Beyond typologies. What is a Public Private Partnership?

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Introduction

The private sector has been placed at the heart of the Sustainable Development Agenda (United Nations, 2015a). This follows previous concerted attempts to increase the role of the private sector in development financing, emblematic in the declaration of the first Financing for Development Summit in Monterrey (United Nations, 2003). The latter officially promoted the principle that financing for development was increasingly to be provided through international capital markets. The idea was reiterated in the Doha Declaration (United Nations, 2009) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda in 2015 formally confirmed private finance at the centre of the development agenda (United Nations, 2015b, paragraph 5). The celebration of the role of the private sector in financing development combines with repeated emphasis on the alleged limitations of the public sector's capacity to mobilise and allocate resources for development. This reflects the unmet commitments from donor countries to spend 0.7 percent of national income on Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the unwillingness of rich countries to tackle illicit financial flows and tax havens effectively.

Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) are part and parcel of this private turn in development finance (Van Waeyenberge, 2015) and there has been a dramatic upscaling of global advocacy efforts in their favour over the last decade or so (Bayliss and Van Waeyenberge, 2017). PPPs are promoted through a vast array of tools and by a wide range of institutions, including bilateral donor agencies, United Nations' agencies, such as UNICEF, WHO and UNECE, the Group of 20, the World Bank Group, global accounting firms, the World Economic Forum, and philanthropic organisations. And PPP promotion proceeds apace despite ambiguous (and often negative) evidence regarding effectiveness, cost and equity implications (Trebilcock and Rosenstock, 2015; Hall, 2015; Romero, 2015; KS et al., 2016; Gideon and Unterhalter, 2017; Languille, 2017; Unterhalter, 2017).

Although the lion's share of financing of infrastructure and public services continues to originate in the public sector (Fay et al., 2019),[i] the influence of PPPs goes beyond their actual use to deliver infrastructure and public services. In the context of education PPPs, for instance, Draxler (2015, p. 475) emphasises that the policy bias that comes with education funding in the form of support for PPPs may be more significant than its monetary value would suggest. Richter (2003) refers to PPPs as a 'policy paradigm' as distinct from concrete arrangements and argues that the former has far-reaching influence beyond its quantitative weight as such. Following Bayliss and Waeyenberge (2018, p. 2), PPPs can be seen as a wedge 'in how the policy space around public service provision is being redefined, with important repercussions over and above their (relatively small) immediate financial significance.'

PPP advocacy has indeed resulted in concrete changes in laws, and regulatory and policy environments. Many developing countries have enacted PPP laws,[ii] and set up 'PPP Units' to scale up their capacities to implement PPP projects,[iii] in line with loan conditionalities and policy guidance emanating from International Financial Institutions like the World Bank and regional development banks, including the Asian Development, the African Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (Romero and Vervynckt, 2017; Brunswijck, 2019). Developing countries have also included PPPs in national development plans that seek to scale up infrastructure and public service provision. UNCTAD (2016), for instance, highlights how across the National Development Plans of 35 African countries, 29 link PPPs to national development goals.

The word *partnership* has been a development buzzword (Cornwall, 2007) for some time, trying to capture 'an agenda for transforming development's relationships' (p. 475). Buzzwords' popularity has had 'as much to do with their feel-good factor as with what they promised to deliver' (Cornwall, 2007, p. 475). However, there is no universally agreed definition of the term *Public Private Partnership*. This has contributed to confusion in policy and academic debates. An increasing number of countries deploy their own definitions in national laws and policies, as do international organisations. This diversity presents challenges for comparative analysis as well as for critical advocacy with regard to PPPs. For some, the loose terminology surrounding PPPs serves a deliberate purpose as it 'fosters convenient ambiguities in defining the roles and expectations of each partner' and ultimately 'permits the interests of the strongest partner to be served under the guise of serving the weak' (Miraftab, 2004, p. 92). Hodge and Greve (2010, quoting Linder, 1999, p. S10) refer to PPPs as a 'language game', as the term partnership allows governments to avoid the term 'privatisation' in favour of a 'warmer and more friendly proposition'.

This chapter seeks to engage with these issues explicitly by unpacking different typologies that have been used to categorise PPPs. We develop a criticism of these typologies, despite their benevolent and often critical intent, arguing that they tend to draw attention away from the underlying shared features of PPP arrangements (across a broad spectrum), that become obfuscated as differences in concrete arrangements are emphasised. We see PPPs, in essence, as one manifestation of state support (domestically and internationally) for the transformation of 'infrastructure' (or 'public services') into private assets which often generate revenue streams for asset-holders – with the exception of partnerships with not-for-profit organisations (although non-for-profit partners sometimes open up opportunities for for-profit organisations and hence the distinction cannot always be clear-cut at a moment in, and over, time).[iv] This is to the detriment of alternative notions of 'infrastructure' as public assets that seek to assure the structural (if not necessarily physical) underpinnings of the public realm (Muschamp, 1994 quoted in Hildyard 2016) – framed by overall imperatives of access and quality for all as opposed to profitable opportunities to the few.[v] Following Lemoine (2016), the idea of 'infrastructure as asset' can be seen as reflecting a 'reversal from the state that gives measure and value … to becoming the thing that is measured and valued, assessed, rated but also broken up and traded according to the rulebook of financial markets'.

We combine the notion of 'infrastructure-as-asset' in our analysis of what is a PPP with Fine's (2017) reference to 'fin(n)frastructure' to capture the increased involvement of the state 'to engage financialised capital in expanding provision of economic and social infrastructure', which is so characteristic of the PPP promotion across scales (global, national, regional and local) (p. 10). We want to emphasise, however, from the start, that both the transformation of public into private assets by way of a PPP arrangement and state support for this process can take different forms and are prone to mutations as economic, financial or broader social circumstances vary and change.[vi]

Existing PPP typologies, while useful to classify specific forms of PPPs in a particular setting, are limited because they are determined exactly by the specificities of a particular setting (which will have its own contextual characteristics). A specific typology offers a static categorisation that detracts from the essential features of what PPPs are about. This transcends PPPs' concrete manifestations and can be better captured through reference to 'infrastructure-as-asset' – itself prone to mutations, including as evolving PPP arrangements – combined with the proposition of 'finnfrastructure' that draws specific attention to the role of the state in advancing private financial involvement in infrastructure.

