

## SUMMARY

By comparing the contrasting metropolises of Abidjan, Dakar and Durban, this research provides insight into the new compromises between the public and private sectors that are emerging for the management of urban services. We have attempted to understand how commercial public services are regulated through interplay between public and private sector operators, users and citizens' organizations in differing sociological, economic and political contexts. In the broad sense, regulation refers to the legal, economic and political mechanisms employed by local public authorities in order to calm antagonisms.

An analysis has been conducted of the forms and terms of the public/private partnerships employed for the creation and management of:

- transport infrastructure (bus stations and transport undertakings);
- primary infrastructure (drinking water and drainage networks);
- commercial infrastructure (markets).

We have tried to answer three series of questions:

- Is a class of national private operators emerging?
- Since decentralization what new forms are the relationships between the State and regional and local authorities taking?
- How is regulation structured and changing in a context with an ever increasing number of private initiatives and new public compromises?