Taylor & Francis
Online

Development in Practice ›
Volume 15, 2005 - Issue 3-4

3,489 Views | 145 CrossRef citations to date | 22 Altmetric

Original Articles

Public resistance to privatisation in water and energy

David Hall, Emanuele Lobina & Robin de la Motte

Pages 286-301 | Published online: 19 Jan 2007

Cite this article https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520500076126

Sample our Social Sciences Journals
>> Sign in here to start your access to the latest two volumes for 14 days

Abstract

Since the 1990s, development agencies and international institutions have promoted private-sector involvement in infrastructure, assuming that this would inject both investment and efficiency into the under-performing public sector. In the water and energy sectors, these expectations have not been fulfilled. Private-sector investment in developing countries is falling, multinational companies have failed to make sustainable returns on their investments, and the process of privatisation in water and energy has proved widely unpopular and encountered strong political opposition. This paper examines the role of this opposition in delaying, cancelling, or reversing the privatisation of water and energy. Local civil society has successfully mobilised highly effective political activity, its opposition being based on the perceived conflicts between privatisation and equity, and over the role of the state and community in these sectors. Such opposition has involved dynamic interactions with existing political parties and

structures, including the use of existing electoral and judicial mechanisms. Its success poses challenges for the multilateral and donor community, NGOs, the opposition campaigns themselves, and the future of national systems of electricity and water.

Additional information

Notes on contributors

David Hall

David Hall is director of the Public Services International Privatisation Research Unit (PSIRU), specialising in water, energy, and healthcare, and the design and maintenance of the database and website. Previously at the Public Services Privatisation Research Unit, he has published books on public expenditure and labour law. d.j.hall@gre.ac.uk.

Emanuele Lobina

Emanuele Lobina specialises in water at PSIRU. He studied political science and international trade law at the universities of Florence and Turin, and has collaborated with IDHEAP at the University of Lausanne. e.lobina@gre.ac.uk.

Robin de la Motte

Robin de la Motte works on WaterTime at PSIRU, an EU-funded project on decision making in the European water sector, and previously worked at the European Commission in Brussels. r.delamotte@gre.ac.uk.

Related research

People also read | Recommended articles | Cited by 145

Information for

Authors
R&D professionals
Editors
Librarians
Societies

Open access

Overview
Open journals
Open Select
Dove Medical Press
F1000Research

Opportunities

Reprints and e-prints
Advertising solutions
Accelerated publication
Corporate access solutions

Help and information

Help and contact
Newsroom
All journals
Books

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email

Sign me up

Copyright © 2026 Informa UK Limited Privacy policy

Cookies Terms & conditions Accessibility

Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954
5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG