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THE NEIGHBORHOOD MOVEMENT IN SAN FRANCISCO

Stephen E. Barton

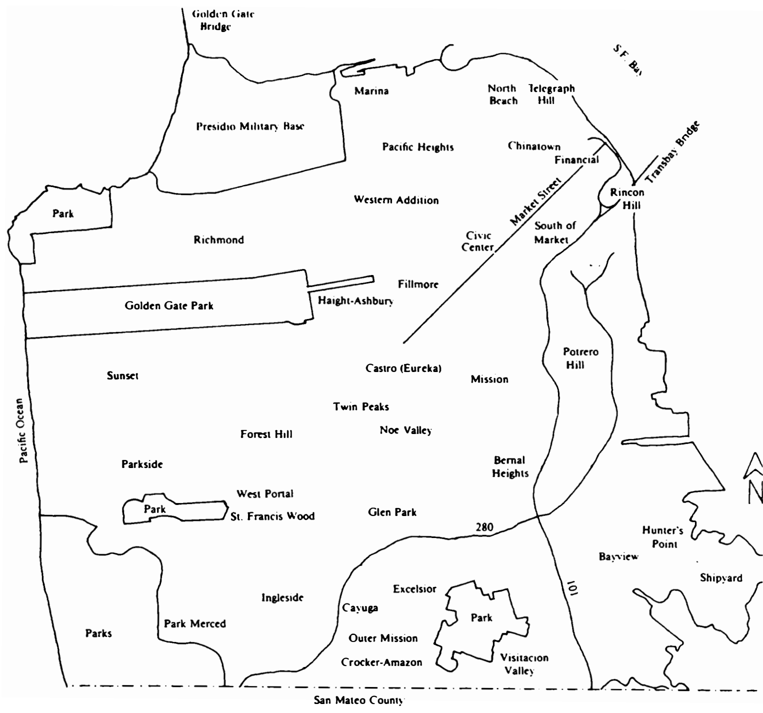
Neighborhood organizations in San Francisco today are notable for the strength of their challenge to business interests in a major corporate center, and for avoiding racial conflict in a remarkably diverse city. (On other cities: Arnold, 1979 & Crenson, 1983 on Baltimore; Edel, Sclar & Luria, 1984 & Mollenkopf, 1983 on Boston; Abbott, 1983 on Portland; Lee, et al., 1984 on Seattle). They have great influence on city planning, but at the same time, neighborhood organizations which unite against the effects of downtown development are also divided among themselves. Tension over exclusion and inclusion, property rights and universal rights, local protection and regional responsibility have been an underlying theme of neighborhood politics ever since new neighborhood organizations arose out of the civil rights movement. In the following pages I trace the neighborhood movement in San Francisco from its origins over a century ago in conservative, parochial organizations of local property owners, to its present complexity and major role in city politics.

Neighborhood Organizations Before World War II

The First Neighborhood Organizations

The first residential neighborhood associations were established during the 1850s, when exclusive developments were built on and around Rincon Hill, south of the downtown business district. South Park, modeled after the private residential parks of London, was closed to everyone except residents of the surrounding townhouses and protected by restrictive covenants. The spread of industry in the South of Market made the area less attractive, and when its residents were unable to prevent construction of the Second Street Cut, which leveled part of Rincon Hill to improve transportation connections for industry, they moved on to other areas (Lockwood, 1978).

The first enduring neighborhood associations were organized in the 1880s in the new developments in outlying areas made accessible by construction of streetcars. Neighborhood newspapers were founded during the same period. The new organizations lobbied City Hall for extension of city services to their areas: streets, lights, water mains, schools, fire stations, parks, playgrounds, etc. They also raised funds to help purchase equipment for fire stations and playgrounds and held social events. Improvement club leaders were usually local businessmen, managers, and professionals, and they had close relations with the neighborhood merchants associations which began to organize as separate entities after the 1906 earthquake (Horton, 1979; Hubbard, 1924; Young, 1912).



San Francisco Neighborhoods

Residents of these neighborhoods soon included the better off strata of the working class, such as carpenters, who began moving into the new single family neighborhoods before 1900 (Tygiel, 1977). Settlement houses were established in several poor neighborhoods, including the Telegraph Hill Neighborhood Association and the South Park Settlement (Burton, 1947).

A typical organization was the Panhandle Improvement Club, located in what is now called the Haight-Ashbury. Founded in 1888, the club lobbied for better streets and street lights in a manner quite familiar to today's Alinsky-trained neighborhood organizer. Its president reportedly dammed up a sewer to flood the road, put a rowboat and some ducks in the resulting pool, and took photographs. The group then invited the city Supervisors to a dinner and provided a coach whose driver had been instructed to run over every pothole he could find and explain to the Supervisors that the light was so bad he couldn't see the road. The Board of Supervisors voted for the improvements (Hubbard, 1924: 83-4).

