INTRODUCTION

The public city: American political culture in nineteenth-century San Francisco

Several Spanish soldiers and their families, under the leadership of the Franciscan Father Francisco Palóu, founded the town we know as San Francisco in 1776 on a site inhabited for several centuries by ancestors of the Costanoan people.[1] San Francisco, inhabited by only a few hundred persons for many decades, became part of the Federal Republic of Mexico when the Mexicans won their independence from Spain in 1821. The Mexicans of California, known as Californios, lost this independence when, under the orders of Commodore John D. Sloat, Captain John Montgomery raised the U.S. flag over an undefended San Francisco in July 1846. Californios in Los Angeles fought until January of 1847 before formally surrendering their territory to the United States.[2]

California at that moment was inhabited by perhaps one hundred thousand free native people, five thousand former Mexican citizens, and several thousand native people who worked in the status of debt peonage for a handful of Californio rancheros.[3] American expansionism, culminating in the conquest of the Mexican territories, would certainly have resulted in the gradual settlement of the nascent state by Anglo-Americans, but the accidental discovery of gold at Sutter's mill in January 1848, just days before the Treaty of

[1] Technically speaking, the bayshore site of the present city was a pueblo called Yerba Buena, and the first American alcalde of the town changed the name to San Francisco in 1846. "San Francisco," however, had been the name of the presidio (military fort) and the mission church (San Francisco de Asis) as well as the name of the Bay since the first Spanish settlement, and the name was commonly used to designate the entire settlement. John Walton Caughey, *California*, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1953), 131–2; Andrew Rolle, *California: A History*, 4th ed. (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, 1987), 49–54.

[2] Rolle, *California: A History*, 149–63.

[3] Edward D. Castillo, "The Impact of Euro-American Exploration and Settlement," in William C. Sturtevant, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978–), 99–127.

Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the United States – Mexican War, triggered a global human onslaught that catapulted San Francisco to the status of a major American city in less than five years. These people came primarily from New York City and Boston, but also from Western Europe, China, Eastern Europe, Central and South America, and Australia.[4]

San Francisco's population rose very rapidly. At the news of gold in 1848, the town numbered about 1,000. In 1849 alone 39,000 people disembarked at San Francisco. Annual arrivals, mostly bound for the interior, averaged more than 30,000 for the next twenty years.[5] The first surviving census, taken in 1852, reports 36,000 inhabitants; by 1860 there were 57,000. Compared with the size of New York City or even of Boston, which numbered 814,000 and 178,000 respectively on the eve of the Civil War, San Francisco was not a very large city.[6] But its rapid growth never ceased during the nineteenth century, and it remained the largest, most important American city west of the Mississippi until 1920, when Los Angeles finally surpassed it. During the Civil War decade, which saw the completion of the transcontinental railroad, the city's population nearly doubled, to 149,500 in 1870. By 1880 the city had almost reached the quarter-million mark, and by the beginning of the twentieth century San Francisco officially numbered 342,782 persons, the ninth largest city in the United States.[7] Maps of the city in 1853 and 1891 illustrate the geographical space inhabited by this growing population (see Plates 1 and 2).

FROM REPUBLICAN LIBERALISM TO PLURALIST LIBERALISM

In the midst of the European revolutions of 1848 and the triumph of liberal political economy throughout the transatlantic world, news of gold in the Sierra foothills attracted men and some women from every continent and race to participate in a frenzy of primitive capital accumulation. Horace Greeley in New York told young men to

[4] Doris Marion Wright, "The Making of Cosmopolitan California: An Analysis of Immigration, 1848–1870," [two parts] *California Historical Society Quarterly* 19:4 (December 1940): 323–43; 20:1 (March 1941): 65–79; Bradford Luckingham, "Immigrant Life in Emergent San Francisco," *Journal of the West* 12:4 (October 1973): 600–17.

[5] Wright, "The Making of Cosmopolitan California," 341.

[6] U.S., Department of the Interior, *Statistics of the United States (Including Mortality, Property, & c.) in 1860* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1866), xviii.

[7] For all San Francisco population statistics see Appendix.

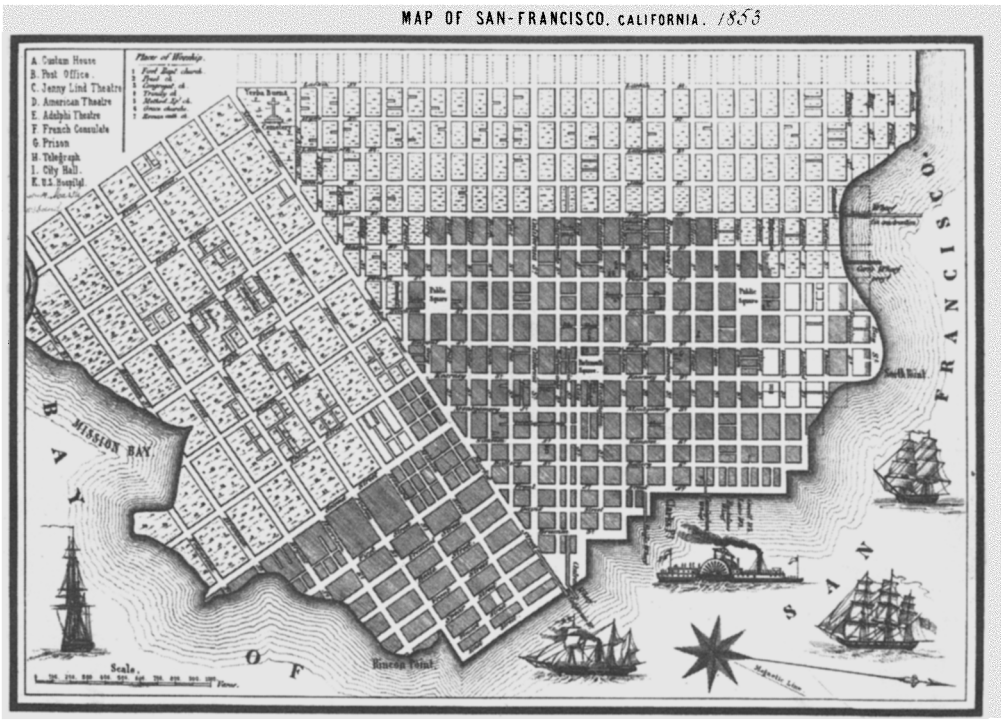

Plate 1. San Francisco in 1853. The map reproduced here illustrates the extent of the settled area (only the darkened blocks have been improved). With a population of about forty thousand and an area of about two square miles, this was undoubtedly a "walking city." The central public space, Portsmouth Square, known by its Spanish name, "the Plaza," marked the center of the new city. The Plaza was the address of the city's leading theaters, City Hall, the post office, and meeting halls. Courtesy of Bancroft Library.

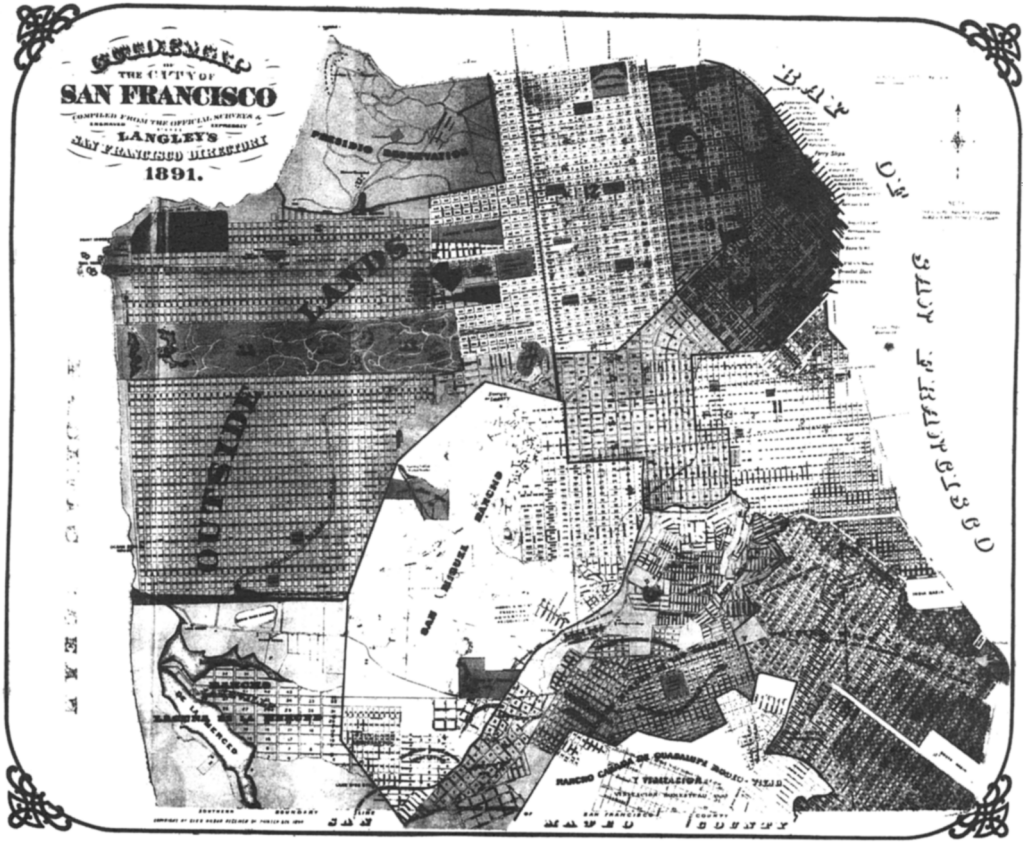

Plate 2. San Francisco in 1891. This map shows the extent of the settled area of the city by 1891, when the population was about three hundred thousand. The darkened area in the northwest corner of the peninsula is the entire area covered by the 1853 map in Plate 1. The city of today, far beyond that central district, is clearly recognizable. Golden Gate Park had just been completed and substantial numbers of residences – primarily single-family dwellings – had been constructed in the newest "suburban" districts (designated as "outside lands" in this map). These new neighborhoods began to replace stretches of wild sand dunes: the "Richmond," lying north of the park, and the sprawling "Sunset" lying to the south of the park. At the westernmost edge of the city, near the mouth of the Golden Gate, were the city's most popular excursion sites, Ocean Beach, the Cliff House restaraunt, and Adoph Sutro's gardens and baths, constructed in the 1890s. Courtesy of Bancroft Library.

