Introduction

Approaching the Local

In 1958, Matson Line's *Hawaiian Merchant* was the first container ship to leave San Francisco Bay and head for open seas. As it slipped past the Golden Gate Bridge, few recognized that its voyage heralded a dramatic change in course for San Francisco's storied waterfront. By the early 1970s, while increasing numbers of massive container ships sailed on a regular basis from Oakland's growing port, San Francisco's cargo operations had slowed to a trickle, and much of the once-bustling waterfront became moribund. Shipping and maritime-related industry are to this day secondary, nearly invisible, features of the city's urban waterfront. Over the course of the last fifty years, much of San Francisco's waterfront has been transformed from an exotic and often dangerous place of work into a place of leisure, distinguished by beautiful public spaces and entertainment facilities that attract visitors from around the world. Slender, obelisk-like historic markers punctuate a well-used public path—named for the late local columnist Herb Caen—explaining the obvious to curious visitors, that San Francisco's waterfront is not what it once was.

The waterfront's revitalization was not as quick as its decline and in fact is still underway. Decades of obsolescence and disuse passed before it formed new and different connections with its city. Even as the adjacent downtown reoriented itself, straining skyward and

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expanding outward with the forms of the new postindustrial economy, the waterfront lay largely stagnant, struggling to find a purpose. The eventual transformation of San Francisco's urban waterfront was not the result of a smooth or methodical shift to a new morphology, guided by a well-coordinated, purposeful bureaucracy, a steady administrative regime, and a compliant public. Rather, the port and its governing commission were caught off guard by the difficulties of competing for business in a new age of transportation technology and the sudden decline in shipping activity that resulted. Over the years, a mixture of governmental hubris, poor strategic decision making and, most critically, complex development politics hampered San Francisco's ability to reinvent its waterfront. Early attempts to promote new uses were fitful and largely unsuccessful, despite the tremendous potential value of waterfront real estate. Some proposals were misguided ideas that faded on their own, but others were prevented by successful resistance from neighborhood activists, environmentalists, organizations of varying stripes, and an accumulation of land-use and zoning restrictions. Indeed, partly because the port is so much a part of the city's identity, deciding what to do with it has been at the center of many rounds of impassioned debate among San Franciscans.

At first, in the mid-twentieth century, when officials began to think that portions of the port could be put to new use, unrestrained modernist visions predominated. By the 1960s, battles over development proposals were joined across multiple strata of San Francisco's political structure. Apart from a few exceptions, such as the opening of Pier 39 in Fisherman's Wharf in 1978, it was not until the 1990s that little by little major changes began to take place. Some of the most significant projects, for instance the renewal of the Ferry Building, have occurred only relatively recently. Much of the San Francisco waterfront is a stretch of urban space that has shifted in use from production and industry to consumption and recreation. This kind of change can be seen as physical evidence of a switch in the functioning of a capitalist economy and the advent of new transportation technology. Tourism and entertainment, for instance, provide new fuel for the engines of capitalism; the energy that shipping provided is mostly spent. But it also reflects the demands, expectations, and limitations related to the locale, that is, to the political, social, and cultural peculiarities of San Francisco as well as the city's geographical site and situation.

So, while this book is about the evolution of the San Francisco's port over roughly half a century, from 1950 to the turn of the millennium, it

is also an examination of the processes and circumstances that have influenced that transformation. Of particular importance in this regard has been how planning and regulation, and generally the planning process, have affected this physically and symbolically important part of San Francisco. In essence, the evolution of planning during the fifty years covered here, especially land-use policy and environmental regulation, is articulated in the transformation of the waterfront. The waterfront is not just a creation of the free hand of capitalist development, assisted by a retreat of public agencies from their civic responsibilities.

