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Situating San Francisco

This book is the result of my spending nearly ten years as both a participant in and critical observer of anti-gentrification and housing rights struggles in San Francisco. In 1998 I set out to write what I had initially intended to be an analysis of the residential property market. San Francisco was at that time being swept by a tidal wave of investment capital and speculative finance fueling the dot-com boom. My intent had been to delve more deeply into the social, economic, and cultural factors giving rise to an unprecedented explosion in rental rates and housing prices, using San Francisco to investigate a more general question pertaining to the circulation of money and finance through the built environment.

When I began my research in 1998, there was as yet no evidence of a significant fight-back against the rise in residential evictions at the neighborhood level, and spiraling real estate costs were forcing many small businesses to close shop to make way for the dot-com boom. The particular conjuncture of circumstances required to trigger an upsurge in popular protest—a deep wellspring of anger, a sense of righteous moral outrage, an emergent "indigenous" leadership able to frame and articulate a nascent collective sentiment, the necessary organizational infrastructure, and the unpredictable event that would finally transform anger into collective protest—was not as yet in place. Hence, I set out interviewing real estate agents, bankers, and, eventually, labor leaders and community-based neighborhood activists and leaders in the tenant rights movement to write what I thought would be an economic sociology of the local housing market.

However, almost immediately after embarking on this project, conditions on the ground began to change. For one, several neighborhood activists had

begun to uncover evidence that developers were subverting existing land use codes to convert warehouse and industrial space into upscale condos. These activists secured a grant from the San Francisco Foundation to conduct a study on land use regulations and impacts of live-work loft development in the city's remaining industrial corridor, including the northern edge of the Mission District, which was still home to San Francisco's largest concentration of Latino residents. Concurrent meetings among leaders of several Mission-based nonprofits convened in early 1999 to address the rise in evictions and pressures affecting low-income, often immigrant households in the Mission neighborhood. As the dot-com boom exploded, concern grew among many San Francisco residents that the city was in danger of losing its distinctive character. The event that finally put the live-work conflict on the citywide political radar screen was a decision by then-mayor Willie Brown to subvert neighborhood activists by expediting approval of a major development in the Mission's northern corridor. The development resulted in the eviction of more than forty small community-based businesses, artists, and small manufacturers in order to convert the site to luxury live-work condominiums. Largely in response to an upsurge in community protest, the San Francisco Planning Department convened a community meeting in the Mission District attended by more than five hundred neighborhood residents. The vast majority offered angry denunciations of Brown and Director of City Planning Gerald Green. The event triggered a flurry of local neighborhood-based activism that culminated in the election of probably the most progressive board of supervisors of any city in the United States, which promptly moved to impose citywide interim growth controls.

As the local political landscape changed, the focus of my research changed as well. Given that I was an intermittent participant in these struggles and had long been concerned with the prospects of anti-systemic movements, I wanted to understand what the struggles around land use and affordable housing might reveal about the more general state of progressive politics. There was a larger historical context and backdrop that informed this research development as well. While the 1990s was when capitalism had been declared universal and triumphant, and the "end of history" was being proclaimed by a growing chorus of establishment intellectuals, new struggles and alliances were emerging, however nascent, both in the United States and, increasingly, on a global scale. These movements and the emergent "antiglobalization" sentiment were most clearly in evidence at gatherings such as the World Social Forum. Struggles against privatization, against the austerity regimes being imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, over access to housing, health care, and education, as well as struggles centering on the natural environment, seemed to be growing throughout the world. At the same time, it seemed clear that the twentieth-century project of radical social transformation centered within, and instituted through, the mass-based revolutionary or Social Democratic Party was in crisis because of the perception that this strategy had been tried and had failed. A growing number of social movement activists had come

to question whether the political party could serve as a viable conduit for advancing the hopes and democratic aspirations of this emergent constellation of forces opposing the increasing domination of corporations and global financial markets over states and their domestic populations. While anti-systemic action and sentiments persisted, what seemed to have changed in the post-1970 period was the retreat from the former centrality of the state as the critical arena for implementing either a liberal-reformist or a revolutionary-socialist project.

Struggles in San Francisco unfolded within this larger historical context. This history of local resistance embodies many of the tensions and ambiguities of anti-systemic struggles that emerged in the wake of the New Left and New Communist movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Many of the leaders of local resistance could trace their own political biographies directly to the ferment of the New Left and New Communist movements of an earlier, and far more contentious, decade. Many activists in San Francisco retain an explicitly anticapitalist ideological orientation, even if their day-to-day organizational practices embody pragmatic compromise. While local land use and housing activism in San Francisco was constrained by the absence of a popular mass movement, many of the questions confronting local activists seemed similar to those confronting anti-systemic forces worldwide. Questions persisted regarding how to reconcile the demands of particular constituencies with the desire to forge a more durable political realignment able to coalesce progressive forces around a common program. Questions likewise persisted about the relationship of social movements to political parties, the problematic status of a brand of politics based on claims to embody and represent the perspectives of the broader community interest, and the corollary growth of a system of governance that accorded a much greater role to nonprofit and community-based organizations in mediating relations between governments and low-income service recipients. In addition, San Francisco raises more general questions concerning the simultaneously democratizing and disabling implications of the "NGOization" of state-society relations. Delving into the issues and understanding the implications for reorienting twenty-first-century Left practices is the core motivation for writing this book.