An understanding of what PPPs are, should then not rely on how we classify concrete manifestations of PPPs along a particular typology, but rather, following Lai and Daniels (2017, p. 222), account for how 'common broader trends [here the transformation of infrastructure into assets] interact with local settings to produce varied practices and outcomes' (see also Fine chapter). Transcending pre-imposed boundaries implied by specific categorisations or typologies, we argue for an understanding of multiple forms of private sector involvement in infrastructure or public service provision as variegated forms of financialised infrastructure. This gives rise to a set of pertinent questions for critical engagement over and above whether a particular arrangement for the delivery of a public service is, or is not, a PPP or of what kind.

The chapter proceeds as follows. Section 2 engages critically with a set of PPP typologies that have become prevalent in PPP advocacy and scholarship. We consider both general PPP typologies as well as typologies that have been developed specifically for the health and education sectors, as two key (social) infrastructure sectors. Section 3 situates PPPs in the broader context of the financialisation of development. Section 4 articulates a set of pertinent questions that can frame critical appraisal of PPP promotion and practices, before concluding.

From One Typology to Another

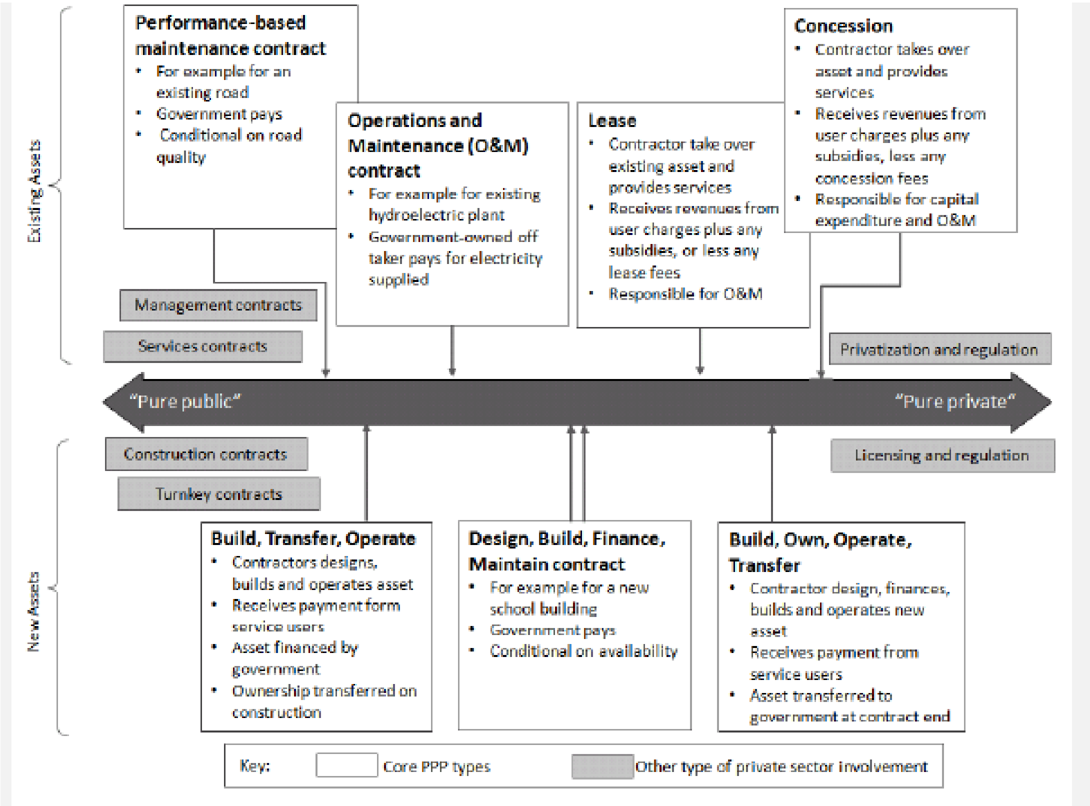
The acronym PPP seeks to identify the engagement between public and private actors (for-profit or non-profit), for the delivery of specific infrastructure assets and services (Romero, 2015; KS et al., 2016; Languille, 2017). The category encompasses multi-stakeholder initiatives, based on the pooling of different resources and competencies of different actors involved, informal and short-term collaborations between non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector and/or government agencies to implement specific programmes or projects, and more complex, formal and long-term contractual arrangements in which the private sector participates in the financing and provision of infrastructure assets and services, such as bridges, tunnels, highways, health and education. For Robertson, Mundy and Verger (2012, pp. 6 and 33) the term PPP is a 'semantic umbrella' and can be understood as a 'metanarrative' about the changing role of the state and the private sector in the provision of public services.

Given the diversity captured by the PPP acronym, practitioners and scholars have suggested different typologies to categorise what is a PPP and what different concrete forms such an arrangement can take. These typologies focus variously on issues such as: the role of the private sector partner in terms of which specific activity it undertakes in the delivery of a public service; the source of revenue for the private partner; the risk assumed by the private/public partner; the ownership of specific assets; and the duration of the contract between public and private entities. General typologies have been complemented by typologies specifically developed for particular sectors, like health and education.

This section critically reflects on efforts at categorising PPPs along particular typologies suggesting that these fail to give an adequate picture of the PPP phenomenon. In essence, it is argued that, while these typologies capture differences in PPPs in their own ways, and hence draw attention to different dimensions of concrete PPP arrangements, they tend to detract from the fundamental features shared across PPP arrangements. This includes, specifically, how PPPs, in general, despite their different concrete forms, foster the increased participation of the private sector in public service provision and how the strong promotion of PPPs reflects increased efforts to transform broader swaths of infrastructure across the globe into revenue-yielding assets. Furthermore, existing typologies (IBRD, ADB and IDB, 2014; Hodge and Greve, 2010; Montagu and Harding, 2012; Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio and Guáqueta, 2009; Verger and Moschetti, 2016) tend not to be historically situated, and hence draw attention away from the broader landscape within which PPPs emerge and take form (including the contemporary, contextual background of financialisation, see Fine chapter). We propose that rather than categorising, and organising particular PPP arrangements along a particular typology, it is more useful to understand these as part and parcel of particular, historically-evolved and specific systems of provision of a particular (public) service, which reflect both local and global pressures and tendencies (Bayliss, Fine and Robertson, 2016a). Understanding PPPs in this manner raises a set of fundamental issues, which are discussed in Section 3 below. The rest of this section discusses three general PPP typologies, and combines this with a review of typologies that have been developed specifically for the health and education sectors.

