

American Geographical Society

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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Geographical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (Jul., 2000), pp. 395-417

Published by: [American Geographical Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3250860>

Accessed: 14/02/2013 09:59

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GLOBAL AND LOCAL CHANGE ON THE PORT–CITY WATERFRONT*

BRIAN HOYLE

ABSTRACT. Successful waterfront redevelopment requires an understanding of global processes and an appreciation of the distinctiveness of port-city locations. Waterfront revitalization occurs at the problematic and controversial interface between port function and the broader urban environment. It reflects varied forces and trends, involves community attitudes and environmental sensitivities, and influences transport evolution and urban change. The revitalization phenomenon is examined using community attitudes in Canada and urban regeneration in East Africa to illustrate retrospective and prospective dimensions. *Keywords:* Canada, cities, communities, diaspora, East Africa, ports, revitalization, waterfronts.

Inner cities, now routinely the focus of induced change and practical research, are unceasing as a source of controversy. The embodiment of a complex mix of urban processes and maritime technology, port cities actually constitute a special subspecies of inner cities. In so high visibility an area as a port, waterfront revitalization is of ready interest and concern to authorities, to communities, and to developers. Fundamental to any geographical perspective on port redevelopment are the notions of scale—from local to global—and, in its broadest sense, great concern for the environment. But waterfront revitalization, as a phenomenon and as a subject of study, is also set within other dimensions, perspectives, and literatures, most prominently those of urban politics.

In this essay I examine aspects of waterfront revitalization as a particular concern of the last forty years. I comment on methods brought to bear in analyzing the waterfront, including recent studies of a political character that speak to community attitudes and involvement. If the so-called global phenomenon of port restructuring is highly variable culturally and spatially, it has been primarily a practice of advanced countries. But with the millennial turn, the phenomenon is taking root, too, in developing countries.

More attention is directed here toward commercial port cities than to their naval counterparts, recognizing that waterfront revitalization in naval ports involves economic restructuring, sociopolitical reorientation, and the reuse of highly specialized facilities made redundant in the last decades by far-reaching changes in national and international defense strategies. The naval-port reformation has been addressed elsewhere (Pinder and Smith 1999).

* The author gratefully acknowledges the support of the Canadian government and the Nuffield Foundation in facilitating the fieldwork, in Canada and in East Africa, respectively, on which parts of this article are based; useful discussions with fellow participants at the 52nd Deutscher Geographentag, held in Hamburg in 1999, at which an earlier version of this article was presented; and the helpful comments of three anonymous referees.

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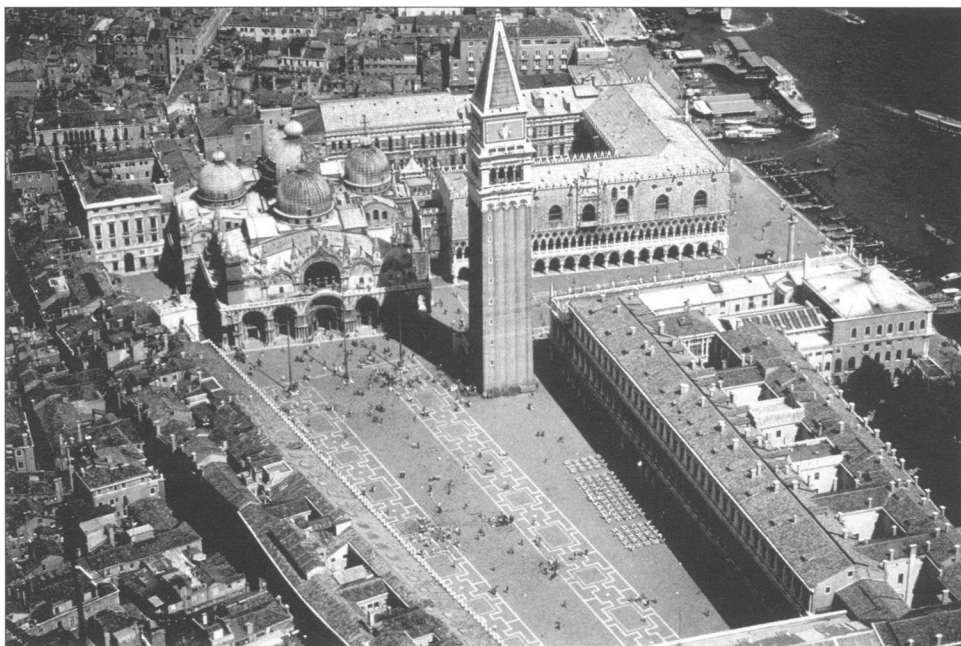


FIG. 1—Venice in the 1990s. From St. Mark's Square the piazzetta leads to the historic waterfront, today used largely for tourism but once the focus of a medieval trading network that encompassed most of the known world. More than any other world city, Venice demonstrates the acute problems of port evolution, historic-artistic attraction, and urban tourism pressures. (Photograph courtesy of the Azienda di Promozione Turistica, Venice)

MARITIME TECHNOLOGY AND URBAN RENEWAL

Europeans generally see the original rationale that underpins waterfront redevelopment as something essentially maritime in character. The motivation stems, they understand, from a post-1960s global transformation of maritime technology and transport, one requiring ever larger ships and ever more extensive land and water areas to assume and discharge the port function. Through this estrangement, threatening divorce, ships and cities have grown dissociated, semidetached, and they have lost a once-relished intimacy. The port function is forced to migrate some distance toward deeper water and more expansive land sites. North Americans, by contrast, are inclined to see the redevelopment of a waterfront as part of the process of urban renewal. Many of their waterfront settlements introduce redevelopment in a context that has little or nothing to do with port activity.

For ports on rivers and estuaries, the advance of maritime technology has usually meant downstream migration, as is commonly the case in northwestern Europe, and for many ports this is the acceleration of an existing pattern, not an innovation. At Rotterdam, the post-World War II downstream development of Europoort and subsequent coastal-zone reclamation provide a classic illustration of this principle, significantly tempered by community attitudes toward port industrial expansion (Pinder 1981). In urban terms the result of downstream move-

ment in search of more extensive land and water sites can be a vacuum, an abandoned doorstep, a problematic planning zone often in or very close to the historic traditional heart of a port city, and a zone of pronounced dereliction and decay where once all had been bustle and interchange and activity. What to do about this problem zone becomes a major planning issue, but it can also soon be perceived as an opportunity—to make money, to replan and redevelop, and to bring the city back to the waterfront once more, in a new and updated context.

The challenge presented by this process is considerable, because it involves major adjustments for both ports and cities. On one hand are new locational requirements for ports, and on the other looms the redesigning of substantial areas of city surface. Urban renewal involves, of course, not just physical infrastructures but also communities. The impact of infrastructural revitalization on society goes hand in glove with its impact on the environment. Each is almost invariably controversial. Wherever this process occurs, an essential question is: How can conflicting aims, objectives, and interests be reconciled?

