of city life, establishing the particular character of a place in time and allowing for the eventual emergence of rhetorical and philosophical inquiry.

While Havelock (1986) is correct in arguing that the practices of abstract thought in philosophy and rhetoric likely emerged with practices of writing that allowed for the disembodied communication of knowledge in writing and market value in currency, it must be acknowledged that these activities also took shape within the communal contexts of city-states throughout the Mediterranean. It is unsurprising then that the tendency for abstract thought which emerged with the pre-Socratic philosophers and Sophistic rhetoricians would only begin to take shape after the Hippodamian plan had become the standard for constructing Greek city-states. The Hippodamian plan, in this sense, not only rendered the city explicit for those dwelling within it but created an abstract image of a city in which contemplating the existential realities of city life became possible. In establishing barriers between inner and outer, city walls forced humanity to confront themselves with ontological, epistemological, and axiological uncertainties. In this sense, the form and function of the city-state became definitive of the human condition. Dwelling within city-walls demanded the cultivation of a certain sense common to public life. Within the uncertainties, ambivalences, and ambiguities of classical cities, public actors had to
work together to reckon with their mutual situations, achieving a dynamic balance for everyday life that was rarely afforded in the village. By pursuing *sophrosyne* or wisdom in the practices of philosophy and rhetoric residents of cities sought to strike an equilibrium that would allow them to manage circumstances of disasters emerging from within the city and from without. As such, the city became the site of multiple schools of value-laden intellectual inquiry.

New urban circumstances posed questions of custom and law, citizenship and justice, politics and commerce, memory and identity that were central for leading schools of the Sophistic movement and philosophers such as Socrates, Isocrates, and Plato. While it must be acknowledged that the Greek city-states were far from perfect, often excluding women and slaves from the public sphere and favoring an aristocratic class of governing male leaders, the forms of democratic governance that emerged within them offered many citizens freedoms of thought and action that could not be afforded in the natural world of the village. The Greek city-states or poleis, foregrounded the importance of public virtues such as wisdom, courage, justice, and moderation and sought to cultivate these virtues in the physical and mental character of their citizens (Sennett 1994; D. Hawhee 2005). In this sense, the Greek city states and their citizens rarely distinguished between mental and bodily education, seeing both as embodied forms of communal knowledge. Physical training was engaged in alongside discussions of how one should live life in a world of others, promoting a sense of civic identity rooted in the historical-cultural context of the city and its memorial practices. While much of public thought was documented in the material forms of reusable clay tablets, the traditions of Greek city-states remained largely oral in nature, retaining the poetic and lyrical qualities of epideictic speech that sought to clarify public values and retain historical-cultural memory in narrative form (J. Walker 2000). In a democratic culture founded on dialogic engagements with others that explored
questions of being, knowing, and acting the city necessarily assumed a dynamic form and function that was not necessarily opposed to the entropic forces of nature, but sought to be in harmony with and depend upon them.

It is in this sense then that the dialogically complex ecologies of communication constituted by Ancient Greek city-states can be understood as emphasizing both-and logics in confronting the major crises of their times. This understanding is captured well by Isocratean rhetorical theory and the citizen orator tradition in ancient Greece (Isocrates 2000; Walker Haskins 2004; J. Walker 2011). This tradition was founded on the notion of worldly knowledge, influenced by many different sources from around the Greek world without homogenizing them into a singular understanding. In this sense, knowledge was both local and foreign, culture was both rooted in place but not isolated to that place, and truths of one culture were not beyond question. Public action within Greek city-states possessed value within a particular context and could not be universally applied to all times, places or peoples. The loosely organized network of Greek city-states, as such, cultivated an orientation toward others and the world that relied on the both-and logics, allowing for multiple perspectives and voices to collaborate with one another without imposing themselves upon one another. This context gave credence to the rounded education, or “enkuklios paideia” (A. Doody 2009) taught by the rhetorician Isocrates, wherein practical language or logos, was engaged in thoughtfully with others not to control or determine truth manage its change over time, both enabling progress and ensuring that it did not extend beyond the reach of citizens dwelling within Greek city-states

It is within this context that the Greek term *krisis* first appears in the field of medicine. *Krisis* for the ancient Greeks was understood as the turning point in a disease when one knew whether they would or would not recover, a moment in which one’s fate was decided for better
or worse. In this sense, the Greek definition of *krisis* was a both-and scenario in which an individual and institution comes face to face with the existential demands of their circumstances and must decide a best course of action from multiplicity of potential outcomes. In this sense, contemporary questions of urban risk and crisis management are fundamentally questions of how to best reckon with the uncertainties of human experience (Groom & Fritz 2012). While the classical teachers of rhetoric and philosophy often demonstrated competing views on this subject, all of them recognized issues of uncertainty as central for meaningfully participating in the life and culture of Greek cities. Uncertainty, however, would remain central for public discourse throughout Greek culture.

Such understandings are consistent with rhetorical and philosophical treatments of uncertainty found in the works of Aristotle (1984a, 2009, 2018), wherein rhetoric is treated as a species of logic that deals with uncertainties of human experience. Where philosophy or dialectic often dealt with questions of truth, Aristotle considered rhetoric as a means of negotiating responses to uncertainty in different contexts of city life. Forensic or judicial rhetoric took place in the law courts and was primarily concerned with uncertainty about the past. Forensic rhetoric was directed toward determining justice or injustice, guilt or innocence, and often proceeded by means of accusation and defense. Uncertainties about the future were confronted in the legislature and often relied upon deliberative rhetoric to determine the expediency or harm of some proposed action. Finally, epideictic, or ceremonial rhetoric, dealt with uncertainties about the present and eternal, proceeding through discourses of praise and blame that reflect the historical-cultural context of the audience whom they addressed and aimed at praising or blaming certain figures and actions for the current state of the world.
While this final rhetorical genre of dealing with uncertainties in a present and eternal sense often took place during public ceremonies, rituals, festivals, and theatrical performances, the assertion of public values in epideictic speech was essential to the historical-cultural context of both judicial and legislative forms, and often motivated the responses they produced to the uncertainties of past and future they considered (Walker 2000, 2011). In this sense, the internal organization of Greek city-states around a central acropolis or agora cultivated a sense of uncertainty which was managed by public rhetorical displays in everyday interactions. Ancient Greeks, therefore, understood their fates in relation with public thought and action, the practice of civic virtues, and the historical-cultural memories preserved by oral traditions of storytelling (J. Klooster & I. N. I. Kuin 2021). Crisis management in the classical world of the poleis was, for all intents and purposes, the activity of learning and communicating public values within a collectively organized context and, as such, relied upon the historical-cultural memory of those in public life to assert what mattered when all else was unknown or in question.

This dynamic way of response not only allowed Greeks to survive but thrive through the crises that plagued Greek city-states. Although the Greek city-states would eventually succumb to in-fighting and disagreement that resulted in their fall (J. Ober 2015), the values cultivated within them would last long into the future of cities and civic culture in the West. The rise and fall of Greek city-states remind leaders in urban risk and crisis management that the relationships of communicative engagement and commercial exchange emerging within and between cities are motivated by practices that preserve the local and global value of a particular place and time. This historical-cultural memory of a place is, therefore, as significant as for risk and crisis management as the expertise of leaders in urban planning and policy. The next fall traces how
new techniques and technologies of urban planning conditioned risk and crisis management in Rome.

The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire

Where the loosely organized Greek city-states prized historical-cultural memory, democracy, and organic mixture, later Roman cities often reinforced the standardization, rigidity, and control inherent to the Hippodamian plan. The militant organization of the Roman Empire, in this way, extend the principles of the Hippodamian plan to the empire as a whole, constructing a highly integrated network of roads and highways that would facilitate communicative and commercial exchange across the growing empire. Within this vast network of communication and commerce literacy would come to the fore as the primary means of codifying ritual, ceremonial, and festival practices in the Roman calendar and the firmament of stone media for preserving memory and identity (Innis 1995, 2007). As Innis (2007) writes, “[o]pposition to Greek culture favored an emphasis on Latin prose which has been confined to blunt sentences adapted to the economy of stone writing in laws, treaties, and official record” (p. 118).

Publication of legislative and court proceedings forced Roman leaders to consider opinions of the outside public, while the reach of the empire reinforced the centralization of power in Roman cities: “The problem of government over large areas compelled an emphasis on bureaucratic administration,” and this “reflected the influence of writing and was supported by an increase in the production of papyrus” (Innis 2007, p. 122-125). In the media ecological sense of Innis then, Roman cities grew into an imperial network of control by relying on the solid foundations of stone media in place and the ability to communicate information quickly in papyrus. These media of literacy resulted in the reorganization of cities around the institutions of libraries and the production of papyrus to facilitate communication and commerce throughout the empire.
This network of engagement and exchange, however, would not only facilitate Rome’s rapid expansion, but provide a fertile ecology for changes in global climate to trigger the rapid emergence and transmission of multiple forms of pandemic disease. As historian and classicist Kyle Harper (2017) of Princeton University states:

“The Romans built a giant, Mediterranean empire at a particular moment in the history of the climate epoch known as the Holocene—a moment suspended on the edge of tremendous natural climate change. Even more consequentially, the Romans built an interconnected, urbanized empire on the fringes of the tropics, with tendrils creeping across the known world. In an unintended conspiracy with nature, the romans created a disease ecology that unleashed the latent power of pathogen evolution . . . The end of Rome’s empire, then, is a story in which humanity and environment cannot be separated. Or rather, one chapter in the still unfolding story of our relationship with the environment,” (p. 5).

Harper follows this statement by acknowledging that “[s]urprise and paradox lurk in the heart of progress,” (p. 4) a point that about the fall of the Roman empire that remains significant for managing urban manifestations of risk and crisis today. This perspective is upheld by the work of past historians as well. What Harper refers to as the Holocene, a period between the Second century BCE and the Second century CE often described as “The Roman Climate Optimum,” was a mereological period that favored the agricultural economies of Roman cities and their ability to transport information and goods across great distances. In this sense, the rise and fall of the Roman empire can be understood as occurring both from within and without: Natural and military circumstances threatened Rome from outside, while the interior networks of communication and commerce spread both distrust and disease throughout the empire.
Changes in climate worked in tandem with the highly integrated networks of Roman engagement and exchange that allowed Roman cities to flourish to create a disease ecology that would produce not one, but three pandemic outbreaks between 165 CE and 749 CE. The Antonine Plague, likely an early form of smallpox and one of history’s first recorded pandemics, threatened Roman trade networks throughout the Indian Ocean and Persian Seas, resulting in the death of some seven to eight million victims. This was followed by a widespread drought throughout the empire and the Plague of Cyprian between the years of 249 and 262 CE. Known as “the crisis of the third century” (Harper 2017), the Cyprian Plague triggered a breakdown in networks of imperial rule, destabilizing control of contested border regions and leaving the empire open to invasion. While imperial leaders attempted to exert control over when, where and how public actors understood their identities as Romans. Roman response to this second plague was not only responsible for the persecution of Christians who were considered to carry the unknown disease, but inadvertently resulted in the growth of Christian faith and its spread into the Roman Empire.

With new Christian rulers, Rome was forced to confront movements of the Goths in the west and the Huns in the east (B. Ward-Perkins 2005). While much of Rome was able to survive these incursions, it the empire would be greatly reduced and carved up under the rule of Emperor Justinian from 527 to 565 CE. During this period, a new Rome seemed to be emerging one codified by law and order that was able to take back African and Italian regions where Rome had previously ruled (A. Cameron 1993, 2012). In the 530s and 540s, however, natural eruptions around the world pushed ash into the upper atmosphere not just blacking out the sun but cooling the planet by 2.5 degrees Celsius. As Harper (2017, 2021) describes, these natural disasters resulted in a period known as “The Late Antique Little Ice Age” and culminated with multiple
outbreaks of the Justinian Plague that eventually brought Roman cities and the empire in their entirety to their knees.

*Yersinia pestis*, the bubonic plague, appeared along the southern shores of the Mediterranean around 541 CE, inspiring apocalyptic sentiments throughout the late empire and every ten to twenty years after with its reemergence. It is unsurprising, then, that the fall of Rome coincided with the spread of Christian faith throughout the Western world. In the face of absolute uncertainty, publics sought some assurance that death did not spell the end of existence and that they would be able to transcend the earthly realm of human fallibility. By taking the form of classical cities as well as their relations with one another into account we can begin to recognize how public actors managed crises within the particular ecologies of communication and commerce these cities constituted. The tightly knit networks of communication and commerce that wove the urban fabric of Roman cities together also served to facilitate disease transmission and create demands for resources that were threatened by global climate change.

As Dave Gibbons (1781/2001) argued in his six-volume work on *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* published between 1776 and 1789, “[t]he decline of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of immoderate greatness. Prosperity ripened the principle of decay; the causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest; and as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports, the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight,” (vol. 3, chapter 38, p. 28). While the Greek city states were able to maintain more flexible networks of communication and commerce between independent sites of political governance, the Roman tendency toward uniformity, order, and certainty resulted in the production of harmful outcomes. It is in this sense, then that crisis management in classical cities of Greece and Rome can be understood as a discursive task of using historical cultural memory.
to reckon with uncertainties about the past, present, and future of civilization. Within the historical-cultural context of these crises individual and institutional actors were called to dialogically engage with one another in deciding their fates and the fates of their world.

_Saint Augustine and a Tale of Two (or more) Cities_

Roman decline ended despotic forms of well-established military rule in many cities, allowing new towns to take shape during the Medieval period. As Mumford (1961) describes, “[b]y the fifth century the life-blood was ebbing from the opened veins of Rome and the hands that had once grasped an empire could no longer keep any part of it securely in their hold . . . in the midst of urban decay fresh life was sprouting” (p. 243). Medieval cities began organizing themselves around the communal and ritual functions of the church, slowly but surely producing mechanical order of time keeping that would govern the university, the capitol, and the market (A. MacIntyre 2011). These institutions provided a means for negotiating the everyday chaos of a world in which no overarching powers of rule remained. Amidst the turmoil of disasters that became characteristic of Roman decline, Saint Augustine of Hippo (426/2003) reinterpreted the city and urban life as metaphors for communal salvation. For Augustine, city walls not only divided the irrational chaos of a natural world from the rational order of human culture but provided an essential distinction between the City of God (a sacred community of Christian faithful) and the City of Man (secular community of markets and government). As disorganized or corrupt as cities may have been during the transitional period of Roman decline, they nonetheless served as shelters for many of the Christian faithful and, therefore, became the responsibility of the faithful to build and maintain.

The church, in this way, emerged as the primary medium in which civic identity was cultivated. Churches provided a sacred space that remained open to the needs of public life and
yet separate from the day-to-day activities of communication and commerce in cities. The chaos of war had left many cities open as well, allowing grasses, forests, animals and other natural element to penetrate city walls in ways that were both awesome and terrifying to behold. The porosity of human settlements made them both vulnerable to hostile elements and readily aware of the demands that an earthly existence had created for everyday life during centuries leading up to the early Medieval period (500 to 1100 CE). As Mumford (1961) described, “[t]he secular church was entangled in in earthly responsibilities” (p. 247) and often implicated religious leaders in political, economic, and military conflicts. Christian faith in building was, according to Richard Sennett (1990), “almost considered a heroic act” (p. 11). Within this context, the church would preserve “advanced practices of Roman agriculture and Greek medicine” (Mumford 1961, p. 247) as well as the rhetorical and philosophical foundations of these cultures. Although notions of organizing cities in accordance with predetermined rational or divine orders began to wane around the Eighth century, the notion that the city existed in two distinct but interrelated forms—one built and one lived—would be preserved in the Etymologies of Saint Isidore of Seville (2006). Isidore’s Etymologies (compiled early 7th century CE) demonstrated how the word city derived from two related terms. The first term, the Latin urbs, described the stones made up the walls of the city or its physical makeup and literal foundations; Whereas the other term, civitas, from which the words civility, citizenship, and civilization among others derived, conveyed the sensibility of urban life, the city as it was lived in everyday forms of communication and commerce. The symbolic and material significance of this dualistic definition would remain significant for urban planning until our present moment provides a foundation upon which urban leaders can begin to understand the conflicts that underly urban risk and crisis management.
While local monarchies remained in power throughout the early medieval period the castle walls, roads, and squares that emerged within and between them would serve as the secondary media within the ecologies of communication constituted by Medieval cities. The rise of scribal literacy in the church allowed for the preservation of classical texts in rhetoric and philosophy that would continue to inform the character of medieval life and the shape it would take within the cities walls. Areas of monarchal rule would remain fairly small, based in local practices of communication and commerce within corporate networks, and often secured power within the specific conditions and constraints of a given geographic context. Mumford (1961) argues that within these contexts “[e]ach medieval town grew out of a unique situation, presented a unique constellation of forces, and produced, in its plan, a unique solution” (p. 303). In this sense, the very construction of Medieval cities resulted from a number of collective responses to the various risks and crises which characterized everyday experiences of city life. Urban contexts took their shapes “from their historical origins, their geographic particularities, and their mode of development” (Mumford 1961, p. 300) and, as such, were not unified by any singular formal pattern. Within medieval cities, a proliferation of varied forms produced varied ways of life, and while all of these cities were patterned by the natural emergence of similar forms, no city possessed the same number of forms in the same pattern. Cities, during the early Medieval period at least, situated responses to risk and crisis phenomena by mediating the relations of those who dwelt within them. It is in this sense, then, that early-Medieval cities could be described as media of communication and commerce that struck a balance between chaos and order, using both as guides to gain a better understanding of their relationship to one another within the walls of the city.
The distinction between *urbs* and *civitas* is clarified further by Richard Sennett (1992c) who describes *urbs* as the practical, foundational purposes of the city (shelter, commerce, warfare) while *civitas* is best understood as “the emotions, rituals, and convictions that take form in the city” (p. 11). For Mumford (1961), the chaotic order of the Medieval city was produced by the opposing forces of attraction and protection: “[T]he public buildings and open places find security behind a labyrinth of streets, through which a knowing foot nevertheless easily penetrates. It is only with the baroque planners who worked to overcome the medieval pattern that the street drives headlong into the town center” (p. 303). Indeed, it was this tendency of the baroque planners in the High and Late Middle Ages that would generate the conditions necessary for cultivating new forms of despotic military rule in European cities. While the distinction between the physical constitution of urban forms and the historical-cultural mentalities they helped shape would remain central for how cities confronted urban manifestations of risk and crisis throughout the Middle Ages, the significance of this ideal would not be realized until well into the Baroque period.

As many historians of the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries would later recognize, Medieval Europe took shape during a prolonged period of crisis that began in the early Thirteenth and lasted until the end of the Fourteenth centuries (A. L. P. Miatello 2019; C. Phythian-Adams 1979). While innovations in agricultural, political economy, and the construction of cities allowed European cities and towns to flourish during the Medieval Warm Period (11th-13th centuries), these innovations would be frustrated by the circumstances of pandemic disease, famine, climate change, and military conflict in following centuries. The Great Famine (between 1315 and 1317) triggered outbreaks of pandemic diseases such as the Black Death (Bubonic Plague from 1347-1351), anthrax, leprosy, smallpox, and tuberculosis
(among others), that reduced the European population by nearly half. These pandemics would coincide with changes in global climate (referred to as the “Second Little Ice Age”) that would end the Medieval Warm Period and halt the machinery of the largely agricultural European economy. Scarcities of food would drive the militarization of European cities and motivate a number of military conflicts throughout the 1400s. Revolts were common and added pressure to control peasant populations during the many civil wars among European powers. Conflicts within the church produced by the great schism of 1053 would erode any collective practices of thinking, building, and dwelling together with others different from oneself in cities.

Similar to eras of despotic rule under the Roman military, cities would be planned by single individuals who did away with the confusion of Medieval cities. As Mumford (1961) notes “[a]t this point in urban building, the now-meaningless enclosure, and the disorder and clutter that often characterized the late medieval city, had become intolerable . . . King Ferrante of Naples in 1475 characterized the narrow streets as a danger to the state” (pp. 347-348). The new city of the later Middle Ages was shaped not according to the demands of the cathedral, with its emphasis on collective forms of historical-cultural memory, but according to the needs and motivations of military and bureaucratic rule. The ruling classes understood the confusing tangle of streets, gates, walls, and commons from which the order of urban life emerged as difficult to manage and forced into these forms into the abstract order and regimentation of armies and bureaucracy of that protected national governments. Transitions from a goods-based economy to a European money economy extended these state powers, fueling capitalist expansion and colonization, the mathematization of habits for thinking and acting, and speculative practices of risk assessment; each of which prompted changes in urban experience. As Mumford (1961) argued:
“The abstractions of money, spatial perspective, and mechanical time provided the enclosing from of the new life. Experience was progressively reduced to just those elements that were capable of being split off from the whole and measured separately: conventional counters took the place of organisms. What was real was part of experience which left now murky residues; and anything that could not be expressed in visual terms was not worth expressing” (pp. 365-366)

As the internal organization of cities began to become more defined by the needs of military rule, the networks of communication and commerce that bound these cities together became increasingly defined by a new political economy of colonization: “The external means of enforcing this pattern of life lies in the army; its economic arm is mercantile capitalist policy; and its most typical institutions are the standing army, the bourse, the bureaucracy, and the court” (Mumford 1961, p. 367). Such conditions were characteristic of the Baroque cities which set the stage for modern urban planning in the Seventeenth century and established precedents for urban renewal movements that took place during the 1900s.

**Implications of Classical and Medieval City Forms for Communication**

The circumstances that shaped urban ecologies of communication and commerce throughout the classical and medieval periods of Western history can provide leaders in planning and policy with a great many insights about risk and crisis management. Cities were not only shaped from withing by planners and political leaders who guided the construction of cities themselves, but also by everyday interactions occurring between individual and institutional actors as they in confronted the daily realities of urban life. Likewise, a number of external circumstances—natural, technological, economic, or sociopolitical—contributed to the shapes that cities took throughout western history. While the circumstances of urban communication
and commerce today differ from those during the classical and medieval periods, constitutive elements of how these circumstances were experienced—their situatedness in time and place, their significance for how individual and institutional identities were figured, and the meanings they assumed in revealing what truly mattered in public life—remain significant for contemporary discourses of urban planning and policy.

Chief among these persistent elements, and most relevant for the theory and practices of urban risk and crisis management, is the reality of how humans have continuously sought, by various means and methods, to manage the uncertainties of a world that was, and largely remains, beyond human comprehension in many ways. Managing uncertainty was foundational for Mumford’s notion of the human “will-to-order,”—the desire to impose a controlling order on that which has been identified as chaotic, irrational, aberrant, or disorderly—and was significant for the rhetorical and philosophical foundations of urban culture in the Greek city-states. The emergence of the Greek alphabet promoted notions of abstract thought and rationality, not as separate from the body of human actors, but as a guide for the form hum and civilization should take. This sense of rational human order motivated the invention of the Hippodamian plan and the standard construction of urban spaces that could be known, understood, and predicted in full. The Hippodamian plan, however, would collapse under its own weight when applied throughout the Roman empire; improvements in the efficiency of communication and commerce facilitated the transmission of disease that would eventually bring the empire to its knees. Similar circumstances befell the European cities of the high- to late-Middle Ages as well, overly rigid plans motivated by military display and fiscal concerns prompted revolts, wars, the spread of disease, and a number of crises among those dwelling within them. Cities which favored the accumulative practices of colonizing land and building empires and did away with the historical
cultural memories cultivated within complex urban forms faced sudden collapse when the tides and winds failed to turn in their favor. Rigidity is ill fitted for weathering the storms and stress of human crises.

In this sense we are reminded of the 1785 poem by Robert Burns (2017) from which this chapter derives its title and primary concern:

But, Mouse, you are not alone,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes of mice and men
Go often askew,
And leaves us nothing but grief and pain,
For promised joy!
Still you are blest, compared with me!
The present only touches you:
But oh! I backward cast my eye,
On prospects dreary!
And forward, though I cannot see,
I guess and fear!