The two most common ways of categorising in-country PPPs are, on the one hand, with reference to the tasks that the private sector performs in the partnership (to which we refer as Typology 1), and on the other hand, by focusing on the source of private sector revenue (Typology 2). In Typology 1, a specific type of PPP corresponds to the execution of some combination of the following functions by the private sector: design; build; develop; rehabilitate; finance; operate; maintain; own; transfer; and lease. Often a distinction is made between whether the activities relate to existing or new assets. Typology 1 places PPPs on a continuum that goes from 'pure public' to 'pure private' (see Figure 1). The idea is that as you move along the spectrum, different categories embody greater presence in provision by the private sector. A 'pure public' arrangement refers to traditional public procurement where the public sector issues contracts to the private sector to execute publicly financed activities to upgrade infrastructure.[vii] A 'pure private' arrangement refers to a privately owned and operated infrastructure asset that would be regulated by a public agency. Typology 1 is usually associated with long-term contractual arrangements in what is often referred to as 'economic' infrastructure (i.e. roads, airports, bridges, the built environment of school and hospitals, etc.), although different sectors might have adapted versions of it, and the prevalence of specific types varies greatly across countries. Figure 1 provides one possible diagrammatic representation of Typology 1. Typology 1 provides the basis on which the World Bank collects and organises information on private sector participation in infrastructure (see https://ppi.worldbank.org/), although this database is limited to 'economic' infrastructure projects.

Figure 1: Typology 1: PPPs as specific activities (along a risk and responsibility spectrum)



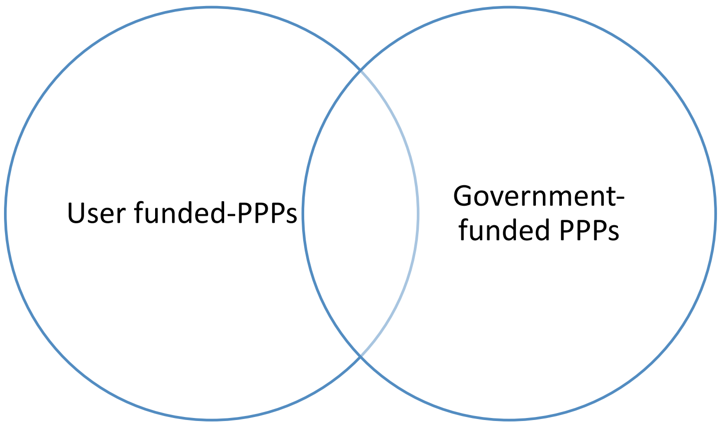
Source: IEG, 2014, p. 4.

Typology 2 focuses on the source of private sector revenue or the payment mechanism. As such, it refers to the funding of PPP projects, and it points to an important distinction between funding and financing of PPPs (IMF-WBG, 2016; Fay, Martimort and Straub, 2018).[viii] Two PPP categories emerge from Typology 2: 'user-funded' and 'government-funded' PPPs (IBRD, ADB and IDB, 2014), although, in practice, PPP arrangements tend to be a mix of both (see Figure 2).

- In user-funded PPPs, the private partner is allowed to charge the public for using the facility, generally through paying a fee (tariffs or tolls), which can be supplemented by subsidies paid by government. The fees reimburse the private partner for the cost of building and operating the facility, or providing the service. This model is the traditional PPP scheme used in road building.
- In government-funded PPPs, the private sector company provides services and/or administers infrastructure assets for a public authority. The payment of the private partner comes from

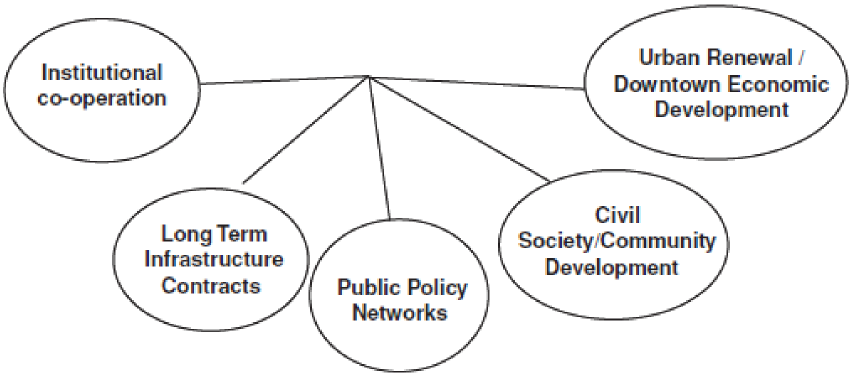
regular payments by the public partner based on the provision of the service at agreed terms. The payments can depend on the asset or service being available at a contractually-defined quality, or on the services delivered to users, such as a ‘shadow toll’ road, which is free for users, but where the governments pays a fee per driver to the operator. The UK’s Private Finance Initiative programme is an example of this, and has been applied to health and education projects, which have, in general, remained free at the point of delivery.

Figure 2: Typology 2: PPPs as a result of different payment mechanisms



Hodge and Greve (2007; 2010) suggest a third typology (Typology 3) of the ‘partnership terrain’, as they see PPPs as a tool of governance, with five ‘families of arrangements’ with each emphasising a different characteristic such as, for instance, institutional co-operation, public policy networks characterised by loose stakeholder relationships, or long-term contracts with tight specification of outputs (see Figure 3). Although Typology 3 covers a wide range of arrangements, it does not account for different levels of intervention, from global PPPs to concrete arrangements at the country level or below, and does not necessarily translate well to social sectors where the funding of a service plays an important role.

