

# Urban Water In The South: Rethinking Changing Services. Introduction

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# WATER IN CITIES: RETHINKING SERVICES IN TRANSFORMATION

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## URBAN WATER IN THE SOUTH: RETHINKING CHANGING SERVICES. INTRODUCTION

Sylvy Jaglin\*, Marie-Hélène Zérah\*\*

As with other major sectors of public intervention, urban water networks and their management have been transformed by the neoliberal policies adopted in developing countries over the past 20 years. Among the changes to have taken place, the dissemination of various models that delegate the management of water supply systems to large international companies is particularly notable. Yet far from being generalized, these models have given rise to diverse modes of development and upgrading of urban spaces in a competitive environment. On the one hand, the large firms that embody this model remain very selective in their geographical presence; on the other, the neo-liberal paradigm, while influential, has only limited explanatory power concerning actual urban configurations, which are better understood in terms of local reform processes.

At the city level, many other processes to transform urban services have been set in motion on the initiative of disparate actors. In most cases they have been driven or aided by reforms, the scope of which extends beyond mere water supply networks. These include politico-administrative decentralization; liberalization and its consequences; the decline of state monopoly in myriad domains of urban production and management; political democratization and the uneven participation of urban inhabitants – both individuals and organized groups – in decision-making processes. Although their effects remain partially obscured by the debate's focus on “privatization,” they nonetheless contribute to transforming the relationship between networks and urban spaces. This special issue examines these transformations through three main

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topics of discussion: what explanatory framework should be used to account for the persistent failings of urban water services? What direction should public modernization efforts take? How can the abundance and resilience of alternatives, both formal and informal, be explained? The issue draws on contributions received and on other recent studies.<sup>1</sup>

## URBAN WATER SERVICES

As the notion of public service is too broad, too particular to specific legal traditions, and difficult to apply internationally, in this special issue we prefer the notion of essential urban drinking water supply and sanitation services. Improving these services entails both improving urban productivity and living conditions and inevitably involves compromises between objectives that are, *a priori*, antagonistic: (i) the efficiency of the service and its economic performance (which raises the issue of its funding), and (ii) the social and territorial equity of its provision (which raises the issue of equity and redistribution). Due to their central role in the urban social question, these services were included in the Millennium Development Goals which, in the year 2000, sought to halve the number of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation. But results have been very uneven (Dagdeviren and Robertson 2009; UNDP 2006) and have not provided solutions to failure in universal coverage and to the exhaustion of the developmentalist model of service expansion. Including long periods of chronic underinvestment, the development of networks – created either during colonial times or after – in many cities of the South remains unfinished. This development has excluded – unequally – significant sections of urban societies either because they are not served by the network or because the service provided is lacking both in quantity and quality. The ideal model of public services based on the expansion of services to all by a Weberian-type administration, mechanisms of spatial and/or social cross-subsidization, and a technical water supply planning process (as a function of standardized needs and planned urban expansion) has reached its limits. Inefficiencies in public management (whether technical, organizational, or financial), the lack of service provision in poor neighborhoods due to objective reasons (speed of settlement, illegal tenure status), but also discriminatory treatment by postcolonial bureaucracies and the resulting socio-spatial inequalities in access to services have called into question the legitimacy of public monopolies.

In the 1980s, such public management deficiencies were systematically denounced in favor of the supposed efficiency of private companies and

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1. In particular reflections developed in 2010 during the seminar, "Services en réseaux dans les villes en développement" (SeRveD) organized by Aymeric Blanc, Sylvy Jaglin, and Luisa Moretto on behalf of Latts and the AFD.

the superiority of their management models. This international “consensus” resulted in an increasing number of public-private partnerships (PPPs) involving large private international firms which were awarded different types of concession contracts (Goldman 2007). These PPPs have been extensively studied, but the intention of this special issue is specifically not to examine these experiences and their assessments (for a recent review, see for example Bakker 2009). On the contrary, authors were requested to examine the “blind spots” of the dominant reforms and the many transformations that have taken place outside the areas covered by privatization. Nevertheless, and with a view to defining the parameters of the discussion, this introduction reviews the terms of a debate which continues to fuel reflection (Marin 2009; Gassner, Popov, and Pushak 2009), but which has swept under the carpet many issues relating to water services (such as the importance of legislative mechanisms, local specificities of socio-technical and political cultures, geographical features of spaces and water resources, new policies to harness water sources) and fostered an understanding of the sector based on a simplistic institutional approach.