The “standard” process of urban waterfront redevelopment in port cities, rooted in maritime technology as the ultimate causal factor, is not, however, the entire explanation for the waterfront redevelopment phenomenon as it is known today. The attractiveness of the idea of waterfront redevelopment became an element in the late-twentieth-century revival of settlements of all kinds, not just port cities, and indeed has extended to rural waterfront locations.

Today, almost every city with any form of water frontage—at least in advanced countries—is doing something about revitalizing its waterfront, if such renovation can be considered remotely affordable and if the essential political impetus is present. This process involves not only port cities, of course, but all kinds of other cities: on lakes, rivers, canals, and artificial water bodies. In Cambridge, Massachusetts, for example, an old industrial canal was restored to serve as a focal point of mixed-use urban revitalization (Breen and Rigby 1994, 120–122), using principles and even specific techniques that underpin the successful canal-based redevelopment programs in Birmingham, England.

As impetus toward port revitalization grows, many settlements with a waterfront broach redevelopment in the context of urban renewal and as something with apparently little or nothing to do with port activity. If primarily concentrating on ports and port cities, we need be aware that the origins of waterfront redevelopment initiatives may lie in the realm of urban planning and renewal, rather than in the sphere of maritime technology.

GLOBAL DIFFUSION

The reconciliation of conflicting aims and objectives involved in waterfront revitalization is not, of course, a new question, for the interlinkages between the port function and urban form have provided interdependencies throughout the history of city development and maritime trade. From ancient times, port cities continually adapted their maritime facade, their window on the world of maritime com-

merce, to enhance their competitive position in trading terms. A port city's waterfront traditionally was its commercial front door, symbolized by the *piazzetta* in Venice, leading from St. Mark's Square to "the most glittering of all the world's belvederes" at the head of the Adriatic (Morris 1990, 9) (Figure 1). In medieval Venice, as in New York or Hamburg today, the relative efficiency, attractiveness, and competitiveness of a port always underpinned its trading fortunes.

The continuing redevelopment of the waterfront is, in a broad and general sense, basic to life in an active, growing port city. The process sometimes involves an occasional great leap forward, as when nineteenth-century Marseille developed new basins outside its ancient harbor, responding to economic and political stimuli and to technological change and transport demand. In more modern times, the spatial diffusion of the waterfront redevelopment phenomenon exists in several dimensions: around the globe; from larger to smaller urban places; and also, in a sense, down the development ladder from more-advanced to less-developed countries and places. Figure 2 highlights countries already prominent in this process (the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Japan, for example) or with great potential (such as India). This diffusion is in some ways a logical consequence of earlier changes and relationships. In a global context, and for as long as port cities have existed, the continuing redevelopment of a city's waterfront has been a basic part of the life of any active, growing settlement responding to economic and political stimuli and to technological change.

Waterfront revitalization in the more restricted sense in which we use the term today really started in North America in the 1960s, notably in Boston, Baltimore, and San Francisco, and spread to European port cities—prominently so to London—in the 1970s and 1980s and also to Australia, where Sydney and Melbourne are interesting cases, and to Japan. In the 1990s port-sphere redevelopment also became important in the newly industrializing countries (NICs) and, to a lesser extent, in the less-developed countries (LDCs). In Asia, Singapore has completed a cleanup of its formerly characterful old harbor where Sir Stamford Raffles first set foot in 1819. In the Caribbean, the Cuban capital—and port city—of Havana is attempting an architectural renovation of interesting old waterfront buildings before they collapse. South Africa's Cape Town is firmly on this bandwagon, with the redevelopment of the Victoria and Alfred waterfront—the first major such development on the African continent (Kilian and Dodson 1996). The waterfront buildings in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras are collectively beginning to receive some of the attention that "stones of empire" often deserve (Morris 1994).

THE STUDY OF WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION

An extensive literature exists on the subject of waterfront revitalization in the broad fields of geography, environmental sciences, urban planning, and politics (Hall 1993). In North America, the real home of waterfront redevelopment studies lies in Toronto, where a joint program in transportation research involving York University and the