History demonstrates how practices of urban planning, or the best laid schemes thereof, do often fail to achieve the ends for which they were intended. Alternatively, such intended ends are achieved, but only at a cost greater than could have been initially perceived from the singular perspective of planners and policy makers at the outset. While this is not the last instance in which the monolithic schemes of urban planning and policy will be subjected to critique in this project, these cases are important for understanding how orthodox practices of planning and
policy took shape in the Modern period and were applied to urban contexts that were being revealed as far more complex than had been previously realized.

As later chapters of this work will demonstrate, the crises emerging within the dialogically complexity of urban ecologies constitutive of and constituted by the human activities of communication and commerce can neither be understood nor reconciled by the overly simplistic techniques of planning and policy and, therefore demand solutions of requisite complexity if they are ever to be realistically managed in any effective way. In this sense, it is not the will-to-order, itself, which is problematic. Indeed, the desire for order, clarity, understanding, continuity, causality, and unity provide the foundations of human inquiry and have been essential motivations for the invention of great works by which humanity has been able to reflect upon itself and its place in the world. Not by works alone, however, are we saved from the existential conditions of uncertainty, ambiguity, and ambivalence that define the human experience of crisis, but by a meaningful faith in others and ourselves, by understanding how relations in which crises occur often provide answers to our questions, and by recognizing how individuals and institutions are figured against the background of environmental, technological, economic, and sociopolitical contexts. The will-to-order was beneficial for confronting urban crises insofar as “order was still an instrument of life,” and only began to perpetuate these crises when “life had become an instrument of order” (Mumford 1961, p. 349). In this sense, urban crises often emerged when planning and policy were used as a means by city leaders to guide, predict, regulate, and control the lives of individuals and institutions dwelling within the city; to direct their interpretations and responses to the environmental, technological, economic, and sociopolitical circumstances of their lives; to, as many practitioners of public relations might say, manage expectations.
Along with this notion of the human will-to-order we can begin to understand how urban planning and policy, as practices focused on the physical form and economic function of cities, often conflict with values revealed in the everyday lives and relations cultivated among individual and institution actors dwelling within cities. This conflict is easily recognized in different understandings of urbs and civitas, the city as a built environment and the city as a lived environment, described by Sennet. In this sense, the urbs not only gives shape to civitas but is shaped by civitas in continual dialogue; people cultivate lives within the conditions and constraints of a given place and time, understood as an urban context laden with implicit and explicit public values, and figure their identities against the contextual ground of the city, becoming defined by, within, and against it. The urbs, thus, represents a historical cultural context in which practices of communication take shape as public rituals, ceremonies, festivals, and habits that preserve collective memories of public value. Public values are revealed within the relationships between individuals and institutions implicated in urban manifestations of crisis and provide a means for understanding what is necessary in confronting those crises. As the historical significance of the agora and the acropolis, the cathedral and the university, have shown, cities are not merely physical, but exist as the byproducts of communicative and commercial activities occurring among individual and institutional actors as they confront the daily crises of human existence.

It must be acknowledged that urban planning and policy (in various forms) have always been driven by a need to address a myriad of crises confronted in everyday experience. While these crises emerged from different environmental, economic, technical, and social origins, the experience of these crises was shaped by the urban ecologies of communication in which they emerged and were managed as situated phenomena of urban contexts. Responses to these crises
were shaped by the value laden contexts in which individuals and institutions confronted them and, therefore, perpetuated those values in response. In the classical mode, crises of collective memory motivated oral cultures to engage in lyrical and poetic practices that preserved the value-laden meanings in what eventually became public rituals which gave coherent identity to the civic culture of the Greek city-states. Against the historical-cultural ground of collective memories preserved in lyrical poetry, the ancient Greeks were able to construct civic centers that became necessary for reflecting upon urban conditions for life: the agora, the acropolis, the agon. These centers allowed individuals and institutions to figure a civic sense of identity and responsibility that would allow rhetoric and philosophy to prosper and bring the existential realities of crises to the forefront of public discussion and debate.

Urban contexts are constituted by the interwoven activities of communication and commerce and, as such, produce both the conditions by which individuals and institutions engage in these activities as well as the constraints placed on them. That is to say that cities both constitute and are constituted by activities of communication and commerce that take place within and between them. As urban ecologies of communication, cities are not merely economic aggregates of social collectives, but communities of purpose in which individuals and institutions rely upon the communication of public understandings and collective memories in order to clarify values in decisive moments, or moments of *krisis*. That the transition from the cyclical organization of the Greek poleis to the rigid grids of the Roman cities coincided with the emergence of abstract and mathematized understandings of urban planning is of significant note, because such perspectives would be replicated during the neoclassical revivals of the high- to late-Middle Ages. Mumford understood such transitions to be representative of a sense a widespread lack of humility, a preponderance of pride in the ability of planners and policy
makers to construct cities in such a way as to prevent the challenges conditional of human existence. As will be shown in the next section, such mentalities are consistent with contemporary movements to address urban manifestations of risk and crisis. In this sense, the will of humanity to discover order in the world became supersede by the desire to create world that fit our will. Such understandings served as motivations for urban planning and policy throughout the Twentieth century and have been extended in the present moment by the forms of the resilient, smart, green, and restorative city.

**Cities as Value-laden Contexts of Communication**

Cities, as planned contexts for communication and commerce, are necessarily value-laden contexts that inform communicative and commercial activities in which individuals and institutions engage and, therefore, cultivate ethical orientations toward manifestations of risk and crisis which occur in everyday experience of the city. This chapter has provided a brief (and necessarily incomplete) history of how cities throughout the Western world have used urban planning and policy to manage public experiences of risk and crisis. The foundations of urban risk and crisis management are found in Ancient Greece and correlate with how media of communication and commerce changed over time. Methods of urban risk and crisis management were extended by leaders of the Roman Empire and proved disastrous for public health and the well-being of cities. Such notions, however, would be replicate in the Medieval period and would provide the foundation for organizing cities according to the values of bureaucratic and military leadership; often prioritizing efficiency, order, hierarchy, regimentation, regulation, prediction, and control.

The next chapter will demonstrate how these bureaucratic and military values would become embedded within the practices of urban planning and policy that characterized urban
crisis management between the 17th and 20th centuries. During this period, referred to as Modernity, planning and policy would become both instrumental for practices of industrial production and nationalist colonization. The values that informed the construction of cities in the high- to late-Medieval period would become definitive of practices for building great cities such as London, Paris, and New York becoming embedded in their physical and communicative constitution. The realities of managing urban manifestations of crises by techniques of planning and policy, however, were not readily apparent until the Twentieth century, when the urban renewal movement was confronted by realities of designing cities in one-dimensional and overly simplistic ways. The following chapter, therefore, is directed toward clarifying how the urban renewal movement attempted to manage urban manifestations of risk and crisis and the implications that this movement had for the communicative constitution of cities as value-laden contexts of crisis response.
CHAPTER THREE

*Do Oft Go Awry: Modern Orientations in Urban Planning and Policy*

Cities always have been, and likely always will be, defined by moments of crisis in which individual and institutional actors reckon with the consequences of a forgotten past in attempting to discern their present fate. Traumatic experiences of crises emergent within and between cities, in this sense, reveal taken for granted assumptions that have become embedded deep within the communicative constitution of urban environments, their roots as complex, self-organizing systems responding to internal and external change. As media, cities not only provide the necessary conditions for cultivation of ethical orientations in communication and commerce, but also inform how individual and institutional actors participate in those activities, generating precedents for how urban manifestations of risk and crisis are appropriately managed in public governance.

In recalling the communicative and commercial constitution of Classical and Medieval cities, the previous chapter demonstrated how urban ecologies of communication functioned as contexts in which the interactions among individual and institutional actors became meaningful for the public practices of risk and crisis management. Urban planning and policy were not merely understood as techniques for organizing urban spaces, but as the means by which city leaders managed public experiences of risk and crisis within and between cities, foregrounding their implications for how individual and institutional actors cultivate meaningful relationships within the communicative and commercial practice. The value-laden contexts of cities both retained the inherent biases of those guiding their construction and perpetuated those biases in the mediation of communicative and commercial activities among public actors. In this way, the techniques and technologies of urban planning and policy not only allowed city leaders to control
public experiences of crisis, but determine how crises could be legitimately understood and ultimately discussed. It was also recognized, however, that the use of planning and policy often reproduced risk and crisis phenomena in attempting to establish a more perfect order than before and forcing the city into a controllable and predictable form. In this sense, urban planning and policy did little more than undermine the value-laden contexts of public actors actively managing risk and crisis phenomena, changing the rules of what counts as a legitimate form of response.

This chapter extends these understandings into the historical period of Modernity. Beginning with a review of the changes that characterized urban life during the European Renaissance, this chapter elaborates how Modern techniques of urban planning and policy took shape within Renaissance cities and laid the ideological foundations for the Twentieth century movements in Urban Renewal. Modern advancements in technology, economy, and science extended techniques of urban planning and policy beyond their practical limits, abstracting them from the lived contexts of their application and perpetuating utopian ideals of absolute order, perfection, and certainty that could only be achieved at the expense of individual and institutional actors dwelling within and between cities. To quote Mumford (1961/1989), during the historical period of Modernity, “life had become an instrument of order” (p. 349). Classical and Medieval cities had been shaped by the institutional centers of the agora, acropolis, agon, Cathedral, and guild the form and function of which derived order from the relations among public actors in which they were embedded. Modern cities were, following the European Renaissance, primarily shaped by external factors of emerging communication technologies and capitalist networks of commercial exchange, making individuals and institutions into instruments of a new order, a highly integrated system of cities. Modern advancements in urban planning and policy, in this sense, not only distanced individual and institutional actors from one another and
the contexts in which they lived, but alienated city leaders from the value-laden contexts of crises being actively managed by the publics whom they intended to serve. By enforcing an artificial sense of order and failing to attend to the complexities, contradictions, and conflicts that defined urban experiences, Modern cities cultivated a sense of urban life that favored emerging economic systems and threatened the ecologies of communication and commerce in which individual and institutional actors managed urban manifestations of risk and crisis. As such, the great renovations of the Eighteenth, Nineteenth, and Twentieth century cities often reproduced the very challenges they intended to resolve.

This chapter could, therefore, be understood as a review of what Jane Jacobs (1961/1992a) referred to as “the principles and aims that have shaped modern, orthodox city planning and rebuilding” (p. 3). This chapter begins by discussing the emergence of these principles and aims and how they became prominent in the planning and policy of Renaissance cities. What these principles and aims were and how they informed contemporary techniques of urban risk and crisis management is discussed in the next section, parsing how changes in technology, science, and economics both shaped and were shaped by the conditions and constraints of urban contexts public actors responded to risk and crisis. Between the Fourteenth and Seventeenth centuries, the events of European Renaissance shook public faith in the institutions around which cities had been organized, threatening their legitimacy as means of mediating communicative and commercial activities and cultivating relationships necessary for holding cities together through crisis. The third section of this chapter elaborates how these changes defined the techniques and technologies of urban risk and crisis management in the renovations of Modern London, Paris, and New York.
These new techniques and technologies of urban risk and crisis management laid the theoretical and methodological foundations for how leaders of urban renewal movements approached cities and their problems in the Twentieth century. The ideological roots of Modern city building abstracted individual and institutional actors from the value-laden contexts of communicative and commercial practice that informed their understandings of self, other, and world and demanded that they maximize their efficient utility in accordance with an order built on rational self-interest and a universal doctrine of progress. This chapter ends with a reference to the contemporary instances of urban renewal described in the first chapter and drawing connections to the history of urban risk and crisis management as a past made present in everyday forms of communication and commerce. As such, this chapter concludes part one of this project before establishing new theoretical foundations for urban risk and crisis management within the live contexts of individual and institutional actors.

**Italian Renaissance Humanism & the Ideology of Modern City Planning**

Any sufficient understanding of urban risk and crisis management in Modern cities must begin by reflecting upon the disruptions of scientific, technological, and economic changes that occurred in the European Renaissance. Described as the early Modern period by many historians, the European Renaissance began around 1350 with the emergence of Humanism in Florence, Italy (C. G. Nauert 1995/2006). In the wake of the Great Plague of 1348, leaders of Italian Renaissance Humanism such as Francesco Petrarch and Desiderius Erasmus eschewed the Medieval authors of scholastic philosophy and relied, instead, upon the insights of newly rediscovered classical Greek and Roman authors (P. Bizzell & B. Herzberg 2001). The Italian Renaissance Humanists, many of them Christians, believed that the works of classical rhetoricians and philosophers would allow them to renew, revitalize, and restore order to the
Christian faith, hence they described their historical moment as one of renaissance, or rebirth. Although many humanists proposed to restore the legitimacy of the Catholic Church, many of their discoveries resulted in displacing the Church and the Guild as the centers around which urban life was organized. Without an institutional center for urban life, planning and policy were oriented outward, toward the demands of an emerging capitalist economy of international trade networks. While advancements in science, technology, economics, and politics greatly improved everyday life for those dwelling within and between cities, these advancements also provided the necessary conditions for crises to emerge within and between cities throughout Europe and the world at large.

In rejecting the scholastic philosophies of Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, the Humanists asserted the supremacy of classical studies in rhetoric and philosophy as the foundation for public affairs and personal education (Sennett, 1992c; D. E. Ingersoll, R. K. Matthews, & A. Davison 2001). Describing the preceding historical moment as a ‘dark age’ in which learning was rare, the humanists reasserted the legitimacy of the city-state, ruling oligarchies, and republican notions of public citizenship and individual responsibility. While the emerging forms of political economy proposed by Seventeenth century scholars educated humanist tradition expanded personal liberties, they also created new demands for how individual and institutional actors cultivated identities and engaged one another in the urban contexts (Sennett 1974). By critiquing the central institutions around which cities had traditionally been organized the Humanists eschewed traditional value commitments, inventing abstract orders for defining individual activities of communication and commerce as rational or irrational within a mechanistic understanding of the world.
Italian Renaissance Humanism, in this way, both rendered the individual autonomous from the local conditions and constraints of everyday life that had traditionally informed their identity and thrust those autonomous individuals into a highly disorganized and chaotic world of others without any means of orienting themselves or making ethical decisions. It is within the context of a chaotic world beyond religious faith or political governance that technological, economic, and scientific advancements were recognized as legitimate means of achieving certainty in the affairs of those dwelling within and between cities. As will be shown, these advancements perpetuated individual capacities for predicting and controlling the outcomes of communicative and commercial activities, allowing them to effectively engineer public experiences and determine the legitimacy of individual and institutional experiences with mathematical certainty.

The Clock, the Press, the Telescope

Although advancements of the Renaissance, be they scientific, technological, economic, or political, were, more often than not, intended to restore or refine the legitimacy of the Catholic church in matters of public survival. The emerging demands of modern crises affecting European cities demanded that the church answer for the devastation caused by the onset of the Little Ice Age in the Fourteenth century and the numerous famines, diseases, and wars that followed in its wake. More often, however, these attempts at restoring the legitimacy of the church resulted in displacing it as the institutional center around which European cities were organized. This displacement provided the necessary conditions for individual and institutional actors to cultivate ethics of individualism, efficiency, and progress in the everyday activities of communication and commerce and would support a number of scientific, political, and industrial revolutions in Modernity. In this sense, the Renaissance not only awakened public actors to the idea of the
‘self’ as a political actor, but perpetuated a notion of the autonomous, rational self as the ethical center around which urban life would be organized. Modern crises, as such, provided the impetus for re-organizing the city around the self as a rational individual and displaced the church as the institutional center of urban life. The urbs overpowered the civitas of Modern cities, in this sense, creating an imbalance that favored aesthetic beauty and material progress in cities over the relations cultivated among individual and institutional actors dwelling within the value-laden contexts of the city. While the city as built and the city as lived had always existed in a complex dialogic relation, the spatial-temporal biases of Renaissance cities gave way to socio-economic biases that that reinforced the legitimacy of ruling monarchies and oligarchies.

The displacement of the church and the guild as institutional centers of public life is easily recognized in recalling the disruptions caused by new technologies such the mechanical clock. Invented in 1360 by Henry de Vick to regulate and direct monastic activities within the Catholic church, the mechanical clock also allowed individual and institutional actors in urban areas surrounding monasteries to regulate activities of communication and commerce. In this sense, the belltower cultivated orientations toward quantitative time, rather than time based in the phenomenological quality of human activity, and promoted a linear and sequential sense of time in ordering the past, present, and future of everyday urban life (W. S. Eichelberger 1907; E. T. Hall 1959; Mumford 1934). The transition from the bell tower to the clocktower was, in this sense, a necessary condition for the transition from qualitative to quantitative sense of time in public life. The mechanical clock abstracted the implicit, qualitative experience of time engaged in meaningful activities of communication and commerce, rendering it as explicit as quantitative time that could be monitored, regulated, and followed. In this sense, the displacement of the church and the guild as institutional centers for communication and commerce left a vacuum that
was filled by mechanistic understandings of time that allowed individual and institutional actors to coordinate their activities. These understandings of quantitative time were essential for Adam Smith’s (1759/2009; 1776/1994) political economy based on the price mechanism of supply and demand as well as Frederick Winslow Taylor’s (1919) principles of scientific management after the industrial revolution. As such, the mechanical clock can be understood as creating the necessary conditions for how industrial factories of the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries took shape and would serve as the foundation for managerial approaches to urban planning and policy throughout the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries.

Advancements in printing, likewise, contributed to the displacement of the Church and the Guild as centers of urban life. Originally intended as a means of educating publics in the Christian faith, the printing press displaced monastic traditions of scribal literacy and biblical interpretation. In this sense, the press not only allowed for the emergence of vernacular literature but also established the foundations of individual interpretation upon which the Reformation was built. While printing had existed for centuries in one form or another, the invention of movable type by Johannes Gutenberg in 1450 increased both the efficiency and the effectiveness of the printing process, making it a viable means for creating the first system of mass production, distribution, and consumption of literature in European cities. The printing press, in this way revolutionized how individual and institutional actors understood public participation in the vernacular discourses of Europe, establishing new paradigms for political, religious, and economic activities in which public relationships were cultivated (E. L. Eisenstein 1980). While the relevance of printing for the constitution of modern cities remains contested, research conducted by Jeremiah Dittmar (11 February 2011) of the London School of Economics states that that the relationship between cities and printing is particularly significant for three reasons:
“First, the printing press was an urban technology, producing for urban consumers. Second, cities were seedbeds for economic ideas and social groups that drove the emergence of modern growth. Third, city sizes were historically important indicators of economic prosperity, and broad-based city growth was associated with macroeconomic growth” (para. 8).

The mechanical printing press, therefore, not only generated the conditions necessary for the spread of vernacular literature and Christian faith, but promoted the use of Bibles in the personal context of the home. When coupled with waning faith in religious and political institutions, it can be easily recognized how the printing press promoted notions of individual determinations of salvation and faith in an autonomous self (Eisenstein 1980). Such notions were essential to arguments of Reformation leaders such as Martin Luther and John Calvin and would become intertwined with the ideologies of material progress common to the capitalist economies of the industrial revolution as demonstrated by the work of Max Weber (1930/1992; 1958). The press, as such, redefined the place of cities in both political economy and religious faith, creating a lasting impact that can still be felt in systems of communication that characterize contemporary urban life.

Personal salvation in both this world and the next rendered implicit essences in explicit physical representations, making eternal fate of individuals actors publicly known and recognizable in their personal appearance, rather than the contextual significance of their thoughts and actions. Material wealth was, therefore, translated into personal virtue in modernity and the individual as the ethical center of urban life was responsible for leading a virtual life alone. The printing press, in this way, reasserted the rational individual as the singular source of ethical determination and identity formation in cities, eschewing collective forms of
collaborative response in which individual and institutional actors traditionally cultivated the relationships that defined their identities and held cities together. The implicit values of urban life which had always emerged as byproducts of communicative and commercial relationships cultivated within the complexities, contradictions, and conflicts of urban ecologies—were no longer determined among individual and institutional actors as they engaged one another in reckoning with the significance of risk and crisis, but would be determined from the outside, by the demands of a socio-economic system of artificial necessities in which cities were nothing more than mere aggregates of individualized, rational agents. While the printing press and the mechanical clock established how networks of communication and commerce were regulated within and between cities, the scientific and industrial revolutions would establish mathematical justifications for what forms of knowledge were considered legitimate. Science, as a practice of individual experimentation in controlled environments, would redefine public understandings of certainty, rendering the physical world mathematically and statistically knowable. Such findings would have significant implications for how urban manifestations of risk and crisis were managed in cities, establishing the conditions in which urban forms would be determined by the demands of capitalist economic systems.

The final and, possibly, most significant technological advance of the European Renaissance established a mathematical foundation for new methods of European navigation, warfare, art, and architecture leading to a search for purity and perfection in people and place. The invention of the telescope, as both a means of observing and quantifying the movements of celestial bodies provided one of the most significant contributions to the scientific revolution of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries, with which the modern age began. The telescope, invented by Galileo Galilei in 1609, relied on the mathematical findings of astronomers such as
Nicolaus Copernicus and Johannes Kepler to rendering natural processes beyond immediate human perception explicit and concrete in scientific analysis (J. Henry 1997/2008). The privileging of mathematical quantification as a means of deriving certainty from the chaos of naturally observable phenomena not only cast doubt on the Ptolemaic system of the universe that was revived during the Humanistic movement, but contributed to the establishment of a universe that could be absolutely knowable in mathematical terms. In mathematizing the universe, Galileo had produced a means of objectifying self and other as autonomous from the contexts in which they engaged one another. As Hannah Arendt (1958/1998) notes in *The Human Condition*, the invention of the telescope provided one of the final breaks with a Medieval past and defined the Modern world in abstract, mathematical, and mechanistic terms:

“With the rise of modernity, mathematics does not simply enlarge its content or reach out into the infinite to become applicable to the immensity of an infinite and infinitely growing, expanding universe but ceases to be concerned with appearances at all . . . but becomes, instead the science of the structure of the human mind” (p. 267).

The telescope, as such, not only influenced a mathematical view of the natural world, but a mathematical view of human minds, history, and culture. If mathematical principles could be applied to the universe at large, it was argued, they would also apply to human thought and action, allowing leaders in politics and economics to establish standards for legitimate forms of rational thought and action in public life. Such understandings were, likewise, essential for the emergence of mechanistic views of the self and how individuals should engage one another in public life.
The inventions of the clock, the printing press, and the telescope, in this way, provided the foundations for individual certainty, efficiency, and material progress that would become essential to Modern ideologies in urban planning and policy. Together with the natural and social circumstances of the Great Plague, Protestant Reformation, and Scientific Revolution, these ideals undermined the centrality of the church and guild as the institutional centers of urban life, implicating both communicative and commercial activity in public debates about the legitimacy and value of knowledge. Within a mathematically observable universe, leading families privileged the coherent unity and seamless perfection in Baroque art and architecture of Renaissance cities. Through the patronage of the Medici family, artists and architects began producing works that favored the linear perspective of an individual observer within cities, establishing aesthetic standards of frictionless-ness and beauty that would overshadow the civic form and function of urban spaces (Sennett 1992c, 1994). Renaissance cities would be ordered according to the ontological, epistemological, and axiological principles perpetuated by these emerging technologies, establishing paradigms for public life that would center upon individual autonomy, efficient utility, and material progress.

The desire for explicit regularity, continuity, uniformity, and regimentation became characteristic of how oligarchic and monarchic governments, likewise, constructed their cities, allowing them to predict and control public experiences in more efficient ways. In this sense, cities no longer existed merely as localities in which individuals and institutions secured their livings, but primary means of asserting political dominance and military rule within the surrounding region and world at large. As Mumford (1961) noted, “[t]he external means of enforcing this pattern of life lies in the army; its economic arm is mercantile capitalist policy; and its most typical institutions are the standing army, the bourse, the bureaucracy, and the
court” (p. 367). It is unsurprising, then, that the next Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries witnessed the emergence of powerful warring monarchies throughout Spain, France, England, and the United States.

The argument for a mathematically perfect and perfectible universe would, likewise, influence Rene Descartes’ understanding of individual certainty and rational doubt in natural philosophy. Both a mathematician and Jesuit himself, Descartes utilized mathematical understandings to produce a mind-body dualism (“I think, therefore I exist”) that reasserted the supremacy of the rational individual as autonomous from collective demands within a mechanistic system of natural order. The mechanistic understanding of the individual mind that provided a necessary condition for the emergence of behavioristic approaches to planning and policy that emphasize the uniform determinations of singular urban planners. The Cartesian understanding perpetuated the same certainties of individual rational thought that was exemplified by the Reformation and Capitalist economics, favoring the discourses of expertise that displaced collective understandings of cities as the historical-cultural contexts of crisis. Such understandings are best exemplified in a statement made by Descartes (1637/2006) in Discourse on Method:

[T]hings made up of different elements and produced by the hands of several master craftsmen are often less perfect than those on which only one person has worked. This is the case with buildings which a single architect has planned and completed, that are usually more beautiful and better designed than those that several architects have tried to patch together, using old walls that had been constructed for other purposes. This is also the case with those ancient cities, that in the beginning were no more than villages and have become, through the passage
of time, great conurbations; when compared to orderly towns that an engineer
designs without constraints on an empty plain, they are usually so badly laid out
that, even though their buildings viewed separately often display as much if not
more artistic merit as those of orderly towns, yet if one takes into consideration the
way they are disposed, a tall one here, a low one there, and the way they cause the
streets to wind and change level, they look more like the product of chance than of
the will of men applying their reason (Part II, p. 12)

In this sense, Descartes provided the argument for the singular rational individual as an
autonomous observer of a mechanistically and mathematically defined city containing an
aggregate population of other autonomous individuals who may also be subjected to the same
mechanisms as the city itself.

The Cartesian understanding of city building, in this sense, provided both the foundations
for understandings of perfection in architecture and the means of purifying Medieval cities and
rendering them uniform. While not new during the time of the Renaissance, mechanistic
understandings of the physical universe asserted overly simplistic understandings of causality in
terms of stimulus and response or action and reaction; reduced organic forms of physical action
mere re-action within statistically predictable and controllable scientific system. It is in this way
that the mathematical universe established by the telescope becomes reflected in the
mathematical understanding of the rational individual in Descartes work and lays the foundation
for Modern forms of planning and policy in cities.

Similarly, the assumption that rational individuals existed in mathematically predictable
and controllable universe would inspire the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes (1695/2010)
who investigated the origins and essential nature of the state as a legal and political entity. Toward this end, Hobbes observed the political individual as abstracted from their historical-cultural context, placing them instead within a pre-political state of nature in which life was “solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short” (p. 78). It was within this abstract state of nature that Hobbes found the establishment of social contracts among rational individuals logical for mutual survival and argued that the origin of the state in agreed upon laws, rather than the historical-cultural contexts of customary relations. While such methods common among political philosophers such as Jean Jacque Rousseau and John Locke, their works inspired the English civil war of the Seventeenth century, as well as French and American revolutions as well of Eighteenth century, establishing the legal lines along which urban territories would be drawn.

A mechanistic understanding of the state based on the mathematical universe perpetuated by the organizing form and function of the clock, the press, and the telescope provided philosophers like Descartes and Hobbes with the foundations for abstracting thought and action from their contexts and constructing an artificial sense of rational order. This order became paradigmatic of urban planning and policy in modernity, giving legitimacy to the rational individual attempting to maximize their efficient utility in attaining progressively greater material wealth. Such individuals fit well within the emerging economic doctrines of mercantile capitalism and national sovereignty that defined Modernity. While cities occupied a central place in the success of capitalist networks for communication and commerce, functioning both as sites for production of material goods and ports in which trade occurred, these networks often conditioned and constrained the shape cities took. That is, the commercial function of the city began to outweigh its communicative significance. Within a mechanistic view of the city individual and institutional actors were no longer contextualized by their commitments to each
other or a larger world, but by their individual success in predicting and controlling landed wealth. In this sense, modernity would be characterized by significant claims to land and rents, issues of housing and homelessness, and a stark contrast between aristocratic elites and the dispossessed living in the city streets.

**Risk and Crisis in Renaissance Europe**

Renaissance advancements allowed European city leaders to witness massive waves of economic growth. Increases in material wealth, however, were accompanied by a growing sense of socio-economic disparity that would culminate with the American and French Revolutions. Since the outset of the Renaissance, European innovations had been dominated by a system of patronage that began with the Medici family. The patronage system not only facilitated the production of work by artists and architects, but ensured that ideals of powerful families throughout Europe would be immortalized in visual, material form cities assumed. In this sense, the ruling classes in many Renaissance cities were able to ensure that the ideals of individual autonomy, formal and functional efficiency, and material progress were realized in the construction of cities. The mathematical and mechanistic universe established by Renaissance technologies provided a strong foundation for perfecting the art and architecture of Renaissance Europe, disrupting the historical-cultural contexts of collective memory in which risk and crisis became meaningful for everyday forms of urban life and isolating city leaders as the sole deciders of what forms cities took and how they functioned. Innovations in warfare, particularly black powder weapons, meant that cities began to be constructed as defensible sites in which military display became prominent. The Star shaped layout of Florence, the home of the Medici, became the exemplar of reemerging urban forms, setting a standard for many Renaissance cities that exemplified military form and the function of the city as a means of retaining, containing,
and protecting amassed wealth. Mumford (1961) would later describe these techniques of urban planning and policy as a sort of centralized despotism, arguing that wealth and warfare had become the defining factors of urban form in Renaissance cities.

Externally, Renaissance cities presented defensible spaces that remained economically and politically significant sites of trade. Venice, for instance, served as an exemplar of such considerations. Located at the center of Eastern and Western trade routes, the urban construction of Venice not only served to prevent attacks from outsiders, but facilitated trade within and between Venice and the rest of the Europe, solidifying the place of the city as a hub in which wealth accumulated over time. These formal considerations not only worked to discourage outsiders from attacking Renaissance cities, however. The military and bureaucratic arms of centralized urban government would also exert influence on how individual and institutional actors within the city engaged one another and interpreted their roles in managing urban manifestations of risk and crisis.

In this sense, the formal and functional organization of Renaissance cities could be understood as serving a rhetorical role, discouraging internal dissidents from rebelling against the ruling classes and seizing the localized forms of wealth for their own. Such considerations are significant, for many Renaissance cities throughout Europe served as the foundations for emerging nation states that would later dominate European trade. Often organized to display their own magnificence and reinforce the legitimacy of their power, Renaissance cities became both symbolically and materially representative of the ruling hierarchies within a given geopolitical region, reinforcing their rule over people and place. The use of space as a means of controlling public action and reinforcing urban ideals would become a definitive factor in Modern forms of urban governance and set the tone for urban renewal.
By the Seventeenth century, Renaissance ideals defined urban experiences of risk and crisis. Ruling powers managed urban manifestations of risk and crisis by controlling the form and function of public spaces, preventing the emergence of socio-political disasters that might threaten their legitimacy. Military and aesthetic acts of display reinforced the contrast between the haves and the have-nots, establishing stark contrasts between classes that were unheard of in the Medieval period. Essentialist notions of divine favor and personal discipline marked the dispossessed and destitute as personal failures deserving of their lots. The management of urban manifestations of risk and crisis by regulating the form and function of urban environments became the standard, foregrounding displays of military strength that discourage rebellion and the adoption of urban plans that allowed the elite to maintain control over cities while amassing wealth. It was in this sense, then, that Renaissance cities were built as means of growing and securing a ruling stock of capital and provided the conditions necessary for the widespread forms of local and global colonization that favored emerging capitalist economies in which the nation state systems would prosper. Modern cities were, therefore, constructed as means of managing public expectations of institutional leadership and perceptions of everyday life. These would be the circumstances in which Modern forms of risk and crisis manifest themselves in urban contexts, contexts in which individual and institutional actors no longer possessed common grounds for engaging one another and in which urban ecologies of communication and commerce would face total collapse.

In this sense it is important to remember that cities, as dialogically complex ecologies of communication and commerce, contain multitudes and can rarely be defined in simple ways by singular individuals. The beauty of Renaissance cities also served the functional purpose maintaining the status quo and had a number of implications for how individual and institutional
actors understood their everyday lives. The best intentions of city leaders created conditions in
which their publics were forced to confront stark realities of urban life, realities of disease,
dispossession, and crime. As individuals and institutions dwelling within and between cities were
forced to reckon with the harmful implications of advancements made during the Renaissance,
rulers educated in Humanistic studies were drawing the lines along which rational forms of risk
and crisis management would be conducted in the Modern world. In this sense, the mathematical
certainty, replicability, clarity, perfectibility, and regularity of communication and commerce
that was characteristic of the humanist tradition would give legitimacy to techniques of urban
planning and policy that relied upon despotic forms of rule between the Seventeenth and
Twentieth centuries, particularly in the renovations of London, Paris, and New York. The next
section demonstrates how the universal perspectives of singular urban planners became
definitive of Modern cities in Seventeenth century Europe. The artificial sense of universal order
established by mathematical precision of Renaissance art and architecture served as the
foundation upon which Modern techniques of urban planning and policy built cities biased
toward the emerging networks of communication and commerce that defined capitalist
economies and colonial expansion. These would be how the Modern city was made and its
implications for risk and crisis management would be felt throughout the world.

**Making the Modern City: London, Paris, New York**

Urban risk and crisis management of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries was
extended by the advancements in science, technology, politics, and economics during the
Renaissance. The Modern world of scientific, political, and industrial revolutions would rely on
the mathematical systems and mechanistic worldview of Renaissance scholars, reducing
humanity to mere cogs within and urban machine of production and consumption. Within this
system, the Modern ideals of individual autonomy, material progress, and formal and functional efficiency would remain paramount, setting standards for urban planning and policy that would create cities ripe for the emergence of crisis phenomena. As England, Spain, and France expanded their territories across the Atlantic Ocean, colonizing lands and resources long held by indigenous peoples, Capitalist economies flourished, giving the emerging nation states the landholdings and material resources they needed to dominate Europe. It was in this way that cities assumed their central as the regulating mechanisms as locales in which ports and factories were located within a global system of economic trade. The emerging nation state system was, in this way, not only shaped by Renaissance cities and their ruling classes, but served to reinforce the implicit biases of those ruling classes as they became embedded in the form and function of cities themselves. As such, the rise of the Modern nation state not only had global implications, but manifested in the local contexts of communication and commerce among public actors dwelling within cities.

Inheriting the tendency toward perfectibility established in Renaissance art and architecture, Modern city planning privileged the aesthetic perspectives of the rational individual, resulting in cities designed by singular master planners, rather than communities of practice attempting to make a living together. It must be noted that master planners were often hired or appointed by ruling powers to oversee the rebuilding of cities, rather than their initial construction. Master planning, in this sense, emerged as a primary means of managing urban manifestations of risk and crisis characteristic of Modern cities. Disasters of natural and human origins were both produced by and producers of crises of public health, financial instability, and moral corruption which motivated widespread and unilateral responses in planning and policy. The movement and flow of wheeled and foot traffic led urban planners to think of the city as a
body through which different populations circulated like blood. Concerns with sanitation, defensibility, taxation, land use and ownership remained paramount, while publics dwelling within cities struggled to secure public freedom via revolt and revolution. This section describes the making of three modern cities and how they shaped and were shaped by modern principles of urban planning and policy. These principles remain the foundations for urban risk and crisis management in our current historical moment and have considerable implications for individual and institutional actors cultivate ethically situated responses to urban manifestations of risk and crisis.

This section reviews how three of the most prominent cities of Modernity, London, Paris, and New York were shaped by Modern doctrines of urban planning and policy and, as such, shaped how individual and institutional actors dwelling within them engaged one another in actively managing urban manifestations of risk and crisis. Such considerations demand reviewing how these cities were constructed as value laden contexts in which collective memories of risk and crisis became meaningful for everyday life. As will be shown, each of these cities constituted ecologies of communication and commerce that were shaped by the Modern principles of urban planning and policy, generating conditions in which individual and institutional actors engaged one another in reckoning with urban manifestations of risk and crisis. London, Paris, and New York each saw their fair share of crises: conflagrations, diseases, depressions, rebellions, and famines included. But each of these cities responded in different ways. Some sought to retain the organic form and function of place as a medium communicative and commercial activity between and beyond mutually engaged public actors. Some sought to redefine public space, presenting an image of perfection that they hoped would inform public relations among individual and institutional actors. Others sought to produce beautiful natural
environments at the expense of public needs for shelter and security. All of them, as will be seen, however utilized planning and policy to impose an artificial order for controlling and predicting urban manifestations of risk and crisis in which financial threats were considered most significant.

The Renovation of London: A Great Conflagration

The city of London began as the Roman city-state of Londinium during the rise of the empire, but was abandoned by the Romans in 410 BCE as a result of imperial instability (S. Inwood 1999). The Saxons inhabiting the area established farmsteads in what remained, many of which became centers for everyday life in Modern London, including Enfield, Hampton, and Chelsea. London grew and changed throughout the Medieval period, seeing the inclusion of Westminster by the Strand and military contests among the Anglo-Saxon, Danish, and Norman armies. While famine, disease, and warfare restricted population growth during the early Medieval period, London’s population increased to almost two-hundred thousand under Tudor rulership. The city itself, however, was not truly constructed in any wide-spread or uniform manner until after Henry VIII’s dissolution of English, Welsh, and Irish religious houses in the Sixteenth century. Without institutions around which to organize, London’s urban development was increasingly determined by the interests of the crown and landed aristocracy. Much of the wealth horded by local monasteries was, liberated by their dissolution, but would be primarily used to fund Henry VIII’s military campaigns. While scholars educated in Italian Renaissance Humanism such as Desiderius Erasmus were not wrong in critiquing English religious houses for their many corruptions, the dissolution of these communal institutions concentrated control over urban development in the hands of King Henry VIII. Many of these sites had served as libraries and hospitals, providing necessary resources for individual and institutional actors dwelling
within the cities that grew up around them. Without these sites, widespread forms of urban development would proceed along the lines established ruling powers, rather than the needs of public civic actors, resulting in the dissolution of communicative and commercial relationships among civic actors dwelling in what few urban areas existed, leaving them unable to maintain the constitution of many Medieval cities.

During the Seventeenth century, however, London would suffer what were likely the most destructive events of its long history. At the time, London was inhabited by nearly half a million residents with holdings that extended far beyond the old city walls. Internally, the city was often described as a highly disorganized bundle of streets and buildings; a sprawl of urban traffic that flowed between low, wooden buildings, squares, and marketplaces. The high frequency of unregulated urban growth over the centuries gave London and organic, unplanned form that functioned well with the diversity of communicative and commercial relationship that emerged among those dwelling within it. During the 1640s, London witnessed a series of civil wars between Parliamentary and Royal armies that allowed King Charles I to seize control of the kingdom. As more people began to inhabit the city, new spaces for leisure and labor were carved out, producing a densely populated urban environment wherein plague and poverty became the norm. An outbreak of bubonic plague pushed any remaining members of the aristocracy into the countryside where they kept their estates in 1666, leaving many of the poor to labor in the squalor of London’s mills and manufacturing plants. As the commercial heart of the capital, the inner city of London was dominated by those engaged in international trade and manufacturing, receiving natural resources from colonial holdings and producing goods that would rarely be purchased by those who were making them.
In September of 1666, however, The Great Conflagration would begin as nothing more than a bakery fire and be fanned into a firestorm that resulted in destroying what little remained of London’s ancient foundations. Spread throughout the exceedingly flammable and tightly knit city streets by high winds, the fire was responsible for the destruction of over 3,200 homes, 87 parishes, the renowned St Paul's Cathedral, and most of the buildings owned by city authorities. Although the use of firebreaks, destroying potentially flammable areas to prevent the further spread of the fire, had been in use for decades, city leadership were hesitant to respond and allowed the flames to give way to total social disorder. Although the southward spread of the fire was halted by the Thames, the city’s financial center was threatened by the fire’s northward spread. With flames of 2,280 F (1,250 C), many were desperate to recover their wealth before it was destroyed. This desperation is captured in the personal Diary of the royal courtier John Evelyn (1901/2013):

“The conflagration was so universal, and the people so astonished, that, from the beginning, I know not by what despondency, or fate, they hardly stirred to quench it; so that there was nothing heard, or seen, but crying out and lamentation, running about like distracted creatures, without at all attempting to save even their goods; such a strange consternation there was upon them, so as it burned both in breadth and length, the churches, public halls, Exchange, hospitals, monuments, and ornaments; leaping after a prodigious manner, from house to house, and street to street, at great distances one from the other. For the heat, with a long set of fair and warm weather, had even ignited the air, and prepared the materials to conceive the fire, which devoured, after an incredible manner, houses, furniture, and every thing” (pp. 20-21)
While many thought St. Paul’s Cathedral might escape the destruction, the wooden scaffolding spelt disaster for this building and then numerous stocks that printers and booksellers had attempted to preserve there. By the third day of the fire, it had turned eastward, toward the Tower of London and its stores of gunpowder. Only the local garrison halted the fire’s advance, demolishing large swaths of housing to create necessary firebreaks.

While the total number of dead was difficult to calculate, the trauma of the Great Conflagration left deep holes in the urban fabric of London. Many sought to identify various causes of the fire: natural, human, architectural. The fire, like all crises, had no singular cause and could not be pinned on any individual or institutional actor. This speculation produced wild conspiracies theories of papal plots, foreign political powers, and domestic terrorists. But no cause was of sufficient complexity to explain the tragic events experienced by London’s urban population and the financial losses of her landed elite. What is most significant about these events is how they spawned and gave legitimacy to the assessments of leaders in risk and disaster management. The Great Conflagration inspired the creation of an organized fire department within the city, the extension of insurance to private property and land (where it had previously been used to protect investments in seafaring, merchant ventures and colonial trade), and some of the first regulatory standards for urban planning and development.

In this sense, it could be argued that Modern standards for urban planning and policy, particularly urban risk and crisis management, were born of the destruction from the Great Conflagration. Rebuilding necessitated the use of fire-resistant materials such as brick and stone, replacing the flammable wooden structures that had given the city its more flexible form. Streets were widened to ensure access for fire departments and local architects submitted numerous master plans for rebuilding. Many of these plans for urban development sought to modernize
London, exemplifying Baroque styles that discarded the chaos of the medieval street plan the rational and efficient grid. The most well-known of these was probably the plan proposed by Sir Christopher Wren which favored a rational grid layout with wide roads, large squares, and buildings that were designed to be both formally and functionally similar. These grandiose plans exemplifying the Baroque tendencies for excess, and ostentation were contrary to the needs of the immediate needs of the people and their leaders. London needed to be rebuilt quickly and have its economy stabilized. Rather than falling into the standardized plans proposed by architects such as Wren, rebuilding was done in a more piecemeal fashion by those who had suffered the tragedy of the fire with the regulation and assistance of the Crown.

London’s history, in this sense, is significant for considerations of urban risk and crisis management. The disastrous events of the Great Conflagration not only inspired the need for regulations concerning land use and construction, but inspired the profession of risk assessment that remains central for how urban governments manage city planning and rebuilding. The fire not only destroyed sites that had become essential for the communicative and commercial processes by which the city was constituted, but also created opportunities for rebuilding the city within the organic formations of human relationships that came to public attention before, during, and after the disaster. In this sense, the Great Conflagration of 1666 can teach city leaders a great deal about urban risk and crisis management, particularly about how disorganization can offer dialogic opportunities for engaging publics in participatory forms of response, while also increasing the manifest risk and crises of urban contexts. In this sense, the trouble for individual and institutional actors is not that crises occur (A. H. Thomas 1940). Cities are characterized by crises and, as fallible human institutions, cannot possibly exist without the uncertainties of risk and crisis that accompany possibilities of growth and discovery.
The real trouble for cities is, in actuality, to discover how the individual and institutional actors dwelling within them are able to thoughtfully engage one another in collaboratively managing urban manifestations of risk and crisis, what resources are available for publics to manage the meanings of these phenomena, and why situated forms of public response are so important for the urban ecologies of communication cities constitute. Each of these troubles are exemplified in the case of London’s urban development and the Great Conflagration. As such, it must be recognized that urban government should mediate public forms of engagement and exchange necessary occurring among public actors, facilitating responses before, during and after crises are recognized. In this way, local governments can cultivate a sense communal identity rooted in shared history and culture that does not reduce individual and institutional actors to mere economic aggregates but allows them to recognize how they participate in urban manifestations of risk and crisis.

In the next century, London would see a credit boom that allowed merchants, bankers, and manufacturers to expand their businesses and contribute to the internal improvements of the city and thirteen American colonies. Increased wealth, however, resulted in producing a credit crisis between the years of 1770 and 1772, resulting in an exponential increase in bankruptcies throughout London by 1773. The crisis, itself produced as a result of The Bengal Famine of 1770 exacerbated by the East India Trading, caused many speculators to experience massive losses (D. Coffman, J. Z. Stephenson, and N. Sussman 2021). In response, the Crown was forced to issue a number of acts that protected the financial interest of the East India Trading company and increased taxes in the thirteen American colonies, actions that culminated with the events of the Boston Tea Party and, eventually the American Revolutionary War. The economic networks in
which London was entwined not only allowed for the city to prosper, but generated a series of commitments that would alter the internal structure of relations that constituted the city.

The emerging global economy would condition and constrain the shape London assumed during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries. As industrialization began to take hold throughout and colonies rebelled against English rule, London would be shaped and reshaped, becoming a patchwork city possessing an urban fabric constituted by interactions among individual and institutional actors from many different origins. While the city suffered numerous crises of public health, socio-economic disruption, and institutional failure throughout its long history, urban planning and policy would remain central for managing urban manifestations of risk and crisis in the city. The implications these techniques had and the questions they generated for individual and institutional actors participating in the urban contexts of everyday public life, however, remain significant for how other European cities managed urban manifestations of risk and crisis, particularly in Nineteenth century Paris.

**The Renovation of Paris: Building Against Revolution**

Between 1760 and 1850 European cities experienced a period of rapid industrial change, resulting in the unfettered expansion of commercial interest, profit speculation, and systemic moral corruption. The industrial revolution not only produced advancements in production, manufacturing, and power that enabled new ways of life in many cities, but reshaped cities into the Modern metropolitan areas of the Twentieth century. Within the historical-cultural context of the industrial revolution, urban ecologies of communication and commerce became mechanized processes of financial transaction and information exchange that abstracted them from the contexts of their practice among individual and institutional actors.
As such, the underlying principles of planning and policy in industrial cities often favored simple, direct, and one-dimensional relations at the neglect of more complex and contradictory forms of experience, supplanting the qualitative uncertainties of human experience with the quantitative certainty of mathematics, statistics, and the technical sciences. Such orientations cultivated a particular understanding of communication and commerce that favored ethics of endless growth and consumption, crushing many cities under the weight of their own ever-growing populations. While breakdowns were not common in cities, advancements in technology, economy, and science exponentially increased the rates of urban change and the impact these changes had on the socio-economic networks in which individual and institutional actors engaged one another. The civic character of cities as such was not outright destroyed, but slowly neglected by advancing waves of technological, economic, and scientific change, each of which were enabled and proliferated by taken for granted techniques of urban planning and policy. Much like the city-states of the late Roman empire, modern metropolises suffered at the hands of their own success.