As I watched struggles in San Francisco unfold, it also became clear that these forms of resistance, far from being unique and singular to San Francisco, in fact, fused, in often novel and creative ways, a wide range of radical traditions in seeking to construct a counterhegemonic narrative to the prevailing celebration of the virtues of the capitalist market. Much of the early activism in San Francisco drew on the celebration of local control and community empowerment associated with figures such as Saul Alinksy. Struggles against urban renewal likewise drew inspiration from the Black Power and nationalist movements of the 1963–1975 period. Much of the activism centered in middle-class neighborhood associations, and aspects of the land use movement drew heavily on the vision of the good city, often associated with the writing of Jane Jacobs, celebrating the virtues of a diverse, variegated, and dense web of distinct yet

interconnected neighborhoods. Many in this new generation of radical activists saw the struggle for community control and local self-government as a means for advancing a more radical political agenda. At the same time, activists' calls for devolving greater control to community-based organizations had certain precedents in radical variants of Jeffersonian Republican and U.S. Populist traditions.

What is particularly interesting in San Francisco is that these enduring themes emphasizing local control have been fused with a radical, often Marxian-inspired critique of capitalism, as well as with aspects of black nationalist thought prevalent in the late 1960s, which saw seizing control over the administrative instruments of municipal government as a viable pathway to political empowerment. This ideological formation has come to be termed "progressivism" in San Francisco. While many of its chief architects continue to embrace explicitly anticapitalist politics, as a form of public discourse, progressivism is anticorporate, but it is not necessarily antimarket. As a political ideology, progressivism is suspicious of the concentration of political and economic power. Activists have consistently celebrated locally embedded forms of community-based self-government. Devolution of governing powers and decision-making authority to local constituents is seen as a means to counter the alienation inherent in vesting political power in large-scale institutions that operate at a vast distance from their constituents. Neighborhood and community activists have similarly espoused the virtues of small business as providing an alternative model of a locally based, diverse, and variegated pattern of urban development. At the same time, progressives have consistently supported union and tenant rights, fought for affordable housing, and pushed for expansion of social welfare.

As my research progressed, San Francisco began to appear less like an anomaly and more as the embodiment of a distinctively American pattern of Populist social protest. San Francisco also appeared more generally to reflect far larger, epochal shifts in the goals and strategic orientation of anti-systemic social movements. This was particularly true for movements that were descendants of struggles of the 1960s. I came to see that San Francisco could provide a prism through which to reflect on how oppositional politics and patterns of social conflict have been transformed within liberal democracies over the preceding three decades. I became convinced that a study of San Francisco could reveal much about the nature of urban social movements, their problems and prospects, and the reasons for past failures and accomplishments, both in the United States and globally. As the study progressed, my focus became understanding how the state operates to simultaneously enable and disorganize popular movements and grassroots resistance. This book tackles the larger questions concerning the nature and trajectory of oppositional politics—the complex manner in which the capitalist state both enables and disempowers popular activists—drawing out the lessons of San Francisco for the Left (broadly conceived).

Situating San Francisco in Historical Context: The Demise of the New Deal Social Compact and the Rise of the Neoliberal Project

Struggles recounted in this book have transpired over a time period that coincides with the demise of Keynesianism and the rise of the neoliberal project. The larger political economic context is important because it defines the external resources and structure of opportunity and constraint that are available to local governments and grassroots activists. The central story running throughout all variants of the analysis of neoliberal globalization is a story of diminished state capacity and subjugation of the public sphere to market imperatives. Whatever their other differences, most critical urban analysts would concur that sometime in the 1970s, a series of shifts occurred that began to weaken the ability of national governments to use the policy tools of the post–World War II Keynesian period to pursue policies of full employment. Increased capital mobility, the enormous volume of deregulated cross-border capital flows, and the growing scale and reach of transnational corporations that carry out operations spanning multiple national jurisdiction have eviscerated the former regulatory coherence of the nation-state as a space for the implementation of a project of national development. Governments have similarly lost the capacity to undertake large-scale public investments that seek to act in advance of, and ultimately guide, the pattern and location of private investment. The net result is that the policy mix of the Keynesian period—countercyclical fiscal policy, progressive taxation, and expansion of public social security, health care, and education—is supplanted by tax breaks to corporations, promotion of regional competitiveness schemes, flexibility in labor markets, targeted public sector investments in infrastructure and technology transfer.