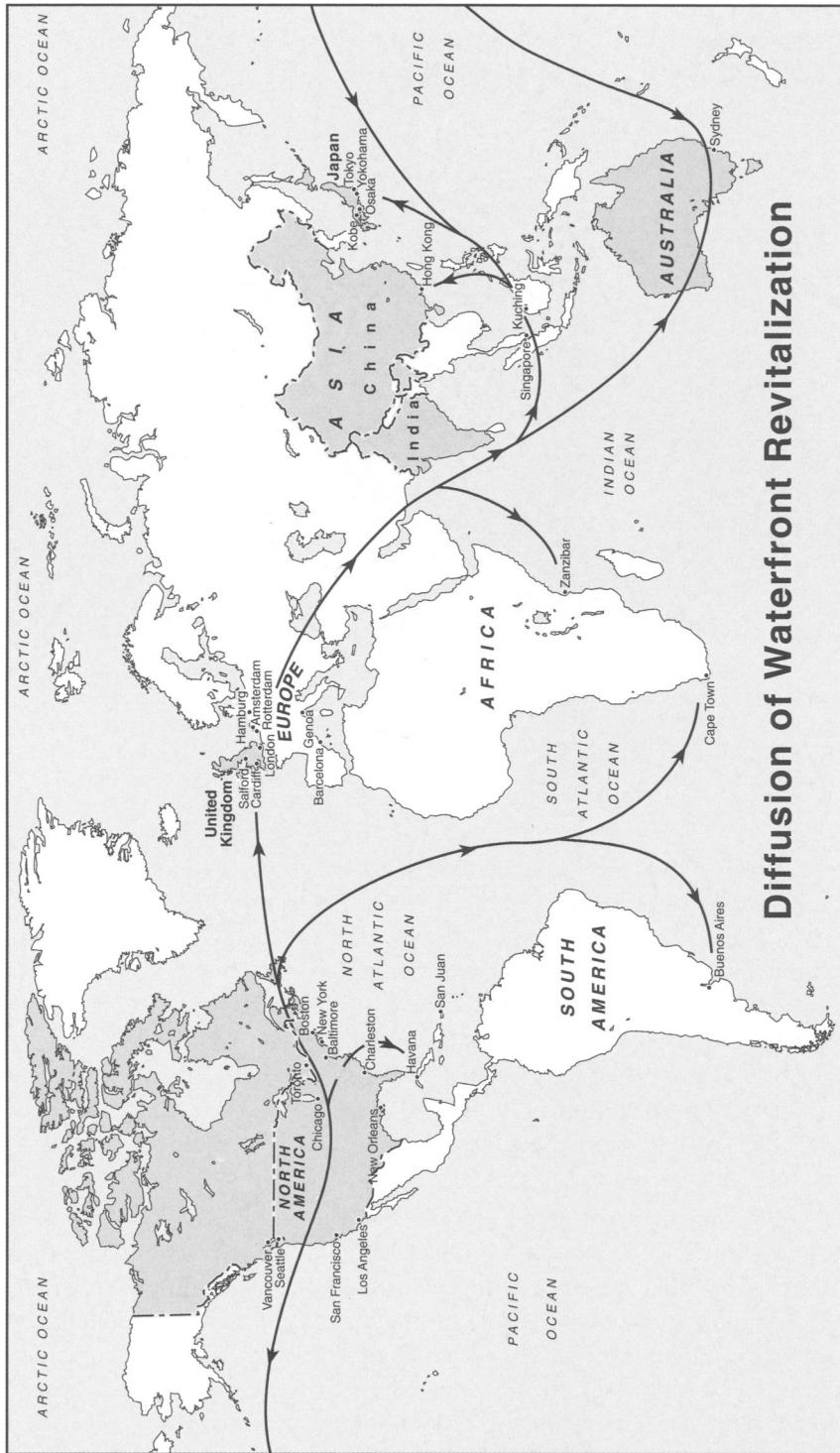


FIG. 2—The global diffusion of waterfront revitalization, with some examples. (Cartography by Bob Smith, Department of Geography, University of Southampton)



FIG. 3—Toronto's controversial waterfront, developed on land reclaimed from Lake Ontario, is a fine example of both achievements and problems in this context: a fast-growing city and a declining small port; road and railway axes that separate urban and waterfront zones; new and converted high-rise waterfront properties; and coastal environmental issues. The Toronto Harbour Commissioners' building still stands (lower right) on what was once the lakeshore. (Photograph by the author, October 1996)

University of Toronto was well established by the early 1970s and was producing much useful material on Toronto and other North American cases (Forward 1969; Merrens 1980). Canada retains a central place in relevant research and literature. It is a deep source of experience, ideas and policies, and contrasting examples (Figure 3). There is often, though, a pronounced focus on the complex case of Toronto (Merrens 1992; Goldrick and Merrens 1996; Greenberg 1996). The Royal Commission that reviewed, at great length, Toronto's controversial waterfront in the 1980s provided a wealth of understanding about the processes involved, and its successor organization, the Waterfront Redevelopment Trust, is continuing to guide and monitor change (RCFTW 1992).

In the United Kingdom, researchers at Southampton and elsewhere have added significant contributions (Figure 4). As an outgrowth of seaport studies in Europe, North America, Australia, and the developing world, two international conferences at Southampton in 1979 and 1987 dealt, respectively, with port-city industrialization and with waterfront revitalization. The 1987 conference was the first academic meeting of its kind to consider waterfront redevelopment trends on a global basis, as opposed to reporting and reviewing individual cases. The edited volumes based on these meetings provide a useful basis for further studies (Hoyle and Pinder 1981; Hoyle, Pinder, and Husain 1988).



FIG. 4—View of Southampton's Eastern Docks in May 1995. The docks, a nineteenth-century extension from the city's natural waterfront, have been partially redeveloped since the mid-1980s for mixed commercial-residential uses. The University of Southampton's world-renowned Oceanography Centre occupies a prime site. Cruise liners such as *Oriana* and the *Queen Elizabeth II* also use the remaining port facilities in this area. (Photograph by Robin Jones, courtesy of Associated British Ports, Southampton, England).

Beyond these university initiatives are numerous attempts to develop in other ways the study of waterfronts, and of the port cities within which many of them are set. Four international organizations are of particular interest. The first is the Waterfront Center in Washington, D.C., where the codirectors, Ann Breen and Dick Rigby, organize annual conferences essentially for practitioners—designers, developers, architects, planners, and others—rather than for students of ports and urban change or of the revitalization process. Breen and Rigby have produced two books (1994, 1996) that, though regarded by academics as too uncritical (Pinder 1994; Hoyle 1997), provide welcome sources of information and striking records of achievement.

In Venice, the Centro Internazionale Città d'Acqua has organized several international conferences of relevance to cities on water, including one on waterfronts (Bruttomesso 1993). Led by Rinio Bruttomesso and Marta Moretti, this center maintains a growing archive and reputation in this field and publishes the quarterly journal *Aquapolis*, a recent issue of which surveys outcomes and prospects (CICA 1999). From its headquarters in Le Havre, France, the Association Internationale Villes et Ports (AIVP) organizes activities, including international conferences, and publications designed essentially to reunite the urban and port-dominated elements within

port cities. The AIVP operates essentially as a political instrument, but it maintains a scientific branch that designs conferences and prepares publications of widespread interest. The Japanese Waterfront Vitalization and Environment Research Center (WAVE) provides an example of a national organization devoted to waterfront research and the dissemination of information about Japanese port-city development through its regular publications, research, and sponsored events.

Each of these organizations develops a specific focus, and together they provide a valuable and complementary range of information and ideas. None is, of course, wholly confined within the artificial boundaries of any particular academic discipline; indeed, in their various ways, all of them make an effort to welcome a great diversity of viewpoints and expertise. As the waterfront revitalization phenomenon has become increasingly widespread in geographical terms, it has attracted the attention of numerous academic disciplines, including politics and planning (Fainstein 1994), environmental sciences (Georgison and Day 1995), architecture, ecology, and engineering (White and others 1993; Hudson 1996).

Geography has played, and continues to play, a leading part in these debates (Norcliffe, Bassett, and Hoare 1996); a good measure of interdisciplinary cooperation is long apparent. In Toronto, for example, geographers work alongside environmental and political scientists (Desfor, Goldrick, and Merrens 1988); at Southampton, the 1979 and 1987 geography-based conferences attracted economists, planners, and historians; and at the AIVP biennial international conferences held in European port cities and beyond—Montreal, Dakar, and Montevideo—there is usually an eclectic mixture of academics from a wide variety of disciplines who convene there with port-city administrators and political figures.

The extension of waterfront studies into the literature of political science, notably urban politics, and architecture is represented by such recent contributions as Patrick Malone's edited volume, *City, Capital and Water* (1996) and David Gordon's studies of the management and financing of change in a series of major urban waterfront locations in Europe and North America (1996, 1997a, 1997b). Studies of waterfront revitalization based in political science, interestingly, tend to maintain the kind of structured, comparative approach appreciated by geographers but routinely lack the case-study approach so favored elsewhere. Han Meyer (1999) has recently reemphasized, through a range of case studies, the cultural dimensions involved in port-city planning.

From a geographical standpoint, early waterfront redevelopment studies became encapsulated in a number of simple diagrams or models that have been widely reproduced in the literature and need only a brief mention here. The port-city interface model reflects a variety of interdependent spatial processes and suggests that the waterfront and its redevelopment are subsumed within a controversial port-city interface zone of conflict and only occasional collaboration (Figure 5). It thus places waterfront revitalization in port cities in a wider spatial context. In contrast, the port-city evolution model adopts a chronological approach to port-city interrelationships and, in the final stage, evokes the renewed collaboration we see today

between port and city as waterfront zones are revitalized (Figure 6). These simple representations of the processes and phases of waterfront redevelopment and enhanced port-city proximity reflect patterns of urban change and renewal in innumerable cities around the world today and help students of the processes involved to relate general trends to specific experiences (Hoyle 1988).

