IDENTIFICATION OF AUTHOR

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IDENTIFICATION OF ABSTRACT

Conference theme: II. People and Societies in Future Cities

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Title of paper: “All That Is Solid Melts into Air”. The privatization of urban management in Lisbon Metropolitan Area

Abstract:
In parallel with what happens in other domains also the territorial and urban management show signs of change that may, in the future, set up a new way to deal with the pressures and spatial transformations. The main objective of this communication is to illustrate these signs of change through the situation in Portugal and, in particular, in Lisbon Metropolitan Area, framing them in the broader process on-going of “neoliberalization”. Finally, we want offer a reflection on the benefits and risks potentially posed by the transformation of the traditional management framework.

Neoliberalism is an advanced form of global capitalism that seeks, in a free and competitive environment, remove the state of multiple domains, notably by reducing the tax and legal barriers to private investment, privatization of public enterprises and services, and finally, deregulation of economic activity. The contraction of the state is a process that was already being felt in the 90s through the modality of concession and public-private partnerships and in response to the profound limitations of public financial institutions either for investments or for the maintenance and operation of its services and equipment. However, the context of serious financial crisis we are experiencing since 2008 allowed accelerate the state reduction without resistance than in previous years had yet been offered.

At the local level this narrative has more precise aspects and perhaps deeper when we look to
areas that were considered untouchable by local authorities: the urban management. This presentation deals with the on-going process of deconstruction of the classic methods of land use management as already happens with culture, sport, health and urban sanitation, maintenance of green spaces, among other areas that have been the target of several externalization strategies.

Simultaneously with the concessions and the establishment of municipal enterprises, others initiatives have emerged in urban planning and land use management that are indicative of these changes. Urban regeneration is a good example where Urban Rehabilitation Societies do now what was done by the municipal services; urban regeneration projects whether mega or small size (like in Polis program) also demonstrated the externalization of skills before headquartered at City Hall.

In addition to addressing this complex process in AML and a theoretical and reflective approach this communication wants to evaluate some of the already visible implications of these transfers and reflect on the likely path that the privatization of urban management will follow, tracing a final image with gains and losses that will result from the process.

Keywords:
Governance, urban management, privatization, neoliberalism