At the urban level, the former emphasis on social welfare enhancement and public employment policy has been supplanted by an emphasis on regional competitiveness and aggressive efforts to attract and retain private investment. The combination of cuts in revenue transfer from national governmental authorities and the growing rhetorical emphasis on regional autonomy have left cities with few policy options for promoting development other than seeking to court and retain private investment. This undermines the ability of local governments to launch social and economic initiatives that operate in advance of, and could potentially guide and direct, the subsequent pattern of market-led development. Private corporations can extort all manner of inducements and favorable incentives—for example, targeted tax breaks and infrastructural investments that fund the up-front costs of private development projects, absorption of firms' externalization of social costs in the form of health care and education and training of the workforce, and maintenance of the vast disciplinary and incarceration apparatus. The result is a constriction of the range of

viable policy choices and near complete subordination to the logic of the (global) market. This places sharp limits on the ability of grassroots movements to challenge the power and prerogative of private business. Community-based organizations and local social movements have thus been forced to adopt an increasingly post-political, technocratic discourse. Often, this has meant activists have had to serve as brokers of a purported "community interest" in consultation processes convened by local governments to work out the terms of public subsidization of private business. As a result, it has become commonplace in much critical urban literature to argue that neoliberalism has severely attenuated the very possibility of engaging in meaningful grassroots resistance to the remaking of cities by global market forces (for various accounts of neoliberalism by critical urbanists, see Cox 1997; Keil 1998, 2000; Jessop 1994, 2000a, 2000b, 2002; Peck and Tindell 1994, 2002; Swyngedouw 2000, 2005; Brenner 2000, 2004; Brenner and Theodore 2002; Sassen 1991, 1994, 1998; Sites 2002; Hackworth 2006; and Einsinger 1998).

While I agree with the overall thrust of this analysis, it is important not to overstate the degree to which the neoliberal project has eviscerated locally based forms of social protest. We continue to observe large numbers of movements, both in the United States and even more so throughout the global South, that challenge key aspects of neoliberal policy, or that are oriented toward the construction of alternative ways of organizing social life, however nascent. What we observe is more of a shift in terms of the foci, aims and goals, and the strategic and tactical orientation of what G. Arrighi, T. Hopkins, and I. Wallerstein termed "anti-systemic movements" (Arrighi, Hopkins, and Wallerstein 1989). Many social movements that have emerged over the past several decades are highly localized (site specific) in terms of the understanding of their own goals and substantive objectives, and they are organized on an often highly issue- and constituency-specific basis.[1] Many land use and tenant movements, anti-privatization struggles, and indigenous peoples movements see the localization of the scale of political engagement as the natural counterpole to the alienations inherent in the politics of large scale—in particular, to the estrangement created by antidemocratic tendencies that come with the centralization of power and authority in the hands of the global corporations and states that have grown increasingly impervious to meaningful influence by popular constituencies. As a result, many social movements today have a more ambivalent relationship to the historical project of acquiring state power (Lustiger-Thaler and Shragge 1998; Wallerstein 2002, 2004; Mertes 2004). Emphasis instead is on diversity and nonidentity, with pronounced suspicion of political projects that seek to impose any a priori presumption of unity (Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Conway 2005). This suggests the story of neoliberalism is not one of the outright defeat of the possibility of popular opposition. Rather, we observe a downgrading of the political party as the "natural" conduit for pursuing a project of comprehensive social transformation, and a celebration of more localized, site-

specific social movements that presuppose a broad basis of affinity but refuse subsumption to an overarching, more fundamental basis of unity.

Viewed from this historical vantage point, struggles we observe in San Francisco appear as local variants of a far larger epochal shift in the ideological tenor and strategic orientation of social movements in the post-1970 period. Patterns of social action we observe in San Francisco similarly challenge narrow, unilateralist readings of neoliberalism's antidemocratic and politically disabling implications. Far from observing a pattern of popular withdrawal and defeat, we observe a persistence of local protest sustained across shifting federal policy regimes and multiple mayoral administrations. While private control over investment and the omnipresent threat of capital flight certainly constrain the policy choices available to local government, development in San Francisco occurs within a set of democratically enacted regulatory controls that impose real limits on the power and prerogatives of private business. Equally striking is how the shift toward a more overtly pro-market policy regime has been associated with a growing procedural democratization (albeit limited and contingent) of local government. The regulatory apparatus constructed over a four decades–long struggle by land use and tenant activists has been successfully defended against attempts at rollback. We thus observe an apparently contradictory development in which the devolution of administrative and regulatory authority, initially implemented to constrain the range of demands that could be addressed toward local governments, has provided a context within which grassroots forces have been able to demand greater inclusion within the local decision-making apparatus. This shift should not be seen simply as a parochial defense of local "turf" resulting from an inability to influence processes whose primary region of operation is the national or international scale (as argued by Castells [1983]). Rather, I argue that these struggles are "productivist," in the sense of marking attempts to both capture and redirect economic resources benefiting low-income constituencies and in the sense of creating regulatory environments that constrain and delimit the systemic power wielded by private business.

