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Lessons from the Extremes in the case of Urban Planning

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Abstract

The presentation aims to highlight the case of Delhi as a reference to reflect on urban planning in general and in the case of Lisbon Metropolitan Area. In fact, the extremes, the edges, offer important insights to understand other realities and dynamics through the identification of players, forces and movements that might be not so evidenced in more 'conventional' cases. New Delhi is the second largest megacity in the world with a population of 25 million inhabitants. Its metropolitan area is under severe vulnerabilities due to the lack of control of planning instruments on urban transformations. Planning efforts seem to have been used by diverse processes and actors under distinct historical moments, namely colonization, state control over land and nowadays capitalism and globalization dynamics. This led to the advent of an insurgent urbanism, where a network of vulnerabilities as settled in time. The presentation establishes this nexus by revisiting key urban transformations in Delhi relating them with planning options that have emerged in distinct socioeconomic, cultural and political contexts. Secondly some considerations will be made on how contemporary concepts such as 'sustainability', 'resilience', 'participative governance' or 'smart cities' are being framed, perceived and applied under the context of current urban planning instruments, policies and research. It seems that these narratives are serving as a mean to achieve specific goals by different drivers and actors. Thirdly it is intended to highlight the importance of these examples as key triggers for a deep rethinking on concepts and practices in urban planning field today, namely in the case of Lisbon Metropolitan Area, keeping a critical distance from hegemonic normative views and looking closer at the distinct meanings, power relations, unbalances that surround them according to the diverse scientific, politic, social, economic drivers.