A slightly more complex but also very familiar representation of real-world processes is the retreat, redundancy, and revitalization model that conceptualizes links between the retreat from the traditional waterfront, the problem of redundant space, and the revitalization process (Figure 7). What originates in technological change and deindustrialization leads to the retreat of port users and port authorities and to a downward transition in the maritime quarters of port cities. These negative factors yield redundant space, initially (t_1) in the urban core but eventually (t_2) in related areas beyond, possibly including some originally greenfield sites for industries, such as oil refining, that are no longer needed and close down. Retreat then produces a process involving problem perception and analysis; some sites are favored for redevelopment and others are not. Site selection is related to an increasing perception of resource opportunity on the part of public authorities, port authorities, commercial interests, and numerous other organizations.

As ideas about redevelopment are refined, the arrow representing strategy formulation and evolution becomes quite wide, indicating that all sorts of ideas and proposals are discussed—but then the arrow becomes more sharply targeted as the planning process eventually reaches a practical and workable solution. Emulation of success elsewhere is often a factor. On the ground, outcomes reflect the balance between commercial interests and social goals, and achieving that balance is often a source of conflict. Revitalization sometimes pays a great deal of attention to commercial opportunities but not much to the social needs of resident communities. The outcome continuum, in reality, is weighted toward the commercial end of the spectrum both initially and, even more so, later, as redevelopment becomes more consolidated and the predominance of commercial interests is enhanced.

POLITICAL DIMENSIONS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS IN THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

Study of waterfront revitalization in human geography is generally framed within a comparative and port city-based perspective. Discussion can be broadened to include the literatures of politics and planning, especially as these influence the particular circumstances of individual countries or locations. Among varied perspectives, methods, and views are valuable points of contact and interdependencies. If geography analyzes spatial structures and characteristic origins and interconnections, politics and planning can illuminate the procedural structures, forces, and pathways that yield dynamic spatial patterns. Each of these dimensions is, then, essential to understanding the dynamic urban system of modern Canada.

The classic work on the management of Canadian local government is Tom Plunkett and George Betts's *The Management of Canadian Urban Government* (1978); and Andrew Sancton's more recent chapter on "The Municipal Role in the Gover-

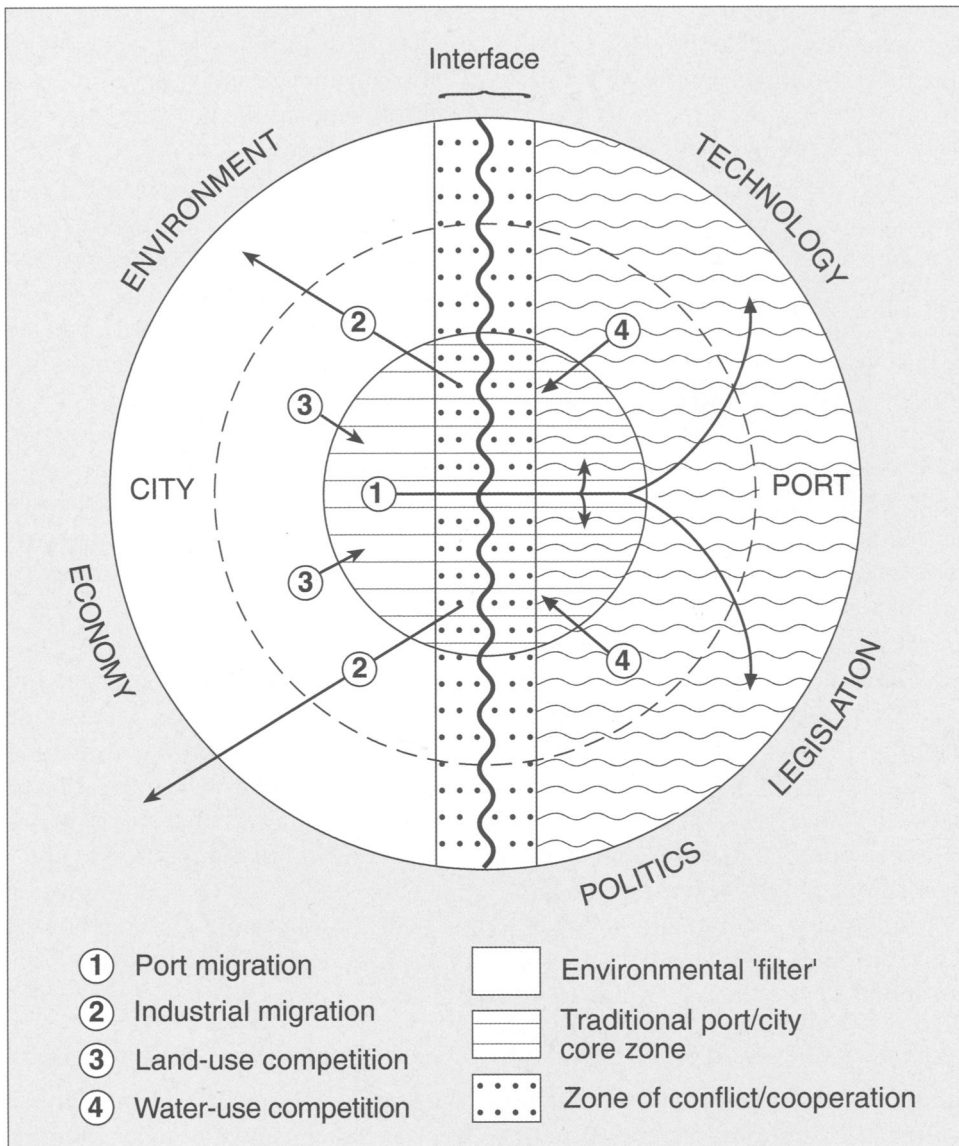


FIG. 5—Characteristics of and trends in the port–city interface. *Source:* Modified from Hoyle 1988, 14. (Diagram by Bob Smith, Department of Geography, University of Southampton)

nance of Canadian Cities” in Trudi Bunting and Pierre Filion’s useful and wide-ranging edited volume on *Canadian Cities in Transition* (1991) contains valuable insights. With reference to community groups and their influence on urban affairs, for example, Sancton highlights the relationship between levels of economic prosperity and the political influence of such groups: “In prosperous economic times, citizen groups opposing particular developments are in a relatively strong position

(as they were in Toronto in the early 1970s and the late 1980s); in times of economic downturn, the pressures for growth and development are irresistible and the political leverage of citizen groups all but disappears” (1991, 475–476). In a similar vein, Sancton recognizes the interdependence of diverse forces in an urban political environment: “What we need from local political research is a deeper understanding

STAGE	SYMBOL	PERIOD	CHARACTERISTICS
	○ City ● Port		
I Primitive port/city		Ancient/medieval to 19th century	Close spatial and functional association between city and port.
II Expanding port/city		19th–early 20th century	Rapid commercial/industrial growth forces port to develop beyond city confines, with linear quays and break-bulk industries.
III Modern industrial port/city		Mid-20th century	Industrial growth (especially oil refining) and introduction of containers/ro-ro (roll-on, roll-off) require separation/space.
IV Retreat from the waterfront		1960s–1980s	Changes in maritime technology induce growth of separate maritime industrial development areas.
V Redevelopment of waterfront		1970s–1990s	Large-scale modern port consumes large areas of land/water space; urban renewal of original core.
VI Renewal of port/city links		1980s–2000+	Globalization and intermodalism transform port roles; port-city associations renewed; urban redevelopment enhances port-city integration.