At the same time, San Francisco's history of locally based land use and tenant activism has much to teach us about the limits inherent in site and constituent-specific forms of social dissent. Despite sustained opposition, activists have failed to fundamentally challenge the market-based system of housing production and allocation. Victories in regulating growth and strengthening tenant protections have not translated into the formation of a durable, broad-based coalition able to cohere various struggles around a common political program. Housing and land use activists have failed to unite the diverse constellation of Left-progressive forces around a shared political platform or common policy goals, despite repeated attempts to do so. As a result, the history of local resistance to redevelopment and gentrification has produced a political landscape ridden by fractious divisions. The Left-progressive political pole within San

Francisco remains factionalized, unable to address internal divisions and overcome the self-limiting effects of the highly constituency-specific, often single-issue focus of its constituent organizations.

The complex nature of outcomes we observe in San Francisco raises several questions this study attempts to address. For one, what factors account for the ability to sustain opposition both across state and market-led cycles of redevelopment and gentrification and across a succession of local mayoral administrations, despite federal retrenchment and factors that have enhanced the systemic power of private capital? And why, conversely, has it proven so difficult to build and sustain enduring alliances among progressive forces, and to unite the various sectors of the San Francisco progressive movement around a common political program?

As I argue at length in Chapter 7, successes in San Francisco are seen to derive from a combination of the demographic and class characteristics of San Francisco; the city's favorable location in relation to the international circuits of capital; the ability of activists to forge recurrent, if ultimately transient, interorganizational and interracial alliances; the weakening of the former coherence of the pro-growth labor-downtown alliance; and San Francisco's size and geographical scale. The result is the formation of a local political culture that is far more inclusive of neighborhood and popular forces than was the case during the urban renewal period (1945–1973), despite the limits imposed by the structural power and the significant political influence still wielded by private capital.

At the same time, multiple factors have mitigated the ability to cohere diverse social forces around a common political program. Obvious factors that stand out are enduring racial and class-based social divisions, and the fact that progressive ideology does not command a clear base of majoritarian support among the city's electorate. A particular focus of this book, however, is understanding how outcomes reflect the manner through which the liberal democratic state organizes, manages, and "processes" social conflict. We explore how the local state facilitates protest and confers a language for legitimating dissent while simultaneously disorganizing popular forces in the very act of extending them recognition, integrating dissent in the very fabric of the state's own regulatory and legislative systems. Integration of popular opponents through instituting bureaucratic-administrative reforms (the creation of constituency-specific agencies and commissions) or through structured interest representation that institutionalizes specific bases of political participation operates to transform protest and opposition into brokered accommodation (Mollenkopf 1983; Reed 1999). While political unity among popular constituencies cannot be assumed as an a priori, if latent, condition, I argue that political fragmentation results, in part, from how the local state institutionalizes a highly fractionated form of interest representation within its own administrative and regulatory apparatus. The state is accordingly understood as simultaneously facilitating forms of popular political participation that may encroach on the conditions of profitable accumulation and capitalists' inalienable rights of (private) appropriation,

while processing conflict in a manner that reproduces the state as a separate political instance standing above and outside of the economic, thereby reconstituting the structural basis of the domination of propertied interests over the popular classes.

The experience of San Francisco also raises questions pertaining to the efficacy of social action oriented toward "the local" as its primary site of intervention. Shifts in the strategic orientation of social movements over recent decades raise questions of why we observe an apparent predilection for more locally based scale of political protest and the concurrent devaluation of the prior emphasis on party-based, state-centered strategies of social transformation. Should we see in local movements a pathway toward a more authentic, transparent, and potential emancipatory form of democratic politics? Or do these movements represent a retreat into a highly parochial form of micro-politics that has effectively abandoned all hope of bringing about large-scale social transformation?

I attempt to answer these questions in Chapter 7. For now, suffice it to say that San Francisco has relevance to these larger questions of whether restructuring local political relationships and processes can serve as a means for instituting more engaged, transparent, and participatory systems of governance. Changes in the local governing process in San Francisco typify a more widely noted shift in the relationships among business, governments, and social movements that has transpired over recent decades. Government has become more ostensibly participatory, based on a consensus-seeking system of multi-stakeholder governance. This shift has been simultaneously celebrated as more substantively democratic (Mayer 1994; Papadopolous 2000; T. Clarke 2000) and condemned as a veneer for the increasingly autocratic assertion of the market imperative (e.g., Swyngedouw 1997, 2005, 2007, 2009; Fraser et al. 2003; Silver, Scott, and Kazepov 2010). San Francisco has perhaps the most developed system of participatory governance of any major city in the United States. Hence, it offers us an opportunity to evaluate these contending claims regarding the alternately empowering and disabling impact of this new system of urban governance.