Beginning shortly before the First World War large developers began to build entire neighborhoods, with names like Parkside, Forest Hills, and St. Francis Woods. St. Francis Woods featured restrictive covenants prohibiting commercial and apartment buildings and residence by non-whites, and providing community-owned parks, playgrounds, and streets and a homeowners association to enforce the covenants and manage the community facilities, thus largely avoiding any need to deal with city government (McGloin, 1978; Mason-McDuffie Co., undated).

By the 1920s virtually every homeowners district in the city was represented by a neighborhood association, with a city-wide Central Council of Civic Clubs. The November 1st, 1938 report on a meeting of the Central Council of Civic Clubs in the *San Francisco News'* weekly column of civic club news shows their continuity with the neighborhood associations of the 1880s, as well as those of the present day. Among the dozen groups making presentations, the Eureka District Boosters Association reported that it held a successful Portola Fiesta, with the proceeds going to a Christmas fund for needy children. The Crocker-Amazon Improvement Club complained that children were damaging McClaren Park and appealed to parents to supervise their children better. The Cayuga Improvement Club opposed rezoning the north-east corner of Cayuga and Geneva Avenues for stores, maintaining that they should be concentrated on Mission Street.

Conflict with Downtown

Occasionally the interests of neighborhood associations conflicted with downtown business interests. They supported business growth in general but opposed activities which adversely affected their neighborhoods. During 1904-1906 downtown

property owners campaigned to have trolley wires placed in the more aesthetic and perhaps safer underground conduits. Improvement clubs in outlying residential neighborhoods sided with the United Railroad Corporation, which wanted to use the cheaper overhead wires, because they wanted service as soon and as cheaply as possible (Kahn, 1979).

Neighborhood organizations joined the business-led effort to bring city planning and zoning to San Francisco, but again there were differences between the two interests. Residents adjacent to downtown favored height limitations to protect their views and sunlight, but the first zoning ordinance, passed in 1921, regulated only the use of buildings but not their height or area (Weiss, 1984). Neighborhood organizations wanted zoning to prevent "the intrusion of undesirable buildings and business into areas of high-priced homes" (Kinnard, 1966:214). The Secretary of the Council criticized the dominance of money and political influence in the city planning process in San Francisco. He complained that the Board of Supervisors commonly overruled the Planning Commission to rezone parts of single-family residential areas and had allowed construction of apartment buildings, gas stations, and even a factory which cleaned and restored barrels (Kelley, 1927).

Conflict Among Neighborhoods

Neighborhood organizations also came into conflict with each other. The location of transit improvements was a major source of conflict, as outlying neighborhood groups competed to win improvements for their own areas, while other groups closer in fought to prevent new lines from being constructed through their areas so that they would not be disrupted by the construction (Lotchin, 1974:369). In one of the rare incidents of overt racial conflict, the Western Addition Improvement and Protective Association tried unsuccessfully to prevent establishment of a black church and community center in the area during the 1920s (Broussard, 1977:226-8).

Although in recent years San Francisco's diversity has become a source of pride, neighborhood organizations' low level of involvement in racial and ethnic conflict was initially accidental. Religious prejudice was diminished because Jews and Catholics were among the earliest settlers in San Francisco, and were an integral part of the city's founding elite (Decker, 1978). The small, dispersed black population did not draw much hostility, in part because the most virulent racial prejudice was directed against the larger Chinese population (Broussard, 1977).

Unrelenting hostility, expressed in law, custom, and periodic violence kept the Chinese within the boundaries of the Chinatown ghetto (Saxton, 1975). The successful campaign to close off further Chinese immigration in 1882 meant that the population of Chinatown, composed predominantly of men, gradually

diminished and there was no pressure to expand its boundaries, thus avoiding conflict with adjoining neighborhoods (Nee, 1974). Among the earliest precursors of zoning in the United States were ordinances passed in the 1880s by a number of California cities, including San Francisco, to control laundries and thus keep Chinese from even working in white neighborhoods (Ong, 1981; Scott, 1969). No other non-white group composed more than one percent of the city's population until the Second World War.

Neighborhoods in City Politics

Prior to the 1950s neighborhood organizations played only a supporting role in citywide San Francisco politics. The main subjects of city politics were economic growth and the conflict between labor and capital. Working class movements were a major force behind the exclusion of the Chinese, elected third-party mayors in 1878-9, 1901-6, and 1909-10, and enrolled nearly half the labor force in unions by the early 1900s, an unheard of accomplishment in a major city in that era (Cherny & Issel, 1981; Watkins & Olmsted, 1976).