Much urban research has focused on broad forces of change—*grand narratives*, they are sometimes called—in its approach to urban transformation. Whether developed within the urban literature or adapted from various disciplines, grand narratives are held to have broad explanatory capacity, capturing both meta- and microphenomena within their sweep. The grand narrative is usually based on a primary organizing concept, such as a theory of space, or social structuring, or political economics, to which almost everything else in the field of view is rendered peripheral. Cultural practices, for instance, may be treated as an epiphenomenon of capital.[1] Put somewhat differently, the interest of many urbanists has been in forces that operate on larger scales, that swirl around and permeate cities and which, in their ebb and flow, do not necessarily seem to relate to the particularities of place. Within this expansive range of analysis, certain foci have come to predominate: theories of capital, an engagement with postmodern urbanism, and the processes and conditions of globalization. These kinds of conceptualizations can be deeply revealing, helping us understand the complex and often obscure phenomena that influence the nature of cities and their roles in our world. Yet one consequence of their elaboration is that the local often seems to be powerless, rendered little more than a spatialized instance of the varying character of those larger forces and their interactions. Phenomena at the scale of the street, wharf, neighborhood, or even city are often read as evidence of forces that act beyond, and irrespective of, the local context. Everyday life loses any nektonic quality as people and communities, especially if fractured by identity politics, become subject to powers beyond their control. Moreover, globalization, advanced capitalism, and the patterns of consumption related to them, are seen to cause the urban world to suffer from a creeping genericness that threatens to overwhelm many of the complexities of material culture, social relations, and the variations and vagaries of urban forms

and functions.[2] All too easily, cities and the neighborhoods that comprise them become undifferentiated or anonymous, or are given a postmodern branding as they are broken into bits and pieces, represented in abstract maps and diagrams with labels like "ethnoburbs," "command-and-control centers," "blue-blood estates," and "festival settings."[3] Cities, along with the grand theories that explain them, become abstractions. The locality is smeared into the background of the theoretical canvas. Yet, as geographer Richard Walker reminds us, "local difference is of more than parochial interest. . . . Local differences may provide clues to unevenness within larger geographies of capitalist development . . . they can bear witness to resistance against the whirlwinds of capitalism . . . and to the persistence of oblique ideas and ways of life in the face of homogenizing forces of modernization."[4]

The basic premise of this book, then, is that local conditions and local power contribute in essential ways to the set of influences that interact to create and recreate places. So, to understand fifty years of a changing urban waterfront requires cognizance both of larger, overarching forces and of the role of the local and particular. In some ways, this may be thought of in the "top down" and "bottom up" conceptual framework occasionally employed to characterize forces that effect change. While such a structure may be useful conceptual shorthand, it is critical to recognize the complexities that more accurately reflect forces of change. For our purposes, top-down forces are of three sorts. The first are grand and expansive, such as the ability of capital to cause development or disinvestment, the effect of technology on the arrangement of shipping routes and the location of production, or the impact of globalization on urban hierarchies and city structure. Related to these, the second set are external forces embodied by, for example, businesses and investors who may come from outside a locale to engage in development, likely bringing with them sources of capital tapped from global financial flows, or members of the "transnational capitalist class" who influence the creation and design of the built environment.[5] The third sort take the form of policy and regulation established by state or federal government, especially as imposed on specific places with little local input. All of these have influenced San Francisco's waterfront. From the other direction, the bottom up or local can include powerful actors, local government agencies and the regulations and policies they administer, and interest groups. More specifically, powerful gatekeepers may be agency heads or commissioners, local real estate magnates, local

business groups, civic leaders, neighborhood and environmental organizations, or experienced activists.

What is particularly important in the top-down/bottom-up schema is the implication that top-down forces such as containerization or the restructuring of the urban economy do not act as unchecked powers: they must contend both with local conditions, such as the fundamental geographical qualities of site and situation, and with bottom-up forces. The converse is also true; local actors may have to tap into larger forces to effect an agenda for change. Local conditions include other elements as well, such as the general political, cultural, and social characteristics that differentiate places. San Francisco's history as a politically progressive city, its status as a charter city, its strong-mayor form of local government (less strong after recent initiatives), its cultural cachet, its ability to produce innovation, and its strong identification with its neighborhoods, are examples of local characteristics that influence the various forces of change.

It is important to recognize the variations in the ways top-down and bottom-up forces interact. First, they are not always in opposition, although frequently portrayed as such. For instance, if any development is to proceed, it requires willing developers, the availability of capital (or substantial public funding), and local entitlements. Second, their relationship can vary over time. A top-down force may create a condition to which local actors take some time to react, and some local conditions develop that require top-down forces to adjust. The different ways they interact create different environments for opportunity, or of constraint. Starting our story from an earlier point in time and working forward reveals shifts in the balance between forces—one or the other may be prevalent at any given time—and how different elements of either may be the "force of the moment." Third, not only are the host of local actors and agencies part of the local power structure that contends with outside pressure but they also struggle with one another over development issues and some may even be a point of focus for external agents. Their collective nature and roles can be kaleidoscopic. Some actors or agencies may be both top down and bottom up, making it difficult to adhere rigorously to the duality inherent in this framework. This last point emphasizes that the historical geography of a place does not necessarily fit easily into the ready comfort of a duality that fails to capture the complexity of the interplay of forces, how their relationships change over time, and the dual roles that some actors and agencies play.[6] The devil, as they say, is in the details.