"go west"; labor recruiters in China's Guangdong Province (Canton) convinced young men to go east, to "Jiujinshan" (for San Francisco, meaning "Old Gold Mountain.") Leading the adventurers of small means were merchants from New York City to Hong Kong, who made San Francisco a world capital of commerce overnight.[8]

One might think that tens of thousands of actors had set about to dramatize the vivid phrases of Marx and Engels in their 1848 indictment of liberal capitalism, drafted at the very moment news of California's gold began to spread. Leaving "no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest," these Argonauts seemingly plunged into "the icy water of egotistical calculation ... resolved personal worth into exchange values, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms ... set up that single, unconscionable freedom – Free Trade."[9] Naked, brutal exploitation of people and nature was unquestionably a central feature of San Francisco's first years, presenting an example of American liberalism in the purest form imaginable. The marketplace of San Francisco was for several years one of breathtaking, devastating competition, so fierce that even the ruthless scourge of the South, William Tecumseh Sherman, could not withstand the pressure of doing business there. A banker in San Francisco from 1853 through 1856, Sherman abandoned California, defeated by its economy and by the political rebellion of the Vigilance Committee of 1856, during which he commanded the state militia. His wife Ellen remembered their "entire stay in San Francisco" as a "terrible nightmare." "I can handle a hundred thousand men in battle, and take the 'City of the Sun,'" Sherman wrote in 1864, after the capture of Atlanta, "but am afraid to manage a lot in the swamp of San Francisco."[10] The real estate and commodities markets of San Francisco – not the

[8] Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 28; Peter R. Decker, *Fortunes and Failures: White Collar Mobility in Nineteenth Century San Francisco* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978); Roger Lotchin, *San Francisco, 1846–1856: From Hamlet to City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974).

[9] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in Robert C. Tucker, ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: Norton, 1972), 337.

[10] William T. Sherman was stationed in California from 1847 through 1849 before returning as a banker in 1853. Dwight L. Clarke, *William Tecumseh Sherman: Gold Rush Banker* (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1969); Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 128–39. Quotations from pp. 133–4.

fabled Sierra gold mines – generated the great fortunes of the Gold Rush. For every fortune made, many thousands were lost.[11]

The radical liberalism evident in early San Francisco represented the extreme tendencies of late Jacksonian America. Yet this radical economic liberalism was enabled by an extraordinary political culture of republicanism.[12] Even this ferocious example of free trade did not drown every "nexus between man and man" in the "icy water of egotistical calculation." The settlers imported wholesale, like they did the shovels and stoves arriving in the holds of their clipper ships, the institutional and ideological cement that bound individuals together in civil and political society. The U.S. citizens who founded the political culture of San Francisco in the 1850s did so in public deliberation, by standards established during more than a half century of self-rule. Those standards elaborated the public context within which liberalism had to operate. Men competed in public to articulate a universal good that transcended individual gain and yet enabled it. Not just liberalism, but republicanism – that ideology of civic virtue, corruption, and tyranny, that great grandchild of the Florentine Renaissance, of James Harrington's *Commonwealth of Oceana*, and of Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des lois* and child of the American Revolution – framed the meaning of public life of early San Francisco.

Scholars have sharply debated whether republicanism, characterized by a "civic virtue" in the pursuit of the common good, or liberalism, characterized by "individualism" in the pursuit of self-interest, best typified political culture in the United States in the nineteenth century.[13] This book takes the position that American

[11] Peter R. Decker, *Fortunes and Failures: White Collar Mobility in Nineteenth Century San Francisco.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 32–146.

[12] The concept of a "political culture" was first developed in Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963). My usage of the term in this book takes the term more generally. See Carole Pateman, "The Civic Culture: A Philosophic Critique," in *The Civic Culture Revisited: an Analytic Study* Gabriel A. Almond, and Sidney Verba, eds, (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980): 57–102, and note 32 below.

[13] The literature on republicanism is now very large, constituting what Daniel T. Rodgers describes as a genuine "paradigm" (in Thomas Kuhn's sense) for the writing of American history. Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: The Career of a Concept," *Journal of American History* 79:1 (June 1992): 11–38; Rodgers's essay is the most recent in two decades of critical synthetic surveys of the the concept, beginning with Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," *William and Mary Quarterly* 29:1 (January 1972): 49–80; and idem, "Republicanism and Early American Historiography," *William and Mary*

political culture at mid-nineteenth century was *both* liberal *and* republican. I label this amalgam *republican liberalism* and explicate its content in detail through the early chapters. On the one hand, it would be absurd to ignore the rampant, self-interested greed that fueled the migration to San Francisco and the conduct of its economy; on the other hand, it would do violence to historical reality to ignore the powerful hold on contemporaries of criteria such as "virtue," "character," and "honor," whose meanings were at once romantic, neoclassical, masculine, Christian, and bourgeois.[14]

The coexistence of liberalism and republicanism is best introduced by Alexis de Tocqueville, who, like contemporary Americans, thought simultaneously as a liberal and a republican. He coined the term "individualism,"[15] but also carried Montesquieu's *L'Esprit des lois* with him as a model during his American tour. Tocqueville predicted in *Democracy in America* (1840) that "it must therefore be expected that personal interest will become more than ever the principal if not the sole spring of men's actions; *but it remains to be seen how each man will understand his personal interest.*"[16] To Tocqueville the site where "each man" came to *understand* his personal interest was the public sphere, identified by him as the various institutions of public life: voluntary associations, parties, the press, "public opinion," and local political office. Castigating "individualism" as a "feeling" that "proceeds from erroneous judgement" and "deficiencies of mind," Tocqueville argued that equality threatened to

Quarterly 39:2 (April 1982): 334–56. Statements contesting the "republican synthesis" with a defense of the view that liberalism best typifies American political culture include, most prominently, Joyce Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s* (New York, 1984); idem, "Republicanism and Ideology," *American Quarterly* 37:4 (Fall 1985): 461–73, John Patrick Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundations of Liberalism* (New York, 1984); idem, "Comrades and Citizens: New Mythologies in American Historiography," *American Historical Review* 90 (June 1985): 614–38, 644–9. I explore variations on the themes of republicanism and liberalism throughout this book; references to prominent works in these genres will be found in the notes to those sections.

[14] My position is indebted to the portrait of a middle ground mapped out by Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); and James T. Kloppenberg, "The Virtues of Liberalism: Christianity, Republicanism, and Ethics in Early American Political Discourse," *Journal of American History* 74:1 (June 1987): 9–33. Republican liberalism is merely introduced here; it is elaborated in following chapters.

[15] For the early history and usage of the term "individualism," see J. R. Pole, *American Individualism and the Promise of Progress* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).

[16] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, abridged with an introduction by Thomas Bender (New York: Modern Library, 1981), 417. Emphasis added.

erase a consciousness of the commonweal in democratic societies. But the very processes of joining and participating in institutions, Tocqueville concluded, "remind every citizen, and in a thousand ways, that he lives in society."[17] Tocqueville understood that the ethical values operative in civil or in private life are shaped (or constructed) by the institutions of public and political life: "Thus political life makes the love and practice of association more general; it imparts a desire of union and teaches the means of combination to numbers of men who would otherwise have always lived apart."[18] Tocqueville brilliantly resolved the apparent contradiction between the pursuit of self-interest and the pursuit of the common interest. The promotion of the common good while holding public power was all the more important when everyone seemed to be pursuing the main chance.[19] To construct a liberal economy, Americans had to assemble participatory institutions of organization and communication, including parties and the press. Individuals acting through these institutions, in turn, constructed the meaning of the common activity of the polity.

This book traces the changing institutions and meaning of urban life from a period in which liberalism was modified by – indeed, framed within – republicanism, to one in which liberalism was modified by a consciousness of plural group interests. This latter formation I shall call *pluralist liberalism.* Pluralist liberalism describes the social understanding of politics familiar to twentieth-century Americans. It is a politics about social groups and their needs.[20] Whereas republican liberalism hinged ultimately on belief in a single, identifiable public good, one grounded in the ethics of political leaders, pluralist liberalism accepted the existence of multiple, or plural,

[17] *Democracy in America*, 295, 402.

[18] "Civil associations, therefore, facilitate political association; for, on the other hand, political association singularly strengthens and improves associations for civil purposes. In civil life every man may, strictly speaking, fancy that he can provide for his own wants; in politics he can fancy no such thing." *Democracy in America*, 412.

[19] Rowland Berthoff, "Independence and Attachment, Virtue and Interest: From Republican Citizen to Free Enterpriser, 1787–1837," in Richard L. Bushman et al., eds., *Uprooted Americans: Essays to Honor Oscar Handlin* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1979), 106.

[20] On the politics of needs, see Daniel Bell, "The Public Household: On 'Fiscal Sociology' and the Liberal Society," *The Public Interest* 37 (Fall 1974): 29–68; and Nancy Fraser, "Struggle Over Needs: Outline of a Socialist-Feminist Critical Theory of Late Capitalist Political Culture," in *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 161–190.

public goods, each grounded in the interests of competing groups in society. In the San Francisco of 1900 urban politics was no longer characterized by the public striving of private men for the honor and authority to define a single public good. Decades of political mobilization in the public sphere had hammered the social identities of race, class, ethnicity, and gender into the basic building blocks of society and politics. Politics was now activity practiced by men and women who cast themselves as leaders of class, racial, ethnic, and gender groups. The republican discourse about a unitary public good was no longer possible because truth itself had been pluralized as group interests became legitimate demands in the public sphere.[21]

Pluralist liberalism refers to a specific discourse about the relations between state and society that became dominant around 1900; it must not be confused with the theory of "liberal pluralism" that became dominant in American political science in the 1950s. Liberal pluralism, best exemplifed in the work of Robert Dahl, can in fact be understood as a logical extension of pluralist liberalism; it can be seen as the nether end of the spectrum that begins in this book with republican liberalism. In republican political understanding, there can be only one public good; in pluralist-liberal political understanding, there are many definitions of the public good, but there still remained the goal – typical among "progressives," – of identifying and promoting that overall general good. Liberal pluralists, writing in the shadow of the Second World War and totalitarian regimes, gave up on the search for a general public interest altogether and celebrated the ways in which a multitiude of interest groups canceled out one another's conceptions of the public good, resulting in a nonideological, pragmatic political economy free from radical excesses. Liberal pluralists claimed to explain the

[21] Until "truth" itself was made relative and pluralistic by the end of the nineteenth century, "good" could be little else but singular. The classic statement is William James, *Pragmatism and the Meaning of Truth* (1907; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975). For the connections between the philosophic and political transformations, see James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Although the term was not yet applied to politics by contemporaries, my use of the term "pluralist" is not anachronistic. John Dewey credited William James with giving the term *pluralism* currency, especially in the latter's *Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (New York: Longman Green, 1896); John Dewey, "Pluralism," in *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, 3 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 2:306.

American polity in terms of the *groups* that composed civil society and the *process* of resource allocation among those groups.[22]

Although it is beyond the scope of this book to trace the course of American political culture after the turn of the century, to place the findings of this study in the longer-term story of American political development it helps to observe that the liberal pluralist political science of the 1950s and 1960s was derived from the triumph of "group theory" in the 1890 to 1920 period, a triumph that occurred among both the general participants in the public sphere and the intellectuals creating the new social science disciplines. Foremost among these individuals was Arthur F. Bentley, who insisted in his *Process of Government* (1908) that "when the groups are adequately stated, everything is stated."[23] Bentley, representative of hundreds of contemporary intellectuals, activists, and politicians, merely articulated in an especially clear way an assumption that had become nearly universal by 1900. This pluralization of the common welfare by the Progressive generation is not only quite distinctive but also quite ironic because "progressives" of many stripes thought that their most important task was to heal the rifts that had appeared in American society as a result of industrial urban modernity. "It is the business of government," Woodrow Wilson would insist, "to orga-

[22] In general, see John A. Hall *Liberalism: Politics, Ideology and the Market* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987). A founding statement of the modern theory of liberal pluralism is Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961). For a critique of liberal pluralism as a normative, antidemocratic model of political science, see Michael P. Rogin, *The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Specter* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967); for a critique of the liberal-pluralist model in American urban historiography, see Terrence J. McDonald, "The Problem of the Political in Recent American Urban History: Liberal Pluralism and the Rise of Functionalism," *Social History* 10:3 (October 1985): 323–45; and for a general discussion see Stephen D. Krasner, "Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics," *Comparative Politics* (January 1984): 223–46.