In the early 1900s working-class organizations allied with middle-class progressives to begin placing water and power supplies and streetcar lines under public ownership (Kazin, 1982). The private utilities were universally unpopular, blamed for impeding the city's growth through high prices and corrupting government officials. The more conservative administrations after 1910 continued municipalization of the transportation and water systems as part of a popular program of urban growth in competition with other West Coast cities such as Los Angeles. Neighborhood organizations supported bond issues for public ownership and for other improvements such as parks which directly affected the quality of life in their neighborhoods (Lotchin, 1979).

The Transformation of San Francisco

By 1940 the city of San Francisco reached the full extent of its growth. Residential districts stretched from the outskirts of downtown to the Pacific Ocean to the west and to neighboring San Mateo County to the south. Thirty-one percent of the population were homeowners, a figure that has remained fairly stable ever since (Mollenkopf, 1983:202). Otherwise San Francisco in 1940 was much the same as it had been for three quarters of a century, a port and financial center accompanied by diverse manufacturing, whose 635,000 inhabitants were 95% white, 4% Chinese, and less than 1% each of blacks, Japanese, and immigrants from Mexico (San Francisco Department of City Planning, 1954). In the ensuing decades San Francisco was transformed into today's international corporate headquarters, financial center, and tourist attraction, with a multi-racial, multi-cultural population.

Arrival of Minorities

During World War II blacks from the South came to work in the shipyards and other war industries. They moved into barracks near the Hunters Point shipyards and into the Fillmore area in the Western Addition, where the internment of American residents of Japanese descent opened up housing near the established black community institutions. During the 1950s blacks were also able to move into the Ingleside, an area of small single-family houses in the south of the city. Bayview-Hunters Point, the Fillmore, and the Ingleside have been predominantly black ever since. Blacks in San Francisco did not face the violence and racist hysteria of other cities such as Chicago. Occasional protests by neighborhood organizations did take place but were often unsuccessful. Residents of wealthy St. Francis Woods tried to stop Willie Mays from buying a house there in 1960 after the Giants moved to San Francisco, but were quieted when the mayor offered to take Mays into his own home (Dorsey, 1963:131). Widespread prejudice and housing discrimination against less elite figures, however, still served to keep blacks segregated (Denton, 1967; Kirp, 1982:77-8; Strazheim, 1974; Wirt, 1974).

The 1950s saw the beginning of a major Spanish-speaking immigration, mostly from Central America, to the Mission district, where there was already a small concentration of Spanish-speaking residents. As the previous residents, predominantly of Irish descent, moved out to the suburbs, latinos became the predominant group in the Mission. In the late 1960s, as a result of the civil rights movement, immigration quotas, which had virtually excluded Asians, were revised. A new generation of Asian immigrants arrived, Chinese from Hong Kong, Pacific Islanders, and later Philipinos fleeing the Marcos dictatorship and Vietnamese refugees (Nee, 1974:254; Wirt, 1974). By 1975 out of a population of some 670,000, San Francisco was estimated to have a minority population of about 300,000, divided roughly equally among blacks, latinos, and Asians (Adkisson et al, 1977).

The 1970s saw the establishment of the first predominantly gay residential neighborhood, in the Castro Street area where several gay bars had been established in the late 1960s. Despite periodic police round-ups and harassment, San Francisco had a reputation for tolerance and its gay community was well organized. San Francisco's gay organizations began the country's first militant demonstrations against discrimination in 1969 (Teal, 1971). With the successful establishment of the Castro as a gay neighborhood, the city became the destination of many gays from less tolerant areas of the country. Gay men and women are now estimated to be 15-25% of the voting age population (Castells, 1984; Shilts, 1982). San Francisco, in its present diversity of peoples and cultures, is a remarkably recent creation.

Political Interests in the San Francisco Neighborhood Movement

Type of Group	Traditional Homeowners and Merchants Associations	Integrated and Minority Neighborhood Associations	Preservationists and Environmentalists
Time	1880s-present	1950s-present	1970s-present
Constituency	White property owners (Integrated circa 1970)	Renters and homeowners in integrated and minority areas	Middle and upper income whites of both types (of neighborhood groups and of city-wide groups)
Concerns	Local Improvement Better city services such as parks, transit Physical upgrading	Local Improvement Better city services such as parks, transit Affordable housing for current residents	City-wide Improvement Better city services such as parks, transit Physical upgrading Split on affordable housing
	Exclusivity Restrictive covenants against racial minorities in neighborhood	Integration Eliminate discrimination Ensure minority influence	Integration Eliminate discrimination
	Protection Oppose freeways through neighborhood Limit commerce in residential areas	Protection Oppose freeways and urban renewal Oppose displacement of renters by market forces	Protection Oppose freeways and urban renewal Preserve historic buildings Split on protection for renters
Role in City Politics	Oppose increased government spending Support business growth except when it physically harms residential areas	Favor increased government spending financed by higher taxes on downtown Split on business growth depending on whether it is seen as providing jobs or raising housing prices	Split on whether business should pay to mitigate impacts on transit and on housing market Want limits on business growth

Economic Changes

An economic and spatial transformation also took place in the Bay Area after the war. In 1940 San Francisco's population was larger than the combined populations of all other eight counties of the Bay Area. Today it is less than that of neighboring San Mateo County, and roughly equal in size with the city of San Jose. With the completion of the Transbay and Golden Gate bridges in 1936 and 1937 and with the help of post-war highway construction and the New Deal programs to support homeownership, middle income families moved out to the suburbs, where land was less expensive, opening up older central city neighborhoods to the new immigrations. Industry too moved out to the suburbs, relying on trucking rather than the railroads (Kinnard, 1966; Scott, 1959).

The diminishing role of San Francisco as an industrial and population center worried business leaders. They promoted regional mass transit, which eventually resulted in BART, the Bay Area Rapid Transit system, and worked for construction of freeway connections between downtown and the regional highway system (Whitt, 1982). They were also concerned with the ring of deteriorating, mixed residential and commercial neighborhoods surrounding downtown and potentially inhibiting its expansion. The Black, Hispanic, Asian, and elderly communities surrounding downtown were explicitly considered undesirable. Urban renewal offered federal funding and the use of powers of eminent domain for "slum clearance" and the elimination of "blighted" neighborhoods. As union jobs and members moved out to the suburbs, union leaders were won over to the benefits of cooperation with these plans, joining a "pro-growth coalition" which promised construction jobs and continued union influence at city hall (Hartman, 1984; Wirt, 1974).

The Fight Against Freeways

Freeway plans drew immediate opposition from neighborhood organizations. The 1951 Trafficways Plan proposed freeway connections from the Golden Gate Bridge south through Golden Gate Park and the middle class residential areas around it, another connection through the wealthy northern waterfront area to downtown and the Transbay Bridge and then south down the peninsula, and east-west connections from downtown and the Transbay Bridge over to the north-south freeway through Golden Gate Park. As detailed plans were developed, local property owners and merchants associations became alarmed. Groups such as the West Portal Home Owners' Association, the Marina Civic Improvement and Property Owners' Association, and the Telegraph Hill Dwellers' Association, the Central Council of Civic Clubs, and the Council of District Merchants Associations, drew thousands of people to meetings with representatives of the State Division of Highways in 1955 and in subsequent years. In 1959 the city

Board of Supervisors officially opposed most of the planned freeways, and all work on the proposed routes was halted with only a connection from the Transbay Bridge and downtown south to the peninsula competed (Lathrop, 1971). With the end of most freeway plans, neighborhood organizations fell into inactivity and the Central Council of Civic Clubs ceased to exist.

The New Neighborhood Movement

Beginnings in the Haight-Ashbury

The first of a new generation of neighborhood organizations arose in the Haight-Ashbury, an area of apartment buildings and large Victorian houses, many of which are subdivided into apartments, which has provided leaders for many of the city's post-war social movements. Neighborhood organizing remained active there because efforts to build a connection from downtown to the Golden Gate Bridge via the Panhandle of Golden Gate Park, which runs through the Haight-Ashbury, continued until highway planners finally gave up in 1965. Many anti-freeway activists there were dissatisfied with the Haight-Ashbury Merchants and Improvement Association (HAMIA), founded in 1906, which restricted membership to property owners and merchants. In 1959 they organized the Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Council (HANC), which was concerned with social services for the poor and with civil rights, as well as with preservation and physical improvement. Over the years HANC opposed plans for urban renewal and the expansion of neighboring hospitals which would destroy housing and displace lower income residents. HAMIA, on the other hand, supported displacement in the name of upgrading the neighborhood, and opposed provision of social services in the area (Godfrey, 1980).

During the 1950s the Haight became an integrated neighborhood, as blacks were pushed out of the neighboring Western Addition by urban renewal. HANC strongly supported integration and the civil rights movement, and attacked housing discrimination (Godfrey, 1980). Haight-Ashbury residents worked both to prevent discrimination against blacks and to prevent white flight in order to preserve the area as an integrated neighborhood. In 1962 plans were announced to open a new, majority black junior high school that would draw students from the overcrowded schools of the Fillmore ghetto and also from the Haight-Ashbury. Panic-peddling real estate agents descended on homeowners in the area, and local residents, who included several leading civil rights activists, organized to demand a racially balanced school. The proposals for racial balance lead to the organization of an anti-integration Citizens Committee for Neighborhood Schools in the neighboring Sunset district from which the additional white students would be drawn. In the end the plans for the new school

were cancelled and the overcrowded black students were bussed into the surrounding predominantly white junior high schools instead (Crain, 1968).