For all these reasons, San Francisco is a useful case study through which to examine questions regarding the implication of these changes in the tenor and composition of social movements; shifts in their goals and strategic orientations; and the corollary retreat from prior commitments to party-based, state-centered projects of social transformation. Movements I examine in San Francisco are part of this larger sea change, and thus provide a lens through which to assess these movements' current prospects and limits, albeit one informed by specificities of the U.S. context. San Francisco's rich history of grassroots resistance to redevelopment and gentrification thus presents us with an opportunity to examine the dynamics and limits of local opposition to both the state and market-led phases of redevelopment and gentrification and to reflect on the prospects of "the local" as a site for meaningful resistance.

It is my hope that this study will challenge perceptions among urban scholars, and those interested in social movements more generally, that San

Francisco is a "deviant" anomaly within the larger context of American urban politics, having little to teach us about the nature of urban movements. Certainly, San Francisco has its particularities. But so do Chicago, Atlanta, and New York City. The issue, in each case, is to distinguish what is general and what is specific, and to show how patterns of social activism we observe in each case refract larger social forces through the prism of each city's demographic and economic characteristics, location, and function within the international system of cities. The successes and failures of local anti-gentrification struggles in San Francisco hold significant lessons for popular movements seeking some way forward in an era in which large corporations and financial interests exercise enormous, at times seemingly inexorable, sway over the policy choices of community groups and elected officials.

Situating the Struggles in the Larger Political-Economic Context

To frame the subsequent case studies that form the empirical content of the book, some further mention must be made of two shifts in urban policy in the United States that are widely regarded as having decisive, and ultimately debilitating, impacts on the efficacy of urban social movements. The first was the initiation of the New Federalism by Richard Nixon in 1973. The second was the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan. Nixon's primary policy innovation was his consolidation of more than one hundred federal categorical and grant-in-aid programs into six separate block grants. Many urban programs were rolled into the Community Development Block Grant that would be appropriated and awarded to cities on a formula basis (for various accounts of this process, see Mollenkopf 1983; M. Stone 1993; DiGaetano and Klemanski 1999; and Dreier 2006). The Nixon administration used this process of consolidation to depoliticize the appropriations process by shifting the method for determining allocations from categorical program grants to block grants based on formula funding. By at least partially depolitizing the appropriations process, this built a fire wall between the Washington bureaucracy and Democratic mayors with ties to local, predominantly black, constituents. While this shift in the mechanism of funding appropriations did not result in an immediate reduction in housing and urban development outlays, Nixon did establish the political context for the far more aggressive implementation of federal funding cuts instituted by Reagan. The 1981 passage of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act marked the point of major reductions in federal funding for a wide range of urban employment, job training, and economic development programs. Cuts in appropriations to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development begun under Jimmy Carter were accelerated, and some federal programs, such as the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), were eliminated (Mollenkopf 1983). Section 8—the federal government's major low-income

housing construction and subsidy program—had all funds for new construction cut from the appropriations budget and would henceforth function as a voucher program. This was followed up in 1986 by the creation of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program that would serve as the major source of federal funding for low-income housing development. The effect was to shift subsidies paid to private investors effectively "off-budget"—hence out of view of the appropriations process (see Dreier 2006).

Republican political strategists used this attack on urban programs to exploit mounting white racial resentment over Kennedy-Johnson era social programs that were perceived by many white Americans as being unduly biased toward central city, predominately black ("undeserving") constituents. The result was a wedge issue that allowed the Republican Party to split off and capture a significant sector of moderate white suburban voters, including disaffected white blue-collar workers.[2] The "Reagan Revolution" imposed a fiscal chill on local governments. Federal withdrawal increased fiscal constraints on municipal budgets and functioned to constrain the ability of local governments to launch independent local development initiatives in advance of securing expression of interest from private developers (Fainstein and Fainstein 1983a; Davis 1993; Einsinger 1998; Lauria 1997). As noted previously, the effect was to powerfully reinforce the principle that the market, not government, should unilaterally guide and control the allocation of long-term investment. The result was a shift in the tone and tenor of local politics away from the social justice agenda of the 1960s and 1970s in favor of a technocratic ethos of good and efficient government. Mayors shed their former social justice rhetoric, emphasizing instead the virtues of fiscal prudence, public-private partnerships, and the removal of urban blight. Local government was reinvented as an efficient provider of cost-effective services to citizen-consumers, as municipal administrations became far more pragmatic and focused on principles of sound management. The result was a policy environment that served to further enhance the power of business over local government. This occurred in both a punitive (through threats of capital flight) and an ideological sense, as policies that skewed the distribution of benefits in favor of wealthy developers and major landlords were upheld as embodiments of the general, public good on the basis of the ability of private development to generate employment and expand the local tax base (see Einsinger 1998; see also Fainstein and Fainstein 1983a; Davis 1993; Lauria 1997; Hackworth 2006; and Kantor, Savitch, and Haddock 1997; and Savitch and Kantor 2002).