Figure 3: Typology 3: PPPs as governance arrangements



Source: Hodge and Greve (2010)

In the context of health services, three specfic typologies are worth highlighting. First, Montagu and Harding (2012) suggest a Typology (dubbed A by us) of hospital PPPs that is widely used in the literature on in-country PPPs (including by the WB's IEG, 2016). This typology includes four categories, 'distinguished by what the public partner is 'buying or selling' from/to the private partner, and the primary objectives of the partnership' (Montagu and Harding, 2012, p. 18). According to this health PPP typology, there are four types of hospital PPPs distinguished by their goals, contractual and functional aspects, as well as risks to both public and private partners (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Typology (A) of hospital PPPs

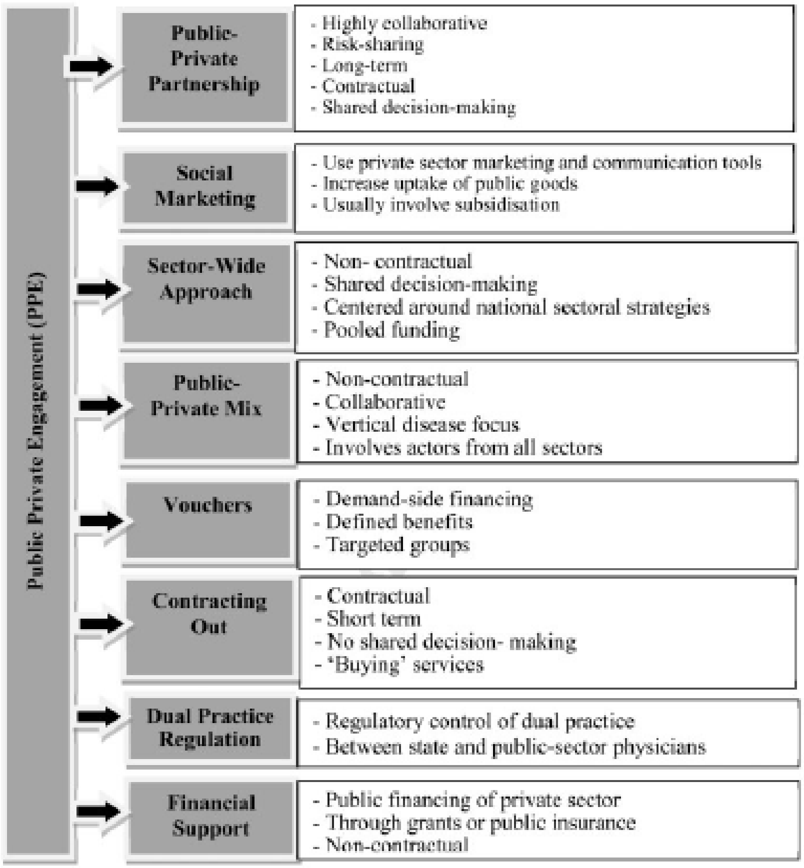
PPP Category	Common term	Definition/Explanation
Services	Operating contract	A private organisation is brought in to operate and deliver publicly-funded health services within a public facility.
Facility/Finance	PFI	A public agency contracts a private entity to finance, design, build and operate a hospital facility. Health services within the facility are provided by government.

Combined	BOT PPIP	A private organisation establishes capacity (through new construction or expansion of existing facility) to provide health services under sustained public or social insurance reimbursement.
Co-location	Co-location	A public agency allocates a portion of a public hospital's land and/or premises for sustained use by a private organisation in exchange for payment and specified benefits to the public agency.

Source: Montagu and Harding (2012)

Second, Whyle and Olivier (2016) present an empirical disaggregation of 'public private engagement' (PPE) models for health in Southern Africa, which goes beyond the scope of the previous typology. This Typology (B) presents eight ideal type-representations of government engagement with the non-state health sector for the financing and delivery of services taking place at the national level (see Figure 3). The key criteria used by the authors to organise this typology relate to the financing and delivery of health care as well as the nature of the public-private engagement. According to this analysis it is possible to identify 'financial support', on one end, which is the tranferring of funds from the public sector to private actors, and implies a low level of collaboration, and 'public private partnership', on the other. In the middle, there are 'contracting out' mechanisms, and demand-side financing, such as voucher schemes, among others.[ix] Interestingly, the authors identify 'six PPP sub-types': franchising, global PPP (GPPP), public-private integrated partnership (PPIP), Alzira model PPP,[x] co-location PPP and Private Finance Initiative (PFI), some of which are part of the typology suggested by Montagu and Harding (2012). In that way, the focus on PPE – represented as a continuum – does not capture the complexities of PPPs in the health sector.

Figure 5: Typology B: Public-private engagement in health in Southern Africa



Source: Whyle and Olivier (2016, p. 5)

Third, Buse and Walt (2000a) focus specifically on global PPPs (GPPPs) in health (Typology C). These are arrangements that have emerged as central in international public health (Buse and Walt, 2000b; Ruckert and Labonté, 2014). Buse and Walt (2000a, p. 699) define GPPPs as:

> collaborative relationships which transcend national boundaries. Each partnership brings together at least three parties, among them a corporation (and/or industry association) and an intergovernmental organisation, to achieve a shared health-creating goal on the basis of a mutually agreed division of labour.

They present 'a goal-oriented, three-category classification of GPPPs': product-based, product development-based and systems/issues-based (p. 700).[xi] An example of the first type, product-based partnerships, are drug or vaccines donation programmes. These are usually initiated by the private sector, as they are:

> generally established after the discovery that an existing drug is found to be effective in the treatment of some condition for which there is limited effective demand, due to lack of willingness and ability to pay (Buse and Walt, 2000a, p. 700).