During subsequent years HANC members found themselves dealing with, and eventually supporting, a wider and wider range of cultural diversity. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, as the North Beach bohemian scene fell apart, many "beats" moved into the Haight. A number of gay bars also opened in the area, and in the summer of 1964 a Haight Street movie theatre was converted to show gay films, which it publicly advertised on its marquis. HANC joined with other groups in protesting the theatre, which closed after a month (Cavan, 1972).

In 1965 and 1966 the "hippie" scene developed in the Haight. The presence of these young people was welcomed as a continuation of the bohemian tradition, bringing new life to the neighborhood. But as the numbers of hippies grew, many long-time local residents grew hostile towards these "tourists", some of whom engaged in displays of sexuality and drug use which residents found offensive. The older HAMIA refused membership to hippie merchants, who formed their own organization, the Haight Independent Proprietors, or HIP. HANC made efforts to reach out to the "New Community," inviting hippies to their meetings and participating in a series of forums in which both sides aired their grievances and talked past each other. Although unhappy with aspects of the hippies' lifestyle, HANC members were also moved by their ideals of love and self-realization. HANC protested when city police and Health Department officials harassed the hippies and their establishments, and supported creation of emergency social services for them as their increasing numbers swamped available housing and health facilities (Cavan, 1972; Perry, 1970).

The Fight Against Urban Renewal

Urban renewal efforts moved ahead during the 1950s, beginning with the demolition of a thirty-block area of the predominantly black Fillmore district, including the small Japantown that had survived wartime interment. Plans were then made to "protect" this urban renewal area by clearing a much larger surrounding area which included much of the housing and all of the commercial area serving the black community. In 1963 a multi-racial group of students and civil rights activists founded Freedom House, which organized residents to oppose the plan. Freedom House organized block clubs, a tenants union, and a homeowners association but fell apart when the Board of Supervisors voted to proceed with urban renewal. Some of the groups it had organized continued on their own, however. In 1965 civil rights activists won control of the Western Addition Community Action Program, a branch of the city's federally funded anti-poverty program, and

used its funding to organize twenty-eight neighborhood councils. The effort collapsed in factional in-fighting, but again a number of groups survived the demise of the parent organization.

In 1967, a group of organizers inspired by Saul Alinsky helped form the Western Addition Community Organization (WACO), bringing together a wide range of local groups. WACO won the support of a majority of the Board of Supervisors in its effort to halt demolition in the area, but the Mayor vetoed the measure and urban renewal continued. Using sit-ins, picketing, and lawsuits, WACO was successful in winning incorporation of several thousand units of replacement housing into the plan. WACO continued on for several years, largely as a social service agency, while many of its leaders served on the Western Addition Project Area Committee, the official watchdog over the redevelopment process in the area (Kramer, 1969; Mollenkopf, 1973).

In the Mission District, also slated for clearance, similar events took place, but with a happier ending. The Mission Area Community Action Program was torn by in-fighting among different Spanish-speaking nationality groups, as well as blacks, Asians, and whites in the neighborhood, but about half of its funding in 1966 went to organizing. It helped set up block clubs and public housing tenants associations which campaigned for such things as better garbage collection and rodent extermination. Most importantly, it joined together with the conservative local homeowners association, a tenant union run by student radicals, unions, social service agencies, churches, and latino political organizations to form the Mission Council on Redevelopment (MCOR). With the assistance of experienced organizers from the Western Addition and from an unsuccessful campaign against the Yerba Buena project in the South of Market, MCOR was successful in persuading the Board of Supervisors not to go ahead with urban renewal in the Mission. Fortunately for the Mission, the concurrence of the mayor was not required to prevent passage of an urban renewal plan the way it was needed to repeal the existing plan in the Western Addition.

The participants in this successful effort formed the Mission Coalition Organization (MCO), based on the Alinsky approach. MCO fought racial discrimination, worked to obtain better city services, and participated in governing the Mission district branch of the Model Cities Program. In-fighting over Model Cities jobs led to the collapse of MCO in 1973, but sections of the organization and many of its constituent groups survived and remain active today (Castells, 1984; Kramer, 1969).

