



Call for Papers on
Financialisation of Water in the Global South

IIPPE Conference
8-10 September 2021 (online)

Organisers: Kate Bayliss (SOAS), Philip Mader (IDS), Solène Morvant-Roux (Geneva)

The causes, processes and consequences of the financialisation of water in advanced capitalist economies are increasingly explored by researchers in political economy and adjacent fields (e.g. Allen and Pryke 2013; Bayliss 2014; Loftus *et al.* 2016; Muehlebach 2017; Pryke and Allen 2019). Yet the financialisation of water specifically in the Global South remains understudied, particularly in a comparative approach, despite a well-established literature on water privatisation and neoliberalism already having critically studied important shifts in the financing of water in developing countries (e.g. Bayliss and Fine 2008; Marin 2009; Bakker 2013).

As noted among others by Baron *et al.* (2019) and Bayliss (2020) something else is additionally happening, with a “turn” towards finance that sees private finance and financial logics creep into the water sector in significant yet less-visible ways, without necessarily involving the full formal privatisation of supply infrastructures or resources. Financial logics and frameworks – which include (but are not limited to) blended finance, impact investing, public de-risking, microfinance, financial behaviour change interventions, fintech-enabled payment and metering systems, and the restructuring of water investment needs to make them more interesting to transnational financial actors – are becoming increasingly important in the everyday management, governance decisions and modes of delivery of water in the Global South. We evaluate this ongoing enfolding of water flows in financial logics and frameworks as a financialisation of water, in both the broader sense of an increasing role for “financial motives, financial markets, financial actors and financial institutions” (Epstein 2005: 3) in water matters and the narrower sense of the generation of new financial products and securities that directly connect to water. Water financialisation spans different scopes and scales, ranging from intra-household dynamics and local governance arrangements to the level of regional utilities, national water politics and transnational river basin management.

Our conference panel at the International Initiative for the Promotion of Political Economy (IIPPE) Conference 2021 will bring together scholars whose research sheds light on the different causes, forms, processes, impacts and wider consequences of water financialisation in the Global South. We are **seeking** critical political economy contributions – encompassing departures from fields such as development studies, geography, anthropology, sociology and socio-legal studies – which offer new empirical and conceptual insights and may help to bring about a more comparative discussion. We are particularly interested in contributions that use empirical research (broadly defined) to analytically make connections between different scopes and different levels or arenas of action¹, or which draw attention to currently under-recognised manifestations, drivers and outcomes of water financialisation. Papers must have an emphasis or a focus on water in low- or middle-income countries.

Proposals (max. 400 words) should be submitted by 15 April 2021; acceptance decisions will be communicated by 1 May 2021; deadline for full (draft) paper is 15 August 2021. Please submit proposals and address any queries to: P.Mader@ids.ac.uk.

¹ For example between transnational financial actors and local water suppliers; inter-/national policymaking and household decision-making; or development finance institutions, financial investors and political movements.

References

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