

initiatives based on run-of-the-mill simplicity and an embarrassing poverty of intent are encountered (in the construction of certain residential districts, for instance, not to mention several zones destined for business activities); at other times individual buildings or urban zones (even of modest dimensions) offer a wealth of stimuli comparable to those typical of historical or more consolidated urban fabrics. Waterfront work has not escaped this double-edged destiny, either giving rise to interesting city sections, carefully outlining the themes of innovation in old places marked by historical memory, or producing flat monotonous landscapes, worn-out replicas of operations conceived and developed elsewhere, ones that depress instead of enlivening the zones to be reconverted.

In the places where the most convincing results have been obtained, action has been taken to ensure that several factors are in play – factors which are held to be essential components of the waterfront operation and which have also made significant contributions to the attainment of urban complexity, this being held to be the primary objective. Several criteria pertaining to these factors can be highlighted:

- 1 *The plurality of functions assigned to the area*, in relation to both its regeneration as well as its relationship with the rest of the city: in this sense the waterfront can play different but complementary roles. This means, for example, that it has been possible to assign to the waterfront the task of maintaining its character of border zone between water and city, while at the same time reinforcing the attributes of the central area which is closely linked to the heart of the city. Moreover, verification of the manner in which a process of more general urban redevelopment has sometimes been planned for is possible, placing the waterfront in the vanguard of change so that once consolidation has taken place on the seafront, certain conditions there can determine the development of the hinterland immediately behind the waterfront up to the more central zones, and, like a wave, spread development to more distant peripheral areas. The Barcelona experience, with the construction of the Olympic Village and the redefinition of the urban border along the seafront, continues, after almost ten years, to testify to the far-reaching scope of the project.
- 2 *The multiple activities in the redeveloped zones*. The mix of functions referring to the different sectors of the principal urban activities (economic-productive, residential, pertaining to culture and leisure, mobility), often represents the keystone of the success to redeveloping a waterfront. The difficulty, naturally, lies in the careful choice and the amount, so that the mix is not dominated by a single function or the consolidated dual term “commerce+entertainment,” this being responsible for the degeneration of a certain model of waterfront organization which is particularly dear to many North American developers who entrust large commercial structures with the task of attracting visitors to these new areas which have finally been reappropriated for public use. Suitable antidotes for this danger of lowering the quality could be:
  - a significant number of *activities linked to previous and original uses* for these zones (for example, involving life at sea, fishing, navigation, and so on), with the purpose of keeping alive the memory of such