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### Solid waste collection in Accra: The impact of decentralisation and privatisation on the practice and performance of service delivery

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### 3

## Urban Governance and the Environment: The Concept of Urban Environmental Management

In the previous chapter we discussed how the African state underwent a transformation as a result of local government reforms following decentralisation and privatisation. We concluded that urban management takes place in the context of a weak state. In this chapter, we will place the concept of urban management in the context of current thinking about urban governance and the global debate on sustainable development. We will first discuss the concept, building blocks and ideology of urban management. Next, we will build on the discussion in the previous chapter, focusing on urban governance. We will show that urban management has moved to urban governance, to include new actors and actions, including public-private partnerships. Concerns about the environment, embodied in the global debate on sustainable development, are addressed in the third section of this chapter. We conclude by introducing the concept of urban environmental management as a body of ideas to manage the urban environment within the context of sustainable development.

### 3.1 Urban management

The urban management model involves the use of an effective, efficient, transparent, accountable and businesslike approach to urban development policies. It deals with the development and day-to-day running of cities (Devas, 1999:2 and 2001; Devas and Rakodi, 1993: 43) and includes topics such as planning, education, health, water supply and waste collection. It refers to "...efforts to coordinate and integrate public as well as private actions to tackle the major problems facing the inhabitants of cities to make a more competitive, equitable and sustainable city' (Dijk, 2000:23; 2001:39). Well-organised urban management is the art of managing the resources of a city in such a way that it helps to achieve common goals. It is an attempt to use business-like approaches to management and find better ways of running a city. The concept is borrowed from business management and applied to the organisation of public affairs.

Since the 1980s, urban development policies have been based on managerial thinking. It originated in the USA where it was borrowed from private sector managerial thinking, and then spread into Europe, Japan, and later to the developing countries.

By the end of the 1970s, urban planners in developing countries increasingly recognised that they had failed to formulate adequate strategies to deal with the urbanisation process (Post, 1997). It took some time before this awareness was translated into the design of new approaches, but in the mid 1980s the management concept became a focal point. The early ideas on urban management were, for obvious reasons, clearly inspired by the neo-liberal climate that prevailed at that time (see Section 2.5). The assumption is that such a policy will create opportunities for the private sector – widely regarded as the engine of growth – to unravel its potentials and also enable other non-public sector agents and organisations to participate in the urban development and management process. Following Post (1996,1997), three dimensions of urban management can be distinguished:

- The urban management concept.
- The building blocks of urban management, *i.e.* the conditions to be fulfilled before being able to work with the concept.
- The urban management ideology, *i.e.* the underlying philosophy and assumptions on how society should be managed or governed.

In the following sub-sections we will have a more detailed look at each of these dimensions of urban management.

### *3.1.1 The urban management concept*

Urban management covers the full range of governmental interventions in the development and day-to-day operation of the city (Devas and Rakodi, 1993: 43). Urban management is about all activities in the area: both public and private, of NGOs and CBOs, and the activities of individuals. However, Mattingly (1992) argued that although urban management is concerned with efficiency, effectiveness and transparency, it is not only the process that matters, but also how to achieve substantial results. For instance: where do we want to go? What are the major challenges in terms of employment, service delivery, etc? Being based upon models of private sector business, the emphasis in urban management is placed on corporate management with clearly defined organisational goals, strategies and a management team to ensure coordination (Devas, 1993). It requires a management team that feels responsible for setting objectives for the urban system, choosing appropriate actions and subsequently carrying these out within the limits of available resources (Mattingly, 1992). The major thrust of such a management perspective is to break with the existing segregation of urban policy. According to Post (1996), urban planning and management is a dynamic process (with uncertainties) which calls for a flexible approach, adoption of a strategic planning style, integration of town and country planning with economic planning and public management, provision of a city-wide frame of reference and setting priorities for action. Urban man-

agement also requires a process approach, which calls for a continuous connection between the different steps in the planning cycle: analysis, policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