## **LARGE PPPS: A LESS AND LESS COMMENDABLE MODEL**

More than in other sector, and because of the specific values attached to water, the PPPs formed in water services have been controversial (Estache and Fay 2009). The biased and ideological nature of many studies, combined with a lack of homogenous, comparable data, has not facilitated a reliable assessment of their results. It has been estimated that seven percent of urban populations in developing countries are currently served by private operators, their numbers having increased from 6 million in 1991 to 94 million in 2000 (Marin 2009). Yet no empirical study has made it possible to irrefutably assess the capacity of the private sector to invest in and improve the management of the service while fulfilling its remit of service expansion, in particular in poorer neighborhoods (Kirkpatrick, Parker, and Zhang 2006; Prasad 2006; Trémolet 2006).

Nowhere have PPPs delivered on all the exaggerated promises of their advocates. Marin’s recent review analyzes the performance of more than 65 large contracts in the developing world based on four indicators (expansion of coverage, service quality, operational efficiency, and tariff changes) and shows that few contracts performed satisfactorily in more than one or two of these criteria (Marin 2009). It corroborates the results of other, less exhaustive studies. First, the drawbacks of concessions, which have been extensively studied in the North, are often amplified in countries of the South: inadequate contractual frameworks have been shown to have failed to provide an efficient

distribution of risk, secure long-term investment, and make provision for adequate responses to macroeconomic risk. In addition, the oversight of these contracts, which in most cases is carried out by specialized, centralized regulators, has often been beset by problems (information asymmetry, regulatory capture, lack of expertise, primacy of economic regulation over consumer protection, or environmental issues). Second, obtaining economic equilibrium in contracts has proved to be elusive. Tariff policies, which have recommended increases everywhere, have clashed with political interests and protest movements, while investment and growth plans have stumbled in the face of difficulties in accessing cheap capital. Third, contrary to the argument that states that private operators have a greater capacity to innovate so as to better service poor neighborhoods, and despite some successful experiences (Botton 2007), private operators have often been constrained by the high standards stipulated in their contracts, and by problems of illegal tenure status in many rapidly-expanding settlements. Furthermore, commercial and social policies (such as reduced connection costs or staged payment plans) have failed to overcome the acute poverty of many users (Boccanfuso, Estache, and Savard 2007; Kayaga and Franceys 2007). The combination of these factors (technical, economic, and legal) underlines the importance of the macroeconomic (poverty, growth) and social climate in which these contracts are established, and their fragility in the event of monetary crisis (Buenos Aires, Manila) or social crisis (La Paz-El Alto).

Such persistent failures can also be attributed to obstacles resulting from the apparent incapacity of sector reforms to reconcile formal institutions, and the organizations that are supposed to embody them, with informal ones. Formal institutions are subject to relatively rapid changes, while informal institutions (perceptions and beliefs, customs, values), which guide the behavior and decision-making of most actors in the water sector, evolve more slowly and incrementally. Conflicts that have resulted in a number of concession contracts being terminated, disagreements over tariffs, and diverging interpretations of actual demand and use values of drinking water, illustrate the importance of local political cultures in the performance of contracts (Mayaux 2010). On the contrary, these local cultures reveal the limits of the minimalist institutionalist approach advocated by supporters of reform, who draw on a narrow, sectoral understanding of institutions, focusing primarily on the sector's "organizations" without relating them to belief systems or social structures (Hibou and Vallée 2007).

The disillusion produced by large PPPs has also resulted from important and worrying political factors. Governments in many countries have invested too little in the water sector, financially and politically, and more particularly in the sanitation sector, and populations without access to water and sanitation have few means at their disposal to make their claims heard.

Local circumstances can strongly influence the terms and schedules of reforms (Alcazar, Abdala, and Shirley 2002; Verdeil 2010). This sometimes leads to paradoxical success, as in Havana, where the political management of the PPP by the government has thus far made it possible to both legitimize the change of model and the widening of social inequalities (Pinceau 2010). Connection to basic infrastructure and access to essential services are an eminently political issue, and they are often used as a tool for social regulation (for instance, the *de facto* recognition of illegal settlements, inclusion in the community of citizens – a bill for services is often used as “proof” of identity – or subsidies that become available through access to the network) (Benjamin 2006; Zaki 2009) and for legitimizing power (Bennasr and Verdeil 2009). Large international organizations have now come to recognize this issue (Estache and Fay 2009).

