

A politics of inevitability: the privatisation of the Berlin Water Company, the global city discourse, and governance in 1990s Berlin

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Abstrak

This book provides a detailed analysis of the controversial privatisation of the Berlin Water Company (BWB) in 1999. As with other cases of privatisation around the world, the city's government argued there was no alternative in a context of public debts and economic restructuring. Drawing on post-structuralist theory, the analysis presented here steps outside the parameters of this neat, straightforward explanation. It problematises the 'hard facts' upon which the decision was apparently made, presenting instead an account in which facts can be political constructions shaped by normative assumptions and political strategies. A politics of inevitability in 1990s Berlin is revealed, one characterised by depoliticisation, expert-dominated policy processes and centred upon the perceived necessities of urban governance in the global economy. It is an account in which global and local dynamics mix, where the interplay between the general and the specific, between neoliberalism and politicking, and between globalisation and local actors characterise the discussion.