Just as we must question the degree to which neoliberalism has closed off the possibility for popular resistance, it is equally important to avoid overstating the degree to which changes in urban policy has represented a fundamental rupture in the larger context of federal-urban relations and long-standing patterns of urban governance. Review of the data on public revenue and expenditure indicates that the actual trajectory since the late 1970s is somewhat more nuanced than is suggested by recent critical urban analysis. Total public

sector expenditure as a portion of gross domestic product (GDP) rose steadily between 1945 and 1997 and has been more or less constant in the years since.[3] Certainly, rising health care costs account for much of the constancy in the federal and state share of total income and output after 1980. Hence, while it is correct to assert that this period has not witnessed any significant expansion of real (inflation adjusted) social welfare benefits in terms of what the public actually receives, claims that the state has withdrawn from its social democratic obligations nevertheless appear overstated (see Gough 2002). This indicates the need for a more nuanced analysis that understands neoliberalism as a politically contingent project of elite withdrawal from the social welfare obligations of the Keynesian-Fordist period (for various arguments along these lines, see Petras 1996; Hardt and Negri 2000; Harvey 2005; Duménil and Lévy 2004, 2011; and Radice 2011). This project is far from being fully realized. The upper-tier segments of the capital-owning classes have not been able—and have not always wanted—to simply annul the complex of social programs and expansion of state involvement in the reproduction of labor power, education, infrastructure, and various forms of social insurance. Large segments of the popular classes still receive benefits from these programs. Hence, any push to impose major reductions in the funding of public sector entitlement programs has, to date, encountered significant resistance. Doing so would, moreover, threaten to erode the fiscal basis of the (provisional) neoliberal consensus (Gough 2002).

It is important to note that U.S. urban and housing policy has *always* had a highly pro-market bias (see, in particular, Marcuse and Keating 2006). With the exception of the 1937 Housing Act, promotion—and protection—of private enterprise has dominated low-income housing policies throughout the entire so-called Keynesian period (1934–1975). Public housing provision was limited to the most unprofitable and commercially degraded segments of the housing market; federal subsidies and public housing development were carefully regulated to protect developers' profits. Urban renewal is likewise an exemplar case in point: from its inception, the explicit intention of urban renewal has been reclamation of formerly disinvested areas as spaces suitable for profitable private redevelopment.

Similarly, we should not overstate the novelty of the public sector intervention strategies used to promote development in the post-1980 period. In fact, the majority of the policy tools and incentive packages currently employed by local governments to attract private capital consists of a standard and enduring mix of land write-downs at below-market prices prior to their transfer to private developers, favorable rezoning amendments, selective tax exemptions, and public absorption of the costs of site assemblage, land clearance, and environmental remediation (Weber 2002). Moreover, actual oversight of urban programs and the implementation of publicly subsidized redevelopment have always been administrated on a highly decentralized, local basis. Urban renewal is again an exemplary case in point. Devolution of power and authority

to local government, and the preference for locally based oversight of actual program implementation, is not a feature that is unique to neoliberalism.

Likewise, the promotion of tourism and the construction of mixed-use, high-end residential, entertainment, and retail complexes; public parks and open spaces; and waterfront promenades does not constitute a neoliberal strategy of place-based accumulation, contrary to the claims of authors such as N. Smith (2002) and J. Hackworth (2006). In fact, the promotion of consumption-based urban regeneration was instituted well prior to the crisis of the Keynesian social democratic state and was one of the major redevelopment strategies pioneered by municipalities during the urban renewal era. What has changed is the growth of public-private development partnerships that require governments to secure up-front commitments from private developers prior to committing public funds to the project. In addition, local governments must fund any up-front investments via borrowing on the capital markets. This allows rating agencies and investors to wield veto power over projects that fail to conform to capital market standards (see Hackworth 2006 on this point).

Furthermore, urban policies of the Keynesian era did not embody values of social egalitarianism and redistributive justice. Such claims have been stated explicitly in Hackworth 2006. While other authors who make this point are often less overt, much of the critique of neoliberalism counterpoises the predations and exclusions of the private market with a supposedly more inclusionary and egalitarian social democratic project. While there is an element of truth in such claims, particularly regarding Europe, it was the U.S. federal government that pioneered the practice of redlining the systemically denied mortgage loans to African American neighborhoods (Massey and Denton 1993). Similarly, local governments used urban renewal to "cleanse" potentially profitable redevelopment opportunities of their existing, predominately black, populations. Keynesian era urban policy can hardly be counted as egalitarian and in certain respects embodied far more revanchist—and overtly racist—elements than urban policies implemented over the past two decades.

