**A mini symposium convened by PSIRU, University of Greenwich**

**Rethinking New Public Management and Remunicipalisation**

University of Greenwich, Hamilton House, HH102, Monday 9th September, 17:00-19:00

**Synopsis**

The recent emergence of remunicipalisation, or reverse privatisation, has upset New Public Management’s dominance. By challenging this central tenet of the NPM paradigm, remunicipalisation invites important questions on the governance and regulation of public services. This mini symposium explores these questions to sketch an agenda for future public services.

**Agenda**

- Chair: Dr Jane Lethbridge, PSIRU, University of Greenwich

- Lecture 1: Professor Mildred Warner, Cornell University

*The end of New Public Management? The case for pragmatic remunicipalisation*

- Lecture 2: Dr Emanuele Lobina, PSIRU, University of Greenwich

*For an end to New Public Management - The case for transformative remunicipalisation*

- Discussant: Professor Hulya Dagdeviren, Hertfordshire University

- Open discussion

- Drinks at our local pub

**Abstracts**

Lecture 1: Professor Mildred Warner, Cornell University

*The end of New Public Management? The case for pragmatic remunicipalisation*

Around the world increasing scholarly interest is being focused on contracting back-in previously privatized services, a process now popularly termed "re-municipalization.” Some argue this is a transformative political project of reasserting the role of public ownership. Others argue it is a pragmatic market management process which is not distinct from the new public management paradigm. I present national survey data from local governments across the US and show support for the pragmatic municipalization thesis. Despite the Great Recession of 2007 and the rise in local government austerity, US local government privatization has not risen and both new contracting out and contracting back-in are also relatively stable. Political factors are not the primary motivators of re-municipalization in the US. Concerns with service quality, cost savings and efficiency are the main drivers.

Lecture 2: Dr Emanuele Lobina, PSIRU, University of Greenwich

*For an end to New Public Management - The case for transformative remunicipalisation*

If rumours of New Public Management’s death may be exaggerated, the moral case for its demise is in rude health. The remunicipalisation of water supply in Paris, France – the country that invented the globally dominant model of water privatisation - offers a case in point. Ending 25 years of privatisation, the City of Paris remunicipalised water supply in 2010 with transformative results, thanks to the removal of the profit maximisation imperative. Not only have price cuts reversed a pattern of continuous tariff increases. The new public operator Eau de Paris has also increased investment levels, reprioritising the realisation of the human right to water and the enhancement of sustainable water development. This talk revisits Oliver Williamson’s assessment of the public sector as the organisational mode of last resort, to choose “when all else fails”, and considers the implications for rejuvenating organisational economics.

**About the speakers**

Dr Jane Lethbridge was the Director of the Public Services International Research Unit (PSIRU), Business Faculty, University of Greenwich, UK from 2013 to 2018. Dr Lethbridge's main research interests are the impact of liberalisation and privatisation on the health and social care sector, digitalisation and the public sector, social dialogue in the health and social care sector and democratic professionalism in the public sector, in the UK and internationally. She is the author of a book on *Democratic Professionalism in Public Services*, published by Policy Press/Bristol University Press in 2019 and has been part of a joint CEMR-EPSU project on new forms of service delivery for municipalities. For further details, see <https://www.gre.ac.uk/people/rep/faculty-of-business/jane-lethbridge>.

Dr Mildred E. Warner is a Professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University, USA where her work focuses primarily on local government service delivery and economic development. Dr Warner's research explores the impact of privatisation on local government, showing potential for market-based solutions in public service delivery but also raising cautions about the uneven incidence of market approaches. Dr Warner is author of over a hundred articles in top journals in public administration, planning and urban studies. Research on privatisation and costs published in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* received the 2011 Best Article Award from the Academy of Management - Public and Non-profit Division. For further details, see <https://www.mildredwarner.org/warner>.

Dr Emanuele Lobina is Principal Lecturer in the Public Services International Research Unit (PSIRU), Business Faculty, University of Greenwich, UK. Dr Lobina specialises in the political economy of water service reform, governance and regulation in the global North and South. His more recent work reconceptualises public service efficiency and productivity and focuses on the international experience with remunicipalisation, or reverse privatisation. Dr Lobina has been awarded an ISRF Political Economy Fellowship ([2017-2018](https://www.isrf.org/about/fellows-and-projects/emanuele-lobina/)). Over the last 20 years, his research has produced policy impact at the highest level, as documented in a University of Greenwich [REF2014 Impact Case Study](https://impact.ref.ac.uk/casestudies/CaseStudy.aspx?Id=3926). For further details, see <https://www.gre.ac.uk/people/rep/faculty-of-business/emanuele-lobina>.

Dr Hulya Dagdeviren is a Professor of Economic Development in the University of Hertfordshire Business School, UK where her research focuses on the social consequences of economic structure and policy for the poorer sections of society. A recent work in this area has been an EU-funded project investigating *resilience and hardship in post-crisis Europe*. Dr Dagdeviren’s work on the impact of water and energy governance on the welfare of low-income groups has been published in *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, *Industrial and Corporate Change*, and *Development and Change*. Currently, Dr Dagdeviren is Editor-in-Chief of *Competition and Change*. For further details, see <http://researchprofiles.herts.ac.uk/portal/en/persons/hulya-dagdeviren(62b5ff0d-62a0-4bbe-b064-7b5d0ed1ace7).html>

Getting to Hamilton House: <https://www.gre.ac.uk/about-us/travel/hamilton-house>