LANDSCAPE

Urban researchers have not, of course, overlooked the local—geographers, especially, are concerned with place and landscape, both inherently local.[7] This book is about a waterfront landscape, one of great importance to San Francisco. Indeed, it was once observed that the story of San Francisco is the story of its waterfront.[8] I invoke the concept of landscape because it embodies two aspects of the world that are essential to understanding urban places—the material, in particular the built environment, and the processes of its creation (or destruction). First, at one level, as John Frasier Hart has said, the landscape is "the things we see."[9] Here, that is the built environment—the physical, visible aspect of an urban landscape with which one may interact. An urban waterfront is a built environment comprised of piers, buildings, container terminals, roads and pathways, open spaces and other physical elements. Particularly notable is its contrast to the waterfront's natural, aquatic setting and its immediately identifiable functions. The built environment tells us in a general way where we are and what kind of place we are in: port or seaside resort, suburb or downtown financial district, old neighborhood, new loft enclave, slum.[10] Built spaces, including waterfronts, are made by and populated with people and thus reflect a multitude of both personal ambitions and structural impulses. Thus they can also be symbolic: skyscrapers can represent power, crumbling and rotten piers can reflect the faded past of a maritime era, and derelict neighborhoods can symbolize the failure of a socioeconomic system.[11] And for most of us, our daily lives occur in and around buildings and streets. The built environment frames the space for and influences the character of many interactions and relationships.

Conversely, some writers have made the point that a landscape is not *what* one sees but is, rather, a *way of seeing*, an ideology, and one based on an act of appropriation. A painter, for instance, depicts a familiar scene but incorporates into it aspects that represent relationships among people, serving to assert certain societal roles above others. Or the way a landscape is depicted can indicate a particular, often class-based or socially structured, conception of the relationship between humans and nature.[12] In another vein, real landscapes hide the conditions of their creation, as Don Mitchell has tellingly portrayed in *The Lie of the Land*, wherein he reveals that the ordered and pleasant agricultural landscapes of California have been the result of "ugly processes" typified by a capitalism that

traps migrant workers in an often wretched system of abuse. In both cases, whether it is the *idea* of landscape as it may be represented in a painting or map, or its *physical character*, they are held to be beguiling or deceitful.

The potentially misleading nature of the physical aspect of landscape is underscored when one considers that not everything important about a place shows up materially. Reading the landscape from material artifacts alone runs the risk of starting from an incomplete text.[13] What is not present in the landscape can be as essential to understanding the nature of the place as what is there. For example, the defeat of a proposal for an urban freeway could be an important substantiation of the effectiveness of civic activism that might be missed if one began with the physical evidence available in the built environment (if there is no freeway to observe, how does one know a struggle over its construction occurred?). Things that did not happen also have important implications for the future. There would be little space along San Francisco's waterfront for its current, relatively publicly minded renaissance had proposals for development in the past been successful.

But landscapes may be more than a lie. At any given moment, they may represent the conclusion of a struggle, the assertion of class or economic power, a stalemate over development policy, a victory for preservationists, a moment of transition between cultural trends, or a combination of many things. The built environment, then, is a starting place for investigating the urban landscape. It is the material manifestation, not necessarily in obvious ways, of cultural and social practices and of an economic system.[14] Viewed over time, it provides signposts marking underlying shifts in a set of forces and their interplay. So, for coming to grips with a landscape, it is doubly true that what is out of sight should not be out of mind. Borrowing from Denis Cosgrove, we must be wary of falling into an "argument of the eye."[15]