FIG. 6—Stages in the evolution of port–city interrelationships. *Source:* Modified from Hoyle 1988, 7. (Diagram by Bob Smith, Department of Geography, University of Southampton)

of the complex processes whereby changing economic, political and social forces act on local politicians, bureaucrats and citizens so as to produce new public policies for controlling the built environment and providing the collective goods that make cities work” (1991, 483).

More specific questions associated with the participation of community groups are addressed elsewhere. For example, Barry Cullingworth discusses Canadian planning and public participation in *Urban and Regional Planning in Canada* (1987), and Gerald Hodge reviews recent literature on the participation of community groups in Canadian planning in *Planning Canadian Communities* (1986). The politics of urban development in Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, France, and other countries are compared in Michael Keating’s *Comparative Urban Politics* (1991); Cullingworth looks more specifically at Canadian planning and public participation in comparison with practices in the United Kingdom and the United States in *The Political Culture of Planning* (1993). Closer to the waterfront-revitalization theme, David Gordon confronts the problems of “Managing the Changing Political Environment in Urban Waterfront Redevelopment” in a recent journal article (1997b), and William T. Perks and Walter Jamieson review the historical context of community-group activity in Canadian urban environments over recent decades, with a reminder that the growth of such activity was one of several significant changes in the Canadian planning environment from the 1960s onward:

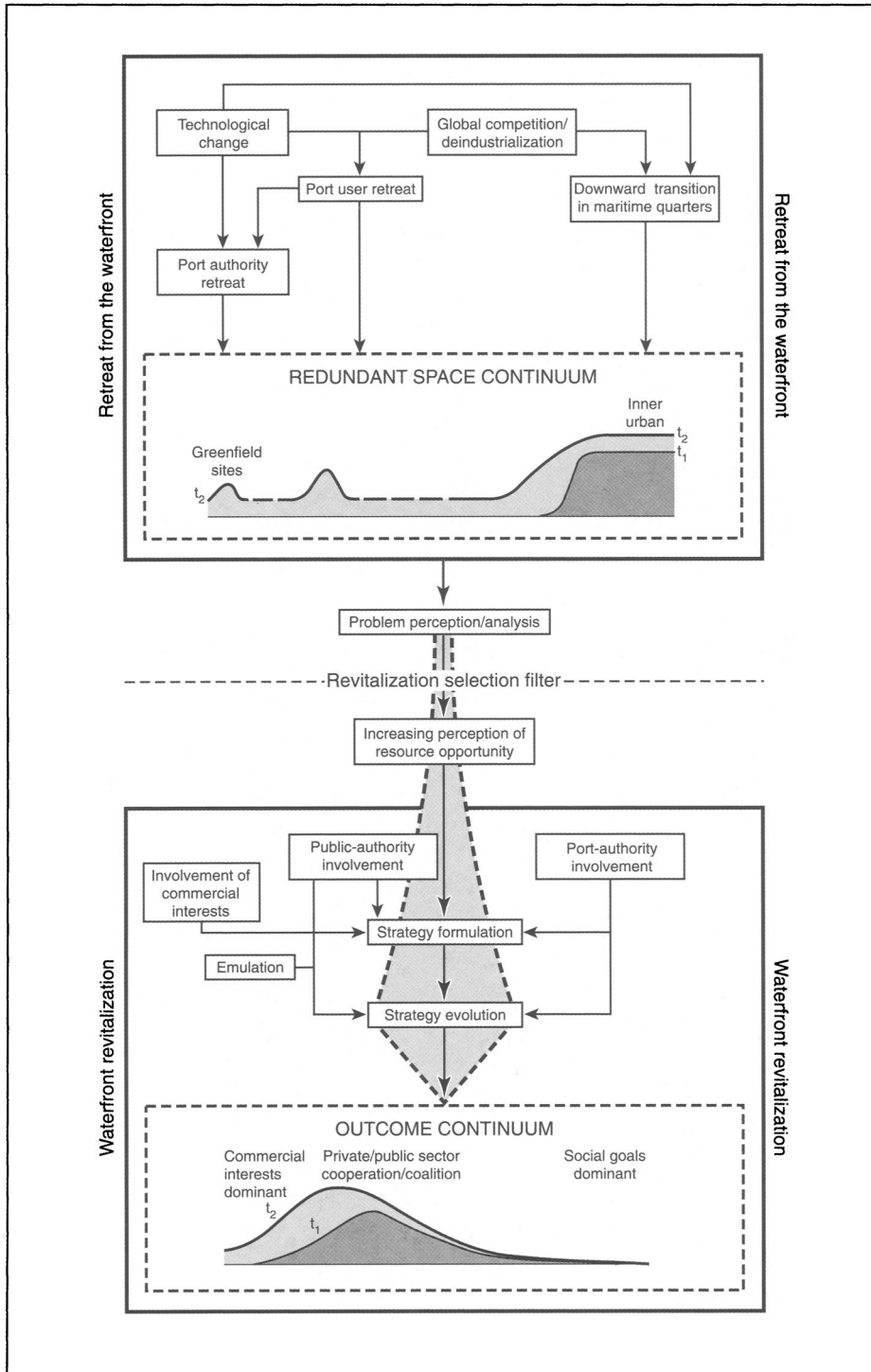


FIG. 7—Forces and trends in waterfront revitalization. *Source:* Modified from Pinder, Hoyle, and Husain 1988, 249. (Diagram by Alan Burn, Department of Geography, University of Southampton)

By far the most influential trends to occur in the 1970s and 1980s were the rise of citizen participation, the creation of large, powerful, pan-Canadian property-development corporations, and a differentiation of roles for the public planner. The "urban protests" begun in the major cities in the 1960s carried through into the 1970s with increasing effect. Citizen groups first fought against urban renewal schemes that demolished old neighbourhoods and rooted people out. Neighbourhood groups were formed to battle against "up-zoning" . . . [, and] expressway construction schemes were fought. . . . In these urban actions, we see the emergence of advocacy planning, a type of activism by which planners worked for citizen groups and community associations. These planners then pitted their expertise and insights against those of the planners at city hall, and against politicians and developers. (Perks and Jamieson 1991, 505)

Attention was drawn in the 1980s to the influence of communities as an agent of change in port cities (Pinder 1981; Hilling 1988). Through the 1990s, the study of communities within cities in general was extensively developed (Davies and Herbert 1993). In particular, it has grown clear that community groups influence the processes of change in waterfront zones (Keating 1991; Ashton, Rowe, and Simpson 1994; Breen and Rigby 1994, 1996; Hasson and Ley 1994a, 1994b). Community groups constitute a source of ideas; they influence the pace and pattern of change and development; they encourage, modify, restrain, and warn; and they provide retrospective overviews and influence agendas for the future. Perceptions of change, and the role of citizen participation in the formulation of urban waterfront plans and policies, have been the focus of a number of recent studies (Krausse 1995; Cau 1996), and the emergence of postmodernism on the urban waterfront has also been addressed (Norcliffe, Bassett, and Hoare 1996).