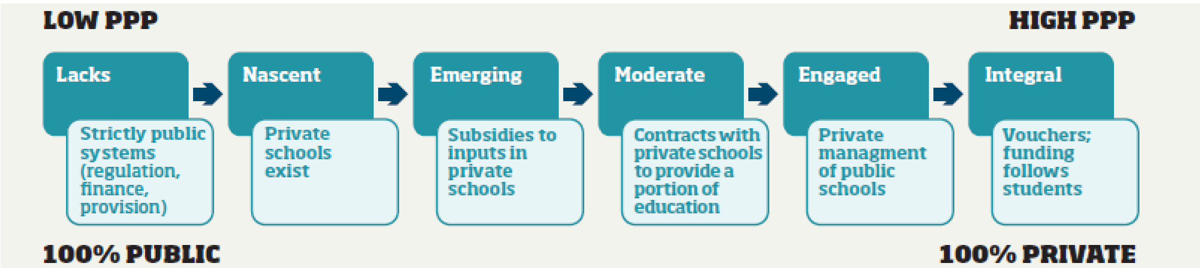
Product-development partnerships, on the other hand, are generally initiated by the public sector, and are based on market failure. In this case, the public sector has to provide a subsidy to mitigate a number of risks associated with product discovery, development and/or commercialisation. Finally, the systems/issues-based partnerships seem to be a residual category, as they include some partnerships that are designed to overcome market failures, and others that:

> seek to harmonise or bring strategic consistency to the approaches of various actors to single diseases, as well as to raise their profile on the health policy agenda (Buse and Walt, 2000a, pp. 701-702).

Although this Typology (C) serves to understand global health PPPs, it gives a partial picture when trying to understand the complexity of the whole range of health PPPs.

In education, we can identify Typology (I) that understands private participation along a continuum (see Figure 5), and as a variant of this, Typology (II) that represents PPPs in education across the two dimensions of public/private sector involvement in the provision and financing of education (see Figure 6). For Typology (I), Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio and Guáqueta (2009, p. 16) suggest a 'PPP continuum' that 'depicts the main forms of publicly funded and privately provided education across the world' (see Figure 5).[xii] The PPP continuum goes from 'low' to 'high' levels of engagement between the public and private sectors. The Typology (I) is framed in an 'evolutionary way' (Verger and Moschetti, 2016, p. 9), starting from a 'nascent' state of engagement, in which private schools exist (independently of the state), to reach an 'integral' stage, in which education is entirely provided by the private sector under a voucher scheme, with funding following students. In the middle, it is possible to identify situations in which a government subsidises private schools to support their capacity to educate more students, and in which the government enters into contracts with private schools, and pays them per pupil, to educate a specified number of students for a specified length of time. The underlying assumption is that 'the responsibility for funding largely remains with the public sector' (Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio and Guáqueta, 2009, pp. 16-17), while maximising school choice is a key policy principle, operating as 'a de facto quality control and accountability mechanism' (Verger and Moschetti, 2016, p. 10).

Figure 6: Typology (I) of education PPPs



Source: Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio and Guáqueta (2009), and quoted by Verger and Moschetti (2016)

Following Verger and Moschetti (2016; 2017), Typology (I) is problematic for the following reasons. First, 'it is politically tendentious and ideologically biased' as it is used to promote the World Bank's preference for market solutions in education, as the 'integral' stage is presented with the necessary presence of private sector participation (Verger and Moschetti, 2016, p. 10). This is despite the fact that 'the level of integrality of PPPs does not depend on the degree of market dynamics, school competition or freedom of clients' choice, but rather on the level of horizontality of the relationship between the public and private sectors', which is not represented in this PPP continuum (Verger and Moschetti, 2017, p. 6). Second, Typology (I) is 'general' and does not highlight significant differences within each of its categories. For example, the voucher schemes and the charter schools (i.e. private management of schools) can take different forms according to their scope, and the type of private partners involved (such as, for instance, religious or non-religious organisations, local or transnational school chains or single providers, for-profit or not-for-profit). Other key features are the degree of autonomy (charter schools) and the scale of the funding provided (vouchers) (Verger and Moschetti, 2017).

In order to overcome some of these challenges, Verger and Moschetti (2016) present an alternative Typology (II) that builds on Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio and Guáqueta (2009), but uses a two-way table to classify the public-private mix in education (see Figure 6). Typology (II) proceeds on the basis of the following two criteria: 'who provides?' and 'who finances?' education. For the authors, PPPs are arrangements in which the public sector funds schooling services provided or managed by the private sector. These can take on different modalities, for instance, through voucher schemes, contract schools, charter schools, and subsidies to private schools like 'low-fee private school. According to Figure 6, PPPs are represented in the lower left-hand quadrant. Although Typology (II) gives further complexity to the analysis of in-country arrangements, it does not capture the different forms that PPPs take as a result of different types of private sector partners, nor does it reflect the existence of global PPPs nor the interactions between national and global spheres. As such, it is still a partial view of the PPP phenomenon in the education sector.

Figure 7: Typology (II) of education PPPs

		PROVISION	
		PRIVATE	**PUBLIC**
FINANCE	**PRIVATE**	• Emergence of private schools and private universities • Home schooling • Private tutoring • Liberalization of the education sector	• User fees • Student loans • Philanthropy, "Brand Aid" • Corporate social responsibility • Multi-stakeholder partnerships
	PUBLIC	• **Vouchers** • **Contract schools** • **Charter schools** • **Contracting out private schools** • Subsidies to the private sector • Tax incentives for private school consumption	• Public schools • Public universitiesg

Source: Verger and Moschetti (2016), adapted from Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio and Guáqueta (2009)

Clearly, the term PPP captures a large heterogeneity of arrangements across sectors and across involvement of agents. Existing typologies variously capture these heterogeneities depending on the particular dimension of interest to an author or organisation. Such typologies may be helpful in identifying specificities for different sectoral arrangements, but may offer little analytical (or advocacy) traction when seeking to deploy them to understand the significance of the PPP phenomenon and critically engage with the complexity of the 'PPP (policy) paradigm' as encompassing a *host* of initiatives and concrete arrangements across global, regional, national and local levels (Richter, 2003). Critical analyses of PPPs by scholars and activists, indeed, can too easily falter when these get lost in questions of whether a particular arrangement 'really is a PPP', according to which definition or typology, where the boundaries are for specific categories, and how we can compare across different categories.

We argue that to make sense of the PPP policy paradigm, to provide a critical account of the massive increase in advocacy efforts in support of PPPs, and to engage with the far-reaching consequences of the PPP policy paradigm, the analysis should not be preoccupied with questions of whether or not concrete arrangements of concern to scholars or activists fit a particular PPP category. Instead, the analysis should tease out, and focus on, the essential features characterising PPP arrangements across typologies and advocacy efforts. Such critical engagement necessarily points towards shared features across PPP arrangements and advocacy, most notably the attempted transformation of public services (or infrastructure) into assets so that these yield some form of revenue stream for private investors and the specific resultant role of the public sector.