How can these principles be realised in practice? Can a city be managed as a business? What are the costs of social and environmental considerations? There are competing views on how a city should be managed. Until recently, for example, the World Bank primarily looked at the city in terms of how its role in the process of economic development could be strengthened. It advocated that the city should be run as a business entity with the aim being to increase levels of productivity. Others (such as Devas and Radkodi, 1993; Gould, 1992 and 2002; Hardoy *et al*, 2001) have denounced this approach as being an economically determinist and reductionist view. According to this school of thought, urban management is multi-sector and multi-actor (Cheema, 1993) and should focus on the economic basis of the city, environment, participation, and equality (Devas and Radkodi, 1993). The city's development management should be human-centred, they argue. However, running a city as a business does not imply running it in a purely economic deterministic way or without due respect for a human-centred perspective. Even the current World Bank thinking about urban development policies does not challenge the idea that a multi-disciplinary approach is central to the concept of urban management. In fact, it confirms it. Businesslike approaches presuppose adopting market principles and policies such as full cost-recovery (*i.e.* emphasis on a cost-benefit analysis), let-user-pay, less politics, but at the same time aiming at equity (*i.e.* coverage should be 100%). Adoption of such a model could help ensure better mobilisation of (financial) resources to sustain the economic development of the city and its public service provisions including housing, water supply and transportation. Many cities in developing countries are cash trapped partly because they have failed to develop effective and efficient methods to mobilise additional revenues from non-traditional taxable sources to provide essential public services. The economic sense of running cities as a business is that services that have a self-financing capability should operate as such. Such a policy could free resources for the provision of other essential services, *e.g.* purely public goods, the cost-recovery of which is impossible. If the urban services were run like a corporate business entity, the chief executive and his management staff (of the "corporate urban setting") would have to account for their stewardship to the shareholders (*i.e.* the public, including not only the executive branch of government, but also the man in the street).

Urban management is not only an attempt to project businesslike approaches to the management of cities', but also to do something about the environment. Although

it was not a leading idea from the start, it has in the meantime taken firm root in urban management thinking.

Summarising the above, urban management is about:

1. The adoption of a business-like approach to urban development, albeit with a consistent view on the impact of policies and actions on the welfare of people and the state of the environment.
2. The need to look at the city in its entirety and to a holistic/integrative approach that seeks to amalgamate economic planning, physical planning, public works and public service delivery into one system.
3. The concern for the urban development process, recognising the dynamics and uncertainties of development and the need to adapt swiftly to changing circumstances.
4. Building a shared view on the future development of the city among decision-makers, and adapting rules, regulations and working attitudes accordingly.<sup>23</sup>
5. Calling upon non-public actors whenever and wherever possible in order to benefit from their resources and comparative advantages in initiating, executing and running activities that foster urban development process.

### *3.1.2 The building blocks of an urban management model*

The building blocks of an urban management model refer to the conditions that need to be fulfilled before the concept can work successfully. In most documents on urban management (Baud, 2000 and 2001; Chema, 1993; Devas and Radkodi, 1993; Dijk, 2002, 2001, 2000; Hardoy et al, 2001; Harris, 1997; Mattingly, 1992; Pieterse, 2000; Post, 1997, 1996; Schubeler, 1996; Stoker, 1998 and 2002; UNCHS, 1996; World Bank, 2000, 2001), it is claimed that reforms are needed. These include policies of decentralisation (*i.e.* strengthening decentralised local government institutions, achieving a new balance between the central and local government administration and giving more discretionary power to local government to prioritise, plan and implement its projects and control its fiscal matters and revenues), as well as privatisation and participation (see Chapter 2). These are political processes that in principle will enable the parties concerned to work according to the principles outlined above. As Safier (1992) noted, the urban management approach is firmly about the sort of conditions to be fulfilled to enable both public and private actors in urban development to deliver their job.

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<sup>23</sup> Later on this was extended to include all stakeholders (the urban government perspective, see below).

The basic conditions that have to be fulfilled in order to work successfully along the principles of urban management are:

- a) Conducive political environment, especially leadership which is genuinely dedicated to the idea of developing the city and which is willing to act as a catalyst. It has to create a feeling of trust and foster consensus on urban development goals and strategies.
- b) Popular participation, involving the people in the decision-making process particularly helps to create a sense of ownership, thereby enhancing the success of a policy or programme.
- c) Decentralisation in order to strengthen local government (see Chapter 2). This will enable the latter to create the material and immaterial conditions conducive to urban development. It is also expected to foster democratic relationships that will enable other actors to participate in urban management.
- d) Privatisation of suitable public service provisions in order to make better use of the acclaimed potentials of the private sector (see Chapter 2).
- e) Sound management practices (efficiency, transparency, accountability) is a sine-qua-non for good urban management.