Paris, in particular, emerged from the industrial revolution as a site in which modern ideals of urban planning and policy could be applied to everyday problems of urban life (de Oliveira 2019). In the Nineteenth century, cities such as Paris which had retained its medieval organization became centers of overcrowding that resulted in poverty, famine, criminal activity, and ultimately revolution. The benefits of the industrial revolution provided the necessary conditions for individual and institutional actors to gather in urban centers, creating opportunities for innovative ways of making a living with others in close proximity and an increased set of physical, financial, and social risks. Over population and lack of sanitation standards resulted in multiple cholera outbreaks between 1832 and 1848. More people living and working within the
city meant more foot and carriage traffic, creating a demand for wider roads between buildings. The streets of Paris were, likewise, often the setting for acts of social and political revolution that would be subjected to prediction and control by modern forms of urban planning. Between 1830 and 1848 the city center served as the site of seven armed conflicts that culminated with the overthrow of King Louis-Philippe and the establishment of the Second Republic under President Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, who named himself Emperor Napoléon III of France in a military coup d’état shortly after. During the events of revolution, Parisian residents used the narrow streets to build stone barricades that prevented the advance of King Louis-Philippe’s soldiers and gave them enough control to win the war.

Intentional or not, many of Napoléon III’s attempts to modernize the city not only prevented active forms of rebellion but made them nearly impossible; widening streets, opening spaces up, and removing the medieval foundations on which Paris had been built allowed Napoléon III to control the sense of everyday Parisian life. While his predecessors had proposed similar methods for modernizing the city, including the wider roads, expanded city squares, and the building of canals and monumental sites within the city, it would not be until after 1850 when Napoléon III passed a law requiring Parisian residences to maintain a minimum standard for public health. Napoléon III had been particularly impressed by the urban planning and design of opulent cities such as London and desired to remake Paris in this modern image. For this, Napoléon III appointed Georges-Eugène Haussmann as Prefect of the Seine to oversee one of the largest urban renovation and development projects in the history of city management in 1853 (M. Carmona 2002). In this role, Haussmann embodied the singular urban planner seeking
to resolve the complexities and conflicts that had always been part of urban experience in Paris, and he did so from a singular perspective and voice.

The renovation of Paris began with the construction of the great a cross in in the city intended to the efficiency and effectiveness of communication between neighborhoods north to south along the Strasbourg and Sébastopol boulevards and east to west along the rue de Rivoli and rue Saint-Antoine (S. Kirkland 2014). This project, which began long before Haussmann had been appointed, was intended for completion by 1855 and Haussmann would use all of the powers granted him by the emperor to finish within the two-year window. Simplified expropriation laws passed by the French Senate in 1851 allowed Haussmann to seize land for use by the state open it for the use of federal and private forms of investment that would serve as a model for all future urban development projects. The second phase of renovations began in 1958 and included an ambitious plan for connecting internal streets and boulevards to an outer ring of grand boulevards and train stations that would serve as the true doors to the city. This second phase included multiple construction and restoration projects that entirely remade the face of the city, opening Haussmann up to criticism. Under Napoléon III, many cities throughout France would come to mirror Paris, opening spaces in which people had once gathered and remaking themselves in the modern image of efficiency and individualism. Napoléon III annexed the suburbs of Paris in 1860 doubling its population size before the third phase of renovations proposed in 1869. Haussmann’s questionable borrowing, funding, and governance resulted in the passing of a new law that gave the Legislative Assembly oversight into the city finances and control over how urban development could take place. In 1870, Napoléon III asked Haussmann to resign his post and was eventually forced to dismiss Haussmann when he refused.
While Haussmann served as Prefect for less than a decade, the particular brand of urban development he employed would have social, political, and economic implications for generations to come. The expansion and pavement of the streets protected the city not from outside attacks as the walls of the medieval city had, but from internal forms of rebellion and revolution, marrying civil and military engineering as Richard Sennett (2018) and Lewis Mumford (1961) have noted. The infrastructure for sewage and water constructed under Haussmann brought the middle class back into the city, reducing chances of disease and increasing urban commerce. But Haussman’s many projects bankrupted Paris after fifteen years of development and the spaces he had created to cater to the powerful became repurposed by the remainder of the population. In this sense, the streets designed to be easily controlled by military forces became the theatre not of war, but of everyday life, drawing greater and greater numbers of people out into the streets and cafes. This generated a culture of spectatorship that was enabled by the invention of plate glass windows and the department store.

Sennett compares these spaces and the movement-oriented culture of the Parisian street with the contemplative and more focused dwelling of the Parisian arcade. As Sennett (2018) notes, the “arcade in form is a glass-roofed passage cut into the fabric of big streets, faced on its side by small shops . . . It was slower-growing and small in scale. Haussmann disliked the arcades precisely because they were cobbled together rather than planned in advance” (p. 35). In this sense, the plans and policies developed by Haussmann are shown as being biased towards the efficiency, individualism, and material forms of progress that were empowered by industrial production in Europe and stood in stark contrast with the spaces for dwelling and community that were embodied by the Parisian arcades. One favored communication and commerce that was based in simple, frictionless, and individualized forms. The other was founded on the ideal of
building and dwelling with others in a complex and contradictory community held together by a network of committed relations, an urban ecology of communication in which trust was distributed among public actors rather than handed down from on high by a master planner.

The financial crises spurred by Haussmann’s renovation of Paris not only had consequences for the social well-being of those dwelling within the city but empowered city leaders, giving them the ability to predict and control movements of people and capital within the city. Haussmann’s practices of city management laid a foundation for techniques and technologies of urban planning that sought to resolve the problems of city life by forcing parts into a coherent but predetermined whole rather than recognizing the holistic experience of urban life in the interactions of people, place, and practice that constitute urban ecologies of communication. In this way, Haussmann’s renovations had effects that spread far beyond Europe influencing discourses of architecture and urban planning throughout the world. In this, the notion of a rational system for predicting and controlling urban challenges became the norm and could be seen in all parts of the city, from the streets to structures of governance, to city infrastructures, and architectural designs.

**The Renovation of New York: Olmstead’s Park, Others’ Peril**

As Sennett (2018) notes, the modern ideals of efficiency, individualism, and progress embodied in the urban planning and policies if Paris had a profound influence on proposals for the construction and design of a modern New York City. The underlying principles of urban planning in Paris and London, and the overt character of architect-planners such as Baron Haussmann and Christopher Wren provided the foundation upon which the Modern city could be built and carried on the tradition of creating an ordered system out of what many perceived to be the chaos of urban life. In this spirit, New York City leaders pursued plans for the construction of
an additive grid on Manhattan Island in 1811 that would allow them to more easily manage the essential processes of communication and commerce that held the city together and integrated it into the industrial network of a global economy.

The extension of this additive grid in 1868 not only provided more space for an ever-growing population of new immigrants and former slaves within the city, but also consumed every farm, village, and settlement in its path, imposing the rational order of the city upon those dwelling in the surrounding areas. Its presence as a major port and location for industrial production situated new work at the center of trade networks that united London and Paris, triggering an exponential increase in the city’s population during the Nineteenth century (E. R. Ellis 1966/1997). The population of New York City had grown to a little over one million people between the years of 1810 and 1860, roughly twice the population of other major cities along the east coast such as Boston and Philadelphia. The invention of the steamboat and the establishment of multiple trade routes along the rivers and canals of New York state in the Eighteenth century had made it possible for New York to exist as a gateway to the rest of the United States, securing its position as a hub for communication and commerce.

The networks of engagement and exchange that spurred the growth of New York City, however, also resulted in higher concentrations of human and financial capital, creating an urban ecology of ever-increasing complexity that was highly prone to the emergence of risk and crisis phenomena. The Norfolk and Long Island Hurricane, one of the first of three tropical storms recorded in the 1821 hurricane season flooded areas of New York City south of Canal Street and contaminating local water supplies and spreading diseases that had long existed within the city proper: cholera, yellow fever, malaria, measles, and smallpox. In this sense, the success of New York City as a hub for immigration and trade made it more susceptible to new strains of familiar
diseases while its geographic position facilitated the spread of those diseases throughout the Northeast. Such diseases were particularly troubling the poorer populations of New York City, especially the many immigrant populations and freed slaves living in and around Greenwich Village. Violent conflicts among New Yorkers were common. A combination of poverty, disease, and lack of security drove many into the shelter of gangs who controlled the Bowery and Five Points areas, two groups who readily and actively opposed the abolition of slavery which had been written into New York City law on July 4th, 1827.

In 1834, these gangs began a wave of terrorism in the five Points area that ended with the destruction of St. Phillip’s Negro Church, and act that clearly and violently communicated the discontents of local immigrants. Between 1832 and 1835 New York City residents witnessed periodic outbreaks of epidemic disease and gang violence that eventually ended in the widespread destruction of the city during the Great Fire of New York. In December of 1935, during a period of economic expansion and increased building, a fire broke out on Beaver Street that would spread over seventeen city blocks, destroying hundreds of buildings and causing upwards of $20 million in property damage (or $538 million when adjusted for inflation). The frozen rivers and high winds made the fire difficult to control, but local firefighters were finally able to stop its movements by creating firebreaks, much like during the London fire. The fire struck at the heart of New York City’s financial district many merchants lost their stores. This would be followed by the Panic of 1837, a financial crisis that resulted from the speculative lending practices that fueled the expansion of the city between 1834 and 1836. The financial district of Lower Manhattan would also suffer the consequences of another large fire in 1845, establishing the value of building codes throughout the city and encouraging local planners and
developers to engage in a surge of construction that would renovate the city and establish it as a modern metropolis.

In the mid-Nineteenth century, amateur landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead recognized how destructive urban expansion had become. New York City had not only emerged as a central location for industrial and commercial production, but also for waste, violence, dissent, and corruption (J. Martin 2011). Like the urban planners of London and Paris, Olmstead sought to create an environment that would counteract human vices; preventing natural, financial, and social disasters that seemed to proliferate within the physical and economic context of New York City from occurring. New York’s existence as a financial hub allowed the city’s population to outpace its public services and the city sought plans to manage the concentrations and complexities that characterized urban life. In 1940 a number of New York City elites, including William Cullen Bryant and Andrew Jackson Downing called for the construction of new public works including an aqueduct water system and grand central park in Manhattan that would provide the city with a center for public interaction. While Olmstead and his colleagues envisioned Central Park as a space in which people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds could interact with one another, the construction of the park was mired with challenges.

Although Jones’s Wood, a forested area of the Upper East Side was initially proposed as the site for Central Park, construction was easily opposed by the wealthy families who lived there. The park commissioners eventually selected an area known as the Seneca Village, a thriving community of freed black slaves and Irish immigrants that had been founded on the northern outskirts of New York City in 1825. Although slavery had been illegal in the city for well over thirty years, racism and xenophobia remained common among many of the city’s elites
and perpetuated an ever-present feeling of oppression that drove many former slaves to the safety of Seneca Village. As Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar’s (1992) work has demonstrated, the years leading up the razing of Seneca Village and the construction of Central Park were filled with legal battles between the residents and numerous accounts of racial discrimination. The central Park Commissioners, including Olmstead and his planning partner Calvert Vaux began clearing out Seneca Village in 1855, using the power of imminent domain to seize land from residents and rebuild area in ways that favored the economic elite of New York. While those residents of Seneca Village who owned land were compensated, they often received less than the value of their land and were rarely afforded the opportunities of wealthier city residents after the development process. The city eventually charged holdouts rent for remaining on the land, using rarely enacted policies to push people from the area. By 1857 all residents of Seneca Village had been ousted and all remaining properties on the land were razed.

While Olmstead, in particular, intended Central Park to be an open space in which people from different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds could engage one another in cultivating civic relationships of mutual respect, the construction of the park set a precedent for shutting out those who could not afford property along its edges, creating a space that mostly served wealthier families. Within forty years Central Park had become little more than a playground for the people living in mansions along its edges, preventing poorer immigrant families and descendants of slaves from achieving similar standards of living. By imposing the park upon a thriving community of diverse inhabitants, Olmstead and Vaux had created the necessary conditions for social and economic precarity, generating a homogenous neighborhood around Central Park. Such practices established the lines along which urban planning and policy would be used to address problems in the city for decades. The construction of Central Park and efforts
to renovate New York city in the Nineteenth century would, in this way, follow the path laid out by many European city managers while also paving the way for many other Reconstruction Era American Cities to follow. Although the racial and ethnic injustices that coincided with Central Park’s construction would fade from public view, their effects would be felt well into the Twentieth century and would be made most overt in the planning and policy techniques that enabled the urban renewal movement. In the interim, political machines such as Tammany Hall ensured the many Irish immigrants received opportunities denied to the descendants of formerly enslaved peoples, perpetuating racial inequalities that resurged in the urban planning and policy of New York City during the Twentieth century.

**Simple Solutions, Complex Problems: The Limited Sense of Modern Urbanism**

The previous section demonstrated how principles of urban planning and policy emerged alongside Modern ideologies of individual autonomy, efficiency, and progress during the European Renaissance and Industrial Revolution. These ideological foundations not only perpetuated a limited framework for defining urban manifestations of crisis in cities, but also provided formal principles for how these phenomena were managed by urban planning and policy. In this sense, the history of urban risk and crisis management in London, Paris, and New York are likewise histories of how modern values of individual autonomy, efficiency, and progress became embedded within urban environments, themselves.

There is a tragic irony in attempting to predict and control urban manifestations of risk and crisis. Abstract understandings of the city promote oversimplified interpretations of the risks and crises emergent therein and, in this way, produce solutions that rarely account for the full scope, impact, or meaning of risk and crisis phenomena within the lives of individual and institutional actors dwelling within public contexts of their emergence. As such the formal
principles underlying planning and policy approaches to urban risk and crisis management were responsible for shaping cities in ways that only ensured the public health and safety of select groups rather than city as a whole. In this way, urban risk and crisis management has been reduced to a redistribution of risk and crisis phenomena, rather than an active confrontation with their complexity.

There is no plainer example of how planning and policy have failed to adequately manage urban manifestations of crisis than the numerous attempts by urban governments to pursue large-scale projects in urban renewal and regeneration. Throughout the Twentieth century urban renewal movements sought to ensure public health and safety by addressing what has been described as the crisis of urban blight and decay within cities throughout the United States and Europe (K. T. Jackson 1985). Blighted areas were identified by the number of abandoned buildings, irregular plots, inadequate streets, and municipal services for sanitation and drainage they contained. Leaders of these movements focused their attention on the frequencies of criminal incidents, fire hazards, traffic congestion, pollution, and overcrowding as identifying characteristics of “problem” areas in urban contexts.

While these factors were useful for creating standards of public health and safety, they rarely accounted for the wider socio-economic causes of urban blight, approaching crises of poverty and labor in terms of a broken windows theory. Broken windows theory states that a minor breakdown in a neighborhood, such as a building with broken windows, precedes and perpetuates further neglect. This theory holds that an area is neglected because the people dwelling there are either unable or uninterested in attempting to fix the “broken windows” and defines crises in terms of particular incidents of breakdown rather than focusing on the urban ecologies of communication in which these breakdowns occur and become meaningful in the
lives of city residents. In this sense, the leaders of the urban renewal movements saw themselves as similar to doctors who had identified cancerous areas in the public body of the city and sought to cutting them out.

But cities are not any one body, and their problems cannot be understood from any singular perspective. As Jacobs recognized in her critique of urban renewal, cities are not mere organisms, but complex ecologies constituted by a mixture of overlapping and intersecting relationships that are cultivated among highly concentrated groups of individual and institutional actors as they engage one another in communicative and commercial practice. Cities in this sense, exist as self-organizing systems in which individuals and institutions are bound together in making a life worth living with others and managing meaningful experiences of risk and crisis phenomena in terms of the public relations they share. In this sense, the communicative and commercial constitution of the city as an urban ecology provides publics with a historical cultural ground of collective memory that allows publics to figure everyday experiences risk and crisis.

The complexity of urban ecologies not only creates conditions that produce risks and crises, but also provide public actors with multiple means of situating these phenomena, contextualizing them in meaningful ways that go beyond abstract statistical projections of quantitative analyses. As a wholistic system, the problems of the city can only be understood and resolved from within by the actors whom these problems implicate in an immediate way. When leaders of the urban renewal movement attempted to ‘cut out the cancer’ of urban blight, they only ever attempted to understand these circumstances from the outside and, therefore, produced solutions that cured the disease but killed the patient, rendering areas of the city more lifeless than they were before planning and policy intervened.
Inspired by Jacob Riis documentation of everyday life in the New York City slums around the turn of the Twentieth century works from German sociologists concerned with city life such as Max Weber, Georg Simmel, and Oswald Spengler, the urban renewal movements were driven by a single-minded hope that urban governments could sort out the problems of city life and lay them bare for the people who lived there. This hope to perfect city life followed from an understanding that the city could be fully understood by one person or group of people who could then predict and control it in an effort to ensure uniform standards for public health and safety. Urban sociologists in Chicago such as Louis Wirth, Robert Park, and Robert Redfield pursued ethnographic studies of urban culture that objectified city life and provided an intellectual foundation for urban renewal, while city and town planners such as Ebenezer Howard and Sir Patrick Geddes sought to restore the pastoral ideals of country life in urban contexts.

Although these movement were informed by leaders in the natural and social sciences, guided by the learned hands of urban planners and policy experts, and funded by both state and federal governments, these movements nevertheless overlooked the ethical implications top-down forms of urban redevelopment would have for individual and institutional actors dwelling within and between cities (Jacobs 1961/1992a). Many of the movements for urban renewal consisted of razing the current buildings where poorer members of racially and ethnically diverse people dwelt, displacing large communities and severing the ties of communication and commerce that bound them together in the urban fabric. In this sense, the best intentions of urban planners and policy makers to address what they identified as a crisis paved the road to a hellish existence for those they hoped to help most and, in the process of development, produced far more crises with far fewer means to manage their significance in public experience.
Both from within and without the intellectual and ideological foundations of urban renewal remade cities into something that could be managed from above, understood with absolute certainty, and predicted and controlled as if they were technical machines. By cutting out or building over blight areas (more appropriately understood as socially and economically neglected areas), city governments could make cities safer and healthier, restoring them to their former glory. Viewing the city as a body (civil or otherwise) meant that many leaders of the urban renewal movements such as Le Corbusier, Robert Moses, and Daniel Burnham could approach cities as singular organisms that followed the same laws of hierarchy and order that any organism would follow. While cities are alive, it is wrong to understand them as all sharing the same sense of order or existing as a singular body. As Mumford, Jacobs, and Sennett understood later, cities are complex ecologies, dialogic tangles of relations cultivated among public actors in which crises both emerge and are managed in meaningful ways. That is to say that a city is not an organism in itself, but a complex ecology of public relations in which individuals and institutions figure their identities against the background of collective experiences and cultivate ethics for communication and commerce within the shared contexts of public life.

This was the understanding that drove many critiques of the urban renewal movement throughout the latter half of the Twentieth century. Between 1940 and 1970, the federal government funded urban renewal projects throughout multiple cities, including New York, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Los Angeles resulting in the wholesale destruction of local communities and the construction of new bridges, highways, housing projects, and public parks (J. Trounstine 2018; A. Mallach 2018; R. Rothstein 2017; E. Anderson 2000). Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a city globally recognized for being dirty, unhealthy, and dangerous was the first of many cities to pursue a modern program of urban renewal,
demolishing the heart of the city in order to construct public parks, office buildings, and even a sports arena. While these projects improved the financial stability of Pittsburgh business in downtown, they were detrimental for the historically black and ethnically diverse neighborhoods of East Liberty and the Hill District.

In this sense, the construction of a more efficient and effective system of transportation and communication in downtown Pittsburgh, threatened the ecologies of other city neighborhoods, segregating racial and ethnic minorities from the heart of the city and making it impossible for them to adequately participate in the benefits of development. The positive and negative consequences of urban renewal in Pittsburgh were recreated in the development projects pursued by many other cities throughout the United States (S. P. Hays 1989). Black families were thrown from their homes in the Detroit, Michigan, neighborhood of Paradise Valley when the city decided to construct an airport and series of highways (T. J. Sugrue 2014). Many of these families were left without relocation services, rendering them homeless and forcing them to move elsewhere. Nearly a third of the city of Boston was demolished in order to construct new high-rise apartments and new government buildings. These examples demonstrate how planning and policy both succeeded and failed in preventing the emergence of crises in urban contexts.

The events of the urban renewal movement are significant because they perpetuated modern ideologies of individual autonomy, efficient utility, and material progress that were essential for Modern ideas of human life in cities. Many of these same principles are inherent to contemporary understandings of urban risk and crisis management which argue for the redevelopment of urban contexts as machines that should be expected to run perfectly and without failure, ensuring the public health and safety of individual and institutional actors. New movements in urban renewal, including movements for smart, green, resilient, and restorative
cities, continue to provide simple solutions to the complex problems of urban risk and crisis. As the first chapter of this project demonstrated, current problems of urban risk and crisis management derive from how cities have been understood as mere aggregates of autonomous agents attempting to maximize their efficient utility within the limits of nature. But the precarity of urban life is conditioned and constrained by techniques in urban planning and policy that fail to account for the complexity of dialogic relations cultivated among public actors in cities.

**The Presents of Our Pasts: Urban Communication Implications**

As dialogically complex ecologies of communication and commerce in which individual and institutional actors cultivate ethical orientations toward others and a larger world, cities are recognized as value-laden contexts embedded with a number of taken for granted assumptions that are only ever revealed in experiences of risk and crisis. As the previous sections have demonstrated, planning and policy techniques used by many Twentieth century movements for urban renewal were often informed by modern ideologies of scientific, economic, and technological progress that originally emerged during the Renaissance and quickly spread throughout Europe. While these innovations in planning and policy were believed to give humanity some semblance of control over manifestations of risk and crisis in cities, the modern problems of urban life have only ever been minimally managed by city governments and have often been exacerbated by planning and policy proposals that aim to solve them. Cities became quite adept at responding to the challenges of initial disasters, but could rarely perceive the ethical implications that planning and policy would have on the communicative constitution of urban life. It was in this spirit that urbanists such as Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs, and Richard Sennett have critiqued many of the Twentieth century urban renewal movements that emerged in cities throughout Europe and the United States.
It is surprising then, that so many scholars in urban planning and policy continue to manage crises in ways that fundamentally oppose public participation. Finding their origins in the urban renewal movements of Ebenezer Howard (1965), Le Corbusier (1987), and Daniel Burnham (C. Smith 2006), these movements continue a long tradition of planners and policy makers addressing the perennial challenges of urban life by re-ordering cities in accordance with presupposed understandings of human rationality, public relations, and objective experience (Mumford 1936, 1961, 1966; Jacobs 1961, 1970, 1985, 1989, 1992b; Sennett 1969, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c, 1994). While such approaches have existed for millennia, they did not come to the forefront of public discussion until the postwar period of 1950s when Jane Jacobs contested renovations to New York neighborhoods proposed by Robert Moses (Caro 1975). Although the leading figures of the urban renewal movement and their works have been described as marvels of urban architecture, planning, development, and design, their interventions in urban life often imposed ‘proper,’ ‘right,’ ‘objective,’ or ‘rational’ orders for experience upon public dwelling in cities, prescriptively managing city life in ways that mitigate certain risks while increasing others.