Organizing campaigns also took place in the public housing projects in Bayview-Hunters Point and Chinatown, and opposition to urban renewal in Chinatown led to the creation of the first progressive neighborhood organizations in that traditionally conservative community (Becker, 1971; Chung, 1985; Hippler, 1974).

Renewed organizing efforts in the South of Market created a permanent organization and won several hundred units of replacement housing after over a decade of legal and political struggles (Hartman, 1984).

The Movement Spreads

In addition to the major urban renewal projects, the city considered nine more residential neighborhoods for "a combination of clearance and rehabilitation." Together with the previously mentioned plans, they covered a fifth of the city's housing stock, much of its minority population, and much of its low- and moderate-cost housing. Most of the clearance proposals were dropped when neighborhood residents protested. Subsequent rehabilitation proposals such as the Federally Assisted Code Enforcement program, which was established in these and other neighborhoods, aroused concern among residents over possible displacement as a result of rent and tax increases and rehabilitation costs which might exceed the ability of low income homeowners to pay for them (Jacobs, 1978). Several of these neighborhoods, like the Haight-Ashbury, Bernal Heights, Glen Park, and the Inner Richmond, were home to increasing numbers of well-educated people who chose to live in an integrated urban environment. They joined with older local residents who feared displacement, creating new neighborhood organizations and reviving old ones.

Court-ordered desegregation of San Francisco's schools in 1971 briefly intensified interracial conflict. White enrollment dropped, and some Chinese students were exempted from the plan after they were enrolled in hastily organized private schools set up by conservative community organizations rather than be sent out of Chinatown. In the end, the multi-ethnic character of the city and the dispersal of its Asian and Hispanic citizens defused opposition to integration as such, leaving the desegregation of the isolated Hunters Point ghetto an unresolved source of complaint (Kirp, 1982).

Churches and foundations which supported community organizing in poor and minority neighborhoods became interested in expanding their efforts into integrated and white middle income areas in order to help overcome racial polarization and win middle class support for efforts against discrimination and poverty. In outlying areas such as the Sunset and the Outer Mission which were generally ignored by city government, they helped create umbrella organizations, following the Alinsky model, which brought together diverse local organizations and also helped to organize new ones (Horton, 1979). Government programs began to incorporate neighborhood organizing. During the 1970s, crime prevention funding was provided to organize block clubs in neighborhoods with high crime rates (Podalefsky & Dubow, 1981).

The result was that by the mid-1970s virtually every neighborhood in the city was represented by some sort of neighborhood association, and membership in neighborhood associations was much broader than it had been before. In 1953 membership in a neighborhood association was reported by less than 1% of the residents in the Inner Mission, a low income apartment neighborhood; the Outer Mission, a low income single family neighborhood; and Pacific Heights, a high income apartment neighborhood. In St. Francis Woods, a high income single family neighborhood where restrictive covenants required membership in the neighborhood association, over 40% reported membership (Bell & Force, 1956). In 1977, 9% of respondents in a citywide survey reported membership in a neighborhood association, and neighborhood surveys found 4% of residents of the Inner Mission, 16% of the residents of Visitacion Valley, a neighborhood in the Outer Mission, and 4% of residents of the Sunset, a middle to upper income homeowners area without covenants, reported membership (Center for Urban Affairs, 1977).

The political influence of the new neighborhood movement made itself felt in 1975, when neighborhood activists played an important part in the election of Mayor George Moscone, one of a group of liberal attorneys who had gone South to work in the civil rights movement and then gone into local politics. Moscone appointed neighborhood activists to the city's Planning Commission and Permit Appeals Board, established an advisory board of neighborhood representatives to help allocate federal aid to the city, and tried to support both neighborhood concerns and the development plans of downtown businesses.

The Neighborhood Movement Versus Downtown

In the 1970s neighborhood politics became increasingly focused on opposition to rapid private development, which overshadowed the effects of government programs, and was much more difficult to reshape through the political process (Fainstein, Fainstein, and Armistead, 1983; Feinbaum, 1977). Office building construction, which had been stagnant since the Depression, took off during the 1960s, changing the skyline of the city, blocking views of the waterfront and the Bay, and bringing plans for highrise office, commercial, and luxury apartment buildings in neighborhoods around the city. A wealthy businessman and environmentalist organized and financed two unsuccessful initiative campaigns to place height restrictions on downtown development, in 1971 and 1972 (Brugmann and Sletteland, 1971; Hartman, 1984). Neighborhood organizations, with the support of a sympathetic planning department, were successful in downzoning most residential neighborhoods to protect existing housing from replacement by highrise commercial and apartment buildings. The first major downzoning came in the Haight, in 1972, at the urging of the Neighborhood

Council and over the objections of the older Improvement Association (Godfrey, 1980; Jacobs, 1978).