This brings us to the second important aspect of landscape, that it is more than the visible, material character of a place; it is also the often-invisible processes and conditions that shaped it. For the purposes of this book, those processes are embodied in the interplay of top-down and bottom-up forces. One must also recognize that the built environment—the visible landscape—at the moment of encounter offers only a brief window of perception, an incomplete set of clues for understanding a place. Thus to see a city—or a waterfront—as a landscape often requires a historical approach. If a landscape is partly a process, then it is something

that can only be properly perceived as existing through time. And so this volume looks at the past fifty years or so, a span sufficient to ferret out the processes most relevant to explaining how San Francisco's waterfront came to be the way it is and "to make visible, to bring out of conceal-ment, what is not visible in today's landscape."[16] Many forces generate urban transformations and determine the character of change; a shift in the built environment influences the next set of interactions among forces and how they may resolve themselves. Thought of in this way, landscape in this book can be understood as a form of dialectical landscape, which Don Mitchell argues is "crucial to understanding how the landscape *works* (emphasis in original)."[17]

PLANNING

A concern for bottom-up or local influences on urban landscapes leads us to city planning. Urban change is deeply influenced by the practice of planning, which has been an accepted, albeit controversial, bureaucratic and administrative function of American society for the better part of the last century. In fact, rooted in the police power and supported by the courts, federal enabling acts, and state legislation, planning is one of the most important sources of local power. Urban planning has as its focus the built environment, its character and functions, how it is shaped, and for whom. The San Francisco Planning Department expresses this loftier role in its mission statement, which is to promote "the orderly, harmo-nious use of land and improved quality of life for our diverse community and future generations." Planning, in the form of policy (as expressed in plans), codes, and regulations, provides local jurisdictions with the ability to exert significant control over development, the provision of infrastructure, and the distribution of resources and public amenities. Planners, and the institution of planning, are at a nexus of government, politics, law, and economics.

Planning can also be thought of as a process, a series of decisions made over time in a more or less mediated and structured fashion. This pro-cess can create many ethical and moral difficulties, especially for plan-ning staff. Allan B. Jacobs, former director of planning in San Francisco and author of *Making City Planning Work* advised that one ought to keep one's bags packed—meaning, basically, be ready to leave if the ability to

maintain professional and ethical standards are threatened. To greater or lesser degrees, this process has become one that unfolds in a system that includes public participation, the nature and success of which varies by place.[18] In this regard, the planning process is both the primary mechanism for and the arena of most struggles over urban land use and development. Therefore, it provides one of the most direct ways to engage forces from beyond the city and county line and to influence or even determine the nature of urban growth and change.[19] It is also where opponents within a locality square off against one another. This happens in obvious ways at commission or board hearings and community planning meetings, and through less obvious, sometimes even sub-rosa means, for example, in closed-door meetings or in attempts to influence elected officials and staff in how to approach problems or reach decisions. If the process is seen to fail a particular party, the ultimate recourse is to place propositions on the ballot, a strategy that many planners and planning advocacy groups find frustrating, but one that has been used effectively in San Francisco by anti-growth activists.

City planning is largely a locally situated practice, and how it works or does not work is very much, though not entirely, a reflection of the community it serves.[20] Where planning is in fact part of the everyday life of a city it is embedded in the workings of the place and is produced and reproduced by myriad actors, agencies, and structures all across the city. Political activists, the mayor and mayoral offices, councils and boards, business organizations, developers, and neighborhood groups all tug and pull at the planning process, creating pressure to promote outcomes that benefit their particular interests. As we shall see, activist-minded populations can ensure that decisions made during the planning process reflect more than purely bureaucratic, political, or narrow economic purposes and can be successful in realizing very specific, even neighborhood-centered goals.

Much of the potential strength of planning is in the quality of the tools available to staff, members of the public, and decision makers. The primary mechanism is the general plan, also called a master or comprehensive plan, which sets forth a vision for the future of the community. The general plan is intended to guide growth and development based on written objectives and policies using maps, illustrations, and quantitative information that address subject areas such as housing, transportation, open space, and environmental quality. In many jurisdictions, general plans provide policy direction for other agencies.[21] Zoning codes and maps are used to

implement general plan policies as they relate to the built environment through the regulation of heights, building bulk and setbacks, parking requirements, and so on. They can also enable exactions, implement the transfer of development rights, support historic preservation, and require various public notification procedures and requirements.[22] Neither general plans nor zoning codes provide absolute surety in a course of action. Planning policy is especially susceptible to interpretation because the language used in policy statements can be one of conditional tenses and weak exhortations, such as "the city should encourage," and because policies can contradict one another. Nevertheless, at a minimum, general plan policy makes relatively clear to the public how a project or development relates to official policy, revealing much about the decision-making process. At their most effective, which is usually when implemented though specific zoning codes and other regulatory mechanisms, general plans set a course for growth and change that considers social and economic issues as well as equity. However, we should be mindful that, as noted by Michael Neuman, "plans are powerful because they are built into the power structure."[23]