These qualifications are important given that the widespread emphasis on rupture at the expense of continuity makes it difficult to explain the persistence of local opposition to redevelopment and gentrification sustained across shifting federal policy regimes and a succession of local mayoral administrations. Explanation must account for both the rupture in the larger political economic environment and the endurance of certain defining features of the U.S. federalist state and its associated emphasis on devolution and the celebration of small-scale, decentralized forms of political government. As I show in the case studies that follow, the particular distribution of governmental power that characterizes the U.S. federal system has been critical in shaping the forms and focus of local protest and in providing a language that has been appropriated and used to legitimate activists' grievances. Overemphasis on regulatory breaks and supposed novelties of post-1970 globalization on the political economy of cities can all too easily obscure the enduring aspects of state-society relations.

This renders it difficult, if not impossible, to account for the persistence of local struggles despite shifts in the prevailing modes of urban governance.[4] It also has political implications, as critique all to often becomes a matter of pointing out the "evils" of neoliberalism, as opposed to critiquing the more enduring and more fundamental contradictions of capitalist urbanization.

Organization of the Book

The central themes of this book—the changing relation between the state and civil society and the role of the liberal democratic state in both enabling and limiting the capacities for popular resistance—are examined by tracing out key episodes in the history of community-based resistance to redevelopment and gentrification. The history of land use and housing rights battles in San Francisco is a story composed of many strands and currents, at times operating in unison, at times fiercely opposed. Given the complexity and overlap of these multiple currents, this study is organized as a set of narrative histories that recount critical struggles in the history of local resistance to both state- and market-led phases of redevelopment. Chapter 2 provides a summary overview of the land use battles transpiring between 1955 and 1975 that initially emerged in response to proposed freeway extensions that would have cut through the center of Golden Gate Park. The chapter also recounts battles over urban renewal in the predominantly African American Fillmore District that transpired between 1959 and 1975. Both these struggles marked key watershed points in efforts to build a citywide progressive political formation that could serve as a counterweight to the capital-labor pro-growth alliance. While these initiatives failed to achieve their intended goals, they signaled the emergence of neighborhood- and community-based organizations and urban environmentalism as a new and significant force in local politics. The period was decisive in consolidating organizations that would compose an enduring base for San Francisco's land use and housing rights movement. Most notably, defeats being handed to activists in the Fillmore District and the spread of the gentrification frontier throughout San Francisco's working-class neighborhoods would spur the formation of a citywide umbrella organization of nonprofit, community-based housing developers—the Council of Community Housing Organizations—that sought to establish an alternative model for community-centered housing development, which could create a credible counterpole to redevelopment. The tenant movement has likewise succeeded in instituting rent controls and limits on evictions that have transformed San Francisco into one of the most extensively regulated rental housing markets in the United States.

In Chapter 3 I sketch out a framework for the analysis of urban movements. My goal here is to outline a framework that can link urban social movements to an analysis of systemic contradictions, which are internal to the capital accumulation process as such. The chapter draws on the eco-Marxist work of James

O'Connor, who has sought to address the site-specific aspects of social movements and conflicts that emerge outside the work site. Expanding this framework, I argue that urban movements of the type examined in San Francisco articulate a tendency for the imperatives of capital accumulation to degrade or underproduce its own natural and social substrate. This provides a basis for theorizing urban movements—struggles to protect the quality of the urban environment, land use, transportation policy, and the sphere of social reproduction and social welfare more broadly, as well as battles to reshape how we consume and use energy—as expressions of a particular set of systemic contradictions that reflect the limits of the capitalist production process to create and reproduce its own necessary conditions of existence.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine recent land use conflicts that constitute various fronts in the ongoing battle over the future of San Francisco. Here the focus shifts from explaining success to examining the problems confronting local actors seeking to develop an enduring, multisector movement able to unite labor, urban environmentalists, and community-based organizations around a common progressive platform. Chapter 4 presents an extended case study of conflicts that broke out over an explosive cycle of live-work loft development fueled by the dot-com boom. The Mission District found itself at ground zero of a major building boom that many felt was accelerating the displacement of low-income, predominantly Latino families and small businesses from the neighborhood. While activists failed to halt live-work condo development outright, they did eventually succeed in forcing the City Planning Department to engage in a multiyear rezoning study that allowed for extensive input from neighborhood residents and community-based nonprofits. Equally critically, in 2000 a solidly progressive majority was elected to the Board of Supervisors, largely on the basis of the candidates' opposition to live-work development. Political campaigns served as a series of neighborhood-level referendums on the no-holds-barred approach to development pursued by the mayoral administration of Willie Brown. This cycle of neighborhood struggle resulted in significant legislative gains for progressives and further reforms in the local planning process. At the same time, it also provides a lens through which to examine how the state, in reacting to popular protest, constitutes itself as an embodiment of the "general interest," thereby obscuring its underlying class basis. In addition, the cycle of resistance in the Mission District and its electoral aftermath shows how incorporation into the legislative and administrative apparatus occurs in a manner that reinforces tendencies for groups to act on the basis of narrowly conceived, often highly parochial definitions of their own self-interest.