In Canada, community groups are numerous and varied, and they consequently represent a wide range of opinions. Community attitudes affect the overall process and analysis of change in port-cities, as in other aspects of society. Distinctions must be drawn between specific community-activist groups, other well-defined groups such as business associations, and the general public. In a complex and dynamic local political situation all such groups offer contributory and often complementary opinions, but not one can legitimately claim to represent the entire urban community; some may even be judged narrowly focused or elitist in approach.

A 1990 research project sampled the views of port authorities, urban planners, real estate developers, and government officials (Hoyle 1992, 1994, 1995). In 1996, further research looked specifically at community groups as a major component of the decision-making process in port-city change. This last undertaking, a form of survey retrospection, aimed to sample the spectrum of community-group opinion in a variety of types of Canadian port cities, assessing character and activities. The results made it possible to ascertain how community views influence the processes and pattern of change. Of particular interest were the limits of public tolerance. It also proved significant to inquire whether a common pattern of reactive and proactive criticism exists across a range of port-city types and community groups in Canada or whether opinions and activities are in essence place specific (Tunbridge

1988). The approach is comparative and structured, though based on empirical evidence from selected locations. Rather than produce case studies, the aim is to elucidate comparisons and contrasts, to inform policy, and ultimately, to emphasize and enhance Canada's position in this research field.

The project was developed with an eye as much to Canadian preoccupations as to global trends. Often-stormy relationships that shape the experience of community groups with local government and planners on the waterfront can be reset within a wider, multidirectional matrix of interrelationships that involve other levels of government, port authorities, and developers of various kinds. Although relationships between community groups and local governments provide a primary axis of debate and communication, the seminal role of community groups is a catalyst within a coalition of stakeholders in the urban redevelopment environment. Gordon found evidence of such coalitions for waterfront redevelopment in Toronto, Boston, New York, and London (1996, 1997a, 1997b). The role of community groups in consensus building, as opposed to confrontation, is an important dimension supported by the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront (1992) and its successor, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust.

The survey project unveiled a larger number and greater variety of community groups than had been expected and discovered details of their character and activities. Although there is a clear distinction, at least in theory, between geographical—area-based or neighborhood—groups on one hand and problem-associated or issue-based groups on the other, the two types are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Community groups, in their variety, offer another spectrum, from the broadly based issue groups concerned with socioeconomic conditions and the prevention of inappropriate waterside investment within a substantial and problematic urban area, such as the Downtown Eastside Residents' Association in Vancouver (Hasson and Ley 1994a), to the narrowly focused neighborhood groups concerned above all with the protection of their own character and privileges, which might serve as a description of the residents' groups in Victoria's upscale waterfront condominiums.

Involvement with the urban waterfront varies in degree from quite limited to almost obsessive. No set rule exists by which a group can be countenanced as "official." At an extreme, volunteer citizens form an action cohort to protect and enhance an immediate urban environment. In another part of the wood, a business group constructs a formal system for urban improvement, with accompanying implications for the waterfront. The question of the degree to which community opinions influence the processes and pattern of change on Canadian urban waterfronts invariably produces a variety of views. Any community group's influence varies according to the quality and vitality of its activities and the accuracy with which group operations are targeted. Routinely, the time lag is substantial between the creation and development of a group and discernment that its activities are actually having some effect. Impacts vary substantially both spatially and over time.

However, there are many common elements in the objectives and achievements of community groups involved in waterfront change in port cities, despite the diverse places involved and the variety of the groups themselves. Within a remarkably enhanced awareness of environmental characteristics and sensitivities, perhaps the most frequently recurring specific themes to emerge from this research involve the maintenance or provision of public access to the water's edge; opposition to—and prevention of—insensitive and inappropriate development in waterfront zones; enhanced rapprochement rather than continuing or increased separation between waterfront zones and urban cores; the conservation and sensitive development of open “green” space; the cultivation of difference and of a sense of community; and the maintenance of links with the past. We all have roots, they often have to do with the sea, and revitalized port-city waterfronts frequently hold a tremendous appeal in modern society for all kinds of reasons. In Canada, a country sometimes described as having too much geography, the positive enhancement of individuality is nevertheless an essential component of any successful waterfront redevelopment plan, however success is defined.

It is also reasonably clear that a common pattern of reactive and proactive criticism exists across a range of port-city types and community groups in Canada and that opinions and activities are not exclusively locally oriented. Inevitably, ideas and actions remain place specific: Canada is a large country, and people in one port city can be largely unaware of what goes on in other cities. Many group activists, by contrast, are only too well aware that the problems faced by their urban waterfronts are commonplace in port cities and other urban places, not only in Canada but around the world. Although some may at times seem to adopt a localized, even blinkered, approach to issues in their own backyard, more appreciate the universality of relationships between ports and people, between environment and society, and between land space and water space (Hoyle 1999a, 1999b).

DIVERSITY, DEVELOPMENT, AND DIASPORA

If the literature on waterfront revitalization in Canada provides retrospective analyses and a useful basis for comparison with other countries and locations within the advanced world, waterfront revitalization is increasingly relevant to the NICs and LDCs of the less-advanced parts of the world. Waterfront redevelopment in port cities is a circumferentially global phenomenon. It has become most compellingly so during the past two or three decades. Among the South and East Asian NICs, Hong Kong presents a spectacular example of an ever-changing waterfront; and, among the LDCs, India, Cuba, and Tanzania provide examples of countries that are beginning to put a great deal of effort into urban conservation, including waterfront redevelopment.

Urban waterfront redevelopment has generally been regarded as primarily a concern of advanced countries, with relatively little attention paid to date to the need for and possibilities of waterfront redevelopment in port cities in developing countries. In the 1970s and 1980s, attention centered almost exclusively on North

America and Europe and on the movement's spread to Australasia and Japan. Until recently the problem has been largely ignored in India, for example, and except for South Africa, little attention was paid to it in Africa. In the 1990s port cities began to develop new attitudes. They faced up to conservation of their colonial urban heritage and, notably, to the obtaining of funding for waterfront revitalization in a context of urban renewal.

