

Frontiers of research on reform of urban public service provision

The literature on the privatization of urban public service provision has generally assumed that a variety of services—such as water, transport, security, energy, and the planning of public space—have become privatized. The common wisdom is that services that were once commonly provided by the state are now provided by private entities, reconfiguring not only the role of the state, but also the role of other actors such as the private sector, social movements, non-governmental organizations, neighborhood and community based organizations, etc. Recent research, however, has begun to call some of this wisdom into doubt, suggesting a more nuanced and complex pattern of service provision.

In this session we will focus on the following questions, in work based on the experience of different cities and/or sectors of urban services going through processes of change:

- - What have we learned about the actual trends of privatization in different cities, as well as the effects of such reconfigurations on social exclusion?
- - What are the responses and reactions of civil society to these changes? Are there opportunities for action by new actors (i.e. new organizations providing services to previously not served areas; emergence of new coalitions preventing top-down reform and proposing bottom-up policies)?
- - What are the challenges these reconfigurations pose for democracy and governance?

In line with LASA's attempt to encourage a cross-fertilization of area studies, the session will create a dialogue among scholars analyzing a wide range of cities, sectors, and actors, from different disciplinary perspectives.

Please send a short abstract (300 words max) by **August 28** to mag231@pitt.edu

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