The failures of planning are legion and often painfully apparent. Most egregious are those associated with urban renewal and sprawl, although smaller-scale problems riddle the built environment, from allowing construction of market-rate lofts in working-class neighborhoods to poorly designed plazas and public spaces. It is, ironically enough, sometimes difficult to identify the successes of planning if gauged only by the built environment. Of course, the definition of *success* depends on the perspective of the parties involved and any number of measurements, from fiscal soundness to legislative victories and even to enforcement. Generally, though, the point of planning is at least to curb market impulses enough to ensure that public needs are not ignored and to make certain that critical political or bureaucratic decisions about land use, development, and related subjects, are not made in isolation, entirely out of public view. To some degree, then, planning successes must be evaluated on that basis and the results can be hard to see, especially when they are in the form of exactions from developers or negotiated public benefits. Nonetheless, they are there. One cannot discern the unbuilt office tower or easily perceive design features enforced to protect light and air or to prevent shadowing of public parks. Nor is it possible to pick out the affordable units required as part of a new housing complex or to recognize patterns of height limits designed to protect public views. To some, these are marginal victories in the face

of persistent social justice issues and the inequities of a rapacious market system; for others, they represent ill-directed government interference in the natural course of urban growth and change.

One theme in this book is the fate of public access to the waterfront. Public space and the right to the city—intrinsically related concepts—are the subject of a burgeoning literature made rich by critical perspectives and insightful analyses.[24] However, serious treatment of the role of planning in creating or destroying public space, in ensuring that public space is public for all, and in mediating the right to the city is, for the most part, strangely absent. City planning is, for better or worse, a critical part of establishing constraints on property rights (or perpetuating them) and maintaining the public realm (or degrading it). It directly handles issues of inclusion and exclusion that are embedded in a democratic, though often fallible, process. In fact, one may argue that it is impossible to have public space absent a democratic process in its making. Planning has had, or can be made to have, a pivotal position in this regard. People have a voice and wield influence over what happens in a city by becoming involved in the planning process.

An examination of the transformation of San Francisco's waterfront through the lens of planning and regulation reveals important aspects of how local conditions interact with larger forces of change and how local actors interrelate, and so leads directly to the main agencies, gatekeepers, activists, and development interests involved. Furthermore, through planning's dual roles as a local force countervailing external pressures and as an institution mediating among various interests, we will come to see San Francisco's waterfront as a negotiated landscape.

An Overview of Waterfront Transformation

Many people are fascinated by ports—or at least the sites of what were once working waterfronts. Old waterfronts have an especially alluring quality. They are often in cities' older sections and their bits and pieces, from piers to historic ships, are easily recognized, making them a visible part of local history. They suggest the excitement and bustle of shipping and related activities even after they have moved elsewhere. This is partly because, as in San Francisco, some ports manage to retain a few of their

traditional activities or features, even if those features are just docks for tugs or fireboats, a few commercial fishing vessels, a passenger terminal, or the shells of old brick warehouses or food-processing plants. Especially in the United States and Europe, a number of cities have used these remnants to help re-market their waterfronts, which have become newly important parts of the traditional city center. Often as part of efforts to claim world-class status, cities play up the natural setting and historical depth of place particular to waterfronts, emphasizing new educational and recreational opportunities, seen in historic ship tours or aquariums, for example, along with residential and commercial development. Certainly, visitors, new residents, and businesses are attracted by buildings and activities related, even if tenuously, to what occurred there in the past.