The next section teases out the implications of understanding PPPs as part of a broader trend of transforming public services into assets, in the context of an increasingly financialised policy realm. Once it is accepted that the issues at stake are not necessarily whether or not a particular arrangement is a PPP or of what specific type, but rather how a particular arrangement reflects broader trends of transforming infrastructure into assets within a specific (local) setting, a host of pertinent questions suggest themselves, none of which is constrained by pre-existing typologies.

PPPs and the Financialisation of Development

Policymaking around public service provision has experienced significant changes in developing countries, reflecting changing moments and forms of neoliberalism (see also Fine chapter). This has been most visible in the trajectories of policy agendas promoted by international financial institutions like the World Bank. The agenda has shifted from the Washington Consensus (WC) of the 1980s and early 1990s, which was characterised by attempts to 'roll back' the state through such policies as privatisation, liberalisation and deregulation, to the post-WC of the late 1990s-early 2000s. The latter explicitly denounced core features of the WC, mainly its reliance on a 'perfectly-working markets' paradigm and replaced this with greater attention to regulatory measures as markets in developing countries were understood to be working imperfectly.[xiii] A more extensive role for the state was (again) foregrounded, even if remaining residual and in the service of making markets work (better).

This marked the onset of a second phase of neoliberalism, characterised by more comprehensive (and locally-attuned) attempts to foster private sector activity across developing countries ('roll-out' phase of neoliberalism following Fine, this volume). Yet, as neoliberalism in development was recrafted to accommodate the tensions and contradictions it had generated, it remained fundamentally underpinned by the essential feature of financialisation, continually seeking to promote the role of globalised finance across large areas of social and economic life, even if this proceeded unevenly across the globe (see Fine and Saad-Filho, 2017; Lavinas, 2017; 2018; Powell, 2013).[xiv] Following Fine and Saad-Filho (2017, pp. 692), financialisation has indeed:

> been closely associated with the increasing role of speculative finance in economic and social reproduction, not least through privatisation of public utilities and, more recently, public-private partnerships in provision of economic and social infrastructure.

The dramatic events of the global financial crisis (GFC), triggered in 2007, looked like they could bring major disruption to the paradigm of market-led (finance-promoting) development, whether as manifested in WC or post-WC guises. However, it became rapidly clear that world leaders gathered under the umbrella of the Group of 20 (G20), the forum assigned to co-ordinate the response to the GFC, would remain strongly wedded to the interests of the private sector, and in particular, those of finance. This was emblematic in the large bailouts of the financial sector enacted across various G20 countries, leading a few years later to the drastic austerity measures imposed in an attempt to tackle the debt that the bailouts had created. Bailout packages were accompanied by their monetary policy counterpart, which, via massive quantitative easing, provided yet more resources in support of the financial sector rather than these resources being mobilised directly to support investment in the real economy, including through, for instance, much needed (public) infrastructure investment (also in the G20 countries). As such, like a phoenix rising from the ashes, the neoliberal agenda, advancing the interests of the financial sector across different areas of the economy, gave rise, in the wake of the GFC, to a reinvigorated promotion of financial interests – despite the massive costs that had been imposed through global financial and economic crises.

In development, this has been equally striking. The ability of private finance to bridge the so-called financing gap has been placed centre stage. Official development assistance – as public resources more generally – is increasingly expected to catalyse private financial flows to generate growth and deliver public services (Van Waeyenberge, 2015). This has been emblematic in the reinvigorated attempts to mobilise private finance for infrastructure in developing countries. Since 2008, a plethora of official initiatives has sprung up persistently pursuing an agenda of transforming developing country infrastructure into assets that could attract private sector interest. Fine (2017) refers to 'finnfrastructure' to capture the increased mobilisation of public sector resources (domestically and internationally) to support the expansion of the private financing of infrastructure. Bayliss and Fine (2016, p. 6) observe how:

> Private finance is making increasing inroads into the delivery of public services as privatisation, at one stage a radical policy, introduced tentatively into limited sectors, has now been repackaged as PPPs and, across the world, has become core policy, adopted to varying degrees, implemented by governments, and promoted by international agencies.

This follows ardent efforts to promote privatisation by international organisations in the 1980s and early 1990s, but which had somewhat subsided during the late-1990s/early 2000s. Bayliss and Fine (2016) add how these renewed privatisation efforts increasingly support the advance of financialisation, 'as elements of a previously public service become tradable assets and are, thereby, (potentially) incorporated into circuits of global (financialised) capital'. At the same time, a mass of wealth in the hands of (institutional) investors has been seeking stable and profitable investment opportunities, particularly after heavy losses were sustained as a result of the GFC (Bayliss and Van Waeyenberge, 2017).

The paragraphs above highlight the need to clarify the systemic features of global policy making within which the current revival of PPP promotion has come about (see also Fine chapter). This includes situating the promotion of PPPs vis-à-vis earlier privatisation efforts of the WC, the fallout thereof, the policy response of the post-WC, the fallout of the GFC – including the search by investors for assets with stable yields, etc. Locating the promotion of PPPs against this broader backdrop also draws attention to links with other (global) policy imperatives. These include agenda of trade and financial liberalisation, capital account liberalisation, the promotion of particular tax regimes, sustained attacks on state-owned enterprises (SOEs), etc.

A closer look at the G20's Infrastructure Hub's benchmarking tool, InfraCompass (https://infracompass.gihub.org/) neatly illustrates these connections. InfraCompass seeks to provide an assessment of the extent to which a (developing or developed) country's infrastructure policies are set 'in the right direction'. To that end, the tool attributes scores on a set of criteria to evaluate the 'capability of countries to deliver infrastructure projects'. The criteria include the nature of the tax regime of a country, the nature of its capital account policies, the prevalence of foreign direct investment, the pervasiveness of SOEs across the economy – with higher scores awarded to countries with lower taxation levels, greater capital openness, higher prevalence of foreign ownership in the country, and little presence of SOEs.