[23] A founding text for sociology is Charles Horton Cooley, *Social Organization: A Study of the Larger Mind* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909); for political science, Bentley, *The Process of Government* (Evanston, Ill.: Principia Press of Illinois, 1908), 209. An imporant treatment of Bentley as one of several group theorists is R. Jeffrey Lustig, *Corporate Liberalism: The Origins of Modern American Political Theory, 1890–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 109–49. As Paul F. Kress shows, however, Bentley's thought went far beyond the articulation of a theory of "groups." He also sought to establish the theoretical framework of government as process. Kress, *Social Science and the Idea of Process: The Ambiguous Legacy of Arthur F. Bentley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1970); Bentley's framework reappeared in a simplified, empirical form, emphasizing the *group* theory over the *process* theory, in the postwar era with David Truman's *The Governmental Process* (New York, 1951). For a careful critique, see Michael Paul Rogin, "Nonpartisanship and the Group Interest," in Rogin, *Ronald Reagan, the Movie: and Other Episodes in Political Demonology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 115–33.

nize the common interest against the special interests."[24] Indeed, leading studies of the Progressive Era from a wide variety of theoretical perspectives agree that a central problem of that period was the overcoming, or the integrating, or the advancement of group interests.[25] And it was in this period, Richard McCormick observes, that the "long-standing unwillingness to enact 'class legislation' recognizing the competing needs of different groups" finally broke down.[26]

The reification of social groups as legitimate political actors, and as the natural source of political action, reached its paradigmatic expression in Jane Addams's essay "Why the Ward Boss Rules," published in 1898. Addams argued that the notorious urban ward boss ruled not simply because he was corrupt, but because he faithfully represented the interests of his constituency:

> And if we discover that men of low ideals and corrupt practice are forming popular political standards simply because such men stand by and for and with the people, then nothing remains but to obtain a like sense of identification before we can hope to modify ethical standards.[27]

It was not the *discovery* of groups in society that marked the breakthrough of the 1890s, but the *legitimation* of groups in a pluralist ethics. James Madison, of course helped design the U.S. Constitution to contain group interests. Madison, however, did not approve of interest groups; he merely thought them a necessary evil, "sown in the nature of man." The noun that Madison used for a political group was "faction," which he defined as a group of citizens "united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and

[24] Wilson quoted in Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 330.

[25] See, for example, Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877–1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); Morton Keller, *Regulating a New Economy: Public and Economic Change in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); Thomas Pegram, *Partisans and Progressives* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

[26] Richard L. McCormick, *The Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 276.

[27] Jane Addams, "Why the Ward Boss Rules," *Outlook* 58 (2 April 1898): 879–82, reprinted in Christopher Lasch, ed. *The Social Thought of Jane Addams* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1965). Quotation is from p. 133 in the Lasch edition; originally published in a longer form as "Ethical Survivals in Municipal Corruption," *International Journal of Ethics* 3 (1898): 273–91. The same argument, in much the same form, appears as the last chapter of Addams's influential *Democracy and Social Ethics* (New York: Macmillan, 1902).

aggregate interests of the community."[28] This last phrase neatly summarizes a central belief of the republican political discourse within which Madison and his generation operated, that there was such a thing as "the permanent and aggregate interests of the community."

This book begins with the Madisonian belief in a unitary common interest fully intact. Lincoln's "House-Divided" metaphor aptly characterizes the political culture of the 1850s. The United States could not "endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*" because, Lincoln assumed, a polity that could not identify a common public interest was simply not viable. "I do not expect the Union to be dissolved," Lincoln told the Republican convention in Springfield that fateful day in June 1858, "but I *do* expect that it will cease to be divided. It will become *all* one thing, or *all* the other."[29]

This book ends with the belief in a unitary public interest in disarray. I have chosen to characterize the formation that emerged by 1900 as "pluralist liberalism" largely because of my focus on the ways constituencies have been organized in the public sphere. Some scholars have characterized the key innovation of the Progressive Era as the creation of "corporate liberalism," a phrase coined in the 1960s to describe the legitimation of corporate industrial political power. According to James Weinstein and others, corporate leaders at the turn of the century helped to reconstruct the American polity, including municipal charters, along the lines of the modern business corporation, stressing the values of organization, efficiency, and expertise over those of democratic participation. The theory of corporate liberalism does capture part of the new political culture that had taken hold by 1900, but it was only a part of the pluralist liberalism that made such theories necessary. Others included the Deweyan social-democratic strain in American

[28] Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison, *The Federalist*, introduction by Edward Mead Earle (New York: Modern Library, n.d.), 54. John Patrick Diggins's argument that the framers of the Constitution "legitimated" factions rests on a misreading of the Federalist papers. Madison *recognized* factions in order to guard against their baneful effects. This is very different from *legitimating* factions, or interests, as the progressives would do a century later. See Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundations of Liberalism* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 9.

[29] Emphasis is Lincoln's. Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953–5): 2:461. For a full explication of the political circumstances of Lincoln's speech, see Don E. Fehrenbacher, "The Origins and Purpose of Lincoln's 'House-Divided' Speech," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 46:4 (March 1960): 615–43.

thought, recovered for the Progressive Era by James Kloppenberg and Robert Westbrook, and the "maternalist" strain among women activists, recovered for that period by Robyn Muncy and Theda Skocpol.[30]

The triumph of pluralist liberalism in the political public sphere provided the background for the creation of what I call in this study the "social-group paradigm" for understanding political development. In order to understand the lives of "the people" of the city and to aid in the formulation of social legislation, Jane Addams and many other social settlement activists produced their richly detailed "social surveys," empirical studies that marked an important advance in the formation of the modern social sciences. These social surveys in turn became the model for American "social history," the historical study of ordinary people. Oscar Handlin's widely read studies of urban immigration gave this tradition a liberal pluralist casting in the 1950s. In the 1960s the "new social history" revived the tradition and within this revival the great bulk of urban history was researched and written. Political development in most of that literature is treated, as it was by Addams and her founding generation, as the outcome of social-group processes. In reconstructing the origins of the social-group paradigm in the emergence of pluralist liberalism, then, I am also carrying on an implicit critique of scholarship written within that paradigm in recent years.

The transformation of the San Francisco of 1850 into that of 1900, from a republican-liberal political culture to a pluralist-liberal one, paralleled the transformation of the United States from a republic to an empire. The neoclassical models for antebellum San Francisco were drawn from the Roman Republic; those for turn-of-the-century San Francisco were drawn from the Roman Empire. Symbolically speaking, the Romantic resonance of historic models had been gradually drained from the city's political culture by the 1890s. Neoclassical references having devolved to the status of superficial rhetorical dressing, they no longer carried the prescriptive force they once had. Nevertheless, it presents a striking contrast that public leaders in antebellum San Francisco treated their city

[30] Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought, 1870–1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion for American Reform. 1890–1935* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

like a polis, whereas those of 1900 treated it as an imperial city, promoting it as the Pacific metropolis for America's emerging global commercial and military reach. The European states that had defeated the republican revolutions of 1848 were now engaged with the United States in the nationalist contests that would culminate in the First World War. The Asian nations that had undergone merchant colonial invasions in the 1850s were now highly incorporated into the international systems of the European and American states. The pluralist-liberal political culture, at once relativist and evolutionary, legitimated and operationalized this international conquest.

Just fifty years after Captain Montgomery planted the U.S. flag in Portsmouth Square to signify the conquest of San Francisco, Vice-President Theodore Roosevelt broke the earth several blocks away, in Union Square, for the construction of a triumphal column to commemorate the sinking of the Spanish fleet and the conquest of the Philippines.[31] It took five conflict-ridden decades to bring about the transformation of San Francisco from its republican-liberal political culture to its pluralist-liberal political culture. The process was gradual, uneven, and very inefficient. The transformation from republican liberalism to pluralist liberalism characterized the whole of American political culture, but this book examines its unfolding in San Francisco. By focusing on San Francisco I do not claim that American political culture originated there, but that tendencies throughout the nation are as easily studied there as elsewhere, adjusting, of course, for regional variations on the dominant theme.

THE PUBLIC CITY

A central argument of this book is that American political development cannot be reduced to, or explained by, historical changes in civil society. Indeed, to a considerable extent the reverse has been the case: Social-group formation in San Francisco was largely the result of actions and institutions of the political public sphere. Developments such as the Vigilance Committee of 1856, the Workingmen's Party of California, and the reform charter of 1898 had

[31] Judd Kahn, *Imperial San Francisco: Politics and Planning in an American City, 1897–1906* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979); Ernest R. May, *Imperial Democracy: The Emergence of America as a Great Power* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961); Stuart Creighton Miller, *"Benevolent Assimilation": American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899–1903* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 129–218.

political, not social origins. These political origins are observable where participants engaged one another in rational debate about the governing relations of their state and society. The public sphere was structured by institutions, principally the press and political parties, and by spontaneous, uninstitutionalized crowds, speeches, and meetings. The meaning of political action in the public sphere was structured by slowly changing "discourses," or finite patterns of words and ideas, that can also be thought of as "scripts" for the behavior of actors on the political public stage.[32]

What exactly is a "public sphere"? My use of this term is derived primarily from the work of Jürgen Habermas, but also from that of Hannah Arendt. Habermas argues that the public sphere came into being in the late eighteenth century, when private persons came together to contest the governing relations of the state and society. It can be conceived of as the metaphorical space *between* the state and the world of social labor. The public sphere in the sense used here should not be confused with the state proper or with the "public sector," which is that portion of the economy controlled by the government. Neither is the public sphere the same as "public space," which is simply a geographic area like a park or a street in which persons may meet. The public sphere arose in the eighteenth century primarily through the vehicle of political journalism to constitute the independent realm in which criticism of state authorities became possible. It was the world of communication, constructed especially by the revolutionary bourgeoisie during the American and French revolutions, in unofficial institutions like coffeehouses, salons, and political parties, and in the media of speech, pamphlets, and newspapers.[33]

The substance of the public sphere is communication: "a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed." It also inscribes action: "A portion of the public sphere

[32] The concept of political culture as a script is derived from Keith M. Baker, in Baker, ed., *The Political Culture of the Old Regime*, vol. 1 of *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1987), xii. Individuals were constrained by these scripts, but not trapped. Improvisation led eventually to the rewriting of the entire script.