During the mid-1970s the business-labor "progrowth coalition" faltered. Labor unions' importance diminished as manufacturing moved out of the city and the port declined. As office construction increased, rising real estate values drove up property taxes. The state of the national economy, mired in simultaneous stagnation and inflation, limited city revenues while costs rose, making the city dependent on increasing property taxes. In response to a series of strikes by city workers, representatives of a number of neighborhood associations, including the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association, joined with the Chamber of Commerce and other business representatives to support measures to fire strikers, set city employees' salaries by formula rather than by collective bargaining, and to refer last offers in disputes to the voters rather than the Board of Supervisors. With the support of the Board of Supervisors, who were feeling the anger of taxpayers who blamed city workers for rising property taxes, the measures passed overwhelmingly in 1975 and 1976.

At the same time, another group of neighborhood activists, many of whom were members of the Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council, began their third attempt to change the city charter to elect the Board of Supervisors by district rather than city-wide. They won the support of a diverse coalition, including some of the same neighborhood groups supporting the restrictions on collective bargaining and the unions who were opposing these measures. Organized labor had opposed the previous district elections initiative in 1973, along with the rest of the city's power structure. This time they joined the campaign in order to punish the Board for their stance on city workers, but with the stipulation that downtown development would not be attacked in the campaign. Instead the campaign charged that the supervisors, most of whom resided in only two wealthy neighborhoods, were tools of downtown corporations. Corporate property taxes, the campaign pointed out, did not rise as fast as those on residential property and thus they avoided paying their fair share while city services and the quality of neighborhood life deteriorated. District elections won a narrow victory in the same November 1976 election in which another set of measures aimed at city workers also passed. The victory of district elections resulted in low-budget campaigns which elected the first gay man, the first black woman, the first single mother, and a strong left-liberal minority on the board (Barton, 1979; Cherny, 1979; Hartman, 1984; Swaim, 1978).

Displacement Splits the Movement

Downzoning and district elections were the high points of the neighborhood movement in San Francisco. As measures aimed at

protecting the existing neighborhoods and increasing their influence, they were able to win support from a broad coalition of neighborhood organizations. But as San Francisco's downtown office sector grew, attracting tens of thousands of high income professionals and managers, mere downzoning was not enough to protect lower income residents from displacement. Private renovation spread widely, and rents and housing prices skyrocketed, as San Francisco became the most thoroughly gentrified city in the country. Progressive activists were faced with the dilemma that fighting for neighborhood improvement was likely to accelerate displacement of existing residents. The fragile unity of the neighborhood movement broke up in debates between proponents of improvement at all costs and opponents of displacement, between proponents of new housing and preservationists, and proponents of subsidized or otherwise less costly "affordable" housing and proponents of "upgrading" neighborhood residents (Schram, 1980).

During the early 1980s the Haight-Ashbury's rival neighborhood associations came together to oppose displacement of existing merchants by upscale, night-life-oriented bars and restaurants, as Haight Street became popular with "young urban professionals." They also supported conversion of a vacant high school into affordable housing for families with children. In other areas, such as the Outer Mission, vacant schools remain empty in the face of neighborhood resistance to apartments and subsidized housing. Efforts to legalize secondary apartments in single family homes have been stalled by opposition from St. Francis Woods and other outlying neighborhood associations.

Hostility towards the expanding gay community also threatened to break up the progressive coalition, but so far the frequent attacks on individual gay men, often by young men from out of town, have not spread into serious inter-community violence. In the most serious organized incident, in 1976, latino community groups organized against a new lesbian bar and restaurant in the Mission, where there are several other such establishments, and it closed after threats of violence and attempted arson. Leaflets were distributed which blamed gays for increasing rents, displacing families, and having harmful effects on children. Members of the Gay Latino Alliance helped defuse the hostility, but fears of a more serious confrontation remain (Hardman, 1976; Levering, 1977).

The 1978 assassination of Mayor Moscone and gay Supervisor Harvey Milk by a right-wing former policeman who had just resigned as the Supervisor representing the Outer Mission, and the subsequent riots by gays protesting the murderer's light sentence, also reminded people of the strong emotions lying beneath San Francisco's tolerance (Shilts, 1982). Two years later business interests successfully campaigned to repeal district election of supervisors, which many now associated with the slayings. The change did not affect the moderately liberal cast of the Board of

Supervisors, but raised the cost of election campaigns back over $100,000 and again made it hard to challenge incumbents.