The fact remains that the operational performance has often been improved with PPPs, which encourages the proponents of this model to assert that it is still a viable option for developing countries if it pays more attention to local contexts (Marin and Izaguirre 2006) and to the conditions governing contracts (Breuil 2004). Others insist on the advantages of shorter and less risky “hybrid” contracts (lease/*affermage* and management contracts) than the traditional concession model (Marin 2009), or smaller and less ambitious projects (Gómez-Ibáñez 2008). Interesting developments are afoot, such as the emergence and resilience of large private local operators in Brazil (Britto 2010) or in India, where the Tata conglomerate recently obtained a management contract. These do not hide the fact, however, that the rate at which large new water services contracts are signed has slowed considerably, which confines these local operators to a limited geographical reach.<sup>2</sup> That the PPP model remains a credible alternative in some large cities in emerging countries, that it introduces a useful reference in benchmarking the services of a country, and that it helps to incentivize improvement in public services “threatened” by privatization is hardly debatable. On this point we will follow the conclusions of Marin (2009). But it is now widely accepted that PPPs are neither suited to all situations (failed model) nor conceivable in all situations (refuted model), and that new “arrangements” – with the emphasis on the plural – remain to be invented.

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2. The latest figures in the World Bank database of private infrastructure investment (<http://ppi.worldbank.org>) illustrate this phenomenon during the period between 1990 and 2009. The geographical breakdown of contracts has seen a considerable decline in investment in Latin America to the benefit of Asia (primarily China) and, to a lesser degree, North Africa and the Middle East. Nevertheless, the lion’s share of this investment concerns the creation of production and treatment units, and no longer the management of drinking water and sanitation services as was the case with the large PPPs.

## **BEYOND INSTITUTIONAL MODELS: RETHINKING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CITIES AND WATER SUPPLY NETWORKS**

As early as 2003, Budds and McGranahan emphasized that the debate on the respective merits of the public and the private missed the point, and that the key issue was not ownership but the difficulty experienced by network operators in finding lasting, acceptable solutions to universal coverage (Budds and McGranahan 2003). In the ideological and innovation vacuum of the post-Washington Consensus world, many actors now agree that it is no more conceivable to universally apply PPPs than it is to advocate an unconditional return to publicly managed utilities without significantly modifying the framework for action. Nevertheless, the lure of the adequate model remains. The return of municipal management (or re-municipalization) is therefore celebrated, but examples of this new public model are scarce, even when including the social mission of the state-owned company, as in La Paz (Poupeau 2002). Questions of financing remain to be addressed, and the new management standards implemented by the private operator tend to endure. This raises the underlying questions of legal foundations and service obligations, which need to be discussed to determine the type of organization chosen (for example, government control, state-owned corporation, or semi-public company), service standards, and modes of relating to customers. This observation is also made by Boag and McDonald (2010) in their study on the recent infatuation for PUPs (Public-Public Partnership) which unites under a single banner management methods with very different foundations, some closer to the private than the public. The rise to prominence of community solutions, for example partnerships between NGOs and residents' collectives (Urcun, Renou, and Plauchu 2010), poses similar problems when accompanied by a naive belief in the existence of "good" institutional arrangements (Bakker 2008).

Indeed, the emphasis on the "governance failures" (Bakker *et al.*, 2008) reaffirms the importance of politics, since it addresses the relationship between unequal access to water services and inequitable urban governance. However, the literature has not yet deconstructed this relationship sufficiently to assess ongoing transformations. Firstly, the simplistic view of a binary city (citizen/illegal residents, connected/unconnected, rich/poor, and so on) is inconsistent with the urban realities of the South, which are characterized by many in-between combinations (Angueletou 2010; Flux n° 56-57, 2004) and communities (in the sociological and geographical sense) with very varied mobilizable resources (political, and social networks) that affect conditions of service access. Secondly, few studies have taken a long-term approach in order to gain insight into how water institutions have been constructed socially (although for Guayaquil, see Swyngedouw 1995). The use of failure of "governance" in the broadest sense (institutional deficit, lack of inclusive mechanisms, and lack



of coordination) as an explanation depoliticizes<sup>3</sup> the issue of complex power relations in urban societies and provides an excessively binary interpretation of both actors that bring about institutional transformations and those that oppose them.