The debate on urban management stresses one point in particular: reform the old ways of doing things in favour of businesslike approaches to enhance economic development. However, the fate of policy reform is largely determined by the degree of available political commitment and institutional support. The desire to make urban administration more decisive and effective can suffer particularly when conflicting interests become more manifest and obstruct planning and decision-making. Decentralisation, privatisation and participatory development may reduce the role of the state or local authorities in service provision. However, they do not take away their overall responsibility (Batley, 1996). The reform calls on the state and local governments to strengthen their supervisory and regulatory capacity in order to ensure orderliness.

### *3.1.3 The urban management model ideology*

The ideological dimension of an urban management model refers to the underlying philosophy or assumptions on how a society should be managed or governed. Behind these assumptions is the question of what is good for the city or society. An example of such an assumption is that the market is more capable of allocating resources (neo-liberal economic philosophy), or that Western democracy is better than others.

The ideology behind mainstream urban management thinking can be summed up in two main points: (i) the promotion of liberal democratic relations as superior to any

other, and (ii) the focus on economic development by enhancing urban productivity. Liberal democracy might be a nice idea, but is it the only system? Is it suitable to the African system? However, this is a summing up stemming from the 1990s. The ideology has changed as a result of the rise of alternative development ideas and their incorporation into mainstream urban management thinking. Urban management used to be shaped along public management lines *e.g.* with a prominent or leading role for the local government. However, the role of other actors in the running of the city – for instance in service delivery – is increasingly acknowledged.

The emphasis on urban management used to be on enhancing urban productivity, in which other objectives such as environmental protection and poverty alleviation are subsumed to the goal (Post, 1996 and 1997). It was only later that it also included concern for the environment. This strong emphasis on the enhancement of urban productivity in urban management demonstrates to some extent a single-minded economic bias at the expense of social, political and environmental considerations. Critics (*e.g.* Rees, 1992,) accuse the World Bank of being the chief exponent of this type of thinking. Although withdrawal of the state and promotion of economic liberalism might improve productivity, it is unlikely to affect those unable to share the benefits of increased economic growth. The programmes intended to alleviate urban poverty and manage the urban environment are designed to be viable, but can be implemented only if the “right” economic conditions are created (Gould, 1992; Haeley, 2002; World Bank, 2001). The poor will be waiting in vain for beneficial trickle-down effects as these fail to materialise (Nientied, 1993; Post, 1997).

Current interpretations emphasise the need for urban development to be more human-centred and contribute more to poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. This is linked to the rise of alternative development approaches, which emphasise the necessity of human-centred development, since development is not just about economic growth, but also about improvements in human’s living conditions (references!).

To sum up, the urban management ideology has two main attributes:

- a) Conventional bias towards economic growth and productivity; little attention to social and environmental aspects (mainstream rather than alternative development).
- b) Superiority of liberal democracy (good governance promotion by the Bretton Woods institutions and donors).

### **3.2 Urban governance**

The global trend towards decentralisation has focused attention on city level government as the institution responsible both for urban development and for addressing urban poverty. Yet city governments are often weak, ineffectual, and squeezed by overlapping agencies of the central state (Devas et al, 2001). In an increasingly globalised economy, alongside decentralisation and privatisation, the process of democratisation, however faltering and incomplete, has enlarged the space in which the citizens have to make their voice heard. The growing strength of civil society has provided other avenues for citizens, including the poor, to demand more, exert influence and secure benefits. These challenges call for new governance arrangements (Healey *et al.*, 2002). The "traditional" ways of managing government functions, particular in the African urban setting, hold back innovation in the economy and civil society. Some criticise the government for failing to adapt to new realities (Le Gales, 1998; Imrie and Raco, 1999). Since the mid-1990s, the idea of governance has greatly influenced the development debate. "Good governance is central to creating and sustaining an environment which fosters strong and equitable development" (World Bank, 1992 and 2000). It has progressively become a key component of development aid programmes and projects, particularly laid down in Bretton Wood institutions' and western bilateral aid agreements with developing countries.

