



3.4 Parque do Flamengo in Rio de Janeiro.

to the conclusion that the waterfront has become a sort of new “category” in the picture of the elements that articulate and define the urban structure in the modern city which is characterized by a significant water presence. A typological “category” that can be placed alongside others which have been the subjects of considerable debate in the European countries in the past is the “central business district,” a conceptual term to which the urban planning of the Old World was seriously committed several decades back. However, the continuing confrontation concerning the “historical centers” is also an important chapter in contemporary urban studies, which often theorize or practice development of the city “by parts,” through sector policies, and often lose sight of the need for “concerted” and sympathetic growth among the different sectors – the need for development compatible between central and peripheral zones in order to create a profound unity of redevelopment for the whole of the urban organism.

The outstanding features of the waterfront redevelopment processes suggest that this type of area is of great “strategic” importance for the destiny of the city: a testing ground for verifying policies. In this sense, the waterfront can be seen as paradigmatic of the condition of the post-industrial city and its vicissitudes will make it possible for the fortunes and errors of urban policies to be interpreted.

Many cities have entrusted the waterfront with a serious task: to re-launch the city through the redevelopment of one area. This has taken place because the best-known and successful cases of waterfront projects have given rise to and directed a series of imitations, flat and ingenuous at times, which have multiplied and consolidated interest in this part of the city. Attentive administrations and alert entrepreneurs have attempted to define the features of the areas to be redesigned, emphasizing the most unusual characteristics, with the aim of constructing a new identity for the “place” which will be recognizable and will in turn act as a “model” in the field of waterfront redevelopment. Furthermore, it must be remembered that these projects also pose the problem of reconnecting relationships with the rest of the city and in particular with the center and the historic