As part of what creates the image of a city, urban designers also note the importance of a waterfront's location at an edge, in Lynchian terms.[25] An edge at once joins and separates two different areas of activity, two different aspects of the physical landscape, in this case, land and water. So, waterfronts are also themselves edges, and they are unusual because they do not always form hard transitions, like that made by the buildings lining Central Park in New York. San Francisco's finger piers, for instance, disrupt the edge. Indeed, waterfronts are as much an interstice as an edge. They are also untypical because to move from one side of the edge to another requires a special conveyance. So the water is also a boundary—one that hinders movement.[26]

But a watery frontier is also evocative. The sounds of seabirds, the smell of saltwater, and the view across a bay or out to sea can make the routines of an urban life seem less quotidian and may conjure up images of faraway places. This kind of effect may be what helps to romanticize waterfronts so easily, hiding a past reality filled with labor struggles and violence, smuggling, racketeering, and dangerous work. Clearly, most people today do not experience waterfronts as places of work, as nexus points for the global distribution of goods, or even as centers of passenger movements. Many cities that were established as ports and grew up around their waterfronts have long since lost those functions. Contemporary shipping areas have been relocated away from the centers of cities and people use cars and bridges rather than ferries. Recent concerns with terrorism have made it even more difficult to experience first-hand what a cargo terminal is like. So, for the general population, old waterfronts provide only hints of the activities that once occurred there

and that now continue in some other place—removed from experience in space nearly as much as in time. Yet, the appeal of these vestiges of a colorful past, and of the water itself, remains.

WATERFRONT DECLINE

The decline of waterfronts is generally due to the influence of top-down forces on port functions.[27] In particular, changes in transportation technology and other large-system factors such as economic restructuring have been of major importance. During the last half century, the most significant and probably most apparent force behind the loss or relocation of cargo operations was the advent of new transportation technology.[28] For many ports, the result has been abandonment and disuse, turning what was once a vibrant connection between city and water into a deserted no-man's land. Most ports that floundered, including San Francisco's, started to do so in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when containerization revolutionized the shipping industry. Site and situation played a major role in whether ports could adopt the new technology and remain competitive. Even if a port authority or other entity could absorb the tremendous capitalization costs to develop the specialized facilities needed to handle and move containers, they often simply did not have the space available. And, because container ships require deep channels, ports found themselves having to pay for dredging—an expensive project and today a very sensitive environmental issue. A host of related problems arises from trying to convert old port facilities to new ones, the most salient being that urban infrastructure adjacent to old ports usually cannot absorb the additional activity, particularly truck and rail traffic, associated with containerization. New technology and its requirements quite quickly rendered the older port morphology of finger piers and storage sheds obsolete.

International cycles of growth and recession and the influence of political-economic groups such as the European Union are also important to the fate of ports, especially as they relate to globalization.[29] The effects of globalization manifest in the reorganization of world trade networks in response to new patterns of national and international development. New manufacturing capacity and infrastructure development can redirect shipping routes and thus affect shipping lines' choices of home and destination ports.[30] As national economies have gained strength in parts of Asia,

ports in the Bay Area, for instance, have found themselves in stiff competition with more northern ports in Seattle and Portland, which are at the end of shorter routes from the Far East or which have better access to inland destinations. Given the massive and frequent relocation of production facilities by transnational corporations, it is easy to imagine resulting shifts in the world web of shipping lanes. Shipping lines are by nature international and may react to national policy formation in one place by redirecting services and operations to another.

Insofar as economic restructuring is a hallmark of globalization, it should also be noted that recent changes in capitalism have affected the role that capital plays in the decline of waterfronts. To minimize the use of variable capital (labor, as distinct from fixed capital, such as factories) corporations both promote the internationalization of the labor pool and encourage the introduction of laborsaving technology. Furthermore, industrial capital is invested overseas to take advantage of lax pollution regulation, cheap labor, and various economic incentives to build production facilities, such as foreign trade zones. Waterfront areas thus become deindustrialized as productive infrastructure is relocated, and waterfront communities become generally derelict as the workforce is marginalized.[31]

National and state events or conditions also generate the top-down forces that cause decline or perpetuate disuse. Relocation and closure of U.S. Navy bases, for example, have reduced the viability of some waterfronts. In San Francisco, the impact was felt by the ship-repair business, which for years had prospered maintaining naval vessels. Furthermore, when military bases are closed or other federal holdings are slated for transfer to local authorities, federal real estate policy becomes an important issue in waterfront development planning. Federal interpretation of public interest can differ from that articulated by local agencies or groups, significantly affecting the potential for and character of revitalization. Moreover, federal procedures and budget limitations may prevent or significantly delay the reuse of former naval sites because of the cost and difficulties of cleaning up what have often become intensely toxic sites.[32]

In a very different vein, regulations contained in the 1920 Jones Act require, essentially, that foreign flagged vessels make only one U.S. port of call. Since all major cruise lines are now foreign-owned, many U.S. port cities have lost passenger-based business, and thus find little reason to devote much time and money to passenger-terminal upkeep. San Francisco saw most of its cruise ship business disappear because cruise lines have

preferred to make their one U.S. stop at Los Angeles. On the other hand, San Francisco has recently become home port to an increasing number of "go nowhere" entertainment cruises. Passenger ships load, take a turn about the ocean beyond U.S. territorial waters (thus avoiding federal restrictions on gambling and wagering), and then come back to port. San Francisco is also a good base for trips to Alaska.

State fiscal policy, legislatures, governors' offices, and regulatory agencies can also influence waterfronts. This has been of particular importance in California, where for many decades the state controlled the Port of San Francisco.

WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION

Starting at the beginning of the 1960s, and coming into full force by the early 1980s, cities around the world have made efforts to reuse the land at the water's edge.[33] By the late 1970s, waterfront revitalization in the United States had become such a common urban issue that federal and national agencies began to produce guides and reports to address the trend.[34] Revitalization appears in many forms and at many scales and can include upgraded shipping and maritime-related facilities, new industrial growth that is not necessarily water-related, mixed-use commercial projects, new recreation opportunities, and residential development.

While top-down pressures have been the main reason for the decline of waterfronts, they also exert a significant influence on revitalization. Some waterfronts have benefitted from changes in shipping technology because they have such advantages as deep-water channels, ample backlands, or efficient intermodal connections, again emphasizing the role of site and situation. Federal funding for highway construction and programs such as ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, now TEA-21) influence the geography of transportation infrastructure, which translates into advantages for those port cities whose intermodal connections improve. Also, federal grants have been awarded directly to port authorities; Oakland's port, across the bay from San Francisco, benefitted greatly from such cash infusions. Of course, capital has had a tremendous impact on waterfront redevelopment. In fact, the success of waterfront redevelopment projects can be tied to increasingly service-oriented economies. Economic restructuring requires new built spaces, and derelict water-

fronts can provide the much needed acreage in what are otherwise built-up urban cores. Similarly, there has been a movement of capital away from the production process into fixed assets, especially the built environment. Waterfront redevelopment is in part a response to economic cycles that encourage businesses to switch capital into the secondary circuit.[35] As a result, many urban waterfronts are now bejeweled with dockside office towers for the service and information labor force, up-market housing for the increasing ranks of the well-heeled, and wharves of distraction for globe-trotting tourists.

Waterfront revitalization has also been a process of homogenization. It has been observed that the postindustrial economy has supported a "Manhattan-like development style adopted all around the world."[36] One can quickly point to the "Rousification" of waterfronts—Baltimore and Boston stand out—and the important role that a few large international development and architectural firms play, for instance, Canada's now defunct Olympia and York and Australia's Lend Lease. Indeed, developers' drive to create the most profitable scheme possible results in similar land uses being replicated, not just at ports within a given country, but across international borders. Of this kind of waterfront renewal perhaps the most common are tourism-related "festival" and "heritage" developments, which are often at the forefront of broader discussions of urban redevelopment.[37] Such projects mix and match office towers, passenger terminals, apartment or condominium blocks, retail development, and new, primarily nonindustrial commercial ventures, but they are perhaps best known for their food courts, waterside malls, and adaptively reused warehouses. Even their design and architectural character are inscribed with a certain sameness. Examples include New York City's Battery Park City, London's Canary Wharf, Toronto's Harbour Square, and of course, San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf—the apotheosis of the festival/heritage waterfront.