Growth Control

City politics since the late 1970s has focused largely on city-wide issues of downtown growth and its effect on transit, housing, and the quality of life in the city. There was wide support for a successful effort in 1984 to downzone the area of low income residential apartments and hotels near downtown which provide much of the city's housing for the low-income elderly and for Vietnamese immigrants. The years of conflict over Yerba Buena Center in the South of Market, and the spectacular eviction of the elderly Philipino residents of the International Hotel in 1977, over the non-violent resistance of 5,000 protesters, had dramatized the effects of downtown expansion on the city's diminishing low rent housing stock, particularly for the elderly. Concern over the effects of downtown growth is gradually reaching into traditionally conservative neighborhoods. Further initiative campaigns to limit downtown growth were defeated in 1979, and again in 1983, but this time by less than 1% of the vote.

Progressive neighborhood activists sought new ways to preserve and create affordable housing. After an unsuccessful initiative campaign in 1978, and with a second effort in progress in 1979, the Board of Supervisors passed a weak rent control law which protects current tenants from drastic rent increases, but allows unlimited increases when the tenant moves. A strong limit on conversion of rental units to condominiums was also passed. Several non-profit neighborhood housing development corporations were set up, but with federal aid to the cities cut back they have not been able to do very much, and their efforts are often opposed by neighborhood groups more concerned with upgrading property values (Fainstein, Fainstein, & Armistead, 1983). An innovative program which requires developers of downtown highrises to either construct affordable housing or contribute to a housing fund has provided money for a few hundred units, but nowhere near enough to actually mitigate the impact of downtown growth on the availability of moderate cost housing (Hartman, 1984). These measures were generally popular with the residents of San Francisco. A poll taken in 1985 found that 66% supported a limit on building new office space in the city and 75% thought developers should be required to help pay for new housing and transportation services (Farrell, 1985).

The State of the Neighborhood Movement

The new neighborhood movement in San Francisco poses several challenges to the normal pattern of neighborhood politics in America. First, it is actively inclusionary rather than exclusionary. Second, it seeks to provide all citizens with rights to

residential security and stability rather than relying on property ownership as the basis for citizenship. Third, it links neighborhood concerns with the economic development of the city as a whole and seeks to assert democratic control over the whole process, rather than restricting its concerns to neighborhood protection and leaving control over development to business. These goals have widespread support within the city, but they are only partially incorporated into the political agenda of city government.

Support for inclusion and tolerance among diverse people is official doctrine. Issues such as school bussing have not explosively divided neighborhoods on racial lines, and gay-straight conflicts are also subdued. The most recent development in neighborhood organizing is Community Boards, a neighborhood dispute resolution program. Beginning in 1977 in the Outer Mission with support from foundations, the program initially used trained staff to support a panel of neighborhood residents who helped mediate disputes. The program now trains residents to perform all phases of the dispute resolution process, has spread to cover most of the city, and in 1985 was incorporated into the city budget, ensuring its continuation.

In a city not undergoing explosive economic growth and widespread displacement caused by increased housing prices, this would be a great success in support of diversity. Measures such as rent control and construction of affordable housing which are intended to give stability to non-owners, however, are controversial and have been implemented only on a limited basis. Displacement continues at a steady pace and is widely felt to threaten the character and diversity of the city.

The planning system is responsive to particular neighborhoods, and the old priority on business and economic growth has been modified by an agreement to avoid or mitigate harmful physical impacts on residential neighborhoods, but neighborhoods are still held at arms' length from planning for the development of the city as a whole. Neighborhoods often get together to form coalitions to get better services or a bigger share of federal or state subsidies, but only a few neighborhood leaders are involved in efforts to develop a positive vision for the development of the city or the metropolitan area.

There are no mechanisms for neighborhoods outside the city to have their concerns taken into account. Clearly neighborhoods in Oakland, with its high unemployment and low tax base, have common interests with neighborhoods in San Francisco who fear the increased congestion and housing costs that accompany concentration of office growth in downtown San Francisco. Oakland's downtown, closely linked to San Francisco by highways and mass transit, is still struggling to get off the ground. Oaklanders would welcome some of the development resisted by San Franciscans, but there is no vehicle for the residents of other cities to require

the city of San Francisco to take the regional impact of its decisions into account.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, efforts to establish a powerful regional planning agency for the Bay Area were defeated by opposition from suburban towns, who feared the end of their autonomy, and by central city neighborhood residents who feared that their limited political influence would be further reduced by the addition of middle-class suburbanites. (Shipnuck & Feshbach, 1972). Recent state legislation requires cities to take regional needs for affordable housing into account in planning for the use of undeveloped land, but this has little effect on San Francisco and other already developed cities. Nonetheless, it sets a valuable precedent by establishing regional responsibilities without eliminating local control, and could be extended to cover other planning decisions. The neighborhood movement has yet to deal with the issue of regional responsibility, which would require activity on the unfamiliar ground of state government.

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