By targeting specific problems perceived from a 10,000-foot view of cities themselves, the proponents of urban renewal responded to urban crises in ways that not only failed to account for the complexity of urban ecologies of communication in which publics dwelt with one another and particular crises emerged, but actively worked against the complexities of urban experience, simplifying the relations cultivated among publics to mere economic relations (Sennett 1992b, 2018). The urban renewal movements, in this sense, resulted in the dissolution of public places for cultivating relations of significance among individual and institutional actors dwelling in cities dissolving the networks of existential trust necessary for negotiating responses to risk and
crisis phenomena in everyday forms of communicative engagement (Lynch 1960, 1981; J. Gehl 2011, 2013; W. H. Whyte 1980/2001, 2009). Such oversimplifications, while useful for efficiently predicting and controlling change in urban contexts have been contested by architects such as Robert Venturi (1977) who argued that complexity and contradiction in urban architecture actually promote reflection among those dwelling there. Likewise, Charles Jenks (1973, 1977, 2011) noted the modern tendencies toward frictionless environments in architecture often promoted individualistic ethics based on hyper-efficient models of everyday life, tending away from communal dwelling and toward material accumulation and progress. While proponents of urban renewal programs throughout Europe and the United States were advocating for the dissolution of complex urban environments, others were attempting to understand how individuals and institutions had cultivated relations ships with one another therein, and found that such complexity created a richer understanding not just of oneself, or another, but of their continual relation to one another.

Presumptions implicit to the urban renewal movement often extend to more recent works in smart, green, resilient, and restorative city systems. The smart city movement of the past two decades have been the primary advocates for greater prediction and control in urban life. Smart cities, as originally described in the work of Mitchell (1998, 2000, 2003) weave digital systems of information and communication technology into the physical fabric of urban environments (Townsend 2013). The integration of physical and digital infrastructures, in this way, improves the speed, clarity, and efficiency of urban processes for communication and commerce, allowing cities to cope with high degrees information processing required for managing public responses to risk and crisis (P. C. Smith & D. M. Simpson 2009; S. Goldsmith & S. Crawford 2014). As such, many have argued that the technological innovations of smart cities, including
advancements in information and communications technologies (ICTs), artificial intelligence (AIs), the internet of things (IoT), and big data (BD), have the potential for improving the efficiency, sustainability, and resilience of urban systems, reducing a number of high-level threats considered in the planning and policy literature (V. Mayer-Shoenerberger & K. Cukier 2014; T. Soyata, H. Habibzadeh, C. Ekenna, B. Nussbaum, & J. Lozano 2019). Such literature argues that automated systems of response reduce possibilities for human error and supposedly prevent the chances of something not going as planned (Goldsmith & Crawford 2014; D. V. Gibson, G. Kozmetsky, R. W. Smilor 1992). For these reasons, a number of smart city proponents have argued that highly integrated networks of digital technologies not only allow cities to more easily compete in a global competition for human and financial capital, but protect private capital investments by guarding against the ever-emerging crises of urban life.

The proliferation of smart devices in urban environments has allowed city governments to disseminate information and monitor patterns of change, making the organization of public responses to urban risk and crisis phenomena easier to quantify and direct. Smart cities in this way provide urban governments with a number of strategic advantages for managing public perceptions of, responses to, and discussions about urban risk and crisis phenomena that allow them to maintain their central role as authorities defining what matters for publics. It must be acknowledged however, that these technologies merely allow city governments greater degrees of prediction and control over essential urban processes, not a deeper understanding of what the city, itself, is or how it is experienced by the individual and institutional actors dwelling therein. Digital systems, in this way, merely extend the ideological biases of a managerial approach to urban manifestations of risk and crisis without confronting their deeper meanings. For all intents and purposes, the central operating system of a smart city treats individuals and institutions as
mere aggregates of data readily abstracted from the contexts in which they dwell and makes them ready for immediate exchange in a global marketplace (Sassen 1991). Indeed, a smart city is ultimately a posthuman city, a ghost city, a city rendered into a perfectly predictable machine lacking the friction of human texture that generate revelatory experiences of the public relations cultivated among oneself and a larger world of others. What the highly integrated digital systems of smart cities cannot do is provide opportunities for individual and institutional actors to publicly engage one another in ways that reveal opportunities for responding to crisis in ways that eschew the conventional, managerial approaches common to urban planning and policy.

Dialogic engagements, in this sense, go beyond the banalities of mere operating procedures common to managerial techniques and information technologies commonly deployed in smart cities (S. Turkle 2011, 2016). Although highly integrated technological systems offer urban governments greater ability to predict, monitor, regulate, and control responses to urban manifestations of risk and crisis, they limit participatory opportunities for communicative engagements between individual and institutional actors struggling to respond in times of crisis, preventing them from situating their identities within the urban ecologies of communication cities constitute. In so far as smart cities rely on highly integrated digital technologies for monitoring and regulating urban processes, these processes remain invisible and inaccessible to everyday urban actors, just as the internal programs and software of smart phones are inaccessible to everyday users. The next section parses the implications these systems of urban risk and crisis management have for how publics experience the communicative dimensions of cities. By reflecting upon the urban communication literature, the next section hopes to lay the
foundation for discussing the history of urban risk and crisis management in Europe and the United States.

This chapter has provided a comprehensive review of how modern ideologies became embedded in contemporary urban contexts. The problems of cities are, ultimately, human problems and cannot be fully eliminated from public experience in cities. Cities and crisis, in this way, are always already implicated in one another. What remains to be seen, however, is an alternative way of managing these crises that works within the conditions and constraints of urban life rather than against them. That is, where modern methods of planning approach urban manifestations of crisis from in top-down ways, communicating the meanings of crises in monologic ways predicated on telling publics how to respond, the next chapter explores dialogic forms of risk and crisis management that treat cities and crises not in terms of particular events or wholistic generalizations but in terms of the relationship they have with one another. In this sense, modern techniques in planning and policy are shown to perpetuate monologic ethics of communication in their urban risk and crisis management. As such, the next chapter offers a dialogic approach to urban risk and crisis management that frames cities and their crises as urban ecologies of communication in which publics dwell with one another.
CHAPTER FOUR

Speaking the City: Dialogic Urbanism and Urban Communication Praxis

In 2018, the urban theorist and philosopher Richard Sennett published a book entitled 
*Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City*. While Sennett’s work had been well known in the 
areas of urban sociology, public communication, labor studies, and philosophy of technology for 
nearly sixty years, *Building and Dwelling* framed his corpus as a comprehensive and thorough 
study of how people cultivate ethics for everyday life with others in urban contexts. In doing so, 
Sennett relied upon the phenomenological perspectives of Tenshin Okakura Kakuzo (2018), who 
understood being not as taking control of one’s own existence, but as learning to participate in 
the existence of a world of others beyond ourselves. Such participation resembles an ongoing 
conversation with a world of others; an active, thoughtful, and open dialog, in which the promise 
and peril of life lived in close relation with others is recognized and foregrounded in urban 
contexts. In this way, urban contexts present individuals and institutions with multiple 
opportunities for engaging others in dynamic forms of communication necessary effective crisis 
management. As Sennett notes, dialog possesses an openness that is not contrary to the 
orthodoxy of urban planning and policy, but incorporates and extends it by working with public 
actors shape the city in ways that reflect their everyday lives and relations with one another.

In this sense, a dialogic urbanism offers a multitude of potential outcomes that, like 
crises, can neither be predicted nor controlled by those observing the city or processes from the 
outside. This very lack of predictability and control, in fact, provide individual and institutional 
actors in cities with opportunities for cultivating dynamic ethics of communication in which 
relations of existential trust are forged, enabling city residents to weather the storms and stresses 
of crises made manifest within the complexity and contradictions of urban contexts. The
theoretical foundations of urban communication study, particularly those which consider the rhetoric and philosophy of cities as media of communication, themselves, reflect Sennett’s dialogic urbanism and possess practical implications that are often overlooked in conventional approaches to urban planning and policy. This chapter elaborates the theoretical foundations for a dialogic urbanism derived from the interdisciplinary foundations of urban communication. The ‘a,’ in this particular instance, is of great importance because a dialogic urbanism cannot presume to be the correct way of understanding cities and their problems. No city nor its crises can be understood from a singular, monolithic perspective.

It is argued herein that cities are only ever spoken into existence by a cacophony of voices that resonate within and between them, across the temporal and special conditions of human existence. A dialogic urbanism, rather, opens discourses of planning and policy to the multiplicity of voices and perspectives constitutive of cities as urban ecologies of communication; the public sentiments of those dwelling together within cities as historical-cultural contexts of public ritual and collective memory; the contexts of public life in which crises are meaningfully situated among actors as they reckon with the everyday experiences of uncertainty, ambiguity, and ambivalence. A dialogic urbanism, as such, goes beyond orthodox theories of urban planning and policy to approach cities and their problems as communicative phenomena in which individual and institutional actors come to their senses of one another and. larger world and are always already implicated within the dialogic complexity of the crises that emerge therein. The work of Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs, and Richard Sennett synthesized an understanding of dialogic urbanism from historical and cultural studies of public life that went beyond mere planning and policy proposals for emergency risk and disaster management to include how cities were shaped as the consequence of an ongoing conversation among multiple
parties. This both provides fertile ground for crises to be made manifest as well as the revelatory potentials for those implicated in them to come to new understandings of how they relate to one another and a larger world.

While the first part of this project demonstrated how crises were made manifest in the history of cities throughout Europe and the United States, the second part of this project elaborates the theoretical foundations of a dialogic urbanism that is of requisite complexity for meeting the practical demands of urban risk and crisis management in this present moment. This current chapter presents dialogic urbanism as a hermeneutic framework for approaching cities and their problems as phenomena of communication in which multiple ways of crisis response are revealed within relations cultivated among public actors dwelling together in urban contexts. In this way, urban risk and crisis management consists of much more than merely monitoring extreme events and instructing publics about how to respond to them. By reframing cities as urban ecologies of communication in crisis, a dialogic urbanism allows issues of planning and policy become situated as questions of an urban communication praxis; begging city leaders and the institutions they represent to recognize how they have intentionally and unintentionally participated in generating crises and actively engage publics in addressing these crises. Both of these foundations, the theoretical understanding of cities found in a dialogic urbanism and its practical implications understood as a form of urban communication praxis cultivate a sense of what matters within urban contexts, refining crisis responses that are oriented by an ecological ethics of communication.

The contexts in which publics dwell inform thoughtful and responsive forms of communicative action in times of crisis, confronting city leaders with the reality that they cannot create a perfect system for urban life and must, instead, recognize how they participate within the
conditions and constraints of the city as a human context for complexity and contradiction. A dialogic urbanism, in this sense, allows urban risk and crisis management to be understood less as a prescriptive set of ‘best practices’ for urban planning and policy oriented toward emergency risk and disaster management and more as a lived-practice of continually thoughtfully working with individual and institutional actors to meaningfully situate experiences of crisis within the historical-cultural contexts of the city, itself. Such an approach allows publics to intuit responses that are of requisite complexity for the contexts in which crises emerge and develop over time, while also preparing governing institutions to facilitate these responses when extreme events do occur. This chapter offers an alternative way of understanding cities and their crises as phenomena of communication in which individual and institutional actors engage one another in dialog that shapes the city and its problems. By incorporating phenomenological studies of philosophy of communication and communication ethics, this chapter parses the elements of a dialogic urbanism found within the interdisciplinary foundations of urban communication and begins building toward an understanding of urban communication praxis in managing the risks and crises made manifest within urban contexts.

The elements of a dialogic urbanism are informed by three conceptual metaphors already introduced in this project. The first of these is Lewis Mumford’s (1934, 1966, 1989) notion of the human “will-to-order,” or the tendency for human animals to organize themselves and their world in ways that allow them to ‘make sense’ of experience symbolically, materially, and performatively. The second element of a dialogic urbanism discussed in this chapter is the notion of “organized complexity” as it was first by the historian of science Warren Weaver (1948) and later applied to cities in the works of Jane Jacobs (1992a, 2016). The ideas of Mumford and Jacobs then find their synthesis in the third element of a dialogic urbanism; that is, Richard
Sennett’s (2018) notion of building/dwelling in dialog as illustrated in the relation of the *cité* and the *ville*. These elements of dialogic urbanism suggest that cities are not merely static contexts controlled by political or economic interests, but historical cultural contexts of collective memory and public value; homes in which public actors dwell together and cultivate relationships in which public values are realized (Boyer 1994). While studies of collective memory are vast, they possess a great deal of relevance for how cities are organized themselves in response to risk and crisis phenomena. Such phenomena are assessed within the networks of relations cultivated among urban publics and provide ground for responding in ways that protect and promote public value.

A dialogic urbanism, in this way, bridges the gaps between the theory and practice of urban life and, therefore, open understandings of planning and policy to the communicative constitution of cities and the crises made manifest therein. The elements of a dialogic urbanism are then used in the next chapter to elaborate how city leaders can pursue urban risk and crisis management as a form of urban communication praxis, collaborating with the publics whom they serve and shaping cities in ways that reflect the public values of a life lived in close relation with others different from ourselves. An urban communication praxis approach is strengthened by the interdisciplinary foundations of studies in urban communication, incorporating more participatory forms of planning and policy in attempting to manage the challenges of urban life. The next section reviews the theoretical foundations for a dialogic urbanism in urban communication, particularly those which consider rhetorical, philosophical, and media ecological studies of cities and human civilization writ large. From these foundations it becomes easier for planners and policy makers to discern the elements of an urban communication praxis that
emerge from the work of Mumford, Jacobs, and Sennett. From these elements, the next chapter builds a praxis approach to urban risk and crisis management.

**Philosophical Foundations of a Dialogic Urbanism**

Studies in urban planning and policy rarely consider questions of public dialog as essential for shaping cities. As noted in an earlier section, public dialog is often reduced to a two-way, system for transmitting information that reflects a therapeutic ethos, rather than a fuller phenomenological moment in which multiple actors situate their experiences and identities in relation to one another and the larger historical-cultural context of a human world. Tore Sager (2015), a contributor to the *Oxford Handbook of Urban Planning* has argued that “[p]lanning is an institutionalized social technology for systematizing knowledge pertinent for a particular kind of collective action” (p. 26). In describing communicative forms of urban planning and policy, Sager described planning as a means of managing uncertainties within the urban environments, stating that “[u]ncertainty forces actors to prepare for several future scenarios of which only one will be realized . . . [u]ncertainty also complicates the planning process, as disagreement easily arises about which scenario is the most realistic and hence how resources should be allocated” (p. 27). Such considerations are common throughout the literature of urban planning, policy, and economic development, reinforcing the rigidity that makes urban systems so vulnerable to crises of environmental, economic, technological, and socio-political origin (N. Brooks, K. Donaghy, G. J. Knaap 2011; K. Mossberger, S. E. Clarkem & P. John 2012; R. Weber & R. Crane 2015). While not inaccurate, fail to fully account for how cities are constructed to manage the uncertainties of everyday life

More recent studies of risk and crisis management, particularly those conducted by scholars like Robert S. Littlefield and Timothy L. Sellnow (2015), have demonstrated that
uncertainty is often managed in communication with others and that such relations are recognized and understood in terms of the experiences of tension they create for all parties involved. Such tensions provide what could be understood as the formal cause for making crises manifest in communicative experience. While multiple parties may engage one another in attempts to resolve these tensions, it must be recognized that such engagements also give all involved a deeper understanding of these tensions, clarifying the realities of shared experiences and what truly matters in moments of crisis. Littlefield and Sellnow, in this way, argue that crises are actively and continuously managed on an interpersonal level by identifying points of tension within the relations cultivated among mutually implicated actors and understanding how those actors participate in negotiating what those tensions mean—symbolically, materially, and performatively—for the relations cultivated between oneself and a larger world of others.

While not studying the emergence of risk and crisis within the dialogic complexity of cities as urban ecologies of communication, Littlefield and Sellnow situate everyday experiences of risk and crisis as meaningful within interpersonal contexts of communicative theory and practice. Littlefield and Sellnow emphasize, in particular, the studies dialog and dialectics conducted by Leslie A. Baxter and Barbara M. Montgomery (1996), who argued that dialogic relations were best understood in terms of how individual and institutional actors navigated multiple tensions and commitments in communicative engagements with one another, situating experiences of uncertainty, ambivalence, and ambiguity within the mutual relations of self, other, and world. These tensions emerged within the complex tangle of dialogic relations cultivated among multiple actors engaging one another in communication over time and in a particular place, providing narrative foundations for meaningfully situating experiences and identities in ways that made sense for publics dwelling therein. Such perspectives reflect the complexities of
urban risk and crisis management in this current historical moment, acknowledging that crises emerge within the dialogic complexity of interpersonal relations and yet can only be resolved by identifying how those relations took shape within a given communicative context. The city, in this sense, both shapes and is shaped by the dialogic relations cultivated among public actors as they navigate the complexities of everyday life lived in close relation with others; constituting an ecology of communication in which crises emerge and are managed in thoughtful ways by mutually implicated public actors.

The insights of Baxter and Montgomery, however, did not emerge in a vacuum, relying instead upon the philosophical and rhetorical foundations of communication studies. The classical works of Protagoras, Plato, Lao Tzu, and Heraclitus in particular provided Baxter and Montgomery with understandings of dialogic complexity that did not deny the realities of uncertainty, ambivalence, and ambiguity in human experience, but foregrounded their significance in the relations cultivated among mutually implicated public actors in context. By approaching uncertainty, ambivalence, and ambiguity within the framework of dialogic complexity, crises could be understood as emerging between multiple actors as they attempted to figure their experiences in communication with one another. The works of Lao Tzu and Heraclitus are significant in this regard because they offer more dialogic understanding of conflict, wherein the competition among viewpoints is less significant than the relation foregrounded in the interaction among the parts and the whole they create, calling attention to the dialogic complexity of relations themselves.

1986, 1990, 1993). These philosophers recognized dialog as necessary for revealing the ontological, epistemological, and axiological realities of human thought and action in times of uncertainty and understood dialog not as a pre-determined technique for accomplishing any particular goal, but an ongoing way or ethic for participating within the complexity of a world of others different from ourselves. For these authors, dialog existed in perpetual relation with monologue as a form of communicative interaction and interplay; inextricably linking self, other, and world. Where dialog represented two or more interlocutors engaging one another within a context, monologue represented a singular interlocutor speaking into a context. Dialogic forms of communication, as such, are not merely understood as opposed to monologic forms, but as incorporating and extending them with in a wholistic ecology of communicative engagement with others. In this sense, ecologies of communication, likewise, not only represent the context in which communicative interactions among individual and institutional actors occur, but also extend monologic and dialogic ethics of communication and constitute their realities in public life.

Dialogic philosophies, in this way, situate communication not as a linear phenomenon of meaning transmission between two parties, but a multidimensional phenomenon of communication praxis within the multiplicity of human relations (P. Arneson 2007). Such relations are brought to the forefront of human attention in moments of crisis, signaling that something necessary has been taken for granted. In this sense, moments of dialogic encounter could be understood as the contexts in which crises emerge and become situated as meaningful forms of experience in both communicative engagements with others. Such understandings were presented in *Dialogic Civility in a Cynical Age* by Ronald Arnett and Pat Arneson (1999). Arnett and Arneson identified a crisis of public incivility in which individual and institutional actors not
only attacked one another, but failed to appropriately negotiate the multiple tensions of public life. Such considerations were, likewise, presented by Rob Andersen, Leslie A. Baxter, and Kenneth N. Cissna (2004) in their edited volume on *Dialogue: Theorizing Difference in Communication Studies*. From the perspective of urban risk and crisis management, dialogic encounters among different interlocutors provide both the formal conditions for crisis emergence and the internal principles for crisis management.

By understanding cities and their crises as dialogically complex ecologies of communication in which individual and institutional actors cultivate ethical orientations in communicating with one another and situating experiences of uncertainty as meaningful, city leaders would be approaching cities in terms of a dialogic urbanism that practices planning and policy not merely as forms of prediction and control, but as interactive and dynamic forms of communication with the publics whom they serve and the places in which they dwell. Such considerations were essential to the works of Richard Sennett, particularly the text of *Building and Dwelling*, in which the relation between the-city-as-built and the-city-as-lived is framed as one of dialogic complexity within the ecological conditions and constraints of relations cultivated among public actors in a particular time and place. As the historical reviews presented in Chapters Three and Four demonstrated, relations cultivated among public actors both constitute and are constituted by urban ecologies of communication in which crises emerge and become meaningful for everyday life. In this sense, the fundamental understandings of managing urban change presented by Sennett not only foreground the significance of communication in understanding how crises emerge, but also its importance in understanding how cities both shape and are shaped by the relations cultivated among publics.
Sennett’s work was heavily influenced by both Lewis Mumford and Jane Jacobs. The “will-to-order” is first defined Mumford (1934) in *Technics and Civilization*, in which he gave considerable attention to the socio-economic dimensions of technology in both producing and preserving human civilization. Mumford argued that the ways in which society and economy conditioned meaningful understandings of our relationships with others and a larger world provided not only a foundation for understanding human culture, but its relation to the natural world. For Mumford, cities were understood as containers meant to preserve human culture against the ‘chaotic’ forces of nature. As such, cities often exemplified what Mumford described as the “human will-to-order” one’s environment in ways that benefit their survival. Mumford argued that nature did not consist of a wholly chaotic series of unpredictable events, but constituted its own order for experience, one that is reflected in contemporary studies of risk and crisis management related to the various disasters affecting urban contexts.

The question for Mumford was, first and foremost, how humanity could learn to work in tandem with a natural order, shaping cities in ways that could account for and incorporate natural processes. Cities, Mumford, argued, were often constructed in ways that reinforced an artificial order, a false order, one of hierarchy, surveillance, and militaristic control, that would ultimately be detrimental for human existence. In this sense, classical urban planning and policy laid a foundation or urban governments to view the city as a machine, one which could be used to withstand the destructive forces of natural events and human enemies, preserving one’s empire even against the onslaught of time, at the expense of dynamic and mutable experiences. Such orders are recognized in contemporary systems of risk and crisis management that rely upon urban planning and policy as tools for regulating public experiences of crisis and directing ‘legitimate’ forms of response, producing systems of prediction and control which aim to
maintain a static order within and between cities. The question in the contemporary moment is not only how city governments construct cities within an order of natural conditions, but also within their own internal orders of human culture. As media, cities exist as means for negotiating the natural and cultural conditions of human existence, foregrounding the complexity of this relationship and its value for understanding how crises emerge from the communication breakdowns caused in times of natural, technical, financial, and social disasters.

Considerations of the complex ordering of urban contexts were, likewise, essential for the work of Jane Jacobs. Drawing upon Weaver’s (1948) understanding of historical developments in scientific thought, Jacobs argued that cities presented public stakeholders with problems of organized complexity in which uncertainty, ambiguity, and ambivalence were inherent. Weaver’s work distinguished between three developments in the history of scientific investigation. The first period of scientific thought demonstrated concern with problems of simplicity in studying the physical sciences. Problems of simplicity, according to Weaver were distinguished from problems of complexity insofar as they possessed fewer than one or two variables that could be easily demonstrated as having a causal relation. Problems of complexity, however, were described by Weaver as containing anywhere between three and three billion or more variables. In this sense, Weaver argued that problems of complexity made discerning causal relations between the parts too difficult for any outside observer, and therefore required additional methods of interpretation to understand in any detail. Weaver, therefore, distinguished between problems of disorganized complexity—in which parts had little to no inherent relation to one another or some greater whole and could only be analyzed as abstract, statistical patterns with no inherent order—and problems of organized complexity in which relationships among the parts and the whole are of the essence and create self-organizing patterns of interdependent
variables. It was this last category of problems, those of organized complexity, which were characteristic of urban challenges in planning and policy for Jacobs.

While problems of disorganized complexity were best characterized by studies of economic, statistical, and political science, in which presupposed laws of human relations and behavioral motivation were used to analyze quantitative data abstracted from a context to offer predictions for how individuals and institutions might react under certain circumstances, in problems of organized complexity, not even the circumstances of change could be understood as certain. Problems of organized complexity, in this sense, presented many more challenges for outside observers insofar as they possessed their own inherent patterns of relation that could not be presumed or presupposed without understanding how various parts actively participated in both the creation and negotiation of those patterns. Problems of organized complexity, in this sense, not only were not only inclusive of problems of simplicity and disorganized complexity but went beyond them to include considerations of various parts related to one another and a greater whole, foregrounding these relations as essential for understanding problems themselves. In Weaver’s understanding, the sciences most easily aligned with problems of organized complexity were the ecological sciences, sciences of environments and the relationships among animals living within them. Weaver’s understanding of ecology as a science of organized complexity was essential for Jacobs understanding of urban planning and policy as issues of public participation in making a living together within cities and provided an answer for how cultural orders of understanding emerged within the communication constitution of cities, themselves.