[33] The principal work by Jürgen Habermas, on the theory of the public sphere, is *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, tr. Thomas Berger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989). For critical appraisal, see especially the essays collected in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992). My own use of the theory is stated in greater detail in Philip J. Ethington, "Hypotheses from Habermas: Notes on Reconstructing American Political and Social History, 1890–1920," *Intellectual History Newsletter* 16 (1992): 21–40.

comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body."[34] In a specific way, I have also drawn on the work of Hannah Arendt to conceptualize the public sphere as it appears in this book. Arendt's version of the public sphere is heavily grounded in classical understandings of "public" and "private." The "private" in her framework comprised the household functions of worldly production and biological reproduction; these were irrelevant to public life. The latter was the sphere of the polis, where men competed to achieve greatness and immortality in the production of the common good.[35] Arendt's rather nostalgic model is useful not because it describes the "reality" of nineteenth-century American political culture, but because it provides a bright window on the way male political leaders through the Civil War understood the division between public and private spheres. Arendt, the philosopher, presents a useful yet normative and ahistorical model of the public sphere, whereas Habermas, the sociologist, provides one that it is grounded specifically in the bourgeois era of capitalist market relations. The "private" sphere of the household was no longer ideologically irrelevant in the nineteenth century. Rather, women had acquired a visible, publicly acclaimed political task of raising virtuous citizens. That task proved the entering wedge for women's eventual transgression of the public–private boundary.[36]

Deliberative bodies like city councils or legislatures are but pale imitations of the critical discourse of the public sphere that needs to be the creation of private people free of state power.[37] The weak American state of the nineteenth century, however, frequently blurred such hard-and-fast boundaries. A citizen did not cease, once he (and later she) became an officeholder, to play a critical role in the discourse of the public sphere. Tocqueville, for instance, saw an interplay between the profusion of local offices and the pro-

[34] Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere," *New German Critique* 1:3 (Fall 1974): 49.

[35] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 38–78.

[36] Glenna Matthews, *The Rise of Public Woman: Woman's Power and Place in the United States, 1630–1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750–1800* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980); see also Nancy Cott, "Privacy," in *Companion to American Political Thought*, ed. Richard Wightman Fox and James T. Kloppenberg (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, forthcoming).

[37] Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, 83 and Chapter 13.

fusion of the print media: "The extraordinary subdivision of administrative power has much more to do with the enormous number of American newspapers than the great political freedom of the country and the absolute liberty of the press."[38] Tocqueville conflates constitutional political offices with voluntary associations in the common category of "associations."[39] Yet nonstate associations are the original home of the entity referred to in this book by the terms "public sphere" and "political public sphere."

It is also very important to distinguish the public sphere from public space. Public spaces in the nineteenth century, such as streets and the squares in front of city halls, did accommodate many activities of the public sphere, but the public sphere resides in communication, and language greatly overflowed the capacity of outdoor face-to-face assemblies to contain or mediate it. Public spaces and the print media overlapped as the core forums, or media, of the nineteenth-century public sphere. On the one hand, meetings were organized through newspapers, or were held to debate issues raised in newspapers, and on the other hand, journalists reported and commented on public meetings, in effect widening their audience and continuing the cycle of discussion. How the public sphere operated as the site of urban political culture is the story told in the following chapters. In this introduction, however, it is useful to establish concretely the outlines of the forums of the public sphere (being careful not to confuse the two phenomena): places of public assembly and the press.

The Spanish and Mexican periods of San Francisco had bequeathed to the city's American conquerors a central public square several blocks from the waterfront. Bounded by Washington, Kearny, Clay, and Dupont streets, its official name was "Portsmouth Square," after the vessel that carried Captain Montgomery to raise the American flag in 1846. San Franciscans of every language group, however, preferred the original European name for this space: "the Plaza." The Plaza actually formed a steep slope, at the foot of which, on Clay Street, stood the sandstone front of the three-story, neoclassical City Hall. Adjacent to City Hall stood the equal-sized, brick-faced El Dorado, San Francisco's largest and most prestigious

[38] *Democracy in America*, 411.

[39] Still, Tocqueville concludes that "if there were no newspapers there would be no common activity." *Democracy in America*, 409.

gambling house, saloon, hotel, and brothel. "What Boston Common is to Bostonians," one historian complained, "Portsmouth Square is, or should be, to San Franciscans – a place to be regarded with affection and deep interest."[40] Instead, it is today a small open space serving just one neighborhood in the heart of modern Chinatown. (See Plates 1.1 and 1.2.)

As the city grew in physical size, other squares became important places for large public meetings. During the Civil War, Union Square, at the foot of Nob Hill, become one such place, and later, in the 1870s, socialists and the Workingmen's party held large weekly meetings even farther out, on the empty spaces at the corner of McAllister and Market known as the "sand lots." But streets, as Le Corbusier once recalled, belonged to the pedestrians before the advent of the automobile. It was easy enough then to hold a large public meeting at any street corner.[41] Still, the demand for public space was so great that providing it in the warm, weatherproof indoors was quite profitable. Saloons provided easily accessible, masculine space for small groups engaged usually in the informal discussion of current events. In San Francisco, as in all other cities, there were hundreds of these from the earliest times. Some became headquarters for neighborhood-level political organizers.[42] Meeting halls, some with a very large capacity, played an important role in the structure of the urban public sphere. "Dashaway Hall," erected by the Dashaway Temperance Society in the 1860s, specialized in bookings for meetings, but theaters and music halls, like the Olympic and Platt's, also made a steady business of renting their space to voluntary, labor, and political organizations. City Hall, in fact, was originally the Jenny Lind Theater, built by the impresario Tom Maguire and sold to the city in 1853 when poor ticket sales made the imposing sandstone edifice unprofitable.[43]

[40] "If all the historical spots in its neighborhood were properly marked, the Square could be fenced by tablets, and a part of its surface paved as well." Helen Throop Purdy, "Portsmouth Square," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 3:1 (April 1924): 30–44.

[41] Le Corbusier quoted in Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 164–5. For the uses of the street, see Susan G. Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986).

[42] Jon M. Kingsdale, "The 'Poor Man's Club': Social Functions of the Urban Working-Class Saloon," *American Quarterly* 25 (October 1973): 472–89.

[43] Henry G. Langley, *San Francisco Directory* (San Francisco: Commercial Steam Press, 1861), 473; Lois Foster Rodecape, "Tom Maguire, Napoleon of the Stage," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 20 (December 1941): 296–301.

Even larger indoor space was provided by the "Mechanic's Pavilion," of which there were five between 1857 and 1906. Because of the rising value of real estate near the central business district, the owners of the Mechanic's Pavilion kept moving it farther from downtown, enlarging it as they did. By 1882, the fifth structure could hold more than ten thousand persons.[44] Churches were used not infrequently for public-sphere functions. In the 1870s the Baptists, under the leadership of Isaac Kalloch, built one of the biggest churches in the United States in the large, class-mixed, South-of-Market neighborhood. Called the Metropolitan Temple, it was modeled on Kalloch's earlier pulpit, the giant Tremont Temple in Boston. Tremont Temple was a theater converted into a church; the Metropolitan Temple was a church built like a theater, with a three-thousand-seat auditorium on the first floor (with standing room for two thousand more) and a one-thousand-seat auditorium on the second floor. From the pulpit in this "People's Church" the Reverend Isaac Kalloch gained the popular strength to win the mayor's office on the Workingmen's ticket in 1879.[45]

The greatest organ of the public sphere was the press. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the press as the central institution of the public sphere. As scholars have repeatedly demonstrated, the active, participatory public sphere of the American and French revolutions through the revolutions and upheavals of the nineteenth century was literary as much as it was oral.[46] A profusion of pamphlets, lettersheets, broadsides, newspapers (morning, evening, semiweekly, and weekly), magazines, and books circulated the discourse of the nineteenth-century public sphere. The values and institutions of the early Republic had produced, by 1850, a nation of readers. American literacy rates, probably the highest in the world, had almost reached 90 percent by 1850 and would top it by 1860.[47] The urban commercial mass-circulation

[44] U.S., Work Projects Administration, *San Francisco Theatre Research*, Lawrence Estavan, ed., vol. 15, Monograph 27, *Theatre Buildings* [mimeograph] (San Francisco: 1940), 247–56.

[45] See Chapter 6.

[46] Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche, eds., *Revolution in Print: The Press in France, 1775–1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press in collaboration with the New York Public Library, New York, 1989).

[47] Scholarship on American trends in literacy rates is summarized in Carl N. Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press 1980), 308.

press had been evolving for almost twenty years by the time of San Francisco's founding. Benjamin Day and James Gordon Bennett in New York City had demonstrated in the 1830s that a market existed for low-priced daily circulations reaching the tens of thousands.[48]

Journalist-entrepreneurs seized upon the market for news as rapidly as readers from every nation stepped off the ships. During the 1850s an average of seven English-language newspapers were started *every year*, and no fewer than thirty-six foreign-language papers – published in Chinese, French, German, Spanish, Hebrew, and Italian – enjoyed at least a brief life. Competition was fierce because demand for news was high, a pattern that would continue for decades.[49] When the U.S. Census published its extensive survey of the periodical press in 1880, San Francisco, the nation's ninth largest city, had the third highest per capita circulation rate and, with its twenty-one dailies, ranked behind only New York City (which had twenty-nine) and Philadelphia (twenty-four) in the total number of papers in circulation. By 1900 the city's per capita circulation rate had increased still further. And despite the dramatic increase in the scale of the industry, there were now twenty-three dailies, two more than Philadelphia, a city almost three times as large. San Francisco produced, as later chapters will detail, one of the founders of mod-

[48] The definitive narrative overview of the American press is Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States Through 260 Years: 1690 to 1950*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1950). An important study, but one that does not explore the political dimension of the American press sufficiently, is Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978). Much more attentive to the political dimension is Dan Schiller, *Objectivity and the News: The Public and the Rise of Commercial Journalism* (Pittsburgh: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 12–17.

[49] The origins and evolution of the California press is incomparably chronicled in Edward C. Kemble, *A History of California Newspapers, 1846–1858*, reprinted from the Supplement to the Sacramento *Union* of 25 December 1958, edited and with a Foreword by Helen Harding Bretnor (Los Gatos, Calif.: Talisman Press, 1962). Included in this volume is a valuable index by Bretnor to the newspapers and editors chronicled by Kemble. The richest modern treatment of the political dimension of the California press is Robert Joseph Chandler, "The Press and Civil Liberties in California during the Civil War, 1861–1865" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Riverside, 1978). The later evolution of the San Francisco press is covered in a remarkable series undertaken by the Work Projects Administration. Specific citations here are U. S., Work Projects Administration, *History of San Francisco Journalism* Emerson L. Daggett, Supervisor, vol. 4, *Frontier Journalism in San Francisco* [mimeograph] (San Francisco: Work Projects Administration, 1939), 14–20; idem, vol. 1, *History of Foreign Journalism in San Francisco* (San Francisco: Work Projects Administration, 1939), [mimeograph] i.

ern illustrated mass commercial journalism, William Randolph Hearst.[50]

"It ought never to be forgotten," E. L. Godkin wrote in 1865, "that a republic without a press is an impossibility, almost a contradiction in terms." Paeans to the press – especially among journalists – were frequent enough to become commonplace,[51] but Godkin's captured the structural political role of periodicals politics as communicative action: "The modern newspaper is the equivalent to the Greek agora, the only means possessed by the citizens of interchanging thought and concerting action."[52] By equating the newspaper with the physical space used both for market and for assembly in the ancient world, Godkin's observation indicates that political communication in the American republic under liberal conditions had overflowed the capacity of central squares like San Francisco's Plaza. Like the popular assembly, the nineteenth-century press was a discursive, deliberating medium. Each physical newspaper was read by more than one person, often aloud, in taverns, on the streets, or in homes. Editors constantly engaged one another in fierce debates, a practice indicating that a great many readers habitually read more than one paper each day.[53]

Newspaper owners and editors (they were usually the same person in San Francisco) were simultaneously political and business men and women. It is hard to find a political leader who had not at one time owned or edited a newspaper. Running a newspaper and running for office, in fact, were similar and deeply intertwined activities.

[50] S. N. D. North, "The Newspaper and Periodical Press," in U.S. Department of the Interior, *Tenth Census of the United States*, vol. 8 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1884), 77; U.S. Department of the Interior, *Census Bulletin*, no. 216 (28 June 1902), 15; U.S., Work Projects Administration, *History of San Francisco Journalism*, vol 4. Emerson L. Daggett, Supervisor, *Trends in Size, Circulation, News and Advertising in San Francisco Journalism, 1870–1938* (San Francisco, 1940) [mimeograph]; W. A. Swanberg, *Citizen Hearst: A Biography of William Randolph Hearst* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961).

[51] A poem entitled "The Press" by one Ebenezer Elliot, printed without comment on the front page of the San Francisco *Alta*, 11 July 1860, concluded with the following stanza: "The second Ark we bring: / 'The Press' all nations sing; / What can they less? / O! pallid want; O! labor stark; / Behold, we bring the second Ark – / The Press! The Press! The Press!"

[52] E. L. Godkin, "The Newspaper and the Reader," *Nation*, 10 August 1865, 165–6, cited in Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, 74.

[53] "It may be assumed," writes S. N. D. North, "that every paper published and circulated is read by an average of at least two persons, the majority of those issued penetrating into families numbering from three to four persons." *Newspaper and Periodical Press*, 78.

Since the rise of the commercial press, newspapers had relied heavily on street sales for business. This gave editors a daily interest in finding a larger audience and in identifying popular issues.[54] Because newspapers were, as Godkin pointed out, the media of republican communication, a candidate or anyone else interested in reaching the public absolutely depended upon access to the press. Running a newspaper, then, was simply part of the political modus vivendi, but it was not merely a means of expressing the positions of the major political parties.

Even well into the Progressive Era and the rise of professional, "objective" journalism, editors had no fear of partisanship, in any sense of that term.[55] The partisanship of the press, in fact, bears comment. In the scholarship on newspapers, it has been common to distinguish between the "party" press of the mid-nineteenth century and the "independent" press of the Progressive Era.[56] Any close scrutiny of the press from the Jacksonian era to the First World War, however, causes such neat categories to disintegrate. Bennett founded his *Herald* on the principle of independence from party, but he took intense partisan stands on political issues of banking and labor, among many others. When Frederic Hudson published his history of journalism in the United States in 1873, he labeled the entire period from 1835 to 1872 as that of the "Independent Press."[57] Certainly, many principal papers served as loyal party organs. The San Francisco *Chronicle* was always Republican, and the *Examiner* was nearly always Democratic.[58] But newspapers were also business enterprises with valuable advertising space to sell. The profitability of a party association had to be weighed against the profitability of an independence that enabled an editor to switch stands rapidly rather than share the fate of a party out of power. The city's leading newspaper from 1849 through the 1870s, the *Alta California*, adopted this latter strategy and remained remarkably independent during its entire forty-two-year lifespan.[59]

[54] Schiller, *Objectivity and the News*, 2–75.

[55] Cf. Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News*.

[56] Mott, *American Journalism*, 411–15.

[57] *Journalism in the United States, from 1690 to 1872* (New York: Harper and Bros. 1873), 428–769.

[58] See discussions in following chapters.

[59] Kemble appropriately called his *Alta California* "the Mother of Newspapers" in California. A long string of editors and owners maintained its trenchant independence from the first

In no single decade can one point to a decisive shift in the kind of journalism practiced; sensationalism, partisanship, and commericalism typified the entire period, although in different measures. Very important, albeit incremental and disjointed, developments did take place, however, in the structure and content of printed communication. Change in the sheer scale of the newspaper enterprise is the most impressive. San Francisco's first newspapers were printed on hand-operated single-platen presses that had advanced very little technologically since the days of Gutenberg. A substantial daily newspaper could be established for as little as a few hundred dollars and with as small a staff as six. Such low start-up costs undoubtedly contributed to the large number of papers in the early years. The introduction of industrial technology, however, steepened the barriers to entering the newspaper business and, simultaneously, the barriers to reaching a public. Already by 1849 the New York *Sun* had sold for $250,000. The most advanced press of the Civil War era, the Hoe "lightning" press, cost more than $20,000. When the *Evening Bulletin* installed one of Hoe & Company's "web perfecting" steam-driven presses in 1877, capable of printing both sides of a continuous roll of paper, its maximum output had reached 18,000 folded copies per hour. Little more than a decade later, William Randolph Hearst invested an enormous sum in two giant Hoe presses – which he named "Monarch" and "Jumbo" – capable of producing 576,000 papers per hour.[60]

As newspaper companies expanded their circulations, they also built the tallest buildings in the cities that they served. In a construction competition repeated in New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, and San Francisco, publishers believed that they had to symbolize

issue on 4 January 1849 through the last, of 2 June 1891. The founding proprietor-editors were Edward Gilbert, Edward C. Kemble, and G. C. Hubbard, "all practical printers, and natives of one district in Northern New York," in Kemble's words. The "salutary," or statement of purpose, in the first issue reads: "This press will be independent of all parties, cliques, and persons. The cause which it will assert is the cause of California – the interests which it will endeavor to advance are the interests of California." Kemble, *History of California Newspapers*, 88–9. As this book should make clear, that pledge was roughly adhered to for decades. The valedictory editorial of the *Alta* expresses the regret that the kind of principled political independence it had maintained was now eclipsed by the commercial consumer independence of William Randolph Hearst. "Finis," *Alta* 2 June 1891.

60 U.S., Work Projects Administration, *History of San Francisco Journalism*, vol. 6, Charles Holmes and Isom Shepard, *History of the Physical Growth and Technological Advance of the San Francisco Press* (San Francisco, 1940) [mimeograph], 109.

their paper's dominance with the edifice that housed their enterprise. San Francisco's first tall newspaper buildings of the 1870s were surpassed when Michael de Young built the city's first steel-framed skyscraper for the *Chronicle* in 1890. Not to be outdone, Claus Spreckels built the twenty-five-story *Call* building across Market Street. (see Plates 5.2 and 7.1). From the Plaza of the 1850s to these skyscrapers of 1900, the structures of communication shaped the conduct and the content of the public sphere.

THE PUBLIC CITY AND URBAN POLITICAL HISTORY

The ultimate victory of the pluralist-liberal language and practice of social groups over the republican-liberal language and practice of politics took place in the public sphere; it was the human product of public political contestation and not the natural outcome of socio-economic change. This, a central thesis of the present study, needs to be further developed by distinguishing the approach of this book from that of the studies of urban politics on which it builds.

In his study of Philadelphia, *The Private City* (1968), Sam Bass Warner, Jr., coined the term "privatism" as a label for what he claimed to be the "American tradition," under which "the first purpose of the citizen is the private search for wealth; the goal of the city is to be a community of private money makers." Warner argued that the "twentieth-century failure of urban America to create a humane environment" was "the story of an enduring tradition of privatism in a changing world."[61] Warner's formulation has a solid kernel of truth. Liberal private property relations have indeed stood at the center of American urban development. Surrounding those private property relations, however, has been a thick and changing political culture, in which the meaning of private interests has been continually reconstructed. The "privatism" thesis needs to be modified by Tocqueville's admonition to discover "how each man will understand his personal interest."[62] This book argues that the story of political change is not reducible to the story of social change; that the institutions of the state and of the public sphere were relatively autonomous from the "social base"; and that the public sphere

[61] Sam Bass Warner, Jr., *The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of Growth* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), x–xi.

[62] Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 417.

is every bit as important to reconstruct historically as the private. Indeed, the meaning of the "private" is much broader in this study than just "private property."[63]

Warner's *Private City* is a representative work within a body of scholarship that stretches back to the social surveys conducted by the settlement house activists beginning in the 1890s. The social-survey approach to urban studies has the tendency to portray political institutions and political behavior as epiphenomenal, or dependent upon, changes in civil society.[64] In recent years sociologists, political scientists, and a handful of historians have created an alternative framework, dubbed the "new institutionalism," which emphasizes "the relative autonomy of political institutions, possibilities for inefficiency in history, and the importance of symbolic action to an understanding of history."[65] Historians working within the new institutionalist approach have recently written studies of urban politics that treat the institutions of the state as relatively autonomous from the social base. As Richard L. McCormick puts it, we need to "ask political questions" about political life, "recognizing that nineteenth-century parties led semi-autonomous lives – independent, in

[63] For a sampling of the diverse social meanings of privacy, see Samuel D. Warren and Louis D. Brandeis, "The Right to Privacy," *Harvard Law Review* 4:5 (December 15, 1890): 193-220; Cott, "Privacy"; and Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women and Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981); the question of public and private property in the law of municipal corporations is treated with great subtlety in Hendrik Hartog, *Public Property and Private Power: The Corporation of the City of New York in American Law, 1730–1870* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[64] Geoff Eley and Keith Nield, "Why Does Social History Ignore Politics?" *Social History* 5:2 (May 1980): 249–71.

[65] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *American Political Science Review* 78 (1984): 734. For all the attention given to "politics," leading up to the rebellion of the "new social history" in the 1960s, it is ironic, as Stephen Krasner observed in 1984, that "from the late 1950s until the mid-1970s, the term state virtually disappeared from the professional academic lexicon." Krasner, "Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics," *Comparative Politics* (January 1984): 223. "States matter," Theda Skocpol writes, "because their organizational configurations, along with their overall patterns of activity, affect political culture, encourage some kinds of group formation and collective political actions (but not others), and make possible the raising of certain political issues (but not others). "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research," in Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 21. This approach does not entail replacing an older social determinism with a newer political determinism. Rogers M. Smith suggests that we "stress how background structures *shape* values and interests, not to speak as if they have interests of their own." Rogers M. Smith, "Political Jurisprudence, the New Institutionalism, and the Future of Public Law," *American Political Science Review* 82:1 (March 1988): 100.

significant ways, of the social conditions out of which they came."[66] Michael Hanagan writes that "class consciousness cannot be separated from the political structures which give it form and meaning."[67]

Possibly the largest obstacle to overcome when studying the operation of political life in the nineteenth century is the image of corrupt party "machines" run by nonideological "bosses" who dispensed city jobs, turkeys, and coal to needy constituents in return for votes.[68] This image, promoted first by reformers in the 1870 overthrow of "Boss" William Marcy Tweed in New York City, was given intellectual authority in James Bryce's *American Commonwealth* (1888) when he pronounced his much-quoted verdict that American cities are the one "conspicuous failure" of American political institutions. The boss/machine model of nineteenth-century urban politics gained greatest popularity during the Cold War, when "bosses" like Boston's James Michael Curley were celebrated in works of history and in novels as pragmatic forerunners of the welfare state.[69]

By asking political questions about political history, several scholars, including Jon Teaford, Terrence McDonald, and Robin Ein-

[66] Richard L. McCormick, "The Social Analysis of American Political History – After Twenty Years," in McCormick, *The Party Period and Public Policy*, 137–8.

