

# Water Privatization and Urban Development in Jakarta

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## Background and objectives of your research

With growing awareness of the water issues and crisis at global level, water shortage in Jakarta has also become critical development issue especially from early 1990s. In a rapid tide of urbanization of the capital city, the pressure of population growth and industrial development to the central urban area has urged the significant increase of social demands of water supply.

Nevertheless, water infrastructures in Jakarta have never met its socio-economical demands. Furthermore, the existing water infrastructure now faces the aged deterioration, the frequent intermittence of supply with leakage, and degrading quality of water due to the pollution from industrial and domestic waste. To deal with those urban development issues, the provincial government of Jakarta took up a reform after the monetary crisis in 1997.

In this reform, the government-owned public water company was taken over by foreign multinational private companies allegedly to achieve more efficient management. However, so far the current coverage of infrastructure in Jakarta has not significantly improved, especially in the marginalized poor residence areas. Several NGOs and media have cast a doubt to the outcome of the reform and have criticized the privatization as a market-oriented neoliberal policy only leading to more evident socio-economic disparity in urban society.

In this sense, the analysis of water crisis and privatization reform should not be confined into mere economic or urban ecological issues. Rather, it is essentially called for the sight of the socio-political complexities in urban development and spaces, in order to identify how the reform of neoliberal urban development policy reflects to the disparity and infrastructural development gap in the urban society. Therefore, I will take this water privatization as one case study to analyze the present shaping of the society with focusing on the restructuring process of its city development on the current terrain of the capital city.

## Geographical Difference of Development in Jakarta



Poor residential areas in North Jakarta and South Jakarta



Central Jakarta