Jacobs’ description of cities as problems of organized complexity adequately reflects the considerations of Lewis Mumford while also including discussion of how individuals and
institutions actively participate in producing the emergent orders of communication in which crises become meaningful. The work of Mumford and Jacobs, therefore, not only lend themselves to understanding cities as communicatively constituted, as much of the work in urban communication has argued, but as the contexts in which mutually implicated public actors cultivate ethical orientations in their communicative interactions with one another. Whether these orientations embody the monologic ethics of urban planners or the dialogic ethics of everyday encounters among those dwelling within urban contexts, they both emerge within web of relations cultivated among individual, institutions, and the urban ecology of communication in which they dwell. In this sense, a philosophy of dialogic urbanism is rooted in the realization that urban communication only ever occurs within the ecological conditions and constraints of the city itself, foregrounding urban communication ethics as rooted in the ecologies of communication where public actors dwell in difference together.

This perspective, uniting the people and place of cities incommunicative relation with one another was emphasized by Richard Sennett’s work. The next section provides an overview of Richard Sennett’s contributions to urban communication studies and parses its implications for studying urban risk and crisis management as a form of urban communication praxis. In doing so, it is argued that urban contexts foreground communication ethics as not merely monologic or dialogic in nature, but ecologic, emphasizing the significance of the city as a dwelling place constituted in everyday forms of communicative practice that both give meaning to crises and provide a means for responding to them. It begins by reviewing Sennett’s corpus and framing it within studies of urban communication more generally before defining the significance of ecologic communication ethics for understanding urban risk and crisis management.
Dialogic Urbanism as an Eco-logical Communication Ethics

While not a scholar of communication ethics per se, Sennett’s work in urban theory owes significant credit to influences considered in the field of communication ethics itself (such as Hannah Arendt, Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, and Mikhail Bakhtin). Sennett’s work has received considerable attention in the communication literature, primarily for its considerations of the public sphere and the interpersonal relations cultivated within it (Arnett & Arneson 1999). Sennett has been included in the publication of *An Encyclopedia of Communication Ethics: Goods in Contention* as a scholar whose works are worthy of consideration in terms of the ethics of communication (M. V. Ortiz 2018). These considerations provide sufficient rationale for utilizing Sennett’s work as extending philosophies of a dialogic urbanism into the practical considerations of an ecologic communication ethics. Recognition of an ecologic communication ethics, much like the monologic and dialogic ethics it encapsulates, provides communicative ground for understanding how risk and crisis phenomena both emerge and become meaningful within the complex relations cultivated among public actors within and between cities; providing both a necessary and sufficient understanding of crisis management within the historical-cultural contexts of cities themselves.

This section provides an overview of Sennett’s works in urban theory, situating them as studies of urban communication that address urban manifestations of risk and crisis as moments in which the ethical character of relations cultivated among individual and institutional actors are tested. This is not to imply that such relations are inherently or essentially ‘good’, but that such relations are often used as a theoretical horizon for interpreting moments of uncertainty, ambiguity, and ambivalence while simultaneously justifying practical forms of actionable response. Monologic, dialogic, and ecologic communication ethics must, in the Sennett’s sense,
be understood in plural as ethic(s) which imping upon multiple people, in different historical moments, across cultural contexts. After reviewing of Sennett’s early works, this section moves on to consider the significance of Sennett’s understanding of a craft in his ‘Homo Faber’ trilogy. In this sense, the ‘craft’ of urban risk and crisis management in cities is not limited to planning and policy, but becomes distributed among individual and institutional actors engaging one another in negotiating what crises mean and situating those meanings within the larger historical-cultural contexts of urban life; creating narratives that compete and reinforce one another’s legitimacy within the public memory of an urban ecology of communication.

Within Sennett’s dialogic urbanism, an ecological communication ethics protects and promotes the public goods of a historical cultural context, itself; that is, the places wherein people dwell and engage one another in communicative practices that cultivates relations among publics and give them their character, allowing both individuals and institutions to making a living together in the city. Sennett’s earliest works on the city, concerned the sociological topics of family and personal identity. In observing how cities both a shaped and were shaped by the relations among individual and institutional actors, Sennet recognized a certain crisis occurring around the mid- to late-twentieth century, one which reduced the dynamic textures of urban life and remade them in favor of individuality, efficiency, and predictability.

Sennett’s (1970) The Uses of Disorder provides critique of how excessive and homogenous order in urban environments produced during periods of renewal provided a foundation for understanding the ways in which individual and institutional actors cultivated identities in relation with their everyday environments, producing overly simplistic responses to complex problems. Responses to risk and crisis emergent within such environments often relied upon statistical forms of prediction and control that promoted singular forms of response based
on a preconceived notions of ‘rational’ and ‘objective’ outside observers. Rather than meeting
the organized complexity of urban ecologies as media of human communication or networks of
socio-economic relations, themselves, urban planners and policy makers reshaped cities into
standardized, frictionless environment in which human flourishing could rarely be achieved
outside of the limited practices of consumption and production.

Such environments stultified the dynamic practices of communication in which
individual and institutional actors could engage one another, reducing them to mere processes of
stimulation and reaction; mere efficient signals in which crises were defined as limited threats to
be predicted and controlled in a top-down manner. Such responses sought easy answers that
often resulted in blaming particular individuals, groups, or circumstances and corroded relations
of existential trust among those dwelling in cities. The reduction of urban complexity, therefore
generated a reduction in communicative complexity, preventing dynamic forms of
communicative thought and action that had originally promoted diverse forms of civic
participation, relational commitment, and character formation. In this sense, *The Uses of
Disorder*, as many of Sennett’s works, privileged the diversity of *placemaking* as a craft
individual and institutional actors relied upon the communicative practices of cultivating
relationships with one another in order to produce collective responses to crises as they emerged.
Such relationships not only provided a historical-cultural context for situating crises as
meaningful within urban ecologies of communication, but allowed individual and institutional
actors to cultivate ethical forms of communicative response in thoughtfully managing crises in
everyday life.

These considerations were significant for Sennett’s (1974) *The Fall of Public Man*, in
which the scourge of individualism is described as emerging from the loss of public contexts for
mediating communicative engagements among individual and institutional actors. Without public contexts for deliberation and debate in cities, publics could rarely cultivate a sense of self as responsible for others and a larger world in everyday life. Rather than creating spaces in which publics could engage one another with relative anonymity, the privatization of the public sphere generated what Hannah Arendt (1998) described as the production of ‘the social sphere’ in her work on *The Human Condition*. For Arendt, the social was a sphere was produced when elements of the private sphere were pushed into public life, removing any sense of relative anonymity from interactions outside of one’s own home. Sennett describes such conditions as a tyrannical form of intimacy, a social condition in which one is forced to disclose personal details of their life and expects the world to legitimatize and justify personal choices. Such conditions are easily recognized in aspects of the urban renewal movement, particularly where they presume that everyone’s personal understandings should come to dominate public concerns.

Sennett argued that the idea of self is not static throughout history, but has remained dynamic, changing with the conditions and constraints of a given historical-cultural context. Likewise, Sennett locates three ways in which the notion of *personality* differs from a notion of a natural *character* of being in the world with others: (1) personality differs from person to person, (2) personality can be controlled through reflection, and (3) personality is no longer as social as it once was under the conditions of a naturally cultivated character in a historically embedded milieu. In this sense, then, the self in a postmodern world is re-situated by the organized complexity of an urban milieu and the contingent goods that cultivate a sense of civic character and mutual responsibility therein. *The Fall of Public Man*, therefore, provides a sturdy argument for protecting and promoting the diversity of active roles that *people* take up in participating
within the organized complexity of an urban milieu and responding to the crises that emerge therein.

Sennett’s (1990) *Consciousness of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* likewise confronts the dialogic relation between the organized patterns of communication and commerce which take place within the socio-economic conditions of city life and symbolico-material constraints of communicative interactions in urban milieux. Sennett described issues of urban design as creating interior and exterior spaces for organization, for human organization in much the same way that Mumford (1934, 1966, 1989) described media cities as container technologies. For Sennett, however, such spaces not only organized practical activities, but thoughtful forms of reflection, creating a sense personal interiority in which individual identity could be severed from public institutional commitments. While such commitments may seem tangential to considerations of risk and crisis management in cities, the work of Klinenberg and Fullilove reviewed earlier in this project demonstrated that the commitments among mutually implicated crisis actors provide them with relational contexts for understanding how they should both interpret and respond to crises as they emerge and what truly matters in those moments of experience.

Such practices are taken up from the perspectives of those dwelling within cities in *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (1994). While understood as a history of the city and urban life, Sennett elaborates *Flesh and Stone* as a history how the city and the body are related, foregrounding discussions of building and dwelling with others in an urban milieu pertaining the lived practices of human communication that bond them. In this sense, Sennett’s work emphasizes the significance of communicative engagement in attempting manage the crises made manifest within the dialogic complexity relations cultivated among public actors
dwelling in urban contexts. This provides a transition to Sennett’s thought concerning urban life as a craft of reckoning with the organized complexity of diverse people, places, and practices that accumulate in urban contexts.

Within the context of an urban environment, communication ethics cohere as *crafts for making a living together* with others in the communicative constitution of cities and their crises. Such crafts are elaborated in Sennett’s ‘*Homo Faber*’ trilogy. Beginning in *The Craftsman*, Sennett (2008) extends the notion of craft beyond its conventional understanding to describe the basic human impulse doing things well for their own sake, rather than for another external good. In this sense, the practice of urban communication ethics becomes an end without end that dynamically cultivates public forms understanding of virtuous activity in response to the momentary experiences of risk and crisis of made manifest in cities. The significance of intuitive and collaborative response to these challenges comes to the fore in *Together: The Rituals, Pleasures, and Politics of Cooperation*, in which Sennett (2012) argues that practical forms of cooperation are necessary for confronting the challenges of multicultural world on their own terms and crafting a world worth living in together. In this sense, urban communication ethics is open to intercultural and interpersonal encounters with those different from ourselves; seeking not to conquer and overcome others, but to engage and be engaged by others in a constructive fashion.

*Together*, provides Sennett a dialogic foundation for approaching cities and their problems as open-ended phenomena that cannot be defined in any sone way by any singular individual, but literally provide a hermeneutic interruption in the normal ‘processes’ of urban life and reveal their underlying realities. In this sense, cities and the crises made manifest within them are not only understood in different ways by different individual and institutional actors,
but also reveal the unstated biases and goods those actors attempt to protect and promote in their communicative engagements with one another. The final installment in the *Homo Faber* trilogy, *Building and Dwelling: Ethics for the City*, elaborates Sennett’s (2018) arguments regarding the dialogic relation between those shaping cities, the planners and policy makers, and those attempting to make a living together within them. It must be recognized that these groups are not necessarily separate and have considerable overlap, however the authoritative position of urban planners and policy makers as those possessing expert definitions of urban life often get held above those who live in cities themselves, creating a relationship of conflict in which leaders no longer listen to or attempt to understand the people they serve.

In this sense, Sennett (2018) argues those both building and dwelling within cities must acknowledgment the ethical figure of the other which confronts them in everyday life. Likewise, Sennett acknowledges that acts of building and dwelling in the city are nearly synonymous in that dwelling requires acts of *making* a living; a sort of setting down roots or cultivating of relations with others in a shared world. In this sense, a city is more than just its physical structures and infrastructures. This dual understanding of the city was captured in Sennett’s metaphor of the *cite* and the *ville*, discussed earlier in this project. Individual public actors craft networks of mutual trust in and through their communicative engagements with one another. These networks allow for the cultivation of identities as forms of public character given life in communicative practices in which a sense of mutual responsibility for public life are foregrounded. In this sense, once again, crises open the city to communicative forms of interpretation and response, reconstituting the city as a dynamic and changing communicative ecology that is open to the possibilities of change.
An open city is in this sense opposed to one which is ‘closed’ to all difference, diversity, and otherness. An open city, in Sennett’s sense, is representative of what urban communication scholars have called a ‘communicative’ or ‘dialogic’ city, in which the city is open to public participation and is shaped in ways that facilitate the recognition of public needs in the contexts where they matter most. Considering the relation between openness and closedness is significant for understanding the ethical implications of urban risk and crisis management, for as Sennett (2018) notes “[d]ifference weighs on the city, confusing both its built form and its ways of life” (p. 121), but also provides a means for strengthening those ways of life. In discussing issues of accepting outside immigrants into an urban milieu, Sennett recalls the work of two philosophers in existential phenomenology already introduced earlier in this chapter: Okakura (who understood others in terms of an inherent familial bond shared by all those without similar blood) and Levinas who attempted to understand “the Neighbor as an ethical figure turned toward others, but unable ultimately to fathom them – yet [one] shouldn’t turn away, indifferent, just because [they] don’t understand them” (p. 125). As Sennett notes, Levinas drew on the work of Buber, but oriented his inquiry toward the ethical first principles by which a phenomenal between revealed truths about human relations themselves.

In Sennett’s (2018) reading, then, Levinas argued for “[t]he idea of a Neighbor – turned towards, engaged with the other who cannot be reckoned” (p. 126). Toward this end Sennett notes “Levinas’s ethics are about awe and wonder rather than intimate fellow feeling. Levinas conceives of the Neighbor as Stranger” (pp. 125-12). This notion is useful for understanding how publics cultivate ethics of response in moments of crisis by recognizing that “[t]he Neighbor as Stranger bears on the mundane realm of the city. Awareness of, encounters with, addressing others unlike oneself – all constitute the ethics which civilized” (p. 126, emph. added); a dialogic
urbanism in this way produces and ecologic communication ethics that protects and promotes urban ecologies of communication in which existential trust among mutually implicated public actors is cultivated. Urban planning and policies seeking to manage risk and crisis would, in this way, follow a similar path, aiming to recognize what matters in times of crisis and working with others to care for the city as a public home.

The second part of Building and Dwelling entitled “The Competent Urbanite” (pp. 171-204) discusses the idea of ‘street smarts’ as a physically embodied sense for, or tacit knowledge of, a particular urban environment; a sense of place with specific limits, a sort of practical wisdom for engaging others within the organized complexity of cities and the crises that emerge there. Sennett’s discussion the dialogic practices in which individuals engage when communicating with strangers reflects Bakhtin’s (1981) notion of ‘heteroglossia.’ Sennett (2018) argues that “the dialogical techniques of displacement, disruption or inconclusiveness establish a different kind of speech community – one in which people speak as neighbors in Levinas’ sense, never quite on the same page” (p. 190). Such a community recognizes that crises cannot be predicted or controlled with absolute certainty, singularity, or clarity, but can only ever be continually negotiated in communicative interactions among those who call the city home.

Sennett describes four aspects of dialog that help individual and institutional actors to engage one another in collaboratively responding to the everyday crises that emerge in urban contexts: (1) Hearing the unsaid, or attending to context; (2) utilization of the subjunctive voice, or listening to the background of speech acts themselves; (3) the presence of the ‘it voice,’ or impersonal distance that does not force intimacy or imperialize the other; and (4) informality, or non-determinative talk, in which there is no presupposed agenda and multiple outcomes might occur. These elements of dialogic openness allow individual and institutional actors to reckon
with the organized complexity cities as ecologies of communication in which crises are made manifest and allow them to shape cities in ways that can account for how publics come to a sense of what truly matters for public life. Dialogic urbanism in Sennett’s work finds its foundation in how the city is understood as an ecology of communication that is both built and lived in the practical activity of cultivating relationships with others in response to multiple challenges of daily life. Such urbanism is necessary for any ethics of communication cultivate among mutually implicated actors dwelling within a city as well as the responses they have for risk and crisis phenomena made manifest therein.

While a dialogic urbanism provides a strong foundation for understanding how cities both shape and are shaped by the communicative interactions among those dwelling within them, this project has yet to fully elaborate a framework for urban communication praxis in responding to risk and crisis phenomena made manifest in cities. Sennett’s dialogic urbanism and the ecologic communication ethics that follow from it, however, provide a strong foundation for elaborating an understanding of urban communication praxis that resituates abstract notions of risk and crisis management within the lived-relations of individual and institutional public actors attempting to make a living in urban contexts. The next section introduces these understanding of urban communication praxis as extending from an ecologic communication ethics and the goods of people, place, and practices they protect.

**An Ecological Framework for Urban Communication Praxis in Times of Crisis**

The study of communication ethics provides a practical extension for philosophies of communication that emerge and are shaped by human interactions within a given historical-cultural context. In this sense, an ecological framework of communication ethics contextualizes urban communication as always already occurring between those individual and institutional
actors who find themselves dwelling together within the organized complexity of a city. Within such contexts, it is recognized that crises are not merely managed in a the top-down fashion presumed by experts in urban planning and policy, but the concrete experience of everyday forms of communicative engagement that occur among mutually implicated public actors. In this sense, communication within the complex networks of human relations constitutive of urban ecologies become more than techniques for negotiating what crises meaning for public experience and deliberating about how they should be managed.

Urban communication, as a form of protecting and promoting the ethical goods of people, place, practice essential through into question during times of risk and crisis, becomes an issue of what communication scholar Calvin Schrag (2003) described as communicative praxis. As noted in Chapter One, Schrag’s understanding of communicative praxis was derived from classical Greek definitions of the term that reflected actions that were both informed by and situated within a public context of ethical and political relations. Such understandings were consistent with the works of Aristotle which argued that the actions associated with praxis often exemplified forms of knowledge that were not technical, as they would be in the abstract theorizing of experts, but embodied, but embodied in a performative and participatory forms of practical wisdom referred to as phronesis. For Schrag, the distinction between episteme, the expert knowledge of abstract theorizing, and phronesis, practical wisdom of lived experience shared in relation with others, provide a marked contrast for understanding communication as either a technique for narrowing understandings and achieving certainty, or an art of everyday life in which individuals and institutions recognize how they are situated within the interwoven fabric of a given place and time.
An ecological framework for urban communication praxis accounts for the experience of risks and crises made manifest within the city by foregrounding the complex networks of communicative relationships that both constated and are constituted by the conditions of urban life itself. That is to say, crises only emerge and become meaningful within the organized complexity of communicative relations cultivated by individual and institutional actors dwelling within the public home of the city, itself, as a historical-cultural context for shared understandings and identities. Urban communication praxis, then, would be represented by the practical wisdom associated with managing everyday experiences in relation with others dwelling in urban contexts. That is, as in problems of organized complexity, questions of urban communication praxis, are best understood from within the contexts where they emerge. Those best equipped for understanding the implications of risks and crises made manifest within an urban context would, therefore, be the people dwelling together within it. Risk and crisis responses, would, in this context be understood as embodying the practical wisdom of a city and the historical-cultural contexts communicatively constituted in the relations cultivated among public actors, themselves. This wisdom, as in Schrag’s understanding of communicative praxis, would be far more than a mere technique for abstract theorizing and quantification of data. The wisdom of a city exists in concretely knowing what matters most in times when urban risk and crisis phenomena are made manifest.

As such, urban risk and crisis phenomena can only ever be adequately understood by those individuals and institutions in the midst of managing their implications in daily life and negotiating thoughtful and active communicative responses for them in their daily activities. The reality of urban risk and crisis management as a form of everyday communicative activity foregrounds the reality of risk and crisis experiences as always already existing as potentials.
within any human environment that are only actualized when both the necessary and sufficient conditions for their emergence are met. It is in this sense that planning and policy responses to crises which fail to account for public forms of practical wisdom often fall short of success at best and exacerbate the problems of cities at worst. Orthodox methods of urban risk and crisis management have failed to create inclusive and participatory forms of response, resulting in the most vulnerable urban publics being ignored and oppressed by the very places they call home. While conventional techniques of urban risk and crisis management often privilege financial over the interests of individual and institutional public actors, an urban communication praxis approach would incorporate participatory and inclusive forms of dialogic urbanism that account for the ecological foundations of risks and crises made manifest in urban contexts.

Approaching urban risk and crisis management as a forms of urban communication praxis does not, therefore, mean narrowly defining what crises are or the best possible ways of responding to them. Urban communication praxis is not an art of telling others how to see the world experiences and engage others within it. An urban communication praxis incorporates the practical wisdom of listening for the particular understandings that emerge in communicative engagements among publics dwelling together in a given historical-cultural context and hearing how that context speaks through public response to crises, themselves. Urban communication praxis is an art of listening for the particular and hearing the background, enabling leaders in planning and policy to understand crises as meaningfully situated within the dialogic complexity of cities and facilitate public responses to them in context. Rather than limiting communicative engagements with public individual and institutional actors, urban communication praxis advocates for putting the tools of planning and policy research in the hands of the public,
facilitating concrete forms of urban risk and crisis management before, during, and after disastrous events actually occur.

Participatory methodologies, particularly those associated with participatory action research (Maier 2021) provide a place for city leaders to begin engaging publics in collaborative forms of risk and crisis management that reflect what matters most within the city as a historical-cultural context of communicative activity, itself. The conceptual metaphors of dialogic urbanism—Mumford’s ‘will-to-order,’ Jacobs’ ‘organized complexity,’ and Sennett’s ‘cite et ville’—provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the city as an ecology of communication in which crises are both made manifest and manageable in the relations cultivate among mutually implicated public actors. Implicit to a dialogic urbanism is a sense of what matters in context, an ecological ethics in which practices of communicative engagement become more than mere techniques for achieving particular ends and are expanded to arts of everyday life in which the ethical character of the city is embodied and performed in responding to multiple experiences of sudden change.

Urban communication praxis, therefore, builds upon the philosophical and rhetorical foundations of urban communication study to include the practical implications that planning and policy might have for public management of risk and crisis phenomena made manifest within urban contexts themselves. While it would be easy to say how cities are planned and governed has obvious implications for how individual and institutional public actors both understand and respond to crises, the first part of this project has demonstrated that such considerations are rarely made by those charged with coordinating response to such phenomena. Participatory methodologies advocate for putting the tools of planning and policy research into the hands of those dwelling within cities themselves, bringing the practical wisdom of urban publics to bear
on considerations of city leaders. Walking pedagogies reinforce understandings of the city as a physical place in which communicative engagement occurs and opportunities for managing crises differently may be found. Grounded theory research, likewise, resituates the abstract concepts of urban planning and policy within the lived contexts of urban life, parsing their actual implications for how individual and institutional actors engage one another in negotiating the conditions of city life.

Within the context of urban risk and crisis management, participatory methodologies would allow for publics to engage one another in responding to localized manifestations of risk and crisis phenomena that are encountered in cities, accounting for their implications within the contexts of their experience. By focusing on the how communicative thought and action come to the fore within a given historical-cultural context, publics can draw on the sources of collective memory laten within the symbolic-material constitution of cities as ecologies of communication themselves in which relations are formed between mutually implicated actors. These relations provide the foundation for understanding what matters in moments when risk and crisis phenomena are made manifest.

**Putting Urban Communication Praxis in Context**

This chapter has attempted to provide a philosophical foundation for an urban communication praxis approach to the participatory management of risk and crisis phenomena made manifest in cities. This section described dialogic urbanism as relating to three conceptual metaphors found in the literature of urban communication, those of will-to-order, organized complexity, and *cite et ville*. Together these conceptual metaphors were extended into an ecological communication ethics necessary for protecting the goods of people, place, and practice as well as understanding how cities were both constituted by and constitutive of the
communicative engagements in which relations relations were cultivated among individual and institutional public actors dwelling within cities. While monologic communication ethics were demonstrated as asserting a particular sense of how the city should be built and maintained in response to particular crises, and dialogic communication ethics were demonstrated as opening the city and its crises to multiple perspectives and voices, it was found that both could be included in the considerations of risk and crisis management by foregrounding the ecological dimensions of communication itself, the role it plays as a performative forms of practical wisdom in communicating what matters in a particular historical-cultural context. This ecologic communication ethics was shown as finding its practical extension in a framework of urban communication praxis which was both embodied in and fully realized in the practical wisdom of those dwelling within cities themselves.