[67] Michael Hanagan, "Response to Sean Wilentz, 'Against Exceptionalism: Class Consciousness and the American Labor Movement, 1790–1920,'" *International Labor and Working Class History* 26 (Fall 1984): 36; Amy Bridges carries this line of research to its logical but startling conclusion, asserting that "in a complex society, community does not come naturally, but is a product of politics." Amy Bridges, *A City in the Republic: Antebellum New York and the Origins of Machine Politics* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 3; and Bridges, "Becoming American: The Working Classes in the United States before the Civil War," in *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Aristide Zolberg (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 157–96. Richard Oestreicher makes a similar case in "Urban Working-Class Political Behavior and Theories of American Electoral Politics, 1870–1940," *Journal of American History* 74:4 (March 1988): 1257–86.

[68] "The machine has existed because of the very large numbers of dependent or semidependent people who have been found in the modern American city, and because it has been better able to respond quickly and directly to their needs." John M. Allswang, *Bosses, Machines, and Urban Voters: An American Symbiosis* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1977), 150. See also Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, eds., *A History of Urban America*, 3d ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1983), 206–28.

[69] The classic historical work presenting this point of view is Oscar Handlin, *The Uprooted* (Boston: Little Brown, 1951); in sociology, the model is Robert K. Merton, "The Latent Functions of the Machine," in Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure: Toward the Codification of Theory and Research* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1949); in fiction, Edwin O'Connor, *The Last Hurrah* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1956).

horn, have successfully challenged the centrality of machines to the study of urban politics, especially for the period before the 1920s. Teaford directly challenges Bryce's verdict of "conspicuous failure" by demonstrating that municipal fire, park, sanitation, and education departments in most major American cities were run by career professionals who were relatively autonomous from party organizations. Systematic analysis throws into question the very idea that urban political "machines" were widespread at all. Brown and Halaby's survey of more than forty cities shows that centralized party organizations that actually maintained a grip on urban political office may have appeared in most cities, but only sporadically. The heyday of such machines did not arrive until after 1920. In San Francisco during the period covered by this book, 1850 to 1900, a machine-style party organization controlled access to city government for only one period, from 1882 to 1891. The work of McDonald and Einhorn specifically refutes the most basic claim of the machine model: that urban politicians stayed in power through a nonideological distribution of government patronage to needy voters. McDonald's study of fiscal policy in San Francisco shows that nineteenth-century urban rulers were not nonideological; they operated within powerful ideological boundaries of fiscal conservatism. The so-called "bosses" in San Francisco were loathe to spend money or to raise taxes. Einhorn's study of Chicago shows clearly that municipal government revolved around property owners and not immigrant masses looking for expensive social services. Even so traditional a bastion of party patronage as the city police department was, in San Francisco, free from party manipulation long before the reformers arrived in the seat of power in the 1890s.[70]

Some of the best scholarship in recent political science has relied on the unwarranted assumption that city governments stayed in

[70] David P. Thelen, "Urban Politics: Beyond Bosses and Reformers," *Reviews in American History* 7 (1979): 406–12; Jon Teaford, "*Finis* for Tweed and Steffens: Rewriting the History of Urban Rule," *Reviews in American History* 10 (1982) 133–49; M. Craig Brown and Charles N. Halaby, "Machine Politics in America, 1870–1945," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 17:3 (Winter 1987): 587–612; Terrence J. McDonald, *The Parameters of Urban Fiscal Policy: Socioeconomic Change and Political Culture in San Francisco, 1860–1906* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Terrence J. McDonald and Sally K. Ward, eds., *The Politics of Urban Fiscal Policy* (Beverly Hills, 1984); Robin Einhorn, *Property Rules: Political Economy in Chicago, 1833–1872* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Jon Teaford, *The Unheralded Triumph: City Government in America. 1870–1900* (Baltimore, 1984); Philip J. Ethington, "Vigilantes and the Police: The Creation of a Professional Police Bureaucracy in San Francisco, 1847–1900," *Journal of Social History* 21:2 (Winter 1987): 197–228.

power by dispensing patronage, to develop institutional models of political development and social change.[71] This book was originally planned to reconstruct the sources of political participation without relying on the dubious machine model.[72] The following chapters, then, are informed by the new institutionalist scholarship stressing the relative independence of political development from social development and by a rejection of the belief that machines are the central story in a city's political history.

This book draws heavily on the scholarship from the social-historical tradition. The empirical wealth of that literature has enabled me to explore questions not previously addressed about the mobilization of constituencies in the public sphere.[73] This is not an economic history of San Francisco, although the operation and performance of the market is a key element of my analytical narrative. Indeed, this study would have been quite impossible without the large corpus of histories, such as the massive "works" of Hubert Howe Bancroft written about San Francisco, and California, almost since the founding of the city itself.[74] Recent histories of San Francisco,

[71] "Machine politics was of course not peculiar to New York City. The machine was the characteristic form of government in the cities of the United States; the boss and the reformer were the most prominent urban antagonists for nearly a century." Bridges, *City in the Republic*, 154; Ira Katznelson, *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); Martin Shefter, "Trade Unions and Political Machines: The Organization and Disorganization of the American Working Class in the Late Nineteenth Century," in Katznelson and Zolberg, eds., *Working-Class Formation*, 197–276.

[72] McDonald's study of fiscal policy in San Francisco strongly suggested that urban political participation would need to be explained without recourse to the patronage theory, and with a central role for ideological persuasion.

[73] The social-historical approach to American city history may have underestimated the independence of political institutions, but it did produce a wealth of findings about the formation and vitality of class, ethnic, and racial consciousness, about the gendered nature of social life, about standards of living and the relative rates of occupational and geographic mobility, and so on.

[74] The first important history of San Francisco, co-written by three insightful journalist-politicians, provides important contemporary observations and data to any modern student of the city. Frank Soulé, John H. Gihon, and James Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco: Containing a Summary of the History of the First Discovery, Settlement, Progress, and Present Condition of California, and a Complete History of all the Important Events Connected with Its Great City: to which are added, Biographical Memoirs of Some Prominent Citizens* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1855); John S. Hittell, *A History of the City of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Co., 1878). Nonacademic history reached its highest achievement in the thirty-nine volumes comprising the massive *Works* of Hubert Howe Bancroft and his uncredited employee-historians, including Henry L. Oak, William Nemos, and Frances Fuller Victor. These volumes are, as one historian later observed, both "an immense drifting miscellany" and perhaps "American historiography's greatest single achievement." To undertake the research and writing of these works Bancroft

especially on social mobility, ethnic communities, working-class formation, race relations, political development, unions, and other subjects, provided indispensable groundwork upon which this study builds.[75] Far from attempting to supplant all previous studies, this book begins with different questions and reconstructs the story of San Francisco from a very different angle – that of the public sphere.

THE POLITICAL COMMUNITY

To complete this introductory overview, we need a preliminary outline of the people who occupied the public sphere by participating in it. We can call the sum total of participants in the political life of San Francisco at any given time its "political community." Because any activity performed in the public sphere having the governing relations of the state as the object of discussion was a *political* activity, we must recognize as members of the total political community in its broadest sense not only those enfranchised few who cast ballots, but anyone who engaged in a spontaneous crowd action or street-corner meeting. Such events were as diverse as a women's rights meeting, as Chinese merchants protesting discriminatory laws, as African Americans holding a "Negro Citizens" meeting, or as a saloon argument over a newspaper article. The political community can be conceived as a pyramid with an extremely unstable base. At the top were the career politicians who organized the durable major parties. At the bottom were the disenfranchised who nonetheless participated from time to time in some political activity or, like blacks and women, who organized for the purpose of becoming enfranchised. Above these were the enfranchised who

assembled a huge library of rare books, pamphlets, and manuscript materials. Bancroft even began what is probably the earliest systematic collection of oral histories in the United States. These materials, which later became the core collection of the magnificent Bancroft Library of the University of California, were the indispensable foundation for this study of San Francisco. Walton Bean and James J. Rawls, *California: An Interpretive History*, 5th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1988), 205–6; John Walton Caughey, *Hubert Howe Bancroft: Historian of the West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1946).

75 The founding work in the "new urban history" on San Francisco is Roger Lotchin's *San Francisco, 1846–1856: From Hamlet to City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974). Authors to which this study is especially indebted include Lotchin, Robert A. Burchell, Robert Chandler, Robert Cherny, Peter R. Decker, Steven Erie, William Issel, Michael Kazin, Kevin Mullen, Alexander Saxton, and Jules Tygiel. See bibliography and references throughout the text for the works by these authors.

participated in just one or two elections before moving out of the city, as thousands did each decade. Between the enfranchised occasional voter and the leadership was the core political community: enfranchised citizens who voted in more than a few elections, lived in the city for more than a few years, and comprised the stable "electorate." Because the enfranchised voters had an immense normative weight in defining the meaning of "political" during the nineteenth century, I shall discuss mainly that group who could and did vote as the "political community" in the pages and chapters that follow.

The political community thus defined requires careful explication as the center of political activity, something the following chapters will address. Crowd and other forms of political activity enter this study throughout, but the voters will dominate the discussion just as they dominated the agenda and participated in defining what was legitimate and illegitimate political activity and in defining who was to receive the privilege of the franchise and who would not. Historians have widely and for the most part uncritically acclaimed the high levels of voter participation in nineteenth-century America. It is essential for the arguments made in this study, however, to understand that voter turnout in San Francisco was always low during the nineteenth century, and that it was especially low in municipal-only elections, well before the Progressive Era and the much-studied dropoff in voter participation during that period. Terrence McDonald's analyses demonstrate these trends: "On average, 42 percent of men aged twenty-one and over voted for president, 37 percent for governor, 34 percent for mayor, and 31 percent for the board of supervisors."[76]

Urban voting was *not* a mass phenomenon, despite the effusive language among recent historians about the "virtually full mobilization of the electorate" during the late-nineteenth century.[77] Such language gives the false impression that nearly every man who could vote did so and that members of all socioeconomic classes asserted an equal voice at the polling booth. Exclusivity and white male supremacy were the unspoken goals behind the formation of

[76] Terrence J. McDonald, *The Parameters of Urban Fiscal Policy: Socioeconomic Change and Political Culture in San Francisco, 1860–1906* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 120.

[77] Quotation is from Paul Kleppner, *Who Voted?: The Dynamics of Electoral Turnout, 1870–1900* (New York: Praeger, 1982), 43; Michael E. McGerr, *The Decline of Popular Politics: The American North, 1865–1928* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). For more skeptical views of high levels of voter turnout, see McDonald, *Parameters of Urban Fiscal Policy,* 118–22; and Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Why Americans Don't Vote* (New York: Pantheon, 1989), 26–63.

San Francisco's political community in the 1850s. In a freshly organized state already yielding uncounted riches from its soil and in its real estate, economic opportunity was very much a creature of political power. The state legislature had the power to govern access to the mines, and the city government had control of millions of dollars in rapidly appreciating "public" property to be sold at auction or otherwise transferred to "private" use.[78] White males, therefore, lost no time in restricting access to political power.

The California Constitution of 1850 limited the franchise to white male citizens who had resided in the state for six months and in the county for thirty days.[79] The lure of gold and the disruptions of the Taiping Rebellion brought roughly twenty-five thousand Chinese immigrants (almost all were men) to California by 1852, making the Chinese the largest single minority group in the state. The California legislature fortified the political and economic power of the white, Anglo male citizenry by enacting prohibitive "foreign miner's taxes" in 1850 and 1852, which effectively barred the state's skilled Mexicans and determined Chinese from the mines.[80] Blacks and Native Americans were barred from testifying in court in 1850.

[78] Christian G. Fritz, "Politics and the Courts: The Struggle over Land in San Francisco, 1846–1866," *Santa Clara Law Review* 26:1 (Winter 1986): 127–64; Bruno Fritzsche, "San Francisco 1846–1848: The Coming of the Land Speculator," *California Historical Quarterly* 51:1 (Spring 1972): 17–34. For the normative tendency to transfer public property to private hands, see Hendrick Hartog, *Public Property and Private Power: The Corporation of the City of New York in American Law, 1730–1870* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983), 101–42.

[79] The exact wording is "Every white male citizen of the United States, and every white male citizen of Mexico who shall have elected to become a citizen of the United States under the treaty of peace exchanged and ratified at Queretaro, on the thirteenth of May, eighteen hundred and forty-eight, of the age of twenty-one years, who shall have been a resident of the state six months next preceding the election, and the county or district in which he claims his vote thirty days, shall be entitled to vote at all elections." Theodore H. Hittell, *The Codes and Statutes of the State of California*, 2 vols. (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Co., 1876), 1:43. Although by both treaty and the state constitution Mexicans were allowed access to citizenship and suffrage de jure, the numbers who actually became citizens and participated in politics was not large in the northern, most populous part of the state. The *Alta California* estimated in 1863 that the number of Spanish-speaking voters statewide was only 5,000, or about 5% of the total electorate. *Alta*, cited in Chandler, "Press and Civil Liberties in California," 47–8. Several upper-class Californios, such as the Vallejos and De La Guerras did take a prominent part in California politics, mainly on the basis of their "Spanish" identity. Mexicans who immigrated after the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo were de facto treated as part of the underclass. Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in California*, (San Francisco: Boyd and Fraser, 1984), 13–30. Until 1870 the U.S. Constitution was silent on the qualifications for suffrage, leaving this to the discretion of the states. See Chapter 5 for a full discussion of election law.

[80] Robert F. Heizer and Alan J. Almquist, *The Other Californians: Prejudice and Discrimination under Spain, Mexico, and the United States to 1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 138–77; Walton Bean and James J. Rawls, *California*, 125, 127.

In order to ensure that Chinese were included in the official underclass, the California Supreme Court ruled in 1854 that the words of the 1850 act, "No Black, or Mulatto person, or Indian shall be allowed to give evidence in favor of, or against a White man," were intended to encompass the Chinese as nonwhite.[81]

The relationship in San Francisco – as elsewhere in the United States – between the membership of the political community and participation in the public sphere was a close one, although not automatic. Those excluded from the privileged status of "electors" (voters) contested their exclusion at the margins of the dominant public sphere. But by excluding women, blacks, and Chinese from the franchise, white male citizens intended to exclude them from the public sphere altogether. Denying them the ballot implied that they were to have no public voice and were to remain solely *private* beings. The Gold Rush, however, coincided with the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, and the granting of statehood to California in 1850 marked the beginning of a sectional crisis that would evolve into the first civil rights movement after the Civil War. Thus, although white males were able until the end of the Civil War to avoid significant discussion of group exclusion in the political debates of the public sphere, they were forced to discuss those exclusions increasingly in the decades after the Civil War. And when they did discuss them, participants in the public sphere gradually constructed social-group identities as the most salient features of the political community. Stated another way, exclusion had enabled the white male citizens to construct ideologies stressing indivisible public interests; challenges to exclusion forced the participants to articulate interests as properties of groups.

Each chapter develops the story of changes in the political com-

[81] Leonard Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846–1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966); Heizer and Almquist, *The Other Californians*, 92–194; Thomas W. Chinn, ed., *A History of the Chinese in California: A Syllabus* (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1969), 23–8; Linda C. A. Przybyszewski, "Judge Lorenzo Sawyer and the Chinese: Civil Rights Decisions in the Ninth Circuit," *Western Legal History* 1:1 (Winter/Spring 1988): 23–56; Alexander Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*, 3–66; Bean and Rawls, *California*, 126–8. The 1854 California Supreme Court opinion overturned the conviction of a white man for murder on the testimony of a Chinese witness. Written by the twenty-nine year old Chief Justice Hugh C. Murray, it intended to close the possibility that Asians might be considered "white": "The same rule which would admit them [Chinese] to testify, would admit them to all the equal rights of citizenship, and we might soon see them at the polls, in the jury box, upon the bench, and in our legislative halls." Therefore "The use of these terms [Black, Mulatto, and Indian] must, by every sound rule of construction, exclude every one who is not of white blood." *The People v. George W. Hall* 4 California 399. Quoted at pp. 403–4.

munity through time. Several dimensions of political participation are examined in each section of the book. These are the institutions (party, press, law) that structured individual choices; the demographic mobility that pulled and pushed enormous numbers of people through the city; the mobilization of voters to participate; the choices voters made when they voted; the formation of group (class and ethnic) voting blocs and group identities; the content of ideological appeals made by political leaders; the modes of communication between participants; and the challenges made by outsiders (blacks and women) to participate.

Two long-term patterns in political participation can be clarified at the outset. The first has to do with social groups and the second with the relationship between geographic mobility and membership in the political community. The presence of social groups in civil society is treated as an open question throughout this book. Using census manuscript samples, voter registration records, city directories, and social-scientific techniques, I have grouped thousands of San Franciscans by occupational stratum, native origins, ethnic stock, household status, and other sociological categories, for the purpose of testing hypotheses about the behavior of individuals and groups. The most basic question I have used these data to answer is, Does social class or ethnicity explain patterns in urban political participation? The most basic answer is that these group categories do not help us explain political participation in the early years, but are increasingly able to do so by the later years of this study. The most important finding, however, is that social groups as historical agents and political institutions are not separable. The process of political mobilization, beginning especially with the Civil War, made social-group identities increasingly salient in the communication of the public sphere. The antebellum decade was remarkable for the rudimentary formation of social groups as the defining criterion of individual identities. Those group identities that did profoundly shape individual self-understanding – race and gender – provided the criteria for exclusion from the public sphere rather than providing the lines of contestation within it. But within the circle of white male political citizenship, group identities of class and ethnicity mattered as yet very little. By the end of the nineteenth century, leaders in the political community claimed to represent whites, blacks, the working class, Catholics, employers, and women, and few doubted that these were principal divisions within society. The crucial issues are whether the discourse of the public sphere indicated that groups

matter and whether individuals behaved as though they belonged to groups. By the end of this book, covering the period when the political culture of social groups and their needs had finally matured, it will be shown that social groups had become the fundamental building blocks of political activity, but that the groups themselves were still highly plastic. Skillful leaders in the public sphere could either mobilize groups or avoid that mobilization.

The other long-term pattern requiring some introduction is the relationship between geographic mobility and membership in the political community. High rates of population turnover characterized all American cities in the nineteenth century; researchers have found that as many as half of a city's residents would not remain more than ten years. A wealth of social-historical data has made it easy to categorize the urban transients. Stephan Thernstrom and others have shown that less successful members of the urban social economy were far more likely to disappear from the city from one decade to the next and that, conversely, those who persisted were better off and more likely to experience upward economic mobility.[82]

We can easily deduce from these sociological findings that individuals belonging to the lower occupational groups would vote in fewer elections than those of upper occupational status.[83] Kenneth J. Winkle has demonstrated this in his careful analysis of voting patterns in Ohio and Illinois during the 1850s. Using poll books, which recorded the names of individuals who actually cast ballots, Winkle shows that geographic persisters were wealthier, worked in higher skilled occupations, and were much more politically active. By casting ballots in many more elections per decade, these individuals had a disproportionately salient presence in the electorate. In terms of ballots, their presence was magnified far beyond their actual numbers.[84]

[82] Stanley Engerman, "Up or Out: Social and Geographic Mobility in the United States," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 3 (Winter 1975): 469–89; Stephan Thernstrom, *The Other Bostonians*; idem, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City* (New York: Atheneum, 1964).

[83] See Charles Stephenson, "A Gathering of Strangers? Mobility, Social Structure, and Political Participation in the Formation of Nineteenth-Century American Workingclass Culture," in Milton Cantor, ed., *American Workingclass Culture: Explorations in American Labor and Social History* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979): 31–60.

[84] Kenneth J. Winkle, "A Social Analysis of Voter Turnout in Ohio, 1850–1860," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 13:3 (Winter 1983): 411–35; idem, *The Politics of Community: Migration and Politics in Antebellum Ohio* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1988). John Mack Faragher, in his study of a small Illinois town, shows how the same rift between a

Levels of voter turnout in municipal-only elections were about fifteen percent lower than in national-level elections in San Francisco from 1850 through 1900. The clear divergence between municipal and national levels of participation indicates the operation of what I shall call a "dual urban political universe." Political leaders attempted to mobilize voters on a wide range of issues, from the local property tax rates to the abolition of slavery in the southern states. It stands to reason that propertyless individuals who circulated through San Francisco without developing strong local interests would be easier to mobilize on the basis of issues and loyalties that would be effective outside of San Francisco. The following chapters support this hypothesis. Local elections, if held separately, had only local issues, such as the tax rate and levels of expenditure, to attract voters who would logically be the most stable residents (mainly the property holders) of the city. State and national elections, however, gave free rein to the great national parties to mobilize the electorate on a host of extraurban issues, from nativism, slavery, Chinese exclusion, and Free Silver, to the foreign policy of Pacific imperialism, and of course through loyalties to the Republican and Democratic parties themselves. The persisters and the transients among the voters were sifted by occupation, property, and other resources. The manipulation of the dual political universe by political leaders is a recurrent theme in this book, although the results varied dramatically from decade to decade.

SUBJECT MATTER AND METHODS

The theoretical framework of this book, taking the public sphere of communicative action as the site of intersection between civil society and political institutions, has already been presented. A word on the subject matter and the methods is in order here. The history of San Francisco is filled with extraordinary people and extraordinary events. From David C. Broderick and James King of William in the 1850s, through Denis Kearney and Laura de Force Gordon in

minority of persisters and a majority of transients structured politics in that small town during the 1830s through the 1850s: "In the congressional races of 1836 and 1838, for example, electors from original settler families gave the Whig candidate approximately six in ten of their votes, while men from families relatively new to the creek voted in almost the same proportion for the Democrat. Because the persistent were usually owners, the transient largely squatters, this political division followed lines of economic cleavage." *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), 149. Faragher, like Winkle, uses poll books for his analysis.

the 1870s, to Charlotte Perkins Gilman, William Randolph Hearst, Adolph Sutro, and James Duval Phelan in the 1890s, the historian has the lives of an abundance of fascinating public figures to recount, to explain, and to fit into an overall narrative of San Francisco history. I attempt to do justice to the lives of these people by putting their actions into the context of their own understanding of alternatives (not ours), by giving them credit for actually believing in the ideologies they espoused (without taking their words at face value), and by conceptualizing them as creative beings rather than as representatives of some group or institutional interest (without divorcing them from their group or institutional context). The individuals that appear throughout this study, then, are presented not as colorful biographic digressions, but as actors who mediated creatively between structures they could not have chosen and goals that they could.

There are also several thousand individuals appearing in this study without names, in the form of "statistics." A major goal of this study is to recover the sense of creativity and of participation that ordinary people had in the building of a great city and its public life. By aggregating these people by social-scientific attributes, such as occupations, ethnicity, and marital status, I hope to have captured the ways that these different identities came to the fore in different contexts, under the influence of leaders or events that persuaded individuals to act sometimes in patterned ways and sometimes in unpredictable ones.

Concerning social groups, the role of San Francisco's Chinese presented a painful problem in the design and execution of this book. Given that so large a proportion of the city's population during the nineteenth century had been born in China and spoke Cantonese, it would have been ideal to construct this analytical narrative not only around the dominant (and dominating) English-language political culture, but also from within the Chinese-language political subculture. Unfortunately, the vast majority of primary and secondary sources necessary for such a task are available only in Chinese, a language I do not read.[85] English-language stu-

[85] For a survey of the historiography of Chinese Americans, see Him Mark Lai and Wei-Chi Poon, "Notes on Chinese American Historical Research in the United States," *Amerasia* 12:2 (1985–6): 101–11; Him Mark Lai, *A History Reclaimed: An Annotated Bibliography of Chinese Lanaguage Materials on the Chinese in America* (Los Angeles: Asian American Studies Center, 1986).

dies of the San Francisco Chinese community in the nineteenth century, furthermore, have only begun to appear in the years since I embarked on this book. Even where I have been able to draw on this recent work, the radical exclusion of Chinese from the ruling political culture of the city left the experience of that community beyond the scope of my narrative. There was almost no communication between these segregated populations on political terms. The Chinese of San Francisco play a role in this book primarily as the "other" against whom European and African Americans defined their own identities and privileges. Those looking for a multicultural history of the city with the Chinese portrayed as they should someday be, will not find such a narrative in this book. The public city of the San Francisco Chinese awaits its historian.[86]

I have chosen to narrate and analyze events by several criteria. The first kind are obvious ruptures in the political development of the city. The Vigilance Committee of 1856, the Workingmen's party of 1877–81, and the charter reform campaigns of 1894–8 are perhaps the three most significant such ruptures. Explanations of these episodes, fascinating narratives in their own right, are a basic requirement of any history of the city stretching from 1850 to 1900. Any model of urban social and political change must be capable of accounting for these episodes. From the work of the philosopher Josiah Royce on the 1856 Vigilance Committee through the numerous works by twentieth-century historians concerning these episodes, interpretations have served to advance one or another sociopolitical theory. The model presented in these chapters differs markedly from most accounts: It emphasizes public, political causes as the most important source of the ruptures and of the course these upheavals took.

A major objective of this book, however, is to reconstruct the "normal" operation of urban political culture in San Francisco, in order to find the general patterns not only for that city but for other major American cities as well. This has required close attention to

[86] A modern and critical social history of the Chinese is now beginning to appear in such works as Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991); Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989); Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States Since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991); Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

the periods prior to and following the periods of dramatic rupture. I discuss yearly and even seasonal patterns of political participation, along with a great many minor episodes of legislation, charter revision, and municipal elections throughout this book. Emphasis on locating the typical patterns in urban political life also has led me to abandon traditional periodization. This book begins with the last years of the Jacksonian era and ends with the first years of the so-called Progressive Era, endpoints justified by the criteria of the city's own history, beginning with the American period of the city's history and ending after the adoption of the reform charter of 1898. Taking up and leaving off the story in disregard of the traditional periodizations allows me to reassess the impact of the usually designated turning points, such as the Vigilance Committees, the Civil War, the "Great Upheaval" in industrial relations of 1877–89, and the Panic and Depression of 1893–4.

Finally, this study is about the linkages between state and society in the urban setting. It therefore privileges the opportunities for participation in political life over the occasions for legislative or administrative policy-making. Policy-making at the urban level, and at the state and national levels having a bearing on urban politics, plays an important role in this study. Any study of politics is largely justified by the understanding we gain from it about the performance of our political institutions. There are two main measures of "performance": inputs and outputs, or participation and policy-making. This book stresses the inputs, or the participatory dimension of political life, conceiving of the linkages between state and society as the way leaders in the public sphere mobilized citizens to participate in institutions of self-government.[87]

OUTLINE OF THE ANALYTICAL NARRATIVE

The chapters of this book simultaneously narrate and analyze the historical activities that took place in San Francisco's political public sphere from 1850 to 1900. The cumulative effect of that history resulted in the emergence of pluralist liberalism and the social-group understanding of political mobilization that characterized

[87] I am able to focus my energies on the participatory dimension of urban political life in large part because of Terrence McDonald's superb study of fiscal policy in San Francisco; see McDonald, *Parameters of Urban Fiscal Policy*.

American political culture during the Progressive Era. Although no particular date can be identified as the point at which republican liberalism died and pluralist liberalism was born, a clear rupture in the historical process did occur during the Civil War and Reconstruction. This book, therefore, is organized around the 1860s as the midpoint. The first four chapters reconstruct the operation of the republican-liberal political culture; the last four examine the rise and triumph of the pluralist-liberal one.

Chapter 1 establishes the broad structural features of the city's political culture for the period covered by the first half of the book. Chapter 1 is an anatomy of the intersections between state and society in the antebellum public sphere. Analysis of the extremely fluid composition of the population reveals that modern sociological categories can be applied only heuristically. Capturing the contemporary understanding of social categories requires a framework that is ethical and characterological, one that is knowable only in relation to the construction of identities in the public sphere. The theatrical operation of that public sphere is explained as a "small republic," structured through a severely gendered division between public and private spheres. The final two sections of Chapter 1 explain the agony of organization, participation, and authority on a neoclassical, masculine, and deadly public stage. Participation was limited to a handful of privileged citizens who threw their loyalties to men who could demonstrate their honor in the pursuit of the common good. Because the common good was presumed to be indivisible, it tended to be nonnegotiable, and because men's selfhood was a function of public will, advocacy of principle frequently led to death.

Chapters 2 through 4 are analytical narratives, explaining historical events in time, with pauses to interpret the overall patterns and meanings at work. Each chapter has a dual purpose: to narrate compellingly and analyze convincingly the specific chain of events in San Francisco, and to illustrate the overall transformation at work in American political culture. Chapter 2 reexamines the vexed question of the origins of the infamous Vigilance Committees of 1851 and 1856. Since Josiah Royce's account in the 1880s, these events have been interpreted as the surface manifestation of deep social processes. My account grounds these events in the logic of republican-liberal political culture and in the visible actions of men in the contested public sphere. I argue, in short, that these famous political organizations had *political* origins, not *social* ones. Chapter 3 exam-

ines the "movement culture" created by the Committee of 1856. For ninety-nine days the Vigilante Executive Committee drew most of the city's voters into an armed paramilitary government that executed political prisoners and adopted the ancient republican practice of ostracism. This organization created a local party organization that ruled the city until the end of the Civil War.

Chapter 4 examines the transposition of the rules of political mobilization during the Civil War. By following the careers of representative party leaders and their methods of mass mobilization, I trace the ways in which the rights revolution of the Civil War unleashed the genie of social groups from within the republican logic of tyranny, dependence, and corruption. The crucial event was the conversion of race from an identity of exclusion from citizenship into a fault line of mobilization within citizenship.

Chapter 5, opening the second half of the book surveys the arrival of new structural features for the urban political public sphere in the immediate post–Civil War years. The signal transformation was the entry of women into that sphere. Women orators, lawyers, and politicians reenacted the eighteenth-century bourgeoisie's creation of a public sphere in the nineteenth century, carving a space for the assault on privilege that was the lynchpin of republicanism. This chapter next examines the attempt to shape the electorate through complex registration and election laws, introduced for the first time now that the exclusive political community had been invaded by the rights revolution of the Civil War and Reconstruction. A statistical portrait of the urban electorate over the course of the postwar decades reveals a "dual urban political community," in which larger turnouts in national elections brought a wider array of voters into the circle of mobilization. Political leaders understood and attempted to manipulate this effect, by separating or joining local and national elections. New forums of mass communication appeared in the aftermath of the Civil War to further restructure the possibilities of mobilization. Commerical newspapers managed on the logic of group marketing and the rise of working-class evangelism presaged the politics of class that exploded in the 1870s.

Chapters 6 through 8, like 2 through 4, are analytical narratives. Chapter 6 reinterprets the rise and fall of the Workingmen's Party of California (WPC), a party dramatic enough to catch the hopeful attention of Karl Marx. As the first act in the "Great Upheaval" (ca. 1877–89), which saw the rise of insurgent labor parties across the

United States, the WPC, like the Knights of Labor, has been interpreted as the eruption of class conflict into "mainstream" party politics. A close narrative analysis of political campaigns during the turbulent 1870s reveals clearly, however, that a politics of class was the creation of "mainstream" party politicians and journalists who introduced a language of class in the effort to mobilize voters. Ironically, the leadership of the WPC continued to use the now-dysfunctional republican language of politics. Statistical analysis shows that the electorate began voting by class long before the creation of the WPC in 1877. Political mobilization in the public city most dramatically led the formation of class identities in civil society.

Chapters 7 and 8 together examine the origins of "progressivism" in San Francisco, detailing the triumph of the pluralist-liberal political culture by the end of the century. Generations of scholars, writing within the social-group paradigm, have sought to describe the Progressive Era (ca. 1890–1920) as a set of distinctive regulatory, centralizing, and ameliorative policies linked to specific social groups thought to be responsible for those policies. I argue instead that progressivism was an institutionalized structure of political action and understanding, marking the arrival of a politics of social groups and their needs. Chapter 7 details the specific institutional arrangements – interest-group lobbies, sensational jouralism, the reorganization of group identities, the politization of women, and the party-weakening secret ballot – that made such a politics possible, locating the sources of that politics in the contraditions of party government.

Chapter 8 explains how a diverse cast of characters and organizations successfully created, within a newly operative pluralist liberalism, a "politics of needs," in which policy-making for specific groups became legitimate and even necessary. Intellectuals, women's rights activists, labor leaders, ethnic group leaders, suburban homeowners, business leaders, political entrepreneurs, and mass media titans mobilized voters to vote on the issues of woman suffrage in 1896 and the reform municipal charter of 1898. These two events are analyzed as emblematic of the central features at work in the emergence of a social-group conception of politics that we call progressivism.

The end of this book refers back to its beginning. The new political culture of the Progressive Era revolved around the political claims of social groups and their needs and provided the practical

example of political life from which the social-group paradigm of modern social science was drawn. That paradigm, through its later incarnations as the liberal pluralism of the 1950s and the "new urban history" of the 1960s and 1970s, raised the questions this book tries to resolve.