East Africa provides excellent examples of port-city redevelopment at work, if in highly variegated forms (Figure 8). In Kenya, the small, historic port city of Lamu is beginning to renovate its working waterfront within a framework of urban conservation (Figure 9). At Mombasa, Kenya's principal port city, the conservation of the old town, long divorced from the modern port, is making some progress. A conservation authority and plan have been established, but a culture of investment in conservation is slow to develop.

In Tanzania there is an interesting contrast between the island port city of Zanzibar and the mainland commercial capital of Dar es Salaam (Figure 10). Zanzibar, waking up to the potential of a well-organized tourist industry, is making great efforts to save some of the town's fine nineteenth-century buildings, helped by the Aga Khan's Historic Cities Support Programme. Dar es Salaam is experiencing waterfront renewal only to a limited extent in the context of the United Nations Development Programme's "sustainable cities" initiative, but some of its splendid nineteenth-century German government buildings are at least being saved from demolition, and a few have found new uses. The old European Club, built on the waterfront in the 1890s by the Germans in the early days of their colonial regime in German East Africa and later used by the British during their tenure of the post-World War I League of Nations mandate in Tanganyika, is now flourishing again, as a training school for hotel staff and others working in Tanzania's growing tourist economy.

The aim of a research project currently under way is to offer a comparative review of waterfront redevelopment in these four contrasting historic port cities on the East African coast in terms of objectives, attitudes, plans, and achievements. The available literature includes material on the wider context of Islamic architectural heritage and on the recent and current revival of Swahili culture. More specific work on the conservation of historic towns in Kenya and Tanzania includes legal documents, such as the Zanzibar Government's Stone Town Conservation and Development Authority Act of 1994, and a number of reports and plans covering the conservation and redevelopment of specific urban zones and individual buildings, for example, the Beit al-Ajaib at Zanzibar and the Old Boma at Dar es Salaam (Sheriff 1995; Siravo 1996).

Fieldwork in 1995 and 1997 produced detailed records of the present condition and use of buildings on each of the four waterfronts and a substantial number of documents, reports, maps, plans, and photographs. Much of the available documentary information is somewhat diffuse; largely it is set in the context of architecture and urban design. Current research aims to bring a new dimension to this field

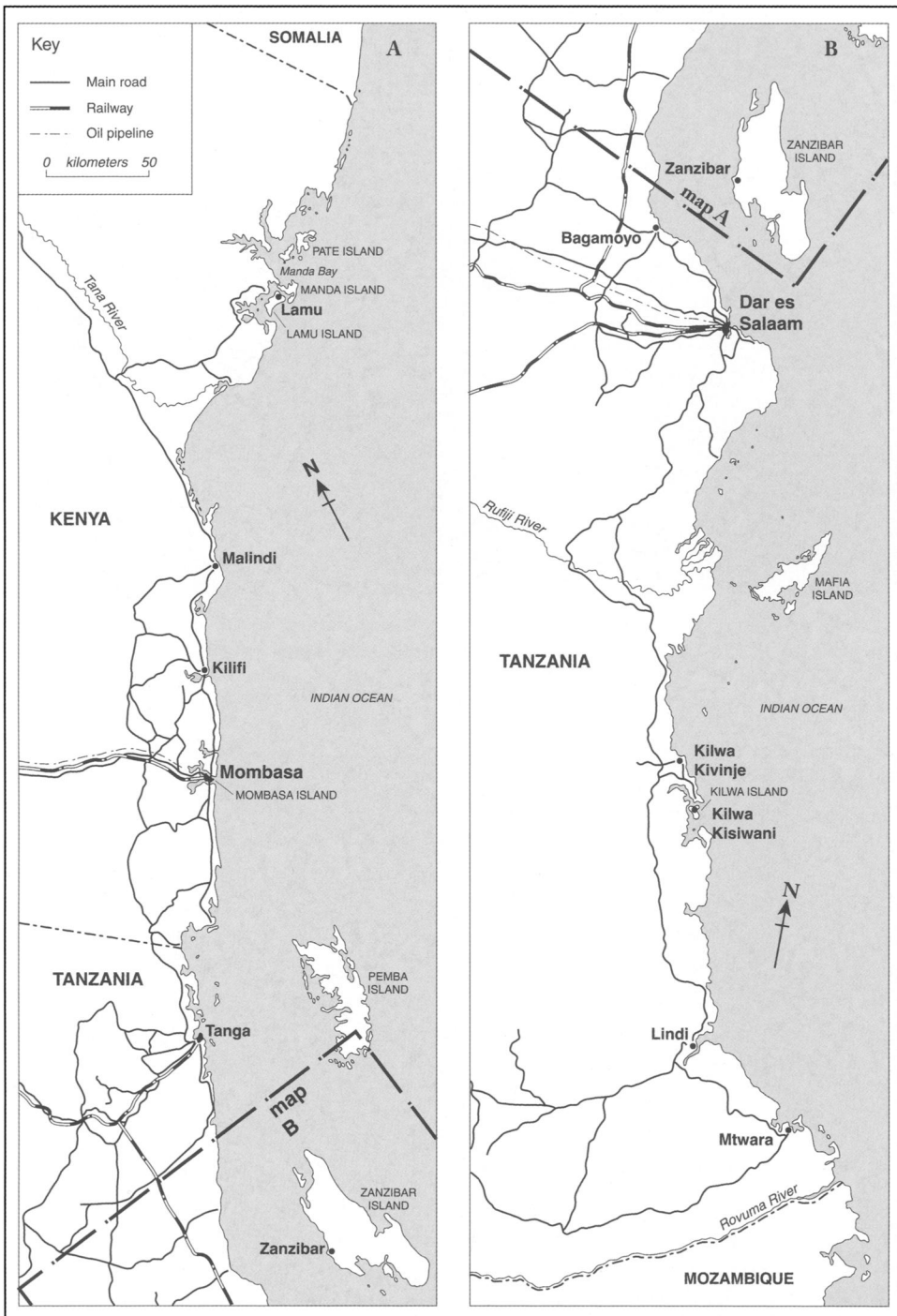


FIG. 8—The coast of Kenya and Tanzania, showing the location of Lamu, Mombasa, Zanzibar, and Dar es Salaam, the four port cities analyzed in a study of waterfront redevelopment in developing countries. *Source:* Modified from Hoyle and Charlier 1995, 90. (Cartography by Bob Smith, Department of Geography, University of Southampton)



FIG. 9—Located on the coast of northern Kenya, the small island port-town of Lamu has grown little since the nineteenth century, but its historical significance, architecture, and lifestyle attract many visitors. Urban conservation and modern tourism do not always mix well in conservative societies. (Photograph by the author, August 1997)

in two senses: by looking at the overall pattern within the East African coastal zone on a comparative basis; and by bringing a geographical perspective to the subject within the spatial and theoretical dimensions provided by seaport studies and waterfront redevelopment studies as evolved within modern geography and related disciplines. In summary, although this project is essentially prospective, it is set in a well-established retrospective context; and, although (like the Canadian material discussed above) it is based on a group of interrelated case studies, the essential focus is on what we can learn from these examples in order to inform wider debates and theoretical arguments. Other researchers may well elect to analyze comparable processes of change in, perhaps, India and China.