Yet, in essence, the problem is political: it lies in the social construction of water services and their collective management, and the definition and legitimacy of the rules that govern their functioning (Coing 2010). While the reality of compromises between diverse demands and social justice can be deduced from investment or network expansion plans, above all it reveals the ability (or lack thereof) to develop a general interest, social cohesion and produce inclusion in fragmented and pluralistic societies, which in some cases are characterized by competition between interest groups for access to urban resources (Jaglin 2005a).

This ought to be at the heart of any analysis seeking to understand the persistent misalignment between water services and developing cities. Network services are socio-technical systems. They are based on technical and organizational mechanisms that incorporate rules and standards; and on practices, values, and compromises between interests and world views, whose construction, stabilization, and crises are inherently political processes. In other words, the functioning of water services depends on variables that are determined exogenously by the nature and behavior of political institutions and social structures. Thus, misalignments between water services and cities can primarily be explained by the unsuitability of the socio-technical system of conventional provision in its many dimensions: its technical infrastructure, its organization, its modes of management and funding, the actors and skills that it mobilizes, but also the political objectives that it wields or of which it is the tool, and the values that it embodies.

In removing the analysis from an overly narrow explanatory framework, we hypothesize that the ability to rethink the relationship between cities and their water services can lead to original solutions that are varied, tailored to local specificities and rooted in urban social structures. The articles in this issue, which all address the “blind spots” of privatization, open up two main directions that can be followed, namely the *in situ* modernization of public services, and the proliferation of unconventional solutions. They contribute to a research agenda which seeks (i) to assess the scope of these changes as well as their role in driving lasting changes to provision; and (ii) to analyze the challenges created by these changes – which are often localized and poorly coordinated or uncoordinated – to the rules and regulation of essential services.

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3. Coing for example emphasizes that the dominant governance approaches are based on an “idealized vision of social relations in which everything is resolved through consensus, as learning to cooperate makes it possible to reconcile diverging interests.” (Coing 2010, 17).

## MODERNIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES UNDER CONSTRAINT

The aim here is to gain a better understanding of shifts in services in order to identify not only their limits but also potential contributions toward improvements and more equitable access to essential services. While the apparent management of provision has changed little, water services have actually been the subject of public modernization that has been more or less coherent and advanced.

An important component of the modernization of public operators has been accounting reforms (adoption of new procedures, computerization, and use of integrated ERP management software packages) and financial methods (ring-fencing); management changes in human resources and expertise (including wage aspects); tariff policy reforms and a reshaping of subsidy methods; and a reformulation of service standards for users and customer relations (Caseley 2003; Davis 2004). Drawing on the “new public management”, these new representations of urban performance, which are supposed to determine the place of cities in the globalized economy, are widely shared – especially in emerging metropolises – by the governments (local or national) responsible for networks and the new local economic elites (Dubresson and Jaglin 2010; Lorrain 2010; Zérah 2010). They influence the spreading of market logic in public services and modify the terms of public decision-making, albeit without clearly defining the results in terms of efficiency in service provision. In some cases they even have a deleterious effect when combined with public divestment (Dagdeviren 2008). Another dimension of this modernization, also inspired by the “new public management”, is what can briefly be classified as “participation and transparency”: the growing power of consumer rights and the willingness to involve consumers in the regulation – and sometimes even the provision – of services have led to the creation of new tools (consumer charters, hotlines, service standards benchmarking, complaints departments, and so on) and the obligation to publicize information. While these new tools have profoundly changed relations between operators, the organizing authority, and users (Jaglin 2005b), they can also strengthen the position of certain groups, like for example the middle class, which are in a better position to use them (Zérah 2009).