While PPPs take different concrete forms with variations in the nature and extent of the involvement and relations between private and public agents (as exemplified in the typologies discussed in Section 2 above), these various forms of PPPs need to be understood altogether as manifestations of a push by various official (national and international) agents for the increased involvement of the private sector (and finance) in public service provision. Proponents of this agenda claim that PPPs raise finance, and offer efficiency and innovation, but they also acknowledge that PPPs can be more expensive than public procurement and demand a high level of expertise from the public sector (IEG, 2014; Hall, 2015; Romero, 2015; Languille, 2017; Bayliss and Van Waeyenberge, 2017; Hodge, Greve and Biygautane, 2018).

Understanding PPP promotion in specific settings as an inflection of a set of broader policy imperatives (underpinned by financialisation) draws attention to its role in transforming infrastructure into assets that yield revenue streams for private agents. The transformation of infrastructure into (private) assets can take many forms but raises a core set of issues. First, while O'Neill (2017) draws attention to the different ways in which infrastructure can be made into an asset class and the different types of agents that tend to get involved in infrastructure-as-asset, across these variations, the transformation of infrastructure into assets necessitates the transformation of infrastructure policymaking so that it becomes concerned with ensuring flows of revenue streams that can attract private investment.

This then, and second, highlights the tensions, again following O'Neill (2017, p. 177), that arise from contesting notions of infrastructure as public good versus infrastructure as 'a set of discrete private assets each with attributable revenue streams and self-interested management arrangements that seek, ultimately, to maximise returns on private investment'. A country's commitment to PPP development results in the design of PPP pipelines of separate projects, each offering profitable opportunities to (often foreign) investors, rather than that governments design comprehensive infrastructure plans to serve the public good – itself contested but at arm's length for most from private profit (Bayliss and Van Waeyenberge, 2017).

Third, this has translated into a set of tendencies in policy-making realms across countries. Aizawa (2018) indicates how PPP guidelines established by major international organisations 'leave out the viewpoint of the public or non-commercial stakeholders' and have little interest in issues of public benefit or public good (p. 4). Aizawa (2018) is particularly struck by the silence on climate change across guidelines.

Fourth, the cultures surrounding the role of the state are dramatically transformed with the expansion of PPP policies. The state comes to be seen increasingly as a commissioner of services rather than a provider. This often leads to a residual role for the state to provide for the most difficult to serve, such as low income groups or rural communities, rather than that infrastructure policy is situated as part and parcel of the broader redistributive mandate of the state in which infrastructure is governed by 'collective and universal principles and practices of delivery' (Bayliss, Fine and Robertson, 2016b, p. 6).

And, fifth, PPP policy advocacy has sought to promote standardised contracts (World Bank, 2017), which favour investors over citizens and the environment, and offer investor protection that exceeds provision under much-contested investment treaties (Alexander, 2017). These proposals preclude any country- or sector-specific stipulations, either of which becomes incidental to the overarching imperative of generating revenue streams for investors. The African Development Bank (2018, p. 99) emphasises the importance of 'appropriate contractual regimes that will enable certainty' for investors. This echoes the G20's (2017, p. 26) insistence that investor interest is likely to be maximised if there is an expectation that 'much of the contractual documentation reflects standard approaches'.

Beyond typologies: what questions should we be asking?

Critically engaging with PPPs then necessitates a careful unpacking of the practices and governance arrangements that migrate from one setting to another when PPPs are promoted as preferred ways of financing infrastructure. This goes beyond categorising PPPs along a particular (static) typology. We propose a set of core questions which could guide critical research and advocacy when engaging with

PPPs. These derive from a unifying framework, anchored in political economy analysis, that understands infrastructure and public service provision as the result of multiple chains of interactions between agents across both the provision and user sides of the service. More specifically, PPPs can be understood as seeking to reconfigure specific relations between agents and structures of a particular 'System of Provision' (see also Fine chapter).

The System of Provision (SoP) approach was initially laid out by Fine and Leopold (1993) to offer a structured framework to analyse the interactions that underpin particular outcomes of consumption patterns. This approach has been adapted and extended specifically to examine changes in public service provision (Bayliss, Fine and Robertson, 2016a). The essence of the SoP approach is that outcomes (of say education, health, or transport provision) result from historically-embedded structures and processes, which are informed by and feed into particular cultures of policymaking, cultures of policy practices and norms of provision (who has access to what and on what terms). Following Bayliss, Fine and Robertson (2016a, p. 21) SoPs are defined:

> in terms of the structures, agents, processes and relations that characterise the entire chain of provision underpinning particular commodities. The operation of a SoP is shaped by multiple factors – social, political, economic, geographic and historical – and in turn gives rise to distinct, commodity-specific cultures of consumption, the pattern of practices, ideas and meanings that shape patterns of consumption.

SoPs are hence constructed by numerous agents, from global development institutions, corporations, governments, state institutions through to providers and end users. Relations between these agents across the SoP can furthermore be contested.

Using the SoP approach to analyse services normally provided by the public sector and for which the state typically retains some overt responsibility means that the 'system' under scrutiny is not so much one that leads to forms of consumption but one which underlies certain welfare outcomes and gives effect to rights and capabilities (Fine et al., 2018). The SoP analysis seeks to connect the financing, funding, governance, production and use of public services and allows for a comprehensive analysis of broader distributional implications of particular formations across the financing, funding, governance, production and consumption nexus.

A SoP approach then requires unpacking the chain of interactions between agents that underpins the provision of a particular public service, an investigation into the cultures of policymaking and the specific norms of provision to which these interactions and cultures give rise. This requires that PPPs and their advocacy are analysed in comprehensive and context-specific ways. This analytical framing gives rise to a set of pertinent questions (of who, what, how and to what effect) that could guide critical analysis of the PPP phenomenon (across advocacy and practices). These questions should take precedence over efforts at categorising PPPs following a particular typology. They reflect broader issues bearing on systems of infrastructure provision identified by Fine and Saad-Filho (2019, pp. 86-87) as:

> issues of ownership (who provides what), accountability (who controls provision), financialisation (who profits from it), internationalisation (where do these profits end up), and distribution (who pockets them).