The relevance of waterfront redevelopment and urban renewal to societies and economies in developing countries reveals a range of problems and attitudes. Such redevelopment has been regarded by some as a luxury irrelevant to the more basic needs of poor cities and countries where recreation—as understood in Baltimore or Sydney, to take two cases—is limited to a tiny elite and where urban tourism is in its infancy. Today, however, in the context of modernization, urbanization, and globalization, clear links are perceived between urban renewal and other socioeconomic sectors: water supply, housing, employment, tourism. Inevitably, costs are high, progress is slow, and returns on investments are not immediate; but a new spirit of revival is abroad, and some international



FIG. 10—The waterfront at Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's economic capital, main port, and chief urban focus, shows signs of neglect as urban priorities move away from the harbor and from colonial zones and buildings. Historical premises are conserved, however, and renovation plans are being introduced. (Photograph by the author, August 1997)

financial aid is available. A process of transformation is under way, at least in some parts of the developing world, and it deserves to be analyzed and publicized by geographers and planners.

THE UNDERPINNING OF THE WATERFRONT

In outlining the rationale that underpins the phenomenon of waterfront revitalization in port cities I have reviewed the global diffusion of a now-global practice, illustrating geographical approaches with recent and ongoing case-study research material from Canada and East Africa. The juxtaposition of simple models of broader relevance with the results of local investigation serves to emphasize a critical geographical point that underpins the study of waterfront revitalization.

Successful waterfront redevelopment recognizes universal processes. With that recognition must come consideration of individual locations and environments. Never has it been easy to bring these contrasting dimensions together. Yet in analyzing port-city growth and change in general, we can recognize a common sequence of stages and a common set of underlying factors. We can also see that this sequence and these factors underpin the similarities among locations and the distinctiveness of each location. This principle applies specifically and effectively to waterfront redevelopment.

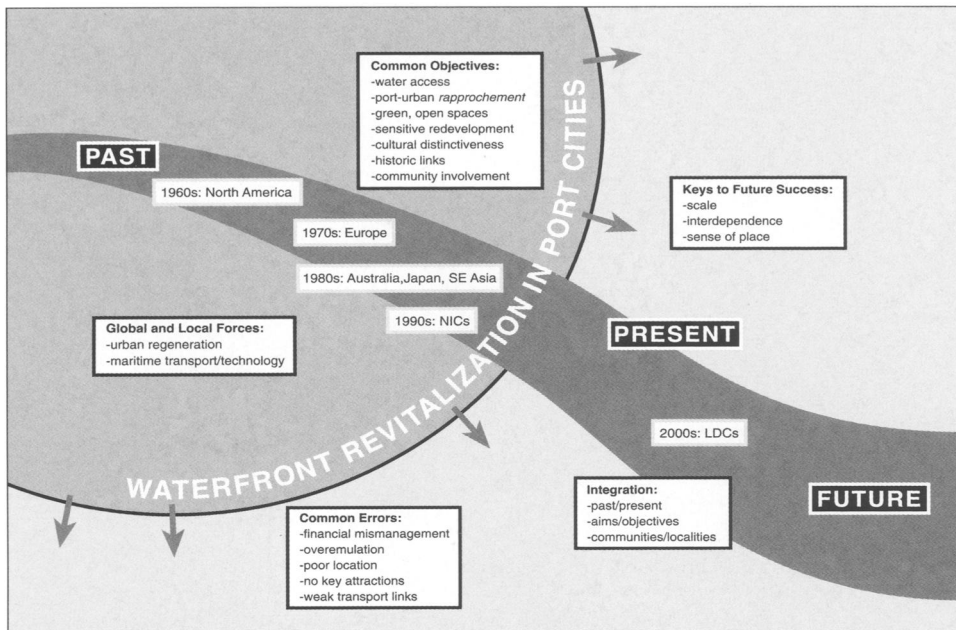


FIG. 11—Waterfront revitalization in port cities: past, present and future. (Diagram by Bob Smith, Department of Geography, University of Southampton)

The basic difficulty involved in waterfront redevelopment schemes in port cities is reconciliation of the many interrelated influences, objectives, and interests involved. Locally, the reconciliation of interrelated but sometimes conflicting influences, objectives, and interests is problematic. The search for a shared vision may be present, but it is rarely totally successful. How, in any case, is success to be judged? The popular success of many new waterfronts reflects the inherent magic of water, drawing people together, bringing citizens and visitors back to the water's edge, all interpreted as a tangible sign of the continuing vitality of cities. But it is questionable whether waterfront redevelopment is really "a worldwide urban success story," as Breen and Rigby claim (1996). It may be happening in many countries around the world, but it is not happening everywhere, and it is certainly not universal. From a European perspective it is not wholly or even primarily urban in origin; and it certainly is not an undiluted success.

The sensitive and often controversial port–city interface needs careful and appropriate planning solutions. As Singapore illustrates, these are not always available or applied with finesse. There has been a good deal of criticism about the way in which the cleaning-up operation around the old harbor, the removal of traditional Chinese sailing vessels, and the sanitization of the whole area has detracted from its character and interest both for visitors and for local people. The revitalization process can perhaps be overdone. "Success" is not simply a matter of financial investment, or of creating a modern waterside playground, or of avoiding too much

emulation or too painful a replacement of traditional communities by imported artificial counterparts. It involves, ideally, a unique set of compromises based on a more deep-rooted reunion between the city and the sea.

In examining waterfront redevelopment what we are looking at is a set of trends that are in the process of changing the face of port cities, and other cities on water, in many countries around the world—not, of course, for the first time, but now these trends are creating new and more attractive urban environments for the twenty-first century while responding to changes in the technology of maritime transport and to the demand for inner-city revitalization. These issues are well suited to geographical interpretation. Geographers are used to thinking in terms of space, scale, association, and diffusion. These concepts and methods mean that geographers have much to contribute to the evaluation of waterfront revitalization alongside planners, practitioners, and politicians. The geographer's spatial, integrated perspective and understanding of the process, the diversity, and the diaspora must not be lost in the problems and publicity that surround specific locations, issues, and controversies.

What of the future? Waterfront redevelopment, in port cities and elsewhere, is here to stay as a reflection of maritime technology and transport and as a feature of urban development in the late twentieth century. As Figures 2 and 11 imply, the process has gathered momentum and is likely to affect many more port cities as the twenty-first century unfolds. The relative success of such developments will depend essentially on three things: integration, integration, and integration. First, integration of past and present; second, integration of contrasting aims and objectives; and third, integration of communities and localities involved. All of this demands a sense of scale, an appreciation of interdependence, and, above all, a geographer's sense of place. The shared vision that many seek but rarely find belongs not only to the local context of a specific port city or a familiar urban waterfront but to the global environment we all share.

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