Broadly speaking, the scope and durability of these changes owe as much to the political use that public authorities make of them as to the efficiency of the institutional mechanisms created. As illustrated by Barrau and Frenoux (2010) or Connors (2005), restoring a relationship of confidence between users and governments may be attained through participatory mechanisms if these are established over a long period, through the recognition of rights, and through a nuanced understanding of existing social relations, rather than through the establishment of *ad hoc* water committees of questionable legitimacy, created

under a utilitarian vision. On another sensitive aspect of reforms, namely tariff policies, the example of Tunisia provides a clear illustration of both the limits of territorial and social cross-subsidization forged in the late 1950s and the issues involved in their restructuring (Touzi, Barraqué, and Treyer 2010). The authors point out that the solidarity mechanisms, which reflected stable compromises at a given point in time, were instrumental in other policies (land use planning, poverty reduction, choice of growth model: developing tourism, maintaining an agricultural economy, and so on), but also that these past compromises are no longer suited to contemporary challenges (such as mobilizing new, high-cost water resources, transforming the structure of demand, distortions created by the tariff structure, or the emergence of environmental issues). It therefore falls upon political decision-makers to debate in a transparent manner the methods to implement new forms of equity. Drawing on very different examples, these articles illustrate the diverse range of concrete forms of expression of the combined transformation of managerial mechanisms and compromises in service provision on the one hand, and certain dimensions of the (urban) social contract on the other.

This observation invites further study in areas beyond the water sector in order to identify the driving forces behind many changes that have *de facto* contributed to reshaping the provision of water services. For example, decentralization and legislative changes have transformed relations between governments and municipalities by giving greater importance to the municipal level (Vincent and Forest 2010) or by encouraging closer ties between municipalities (Britto 2010). Forms of democratization have modified the rules of the socio-political game in which the service operates. In India, for example, the Right to Information Act was introduced with a view to obtaining greater transparency in development programs by providing the public with access to administrative files and bureaucrats' notes. In the water sector, this had the effect of transforming the relationship between consumers and operators, as illustrated by the use of this tool by an anti-privatization movement to obtain the cancellation of a concession contract in Delhi (Bhanduri and Kejriwal 2005). Similarly, movements against the installation of prepaid water meters in Johannesburg were empowered by the inclusion of a clause guaranteeing the right to water in the South African constitution (Aubriot 2009).

Power relations in urban societies are thus subtly transformed, although outcomes are not always either immediate or tangible, as evidenced in Brazil where efforts at decentralization have been held back by existing political practices (Britto 2010). These changes also introduce an element of complexity, as projects require longer negotiations and the acceptance of contestation and the seeking of second opinions, as illustrated by the case of projects to improve sanitation in Varanasi (Vincent and Forrest 2010). In addition, new

tensions surface around rights involving a larger number of stakeholders, as in La Paz-El Alto, where the place of community rights needs to be redefined (Poupeau 2002).

## **PROLIFERATION OF UNCONVENTIONAL WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS**

In response to the failure to meet demand, in almost all cities the conventional network coexists with other commercial forms of water supply, which are almost always formed according to criteria of use, price, taste, and accessibility. These alternative sources have developed mainly where there are gaps in the service of the main operator, and are inversely proportional to the expansion of its activities; they are financially autonomous, receiving no subsidies, and present the typical characteristics of an informal economy (unregistered, untaxed, low capital intensity, and legally vulnerable). Strongly involved in distribution, in some cases they are also active in production from private wells. Despite presenting behavioral similarities through imitation, these commercial sources of water supply mostly remain heterogeneous, small-scale, and, compared with conventional provision, costly in unit terms due to a low level of standardization.

These features do not preclude them from forms of social integration. The widespread adoption of such methods of decentralized provision leads to access standards that are compatible with the absence of a network: users are integrated into social and market networks that offer them varying levels of water quality (potable or non-potable, at a cost or free of charge) and services (doorstep delivery, public or private water points, with or without guarantee of quality and regularity, or with or without subscription). However, this social integration should not be allowed to mask the fact that users are seldom in a position to exert pressure on various offers. Captive to unregulated markets, they pay 10 to 20 times more per unit than houses connected to the conventional network, and, given the disastrous shortfall in sanitation, they benefit only slightly from the positive health externalities generally associated with the consumption of potable water.