Specifically, the following questions arise, although we should not lose sight of their interconnected nature.

Agents

What agents are involved in public service or 'infrastructure' provision, including via PPPs?

How are these agents owned and governed?

What incentives do different agents obey?

Do different objectives characterise different types of agents?

Institutional/regulatory landscape

What changes are made to the policy and regulatory landscape to facilitate private financial involvement in provision?

What is the role of international agents in this redesign?

Which international agents influence national policymaking and how?

Financial flows

How is provision (of infrastructure and social services) funded?

What are the financial flows flowing across the chain of provision?

How are public resources mobilised to advance private participation in public service provision? This raises a set of subsidiary questions:

> At what level of governance (global, regional, national, local) does this mobilisation take place?
>
> What is the nature of the support (specific mechanisms) offered by the public sector (subsidies, guarantees, and risk mitigation mechanisms)?

How much public resources are mobilised in support of the expansion of the private sector in the provision of public service (both in absolute terms and as a share of total cost of the project)?

Outcomes

When private finance is involved in public service provision, what norms of provision come to prevail: who has access to what and on what terms?

Does the need to generate revenue for private investors affect the way in which the infrastructure service is delivered (in terms of quality, access, etc), and if so how?

Does the generation of revenue for private investor have equity implications, and if so how?

Answering these questions will allow teasing out core connections between financing, funding, governance and outcomes, while at the same time accommodating diversity across settings that are differentially integrated internationally, that are characterised by their own balance of powers across political economic and financial interest, that reflect differential involvement of outside players, etc.

The questions give a handle on how to capture core interactions between a global agenda and local conditions and dynamics.

Conclusion: To PPP or not PPP, that is not the Question!

PPP promotion is about public support (from the global to the national down to the local) for the enhanced involvement of the private sector in public service provision. Different configurations of 'systems of public service provision' capture different ways of private sector involvement and are likely to have their own distributional implications, reflecting what is provided, how, to whom and on what terms. With increased involvement of private finance, infrastructure (or public services) comes to serve as a conduit for revenue capture from households to shareholders via households' or individuals' access to essential services of social reproduction. It is important to investigate the ways in which financing, production and consumption of public services are connected and what the broader distributional implications are of these connections.

Our attempt to situate PPPs in broader tendencies of financialisation of development, rather than situating them in static categorisations along a particular typology, gives rise to an essential set of questions that could guide future critical engagement with PPPs across both scholarly and advocacy realms and that allows capturing and revealing the essential (if variegated) nature of the PPP paradigm in public service provision.

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[i] Fay et al. (2019, p. 39) estimate the public and private share of infrastructure investments in low and middle-income countries, concluding that 'the public sector clearly dominates, with the private sector accounting for only 9 to 13 percent of total infrastructure investments'. The authors also report considerable variation across regions, 'from a low of 2 percent in East Asia to a high of 35-46 percent in South Asia'.

[ii] For a snapshot of PPP laws enacted across developing countries, see https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/ppp-legal-framework-snapshots-2

[iii] For a map of countries with PPP units, see https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/overview/international-ppp-units

[iv] https://www.forbes.com/sites/petergreene/2018/08/13/how-to-profit-from-your-non-profit-charter-school/#2ff3078d3354 and https://www.huffpost.com/entry/charter-school-executive-profit_b_5093883

[v] Infrastructure is itself a contested term which for some only captures what is often referred to as 'economic infrastructure', traditionally understood to include transport, energy, utilities, etc. and for others also includes 'social infrastructure', like education, health, and housing. Following Bayliss and Van Waeyenberge (2017) we use 'infrastructure' interchangeably with 'public services', with 'public' capturing the reality that the state retains some degree of (or all) responsibility for service provision, regardless of varying levels of private sector involvement. As such, we use 'infrastructure' here to cover the broad spectrum of public services, including education, health, housing, transport, and energy.

[vi] The attempts to redefine the nature of private sector involvement in infrastructure financing and delivery in the UK after the abandonment of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) is a clear example of mutations of the assetisation of infrastructure in response to hurdles encountered by its concrete manifestations, including as a result of lacklustre performance (see NAO, 2018).

[vii] Note that in these typologies, there is often no mention of the possibility of public sector works being delivered by public sector works departments given that the boundaries of the typology are such that every activity on the spectrum includes some form of private sector involvement.

[viii] Funding refers to how investment costs are repaid over time, i.e. it is linked to who *eventually* pays for the full cost of delivering the service, while financing refers to the money that has to be raised upfront to pay for the design, construction and early operational phases of an infrastructure asset, i.e. who puts the money upfront to build and start operating it. See O'Brien et al. (2019) on the important distinction between funding, financing and governing of infrastructure.

[ix] Although out-of-pocket expenses are very common in the provision of healthcare, the typologies developed for health PPPs do not refer to this as a way of financing.

[x] The Alzira model, which has this name as a result of the location of the first hospital to use this model, the

town of Alzira, in the autonomous region of Valencia, Spain, refers to the full health services provision model, where a private operator builds and operates a hospital and some or all associated community primary care provision, with a contract to provide care for a defined geographical area. According to Acerete, Stafford and Stapleton (2011, p. 534), who analyse the financial implications of this model, 'the unique feature to this contract is that the public sector role is reduced to being that of a commissioner of healthcare, as it funds healthcare services by paying the provider a capitation charge derived from the public health budget'.

[xi] Nishtar (2004) presents a more detailed typology of PPPs based on the purpose they serve, which results in six different categories (although some PPPs may fit into more than one category): product development; improving access to healthcare products; global coordination mechanisms; strengthening health services; public advocacy and education; and regulation and quality assurance.

[xii] Note that 'The Role and Impact of Public-Private Partnerships in Education' (Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio and Guáqueta, 2009) is a World Bank publication and has been a very influential report in global education policy, promoting state engagement with alternative forms of education provision.

[xiii] See Van Waeyenberge (2006) for a critique.

[xiv] We follow Aalbers (2017, p. 4) who adopts a broad definition of financialisation as: 'the increasing dominance of financial actors, markets, practices, measurements, and narratives, at various scales, resulting in a structural transformation of economies, firms..., states, and households'.