The next chapter returns to Hurricane Katrina as a case in which participatory and inclusive practices of urban risk and crisis management could have benefitted leaders in planning and policy attempting to manage the implications of the storm and negotiate responses of sufficient complexity for the challenges it created. As described in the first part of this project, cases of urban risk and crisis management pose significant challenges for conventional techniques of risk and crisis management, particularly in that cities are far too complex for narrowly defining crises and their solutions. As such, an urban communication praxis approach must invite a myriad of voices and perspectives to the table in order to parse the implications of crises themselves and provide sufficient forms of response. Such practices bring the background conditions for urban crisis to the foreground of public deliberation and debate, providing certainty where there is none and opportunities for recreating the city anew. While such methods make sense within the lived contexts of urban risk and crisis management, they must approach
the city as an ecology of communication in which relations are cultivate among various actors caught up in a crisis, making a singular response to a case study dubious at best.

Chapter Five, therefore, represents a first attempt at approaching cities and their crises in terms of an urban communication praxis. In this effort, the next chapter provides an explanation summarizing the case of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and its key factors, before analyzing the case in terms of the theories and principles introduced in this chapter, namely the elements of a dialogic urbanism and urban communication praxis approach that extends from it. The next chapter concludes this project and aspires to provide tools for city leaders to reinterpret cities and their problems as ecologies of communication in which relations with individual and institutional public actors provide both the means for managing crises and making them meaningful for urban planning and policy.
CHAPTER FIVE

Urban Communication Praxis in Context: The Natural Disaster of Hurricane Katrina and the Human Crises it Revealed

While the major events of Hurricane Katrina have been discussed in previous chapters of this project, it behooves scholar-practitioners of urban risk and crisis management to reflect upon what this event means for urban communication praxis as a form of risk and crisis management. This chapter discusses how the techniques and technologies of urban risk and crisis management employed by leaders in planning and policy during Hurricane Katrina could have been improved by incorporating more collaborative and participatory forms of urban communication praxis elaborated in the previous chapter. The concepts of dialogic urbanism and ecologic communication ethics reflect how public individual and institutional actors cultivate relations of value with one another and provide city leaders with a hermeneutic framework for understanding how cities and their crises are both constituted by and constitutive of the urban ecologies of communication in which these publics dwell, together. Insofar as New Orleans, Louisiana, and Hurricane Katrina provide a representative case for understanding the effectiveness of urban communication praxis as a hermeneutic framework for collaboratively managing risk and crisis phenomena in cities, it is important to remember that these approaches are always only informed by the conditions and constraints of the urban ecologies of communication in which they are applied and may not necessarily be applied in the same way in other cities. That is to say, urban communication praxis advocates for understanding risk and crisis phenomena as historically-culturally situated within the dialogic complexity of urban ecologies of communication they implicate and cannot be universally applied.
Within the context of this chapter and the larger project of urban risk and crisis management in which individual and institutional actors are publicly engaged, Hurricane Katrina, as well as the other disasters reviewed in earlier chapters provide multiple cases in which the urban ecologies of communication that held a city together were weakened by urban planning and policy that were biased toward the protection and promotion of particular ethical communicative goods of people, place and practice; thus, producing crises that could neither be predicted nor controlled by the established plans and policies of city leaders. Cities and their crises emerge as phenomena defined by the dialogic complexity of the ecologies of communication they constitute and therefore become particular historical-cultural context of a given time, place, and people. Such elements reflect what the editors of the encyclopedia of communication ethics have described as ‘goods in contention’ (Arnett, Holba, Mancino 2018, pp. 1-3), or goods that matter insofar as they are not necessarily agreed upon but orient how publics manage meaningful experiences of crisis and seek to participate in them. Such goods are foregrounded as significant within the relations cultivated among publics attempting to weather the storms and stresses of crisis, together, and become apparent when all else seems uncertain.

This chapter begins by reorienting the reader to the particular case of New Orleans, Louisiana, as an urban ecology of communication characterized by contradiction and conflict before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina made landfall. In this sense, the urban ecology of communication constituted by and constitutive of New Orleans provided a historical-cultural context in which the crises precipitated by Hurricane Katrina assumed particular meaning within the relations cultivated among different publics at different times. By using a variation of the case study approach to crisis analysis, what Eric Klinenberg (2002) has described as a “social autopsy” (p. 10-11), it becomes possible for scholar-practitioners of urban risk and crisis
management to chart the multiple voices competing to be heard in moments of crisis and how they provide illuminating understanding of the situation itself. In doing so, this project provides a critical review of the case study approach to risk and crisis management research, one which has changed little since the time of its emergence and must be radically altered if it is to provide insight into how crises both emerge within, and reveal particular challenges of, dwelling together with others in the communicative constitution of cities.

The next section, as such, begins by reviewing key elements of the case, such as the major stakeholders, their major crisis communication concerns, and the objectives established for the crisis management team. These elements are, then, read through the lens of an urban communication praxis approach in which cities are understood as communicatively constituted in the dialogic complexity of relations cultivated among individual and institutional public actors as they negotiate meaningful experiences of the city and navigate the various conditions and constraints it creates for everyday life. The biases of such symbolic and material conditions provide the background in which particular communicative goods are foregrounded in communicative engagement, becoming characteristic of a dialogic urbanism and an ecologic ethics of communication. This chapter, therefore, demonstrates that an urban communication praxis approach does not aim to predict or control the meanings of risk and crisis phenomena by limiting how they are defined in the relations cultivated among publics but, instead, strives to understand risk and crisis as communicatively constituted within the complexity of these relations as they are cultivated among public actors dwelling together in cities.

**The Dialogic Complexity Risk and Crisis in New Orleans**

This section provides an overview of the multiple risks and crises generated by Hurricane Katrina for the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, before, during, and after the storm made landfall.
In addition to providing an overview of the case of Katrina, this section also provides a critical analysis of the case study approach as a research method in itself. Insofar as the case study approach consists of describing a real-life event or series of events and systematically applying theoretical models of analysis, it would appear that risk and crisis management (as a form of public relations) has directly followed in the footsteps of organizational and business management literature which presumes to understand particular phenomena in an effort to predict and control their emergence (Coombs 2014; R. Yin 1984). Such a method, as shown in previous chapters is far too simplistic of an approach for truly understanding how risk and crisis phenomena are made manifest and become meaningful for public discussion within the dialogic complexity of cities as urban ecologies of communication and historical-cultural contexts of public memory. In contrast, this section seeks to understand cities and their crises as polyvocal and multi-perspectival phenomena of communication, reinterpreting them as extended and varied moments of uncertainty, ambivalence, and ambiguity within a given historical-cultural context, allowing for a more dialogically complex understandings of risk and crisis that are open to collaborative and participatory forms of interpretation and response.

The concept of multi-perspectivism originates with the theological hermeneutics of Calvinist philosophers such as John Frame (1987), Vern Poythress (1976/2004, 1987/2001), and Esther Meek (2003). Understandings of knowledge and perception as situated within the phenomenological relation of the individual to the historical moment and cultural context of experience, however, much like the understanding of crises as decisive moments extending far beyond the mere sequential events of experience, are evident in ancient philosophical and rhetorical understandings of change. In this sense, perspectivism is understood should be understood as an objective approach to understanding and giving clear definition to knowledge,
but as an inherently pluralistic approach to knowing and perception that assumes that no one individual or institution has complete access to an absolute or unbiased understanding of self, other, or world (A. Nehamas 2000). Similar understandings are found in the works of the pre-Socratic philosophers and rhetoricians reviewed earlier in this work, particularly Heraclitus, Protagoras, Lao Tzu (Baxter & Montgomery 1996). These understandings provided the foundation for later arguments for perspectivism which emerged in response to developments in the art and sciences of the European Renaissance, particularly in the works of Michel de Montaigne and Gottfried Leibniz (B. Sandywell 2011). Together these works provided the necessary means for questioning the established discourses of individual autonomy, efficient utility, and eternal progress which characterized the historical moment of Modernity.

The continental philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche (1974) is of particular note for extending understandings of perspectivism and shaping them into a coherent and unified discourse which elevated the historically and culturally situated nature of human perception in relation to a world of others beyond ourselves. In this sense, Nietzsche’s approach to knowledge and perception was necessarily contextualist, relating to how individuals and institutions are woven into and shaped by the time, place, and people with whom they interact throughout their lives. Such understandings most easily recognized in Nietzsche’s (1887/1969) Genealogy of Morals, in which the author states:

“Let us be on guard against the dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject'; let us guard against the snares of such contradictory concepts as 'pure reason', 'absolute spirituality', 'knowledge in itself': these always demand that we should think of an eye that is completely unthinkable, an eye turned in no particular direction, in which the active and
interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes seeing *something*, are supposed to be lacking; these always demand of the eye an absurdity and a nonsense. There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective knowing; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity' be” (p. 12)

While it may seem a tangential notion, Nietzsche’s argument regarding objective knowledge and perception relates directly to how risks and crises are made manifest and become meaningful within the relations of those dwelling together within the urban ecologies of communication that constituted cities, themselves. Although city leaders often seek to predict and control public understandings of risk and crisis phenomena, such attempts are only ever perspectives delivered from on high to the publics who suffer most from experiences of risk and crisis. The urge to control, Mumford’s notion of a will-to-order, is apparent in planning and policy discourses related to urban risk and crisis management as it is in rhetorical and philosophical arguments for the objective epistemological knowledge and universal truth. It is for this reason that a case study approach is unable to fully understand the ethical implications risk and crisis phenomena have for those attempting to navigate urban ecologies of communication.

Alternatively, this section reviews the case of risk and crisis management in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina by engaging in practices that are often overlooked (pun intended) discourses of urban planning, policy, development, and design: Listening to and learning from those dwelling in the cities they shape. Such practices emphasize the polyvocal nature of crisis narratives as complex phenomena of communication that inform how individual and institutional publics engage one another and cultivate contextually situated values. Polyvocality, as a form of
narrative complexity, originates in studies of literature and describes how authors present multiple voices in order to encourage more diverse understandings of characters, plot, events, and relations in a story (D. Chandler & R. Munday 2011). Mikhail Bakhtin (1984b), in particular, described polyvocality in terms of dialogism as a sort of polyphony of voices that inform how we recognize the relation of self, other, and world as necessarily and inherently dialogic. Within the historical-cultural context of the city as an urban ecology of communication, then, polyvocal understandings of risk and crisis management reflect the need for city leaders to listen to and learn from how individual and institutional publics experience uncertainty, ambivalence, and ambiguity of change while also providing necessary means for polyphonic forms of response.

While there is literature related to discussing and learning from crisis narratives (Seeger & Sellnow 2016), many works only understand narratives of crisis after the fact, while those individual and institutional actors dwelling within the city must intuit different situated responses to crises before, during, and after disastrous events actually occur. In this sense, the case study approach is limited in its understanding of how risk and crisis phenomena manifest and become meaningful within the dialogic complexity of urban ecologies of communication if it does not attempt to understand these ecologies as historical and cultural contexts of situated relations cultivated among the publics dwelling therein. As such, reviewing the and explaining the case requires not only identifying the key actors caught within a particular crisis, what was at stake for them in attempting to manage the emergence and outcomes of a crisis, the communication concerns they faced in responding to public experiences of the crisis, and the objectives that were set for the crisis management team. Urban manifestations of risk and crisis are far complex and contradictory for such methods. Instead, what is required is reviewing how the elements of the
historical cultural context in which the crisis emerged, that is the people, places, and practices that made the crisis manifest and informed its meaning for the relations cultivated among publics dwelling in the city, itself, over time. Doing so demands reviewing the history of those dwelling together within the city, the conditions and constraints the city created for practices.

Katrina in Context: People, Place, Practice in Urban Risk and Crisis Management

Before Hurricane Katrina made landfall in 2005, city leaders of New Orleans had sought to manage crises caused by hurricanes, floods, disease, financial collapses, and blackouts by imposing preventative forms of planning and policy throughout the history of the city (L. N. Powell 2013; N. Sublette 2009; R. Campanella 2008). The city of New Orleans was founded as the capitol of the French colonies by the Governor of Louisiana Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne in 1718 for the purpose of restoring the French economy and managing trans-Atlantic trade routes in the Americas. By 1720, the city of New Orleans possessed estates for city leaders, a hospital, general stores and numerous employees prepared to work and develop the land. It was around this time that the city was surveyed by engineer Pierre Le Blond de La Tour and his assistant Adrien de Paige, resulting in the generation of a comprehensive plan for organizing the city of New Orleans along a grid system which had been characteristic of urban planning throughout the Ancien Regime of colonial France (Sennett 1992b). La Tour’s comprehensive plan for the layout of New Orleans has remained largely unchanged. Known as the French Quarter, this plan set a precedent for how individuals and institutions engaged and continue to engage one another in actively cultivating public relations within the city and provided the necessary but insufficient conditions for making risk and crisis phenomena manifest as meaningful in the everyday lives of New Orleans residents.
Prior to its founding, the area of New Orleans had been inhabited by indigenous people of the Chitimacha, with the surrounding region of present-day Louisiana populated by the Atakapa, Caddo, Choctaw, Houma, Natchez, and Tunica (R. Dunbar-Ortiz 2015; K. T. Mays 2021). The relations among French colonials and peoples of the indigenous nations vacillated wildly between mutual collaboration and violent conflict throughout the initial decades of French colonization, eventually culminating in widespread warfare. Lasting from 1754 to 1763 with the Treaty of Paris, the French and Indian War gave Spain sovereignty over Louisiana and, as a result, the city of New Orleans. The crescent shape of the city along a bend in the Mississippi River influenced the construction of its various suburbs, retaining the grid pattern of La Tour and an expansive central avenue that ended with a space dedicated to the first church in the area and overlooked a public square surrounded by spaces for public government administration and commercial exchange. This same space would become the site of the St. Louis Cathedral over a century later in 1844. In this sense, the public square played a central role in mediating the public relations cultivated among individual citizens and the institutions of church, state, and market, facilitating practices of communication and commerce necessary for collectively organizing the city of New Orleans into a diverse but cohesive whole.

The outcome of this history of bloody conflict, diseases, and disasters, likewise, generated a mélange of architectural styles and urban designs throughout the city which contributed to the cultivation of a unique network historical-cultural relations among those publics who called the city and its surrounding suburbs home. In this sense, the complex yet coherent whole of the city both shaped and was shaped by the particular practices of communicative engagement and exchange that cultivated among highly concentrated groups of diverse public actors attempting to make a living together within the shared historical-cultural
context of the city. A study conducted by Kate Holiday (2015) of the University of Texas at Arlington provides a useful reference for understanding how the architecture of New Orleans both retained the public memories of changing circumstances in the city while also cultivating a diverse and multidimensional understanding of civic identity tied to the various peoples, places, and practices that were and continue to constitute the city as an urban ecology of communication in itself. As Holiday argues, New Orleans cosmopolitan history as the home of the Chitimacha, a site of French colonization, an area of short-lived Spanish rule, and locale trading hub for fashions of England and the United States, has generated a complex and often contradictory context for understanding the organization of public space, whether it be for the creation of a new public center or in response to the crises that coincide with the natural, financial, social disasters made manifest in the city.

The second half of Nineteenth century city leaders initiated of a number of projects to managing flooding throughout the city, allowing residents to use the surrounding waterways for transportation and trade while also reducing the harms generated by reoccurring floods which plagued the area (A. Fontenot, C. M. Reese, & M. Sorkin 2014). As in Hurricane Katrina, these floods not only destroyed housing, public property, and lines of transportation, but also generated the sufficient conditions for making ever-present challenges of urban life manifest as multiple crises of public health, social and economic insecurity, and technical failures that necessarily reinforced each other within the organized complexity of the city as an urban ecology of communication. Near the turn of the century, city leadership sought funding for improvements that beautified New Orleans’ urban fabric, gaining patronage from a number of wealthier citizens who exerted significant control over how the urban ecology of New Orleans would take then shape and, therefore, maintained a particular financial interest in preserving a particular order
throughout the urban fabric (Sublette 2009; Campanella 2008). This order not only reflected the biases of efficiency and visual aesthetics that had characterized urban planning and design throughout during the Industrial Revolution, but also reflected the socio-economic biases of city leadership and landed families.

It is important, in this sense, to recognize how the urban ecology constituted by and constitutive of New Orleans reflected the deeply embedded biases of gender, race, and class common within the colonial United States; influencing the historical-cultural context in which various disasters were made manifest as crises within the city (K. Ford 2011). While the complexity of how these biases manifested within the urban fabric are most easily recognized in discussion of the plaçage system (wherein wealthier men took mixed-race mistresses), the challenges of gender, race, and class that characterized the urban ecology of New Orleans also revealed themselves in other ways (J. Foreman R. Starrett 2020). In particular the history of conflict in relations between people of Creole (those composed mostly of mixed colonial French, Spanish, African American, and Indigenous ancestry) and Cajun descent (French immigrants that were exiled from Nova Scotia and mixed with people of German, Italian, Cuban, Haitian, Anglo-American, and Indigenous ancestry) add an extra dimension to how the urban ecology of communication in New Orleans took shape. The diverse cultural heritage of New Orleans lent itself both to an openness and acceptance of diverse peoples, places, and practices, as well as constrictions of colonial culture and discrimination within political economy of the city itself, creating an environment in which conflict and contradiction were definitive aspects of everyday experience (S. Kostof 1993; R. Campanella 2010). The regional isolation of New Orleans, however, provided a dialogically complex context for the emergence of a particular civic identity.
and language (patois) which came to organically inform public understandings of the city as a complex and coherent whole in which crises were made manifest.

In the years leading to the events of Hurricane Katrina, the complex historical-cultural context of New Orleans as an urban ecology of communication would be conditioned and constrained by plans and policies for urban renewal enacted by city leadership. New industrial technologies and the extension of power grids enabled the irrigation much of low-lying swamplands between the city center and the Mississippi, allowing for the construction of levees and canals that could effectively control the flow of water throughout the city in the Twentieth century (Campanella 2010). The infrastructure developed during this time allowed for the construction of neighborhoods in areas that had been previously uninhabitable (Ford 2011; Fontenot, Reese & Sorkin 2014). The reoccurrence of hurricanes and flooding continued to present hazards for such neighborhoods throughout the Twentieth century, threatening the life of many the Creole and Cajun residence who had called the city home for decades. Such challenges strained the systems of social relation and economic stability which held the urban fabric together, pushing the urban ecology of communication that constituted meaningful relations between individual and institutional public actors into meaninglessness sand chaos time and again.

Understanding how the historical-cultural context of New Orleans was both shaped by and shaped the people, places, and practices that gave it its distinctive identity as a city is essential to understanding how crises, as communicative phenomena, were made manifest within it. It is important to recognize that this short history of urban planning and policy in New Orleans constitutes the pre- or before phase of the many crises made manifest by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, but also include responses to past crises and conflicts that emerged within the changing
conditions of urban complexity within the city. Many of these responses reflect perspectives common to the concerns of risk and crisis management research introduced in the first part of this project. It must be remembered, then, that practitioners of risk and crisis management, particularly those using the case study approach to analyze how the techniques and technologies are used to predict and control responses to sudden and sometimes harmful change, often understand the emergence and development of these risk and crisis phenomena by dividing them into periods of time before, during, and after a particular event triggered their emergence. In doing so, the case study approach often analyzes the practices of risk and crisis management in an oversimplified manner that does not recognize the wider spatial-temporal horizon of crises, nor the historical-cultural contexts in which they are implicated.

This first subsection has attempted to demonstrate how the shaping of urban ecologies of communication exerts a perceptible bias or persuasion upon the emergence of risks and crises as phenomena of human communication and is also shaped by the present relations of individual and institutional public actors engaging one another in response to these phenomena. In doing so, this project has attempted to bring the historical and cultural background of urban risk and crisis management to the forefront of discussions necessary for understanding the pre-crisis phase of risk and crisis management in a fuller and more robust manner. This context not only informs later understandings of the Hurricane Katrina crisis presented later in this chapter, but also provides a way for contextualizing public interpretations of and responses to this disaster in the case itself. In terms of the case study approach, it can be seen that the key stakeholders of crisis in New Orleans are not only those with a key financial stake in developing and preserving the physical and economic infrastructure of New Orleans (i.e., planners and policy makers, business leaders, government officials, etc.), but also residents of diverse cultural backgrounds and ethical
dispositions. In this sense, the phenomenological horizon of pre-crisis phase must be extended beyond the mere recognition of disastrous events to account for the ever-present crises simmering below the surface of government recognition and remain taken for granted or denied in the practices of urban planning and policy that seek to predict and control the emergence of and public response to crises.

**Katrina in Context: Reading the Winds and Responding in Kind**

The second part of explaining a case in risk and crisis management demands that authors account for the key stakeholders, crisis communication concerns, and objectives of the crisis team were understood, during the ‘crisis’ phase, or in the midst of the crisis itself. This is a challenging way of understanding urban manifestations of crisis, because urban manifestations of crisis are far too complex to delineate along a singular, procedural line of emergence. Urban manifestations of risk and crisis often exist long before they are revealed to the eyes of planners and policy makers during the vents of a particular disaster, and often remain long after these same planners and policy makers implement solutions to them. As many scholars in urban sociology and communication have argued, urban infrastructures often reflect systemic issues of institutional sexism, racism, and classism which then influence how public interpretations of and responses to risk and crisis are interpreted and given legitimacy within discourse of urban planning and policy. The crisis phase in this sense must be recognized not merely as one which follows the pre-crisis phase in a clear and consistent manner, but one which necessarily includes and bridges the gap between the past and future of the crisis itself. Such perspectives are recognized in the works of Sellnow and Seeger (2013) which describe crisis management as and communication as ongoing. The crisis phase, in fact, is an ongoing phenomenological moment characterized by the need for decision, whether it is deciding how to respond to questions of a
crisis moment, those factors which decide of the public character of those responding in the moment, or those decisive factors of what matters most for individual and institutional public actors attempting to whether the crisis.

In this sense, then, it becomes important not only to understand what interests were at stake for key actors attempting to manage those crises triggered by the natural disaster of Hurricane Katrina, but to understand how the phenomenological moment of crisis presents (makes present) matters of significance for public individual and institutional actors attempting to make a living, together, in the city as an urban ecology of communication understood from multiple perspectives and consisting of a polyphony of voices. This sub-section therefore invites urban planners and policy makers to dive into this cacophony of response, to read the winds of change that characterize urban manifestations of risk and crisis, and to chart a course with those who know the city best. In this sense, the practice of urban risk and crisis management begins to reflect a dialogic urbanism, one in which the city stakes shape through the practices of public conversation among individual and institutional actors, people and the places in which they dwell, bringing the historical cultural context of the crisis to the forefront of public understanding. Such understandings are necessary for recognizing an urban communication praxis, a practice of everyday life that is informed and reinforced by situated experiences of culture and context.

It is important for practitioners of urban risk and crisis management to ask, then, when the crises made manifest by Hurricane Katrina throughout New Orleans were actually made present for public discussion and debate? Socio-economic crises related to gender, race, and class were obviously present centuries before Hurricane Katrina, but had remained obfuscated by legal and economic systems that promoted particular forms of urban planning and disaster
management in the city. In this sense, the present moment of the crisis brought forth the situated experiences of systemic discrimination for those groups overlooked in planning and policy (mostly the working-class, people of color suffering socio-economic precarity, and members of indigenous nations unaccounted for by local governments). Together these elements make it difficult to parse when the crises precipitated by Hurricane Katrina could be said to begin or end. Indeed, while it is easy to recognize a natural disaster as creating the sufficient conditions for generating multiple crises within a particular urban context, it is the context itself that presents the necessary conditions for manifesting a natural disaster as a series of human crises. That is to say, crises present themselves as having, multiple, complex causes that cannot be accounted for by the overly simplistic definitions of crises that inform the interpretation of crises emerging in a linear process nor the singular responses of city governments that are often predicated on prediction and control.

The bigger question for understanding the crisis phase of a given case is what matters actually gained significance for public individual and institutional actors as they engaged one another in response to the uncertainties, ambivalences, and ambiguities of a crisis as it made itself present in everyday life. That is, what matters in the present moment is not the particular interests of any one individual or institutional actor, but that which was at stake in experiences of crisis, i.e. relations cultivated among those publics implicated in it and the public values clarified in responding to the crisis. In this sense, a crisis is not so much a threat but and experience of uncertainty, ambivalence, or ambiguity demanding re-cognition (or relearning, literally knowing again) of what matters within the dialogic complexity of relations making up urban ecologies of communication in which crises gain significance as communicative phenomena. Such relations constitute contexts of collaboration and conflict in moments of crisis, offering insights for those
willing to engage one another and participate in them. In this sense, there is no widespread understanding of a crisis, but a myriad of situated perspectives on what crises are and a cacophony of voices striving to be heard. This is how urban ecologies of communication in crisis become characterized by particularly dialogic forms of urbanism in which praxiologial orientations in communication become necessary for collaboratively managing crises in ways that reflect the situated perspectives of city residents.

The crises clarified by Hurricane Katrina, in this sense, were those systemic challenges of living together in close proximity with those different from ourselves within the dialogic complexity of urban ecology of communication characterized by contradictions and conflicts in the relations cultivated among different peoples, places, and practices within the historical cultural context of New Orleans. While the storm made these contradictions and conflicts present the moment it made landfall, the true challenge for those reading about Hurricane Katrina as a case in urban risk and crisis management how individual and institutional actors responded to the crisis as a revelatory moment in which the taken for granted gained recognition. While this does not justify calling the events of Hurricane Katrina good (they were, indeed, tragic and remain so), they call attention to how moments of crisis challenge individual and institutional actors by laying bare the taken for granted challenges, responsibilities, and practices of making a living with others in dialogically complex contexts of cities. As will be shown in the next sub-section of this chapter, clearing away that which obfuscated the inherent challenges of urban life offers individuals and institutions the opportunities to take stock of their relations with one another and engage in participatory forms of risk and crisis management that cultivate urban ecologies of communication in ways that no technique nor technology of planning or policy could. Indeed,
urban manifestations of risk and crisis demonstrate that cities are only ever truly made by those dwelling within them, together.

**Katrina in Context: Techniques and Technologies in Post-Crisis Discourses**

As stated throughout this project, crises neither begin nor end with the discrete events that trigger their emergence and recognition by those directing public discourses of planning and policy. In the same sense, then, the post-crisis phase, as it is often referred to in the risk and crisis management literature, is not understood as beginning when a particular crisis has subsided, but often before it actually occurs. That is to say, where case studies in risk and crisis management usually describe the post-crisis phase as a period of taking stock and learning from the actions taken by the crisis management team, such understandings can be assessed more intuitively by dwelling within the historical-cultural context of relations cultivated among publics and familiarizing themselves with the situated perspectives of individual and institutional actors at any phase of the crisis. Indeed, the outcomes of a crisis response, how it will ultimately be resolved by and resolve a number of questions for individual and institutional actors caught within it, are often recognizable long before a crisis actually is actually constituted in communicative experience.

Within the context of New Orleans, the post-crisis phase consisted mostly of housing and offering medical treatment for those displaced by the storm in and emergency and disaster management sense, and continual statements from city government in terms of risk and crisis communication. Such post-crisis responses were reasonable in a technical sense, but insufficient for the dialogic complexity of public understandings signified by the crisis itself. The practices of urban renewal which had oriented orthodox understandings of planning and policy in New Orleans city government throughout the Twentieth century, eroding urban communities and
dissolving the networks of existential trust within city, left it unprepared to facilitate public understandings of the crises revealed by Hurricane Katrina before, during, and after the storm ever wrought havoc upon the urban fabric. As such, publics dwelling together in the city struggled to meaningfully comprehend possibilities for responding to the ongoing crises of natural disasters, technical failures, financial collapses, and social disruption in the city. In each instance, the city government was unable to facilitate public understandings of and responses to the multiple crises which emerged within the ecology of communication constituted by the networks of relations cultivated among publics dwelling together in New Orleans situation and offered few means for individual and institutional actors within the city to regain a meaningful sense of security.

In the weeks, months, and years following the initial disaster of Hurricane Katrina, city government has initiated a number of plans for improving the physical and economic infrastructure of New Orleans, while continuing to neglect the social infrastructures in which relations of communicative significance are cultivated among individual and institutional actors, providing them with meaningful security in times of crisis. While initiatives for bringing in new business and developing land for private use took hold in the city, there were few initiatives for facilitating the cultivation of relations among individual and institutional publics dwelling together in the city. In this sense, the techniques and technologies of crisis management allowed for the city to be rebuilt and protected the financial interests of commercial entities therein, but failed to facilitate the cultivation of relations among publics who were actually implicated in a storm, leaving those who were made most vulnerable by the storm to be overlooked in considerations of planning and policy that would shape the city anew. As such, the city government of New Orleans put their faith in the managerial techniques and technologies of
emergency risk and disaster management that often make cities physically and economically ‘resilient,’ while leaving them socially and communicatively vulnerable.

From the perspective of a dialogic urbanism and an urban communication praxis approach, it is this openness to the multiplicity of possible outcomes coupled with the recognition that multiple avenues of response exist which offer more opportunities for leaders in urban risk and crisis management not to produce responses to crises for the publics whom they represent, but facilitate public responses as situated within the historical-cultural contexts in which individual and institutional actors dwell together. Contrary to Perrow’s (1999, 2011) arguments that crises emerge with greater frequency in complex and highly concentrated technical systems, like cities, it is those very elements of complexity and concentration that actually offer individual and institutional actors to cultivate dynamic social networks able to cope with the realities of uncertainty in daily life. Such arguments are found throughout the literature of urban sociologists, economists, and psychologists and represent a form presented herein and provide leaders in urban risk and crisis management with hermeneutic frameworks for recognizing how they should facilitate public responses within historical-cultural contexts of crisis experience.

As such, those pursuing an urban communication praxis approach during the post-crisis phase, an approach that is attuned to the polyphony of public voices producing responses to crises from perspectives situated within the dialogic complexity of urban ecologies of communication constituted by and constitutive of cities in which those crises are made manifest and become meaningful, must not approach this practice in terms of merely telling publics how to respond, but facilitating the cultivation of ethics for response, ethics in which the questions of how one engages a world of others in responding to uncertainties is paramount. During the post-
crisis phase, city leaders must recognize that they are not merely tying up loose ends of a crisis management plan and refining it in an effort to manage the next crisis in a more efficient and effective way (there is not perfectly efficient or effective way to respond to crisis) but engaged in working with publics to account for the fallout of a crisis event and conditions that allowed for it to emerge in an unmanageable way. That is to say, many crises never really emerge as crises because they are moments of uncertainty that are easily resolved within the priorities of relations cultivated among public individual actors (just as Fink stated in the management literature), but are made manifest because particular conditions were taken for granted or overlooked by those with the responsibility for ensuring their existence.

The next section of this chapter provides an analysis of the case of Hurricane Katrina that is consistent with a communication praxis approach informed by the elements of a dialogic urbanism introduced in the previous chapter and elaborated throughout the studies of rhetoric, sociology, and media which provide a foundation for urban communication theory. Such an understanding will allow for the extension of urban planning and policy to include considerations of how cities are both constituted by and constitutive of the communicative relations in which crises emerge and become meaningful for everyday life, generating both the promise and peril of dwelling in close proximity with others different from ourselves. Such insights resituate practices of urban risk and crisis management within the discourses that cultivate relations among those individual and institutional actors who call the city home.

**Case Analysis: An Urban Communication Praxis Approach**

The previous section provided a rather unconventional case study of risk and crisis management engaged during Hurricane Katrina. In doing so, it was the intention of this section, and overall project of this dissertation, to extend the practices of risk and crisis management
beyond merely accounting for particular interests and, more importantly, begin to consider how those particular interests are informed by the dialogic complexity of the historical cultural contexts in which crises are made manifest and become meaningful in relations cultivated among public individual and institutional actors whom they implicate. As such, this section reintroduces the elements of a dialogic urbanism developed in the works of Mumford, Jacobs, and Sennett which inform an urban communication praxis approach. This section then proposes more participatory and collaborative forms of facilitating response which may have helped the city government of New Orleans facilitate the cultivation of relations among individual and institutional public actors implicated in the crises made manifest in Hurricane Katrina.

As stated, an urban communication praxis approach relies upon the collaborative methods of participatory action research and walking knowledge both of which move the practices of academic research outside of the university setting and work with local communities to develop tools for learning that reflect the situatedness of their everyday experiences and the core values of relations cultivated among publics. An urban communication praxis approach, then, is always and only ever can be specific to the historical-cultural context in which it is collaboratively made. That is, the practices of risk and crisis management cultivated by an urban communication praxis approach cannot be universally applied in every case, but must be continuously reassessed an order to facilitate dynamic and iterative forms of response within the urban ecologies of communication where crisis are made manifest. Similarly, the elements of a dialogic urbanism, those developed in the works of Jacobs, Mumford, and Sennett not only must be re-cognized in response to various risk and crisis experiences, but also take on new shape in the different historical-cultural contexts of cities, themselves. Each city, as a particular collection of places in which diverse peoples and engage one another in a multitude of communicative practices exist as
specific ecological contexts with particular historical and cultural dimensions, and therefore produce unique experiences of crisis within a localized set of public relations.

In this sense an urban communication praxis approach informed by the elements of a dialogic urbanism reflects the methods of risk and crisis management pioneered by Gilpin and Murphy (2008, 2010) which accept and expect crises to emerge as complex forms of experience that are not and cannot be easily defined or understood, as well as those present in the works of Baxter and Murphy which demonstrate how complexity of relation generates opportunities for dialog forms of response. The larger question for an urban communication praxis approach is not how we limit understandings of crises but learn to make living, together, within the multiplicity of perspectives and voices that make crises meaningful for everyday life. Crises, contrary to much of the work in risk and crisis management are not merely threats nor opportunities, but represent and are represented by the experiences of uncertainty and opportunity which characterize existence in complex networks of dialogic relations where crisis emerge.

Cities, as urban ecologies of dialogic complexity in which crises emerge, therefore, offer opportunities for publics to respond to crises in ways that are often unaccounted for in the discourses of planning and policy that have become so influenced by managerial techniques and technologies. Therefore, the elements of a dialogic urbanism, Mumford’s (1934) understanding of a will-to-order that is not limited to planners and policy makers controlling the shape a city takes, Jacobs’ (1992a) argument that cities constitute problems in managing organized complexity always on the edge of a chaotic existence, and Sennett’s (2018) description of the city as a mediator of relations between those who build and those who dwell within them, each offer lessons for understanding how crises are made manifest and become meaningful within the complex dialogic relations constituted by and constitutive of urban ecologies of communication.
Sennett’s works in particular offer a number of lessons for how individual and institutional publics approach urban risk and crisis management. First, it an urban communication praxis approach opens space for the multiple, taken for granted contexts of a communicative responses to be heard in the city. Secondly, it would utilize the subjective or hypothetical voice as a form of presenting tentative understandings of risk and crisis in these contexts, engaging in practices of open questioning and listening for what matters most to the publics implicated in moments of crisis. Third, this approach would acknowledge the importance of the ‘it voice’ which allows for impersonal distances and does not get distracted with blaming individuals for collective challenges created by a given historical-cultural context. And, finally, this approach would include informal, or non-determinative, forms of risk and crisis response, responses which do not necessarily have a discernable agendas or predetermined ends but facilitate meaningful understandings of the relations cultivated among publics weathering the storm of a crisis together. These elements of a dialogic urbanism reflect the commitment of urban communication praxis to accounting for and actively cultivating situated relations among individual and institutional public actors in crises.

As analytic tools, the elements of a dialogic urbanism that inform an urban communication praxis approach to risk and crisis management in cities would be realized as workshop models for scenario planning and crisis management which are developed within the context of a given neighborhood and coordinated by city governments. Urban communication praxis, in this sense, demands understanding cities and their crises as communicatively constituted in and constitutive of the relations cultivate among public actors as they navigate the complexities and contradictions of everyday lives lived in close proximity with others different from themselves. While a comprehensive program for response would be difficult to present here
in this project, an urban communication praxis approach provides a foundation for city leaders to work with publics in cultivating ethics of response which reflect the situatedness of individual and institutional perspectives while remaining open to voices of those often overlooked in planning and policy initiatives directed toward making cities more resilient.

An urban communication praxis approach would therefore not attempt to solve the problems of organized complexity constituted by cities, but would instead seek to facilitate a life lived with others which is able to cope with and find opportunities for responding to these complexities in ways these allow cities and the people who call them home to flourish. These responses would foreground the importance of communicative practices that cultivate relations among publics rather than those which manage public relations between governments and the publics whom they represent. The former calls attention to how cities are constituted as and constitutive of urban ecologies of communication in which crises are made manifest, become meaningful for, and are collaboratively managed by individual and institutional publics as they engage one another, while the latter legitimates the authority of city governments to determine what constitutes a crisis, who is responsible for its emergence, and how publics should respond to it. In this sense, an urban communication praxis approach to risk and crisis management in cities would open considerations of planning and policy to participation from individual and institutional public actors, facilitating the response of each to questions of crisis.

This section has attempted to bring together a number of concepts discussed in earlier chapters and develop a foundation for how city governments might engage the publics whom they represent in collaboratively managing crises as they are made manifest and become meaningful within urban ecologies of communication. The next section represents the conclusion to the case study portion of this project and offers the final critique and constructive response to
using a case study approach in urban risk and crisis management research. In so doing, the next section bridges the gap between practical considerations of risk and crisis management and the more theoretical understandings of communication theory. Such understandings allow for leaders in planning and policy to parse the communicative implications their professional practices have in managing risk and crisis phenomena.

**An Imperfect, but Situated Ethics for Urban Crises Response**

Case studies in risk and crisis management often conclude with discussions that justify the selection of a preferred solution in terms of the analytical tools introduced in the study and a comparison of this solution with those which were actually applied by crisis team in the case itself. This section does something similar, however it cannot offer a final solution to the problems of organized complexity because such a solution would demand reducing the complexity and contradictions of cities by removing the source of them, namely, us. It must be recognized that cities are complex and contradictory because they are built, maintained, and changed by human beings that are, themselves, complex and contradictory. Indeed, insofar as all crises emerge and become meaningful within networks of human creation, there is no way of completely preventing crises without removing all of the things that make us and our cities human. A city without crises, in this sense, would be most easily represented by those cities in which people no longer dwell, the massive cities ghost cities of China, or the spaces in which individuals and institutions are unable to engage and develop relations with one another.

It could, however, be argued that this lack of urban tissue (the literal bodies of people who wear or inhabit the urban fabric of a city itself, as Jacobs seemed to understand it) is, in itself, evidence of a crisis; one in which a city never really becomes a city because it offers nothing for people to hold on to, no texture for experiences, memorize, and identities to take root
in. In this sense, the newly emerging Smart Cities of the past twenty years are as much ghost cities as any other: people are only ever specters to one another in a city that fails to facilitate recognition of others or cultivate urban ecologies of communication. If this is the case, then there really is no city without crisis and no crisis that does not implicate communicative relations among public actors. While this is an extreme comment it falls within the same logics of prediction and control which originated in discourses of organizational and corporate management and continues to inform planning and policy responses to urban manifestations of risk and crisis. These logics necessarily privilege discourses of individual autonomy, efficient utility, and progress which could only ever result in a pyrrhic victory over the unknown in an attempt to create a perfect response for an imperfect existence.

Alternatively, by approaching the city as an ecology of communication that is both constituted by and constitutive of relations cultivated among individual and institutional public actors attempting to navigate experiences of risk and crisis in a given historical context, that is, by dialogically engaging those dwelling in cities as thoughtful actors attempting to make a living together with those different from themselves, city leaders can begin to facilitate response of requisite complexity for the crises made manifest in cities. Such a practices demand providing neighborhood representatives who understand the implications of planning and policy, are attuned to the people whom they represent, and are able to articulate issues of significance in a language that reflects the values of a given community. In essence, urban risk and crisis management demands putting the tools of crisis response in the hands of local neighborhoods where crises might occur. This not only includes tools for immediate survival in the event of natural, technical, financial, or social disaster, but those tools of community relations that allow
publics to engage one another and cultivate meaningful experiences of one another when crises are not paramount.

As stated, there is no final solution to the risks or crises made manifest within urban ecologies of communication, just as there are no final solutions to the conflicts or contradictions of human understandings. That is because neither crises nor conflict are the problems with which urban risk and crisis management must reckon. The uncertainties, ambivalences, and ambiguities associated with the experiences of risk and crisis are not even really the problem that is most important. What matters most for understanding urban risk and crisis management are the questions of how cities shape and are shaped by communication before, during, and after crises are made manifest and become meaningful for everyday life. This problem can only ever be reckoned with, never resolved. It is one which has characterized cities since their emergence in ancient cultures and continues to characterize the highly integrated cities of our digital one. In this sense, an urban communication praxis informed by the elements of a dialogic urbanism offers nothing more than an ethic, one that incorporates both monologic and dialogic into the ecological contexts of human engagement and exchange, to approach cities as and their crises as communicative phenomena in themselves.

The next section offers some concluding implications of this project for discussion of risk and crisis management in cities. In doing so, this final section elaborates how planning and policy have often been used as means for both managing and making manifest experiences of risk and crisis within urban contexts, while also describing how participatory methods would allow for city leaders to account for public sentiments in shaping cities to weather the storms and stresses of crises themselves.
The Decisive Character of Risk and Crisis in the Communicative Constitution of Cities

This project has offered a theoretical foundation for participatory approaches to urban risk and crisis management that are of requisite complexity for cities and the crises made manifest therein. In doing so, this project has reviewed discourses of urban risk and crisis management found in the literature of urban planning and policy, demonstrated how these bodies of work have been influenced by work in corporate and organizational management research, and advocated for a reinterpretation of cities and their crises as dialogically complex phenomena of communication in which individuals and institutions cultivate relations of value with one another. This project has reviewed how techniques and technologies of urban risk and crisis management emerged and influenced practices of planning and policy in the history of cities throughout Europe and the United States. In doing so, it was demonstrated that abstract notions of people and place followed from a particular orientation to order cities in such a way that they could be easily predicted and controlled, either by those dwelling within them or the leaders who governed them. Such ethics of prediction and control were shown as having consequence for how individuals and institutions cultivated the networks of existential trust necessary for weathering the storms and stresses of natural, technical financial, and social disasters which produced human crises of communication. Ultimately, these first chapters argued that prediction and control are far beyond the reach of those working in planning and policy and that city leaders should instead work towards facilitating responses of those whom they represent, rather than telling said publics how to respond.

The second goal of this project was to provide a theoretical foundation for participatory and collaborative forms of urban risks and crisis management. This was done by recalling the philosophical foundations of urban communication studies, including rhetorical theory, urban
sociology, media ecology, and continental philosophy. For this section, it became important to include understandings from three key scholars, namely Lewis Mumford, Jane Jacobs, and Richard Sennett, each of which provided work that elaborated a different element of dialogic urbanism. Mumford’s will-do-order provided a conceptual metaphor for understanding how cities were shaped by the techniques and technologies of urban planning in a monologic or an oversimplified, hierarchical, procedural, and one-dimensional manner. Jacob’s interpretation of cities as problems in organized complexity provided a way of recognizing how cities change and grow from below, privileging multidimensional, dialogic orientations in urban communication. Richard Sennett’s work, however, introduced the metaphor of the cite et ville in order to bridge the gap between the monologic and dialogic orientations in urban communication theory. In doing so, Sennett not only emphasized the necessity and importance of both of these orientations but situated them within a historical-cultural context of public ritual and remembrance, generating an ecological orientation and ethics of urban communication.

From this ecological ethics, it was possible to understand dialogic urbanism as a way of being in relation with others in cities. By foregrounding the relational dimensions of urban communication which constituted cities as dialogically complex ecologies of existential trust in moments of crisis, this project was then able to pars the practical dimensions of urban communication in crisis by discussing an urban communication praxis, a practical orientation to urban communication which emphasized relations between self, other, and world in attempting to understand the historical-cultural contexts that inform interpretations of and responses to crises. These concepts were then applied to the case of urban risk and crisis management in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina. Doing so demonstrated that traditional case study approaches to risk and crisis management demanded significant extensions in order to be applied to urban
contexts of crisis. The concepts of a dialogic urbanism and urban communication praxis were demonstrated as sufficient for providing city leaders with a hermeneutic framework for approaching cities and their problems as communicative phenomena.

This concluding section parses some final implications that an urban communication praxis approach to risk and crisis management in cities might have for discourses of planning and policy in cities. If the arguments of this project are taken seriously by leaders in urban planning and policy, particularly those concerned with building resilient cities, then an urban communication praxis approach to risk and crisis management might help city leaders to recognize new opportunities for responding to crises in ways that are open to the voices of public actors reflect the situated perspectives of those who have been navigating these crises for decades. Likewise, the arguments presented herein have implications for how city leaders understand the orthodox practices of urban planning and policy that have informed risk and crisis management in cities since ancient times. While the orientations toward prediction and control might always exist in trying avoid the harms that crises generate, it is also important for city leaders to recognize that these orientations have their limits and must be filled in by actually working with the communities dwelling together within the dialogic complexity of the city as an urban ecology of communication.

Ethics of communication both shape and are shaped in responses to the contextually situated questions of a given historical moment and therefore can only ever be understood from within the contexts where they are made. In terms of cities, this means that understanding how to best manage crises is determined by the symbolic-material constitution of the city as a communicative entity and understanding how it mediates relations among individual and institutional public actors as they reckon with the uncertainties, ambiguities, and ambivalences of
daily life with others in close proximity. Cities and their crises, as e communicatively constituted phenomena, offer no singular answer to the question of how one makes a living in an uncertain world, but only ever offer a multitude of perspectives from which one any interpret those questions and cacophony of voices struggling to respond in kind. In the end, the only ways to navigate the storms and stresses of crises made manifest within cities is together in an imperfect harmony with a world beyond than ourselves. This is why crises represented decisive moments for the ancient Greeks: they are moments in which we recognize the public character of thought, word, and deed in relation with one another. In other words, we do not define crises, crises define us.
REFERENCES


Arneson, P. (2014). *Communicative engagement and social liberation: justice will be made*. Fairleigh Dickinson UP.


(Original work published in 1993)


(Original work published in 1987)


http://www.jstor.org/stable/40208088


http://www.jstor.org/stable/1632786


https://www.gutenberg.org/files/41218/41218-h/41218-h.htm


Havelock, E. A. (1986). *The muse learns to write: reflections on orality and literacy from Antiquity to the present*. Yale UP.


Lee, S. (2010). *If God is willing and da creek don’t rise*. [Digital].


https://doi.org/10.1080/1041794X.2017.1315453


*(Original work Published in 1887)*


*(Original work published in 1906)*


http://www.jstor.org/stable/2763406


doi:10.1016/j.orgdyn.2010.10.008


rhetorical approach to crisis communication (pp. 251-262). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.


(Original work published in 1970)


(Original work published n 1776)


https://www.jstor.org/stable/27826254


(Original work published in 1905)