These commercial services, which include small local private operators, forms of community privatization in poor neighborhoods (Jaglin and Bousquet 2011; De Bercegol and Desfeux 2008), and sophisticated alternative modes for provision by local urban entrepreneurs in affluent neighborhoods (Maria and Levasseur 2004) are the subject of renewed attention (Conan 2004; Kariuki and Schwartz 2005; Kjellén and McGranahan 2006; van Dijk 2008). Thus, small private operators, which had long been disparaged and considered to be uncompetitive, are now deemed attractive in light of their entrepreneurial initiative, flexibility, and adaptability (Blanc, Cavé, and Chaponnière 2009;

Botton and Blanc 2010; Valfrey-Visser et al. 2006). Mechanisms on the scale of upper-market residential buildings or new middle-class settlements could bring about the heralded emergence of a “post-network” society (Coutard and Rutherford 2009; Giraud et al. 2004; Maria 2007) based on an integrated, environmentally-friendly management of resources and adaptation to the diversity of demands and forms of urban expansion. Alongside these operators, other individual actors (semi-wholesale domestic subscribers) and collectives (users’ committees and associations) are also included in the discussion. By shifting the boundaries between public and private, legal and illegal, and market and non-market, these approaches open up new opportunities for collective action in the area of water services.

The hypothesis here is that these processes in varying stages of development offer means to reform networks from within, and contribute to a bottom-up redefinition of the roles and skills of urban actors. In contrast to the recent trend, however, they should not be considered as a substitute for formal privatization reforms, but rather as complementary to conventional provision. This raises two main issues.

The first relates to the organization of services, namely their institutionalization (Barrau and Frenoux 2010) and the specific problems generated by their coordination within composite systems of provision (Jaglin 2010; Urcun, Renou, and Plauchu 2010). This requires rethinking the set of rules that organize and structure provision in order to determine their operational perimeters, service standards, actors, and regulatory tools (Angueletou 2010), all the while anticipating the effects of cities’ spatial expansion on these new equilibriums and being aware so as not to rigidify a system that would *de facto* reproduce informal activities at its fringes. Such changes upset the balance of corporate and professional interests (of the conventional service’s engineers), perceptions (those of “acceptable” urban standards), and power relations (between the conventional operator and small-scale suppliers). They need to be the object of enduring agreements to avoid the risk of being rapidly weakened (Barrau and Frenoux 2010) and call for renewed governance methods (Urcun, Renou, and Plauchu 2010).

The second issue concerns the relationship between these non-conventional forms of provision and city authorities. While they demonstrate the vitality and innovative ability of urban societies in the South through the diversity of their multifaceted urban entrepreneurship, they are also capable of leading to a breakdown in public interest. On the one hand, upmarket solutions introduced in middle- or upper-class neighborhoods could in some contexts lead to a complete or partial disconnection from the conventional network. The subsequent fall in revenues for network operators then leads to an equivalent decrease in the potential for cross-subsidies: in such instances it is in fact the

equity within the network that is disrupted. On the other hand, small private operators can also form part of power and clientelist networks (or even mafia networks), which have negative impacts on service access. This has been the case, for example, in the outlying suburbs of Mumbai, where a number of local elected officials are also owners of water tankers and therefore control to some extent the formal and informal supply (Angueletou 2010). This situation exacerbates the risk of such unconventional solutions to produce disincentives to invest in network expansion. This once again underlines the importance of a functioning multi-level governance framework, where various levels of government are responsible for investment in expanding the network, particularly in this case.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this special issue is to show that the tangible forms of transformation of water services are inseparable from those that affect the decision-making processes in urban collective action: it is a question of re-situating them in the wider evolution of urban management and governance, as remodeled by decentralization and liberalization; the redistribution of roles and the blurring of boundaries between public and private; democratization; the redefinition of powers between the technical and political elite; and so on.

Beyond directives and reforms all drawn from the same vision, the articles in this issue nevertheless bring to light the diversity of water services' modes of production (from the public monopoly to fragmented competition) and management (public, private, semi-community, community, and so on). This diverse reality is neither the result of a failure to correctly apply the models, nor is it mere compensation for deficient public provision. It has its own role in service provision in developing cities and provides part of the solution to the issue of universal coverage. The questions to which this diversity gives rise therefore need to be examined: How should it be considered? Should it be regulated, and if so, how? Which authorities and which urban institutions – formal and informal – are needed to take on the challenge of its regulation?

Lastly, in addition to the in-depth analysis of ongoing changes, these texts reiterate, both explicitly and implicitly, that the question of investment and sustainable funding of these essential services is of vital importance, and that, in many cases, the answers to these issues need to be invented or reinvented,<sup>4</sup> without any normative exclusion or bias.

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4. See for example the research program, «Financement des services urbains d'eau potable et d'assainissement dans les pays en développement. Modalités de partage du coût global de long terme entre acteurs,» with the financial backing of Iddri and IRD and coordinated by Claude de Miras.

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