For the most part, waterfront redevelopment projects serve to privatize the waterfront. Less common in revitalization schemes is the provision of open spaces and expansive areas for passive and active recreation along waterfronts. Even in areas where access to the water or to waterside recreation is provided, designs discourage their use by the general populace.[38] The transformation of San Francisco's urban waterfront, while it now has some of these features, has been slower and has produced a somewhat different morphology. At this time, the port has no office towers, housing has been built in only two places, and hotels are absent. Its recent recon-

nection with the city has been not just as an extension of downtown or as an elite bastion. Instead, the waterfront is characterized by modestly scaled development, is laced with open space and publicly oriented uses, and it has an emphasis on public access to and movement along the waterfront.[39] These qualities reveal a resistance to the privatization that often threatened, making its present form and function very different from early visions for its revitalization. It seems to be more and more a place in which civic life is carried out. Indeed, the emphasis on public space along San Francisco's waterfront is a dramatic contrast with what has happened at other waterfronts, for instance in London's Docklands, where gated housing estates and a suburban mentality have created some very asocial spaces, and Toronto, where the public space on the waterfront has been "inscribed by disenfranchisement."[40]

As much as the scale, mix of uses, and social orientation of projects proposed by the Port of San Francisco were for many years in the modernist mold, the (so far) successful countervailing discourse could be characterized as one of postmodern resistance. Using a different lens, if a neoliberal landscape is one that bears the imprint of deregulation, devolution, and the concomitant expansion of the private sphere into the public realm, then our story can be seen as one of at least a partially successful struggle against neoliberal tendencies that have affected the rest of San Francisco, as evidenced in the spread of business improvement districts, public-private partnerships, and more generally, rollbacks in government programs. One critical factor in this regard is that port land is public land. The waterfront then is a kind of spatial frame onto which all manner of forces adhere, and within it, we can place the story of contestation over the use of a public resource threatened with commercialization and privatization.

But much has yet to be resolved, and the struggle over waterfront development in San Francisco embodies a key issue that the port and city continue to face—What and, therefore, who is the waterfront for? Commerce and industry or consumption and recreation? Residents or tourists, workers or pleasure-seekers? Or put slightly differently, echoing social theorist and urban thinker Henri Lefebvre—Who will have the right to the waterfront? Will only members of the middle and upper classes be welcomed, or will skateboarders, pamphleteers, the homeless, and the variegated "other" be tolerated, if not embraced? Will exchange value trump use value?[41] Will private enterprise ultimately dictate the fate of a public

resource? Or can such an important urban amenity accommodate many, often competing needs and desires?

The Chapters Ahead

The book is arranged essentially chronologically, with the exception of Chapter One. To answer the most basic question—How did the waterfront get the way it is?—we need to start with a description of what the waterfront is like today. This includes not just the built environment but the nature of the port itself and its relation to other governmental bodies. The chapter ends, and the main narrative begins, with the state of the waterfront in the 1950s. Chapter Two begins to answer our primary question in earnest by delving into the primarily top-down causes of the port's decline. Even before the wave of containerization washed away its shipping business San Francisco's port was beset with problems, some of its own making and some the result of external pressures that were starting to reshape the city across from its docks. Chapter Three finds the port reacting to the slipping away of its maritime activity with misbegotten ideas for a reimagined modernist waterfront. But concerns about development in areas of the city across from the port resulted in the first locally imposed restrictions on development of port land along its northern waterfront.

Nevertheless, encouraged by consultant advice about what to do with its property, the port entered the 1960s set on the pursuit of massive real estate ventures. Chapter Four documents the clash between the port's vision for the waterfront and the one being established by new plans and the creation of a new regional agency charged with protecting San Francisco Bay. The port's proposals caused a reaction among environmentalists and the general public that initiated more limitations on development on port land. By the end of the decade, the port found itself in a very different political and policy context.

Chapter Five describes how the 1970s ushered in an entirely new stage in the port's evolution. After a century, the port was reclaimed by San Francisco, but its transfer from state jurisdiction back to the city did not ease its problems; rather its status as a local agency exposed the port to powerful local interests. Chapter Six continues this theme. Even as large-

scale economic transformations gripped the city's downtown, a spate of new plans and regulations were put into place as a result of the efforts of bottom-up forces. This had the effect of stalling nearly all development on much of the waterfront for years. Yet as Chapter Seven details, the waterfront of the 1970s and 1980s did not remain completely unchanged. Policies that applied to the port's property allowed for the birth of a new, consumer-oriented waterfront. The port's attempts to exploit a loophole, to build hotels, again generated a strong public response, this time forcing the port to come up at long last with a plan for its future. As described in Chapter Eight, this, along with an earthquake, helped shift the port onto a path, one paved with good civic intentions. However, a housing crisis and spreading gentrification in the early part of the new millenium would significantly affect major real estate development projects proposed for the waterfront, raising the question of whose waterfront it will become.