Chapter 5 presents the story of the Mission Bay project that, once completed, will be the largest planned development in San Francisco. Mission Bay is a preeminent example of the public-private partnership. The development is revealing of the extent to which the "land use Left" has been able to leverage its influence and ability to claim legitimacy as the bearer of a broader public interest, which can be seen in the Left's attaching public benefits and

affordable housing provisions onto a heavily subsidized public-private development. At the same time, Mission Bay demonstrates how this process of stakeholder consultation occurs in a tightly controlled and top-down fashion. Here also we observe a complex and ambiguous effect. On the one hand, outcomes reflect the ability of popular actors to impose limits on private prerogative. At the same time, the local state mediates between contending social interests in a manner that confers legitimacy on a "consultative" planning process, which transpires under the de facto control of private developers and major corporations.

Chapter 6 provides an overview of the succession of San Francisco mayoral administrations since 1975, through which I examine the relations between social movements and electoral politics. Shifts in the configuration of forces that alternately aligned behind or opposed the successive administrations of Moscone, Feinstein, Agnos, and Brown are recounted. I tell the story of the 1999 insurgent mayoral campaign of Tom Ammiano and the even more impressive bid by Green Party member and then–Board of Supervisors president Matt Gonzalez in 2003. The aftermath and fallout from these mayoral campaigns, particularly in the case of Gonzalez, reveal the weaknesses that derive from the high degree of fragmentation that characterizes the political landscape in San Francisco and the resultant inability to unify various sectors and organizations around a common program.

In Chapter 7, I examine factors that account for the relative success enjoyed by activists in San Francisco in sustaining a culture of local dissent and the ability to extract meaningful concessions from private developers, as well as the problems and limits of this locally based, often highly constituent-centered form of social protest. Despite the failure to preserve affordability and stop gentrification, activists have imposed very real limits on the prerogatives and power of private business and have succeeded in shaping a far-reaching set of regulatory enactments that prescribe and limit the ability of private developers and landlords to operate with impunity or disregard for social obligations and constraints. These achievements are particularly impressive given the fact that they have transpired within an external environment characterized by federal withdrawal from the cities and attacks on the terms of the New Deal social compact. The result has been the creation of a regulatory framework that imposes real limits on developers and the formation of a network of progressive organizations that has sustained a local culture of opposition, enduring across shifts in the federal policy environment and a succession of mayoral administrations.

To explain success, I first discuss aforementioned factors that have facilitated the ability of urban activists in San Francisco to impose extensive regulatory control on private developers. I argue that community activism in San Francisco exemplifies a distinctive form of social action that derives from the opportunity structure and normative value frames that typify the U.S. federalist system. Activists have mobilized a Left variant of a venerable American political tradition that celebrates local self-determination and diffusion of

decision-making power to neighborhood associations and councils. These ideological tropes have been appropriated and reinvented by activists in San Francisco to advance a counterhegemonic project seeking to institute alternative forms of more locally centered, neighborhood- and community-based governance. The ability to exploit existing avenues for voicing dissent and couch grievances in a culturally resonant framework are *necessary*, albeit not *sufficient*, conditions that have allowed local movements to bring about significant reforms in the policy-making practices of local government.

I then turn to a discussion of some of the prospects and problems confronting efforts to build a more coherent and enduring progressive political formation. Arguments that state-focused strategies of political action no longer constitute viable pathways toward achieving fundamental social transformation are evaluated in light of the San Francisco experience. In contrast to such claims, I argue that the state remains a critical terrain of political engagement. Posing the issue as such raises the question of the immediately observable limits of these struggles and the question of what these struggles may potentially prefigure. I discuss the problems inherent in the elevation of nonprofit agencies to the role of emissaries claiming to speak on behalf of the imputed interests of low-income populations (Reed 1999). I examine whether building political organizations that seek to overcome the inherent limits of a single-issue, single-constituency focus is possible or desirable in the present historical context (Marcuse 2005; Conway 2005). I discuss the prefigurative aspects of the struggles we observe in San Francisco and some of the larger political implications of these movements through the consideration and critique of thinkers such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri as well as Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. While remaining cognizant of the demonstrated limits of these movements, I argue that they embody, albeit often in inchoate fashion, a radical-democratic claim that urban residents have vested rights to exercise control over the long-term planning of investment. These struggles and their conceptions of democratic rights thus point to a world beyond domination by capital and "the market." This ultimately poses the question of how to constitute governing institutions that will allow urban inhabitants to determine the type of city in which they work and live. I conclude with a discussion of ways urban activists in the United States can move toward a more proactive and "productivist" form of political action able to push our present society in a more democratic and egalitarian direction.