The debate about governance has emerged from two differing camps: from radical critics of conventional liberal democracy who call for empowerment of groups and organisations outside government institutions; and from new right-wing radicals who stress the need for an enabling state and for decentralisation, privatisation and consumer orientation. Common to both orientations is hostility to large-scale central governments (Crook and Manor, 1995). The increasing concern with governance is also associated with the emergence of political conditions attached to aid programmes that require a move towards "good governance". The ideology behind a good governance programme is that existing corrupt and inefficient administrations should be replaced with those based on multi-party democracies, as a precondition for economic growth (Leftwich, 1993 and 1994).

The term governance, which is broader than government, means different things to different people or users (see Haeley, 2002; Pieterse, 2000; Stoker, 1998 and 2002). Governance encompasses a complex set of values, norms, processes and institutions, whereas government is concerned primarily with the state. Governance includes the whole range of actors within civil society, such as community-based or grass-roots organisations, NGOs, trade unions, religious organisations and businesses, both formal and informal, alongside the various branches of government

and governmental agencies, both national and local (Devas et al, 2001). It also refers to the whole range of relationships between society and the state, while government is associated primarily with top-down interventions and technocratic planning (Crook and Manor, 1995; Devas, 1999; Devas and Rakodi, 2000; McCarney et al., 1995; Paproski, 1993; Rakodi, 1999; UNCHS, 1996; World Bank, 2000 and 1992). Generally, governance can be thought of as a means to establish order among parties whose interests may conflict. In the context of a firm, these parties are the stakeholders who influence strategic direction and performance (Harper, 1999; Hitt et al., 1999).

Socio-cultural changes also generated new material demands on urban government, altering the configurations of value with which citizens judge their representatives. It is claimed that the present governance arrangements are not conducive to the kinds of demands made by citizens (Hirst, 2000). At city level as well, therefore, there is pressure on those involved in urban government to transform their policy agenda, their relations with the citizens and their position in the wider regional, national and international landscape (Healey et al., 2002).

Urban governance is primarily a steering policy. It refers to the complex set of values, norms, processes and institutions by which cities are managed (Van Dijk, 2001; Helmsing, 2000, UNCHS, 1996). It covers the local government-based relationship between various actors and stakeholders for improved social opportunity, welfare and economic efficiency in an urban setting. It is the stepping back of government either spontaneously or by force and as a result of pressure by donor organisations (World Bank, 2000). For most developing countries, the latter is the rule rather than an exception. Urban governance is also another way of achieving urban management goals (see below). It is practised in an attempt to improve state-market-society relations. An underlying supposition is that the state influences market and society, and the former itself is influenced by the latter in efforts towards good governance. Currently, interpretations of good urban governance refer to "inclusive" governance: the involvement of all stakeholders (Harpham and Boateng, 1997; Perterse, 2000; Pugh, 1999; Stoker, 1998; 2000 and 2002, UNCHS, 1996 and 2000; World Bank 2001).

Urban governance is concerned not only with policy, planning and economic production in an urban setting, but also with how these can bring about a fair distribution of goods and services to all in a democratic environment. Urban governance is about accessibility, accountability, transparency and efficiency. Frequently, urban governance is closely associated with decentralisation, privatisation, empowerment, capacity building, partnerships and enablement (Pugh, 2000). The interest shown in

urban governance by developing countries stems from the need for all actors involved in the development of these areas to rethink ways of bringing about improvement in the quality of life in their area (Harpham and Boateng, 1997). The new alignment between the state and civil society in the governance of their area constitutes the main challenge facing cities in the developing world (Aina, 1997; Gough, 1999; McCarney, 1996a) (see Section 3.2.2 on partnerships).

The process of urban governance in the developing countries has over the last two decades been shaped by three major trends: a degree of decentralisation of responsibilities from central government to local levels; the privatisation of state assets and public utilities; and an attempt to increase participation by sharing the planning process (Devas, 1999). These trends are no longer managed through government monopoly, but through a multiplicity of actors. Decentralisation has also led to a loosening of the national government's control (UNCHS, 1999).

To summarise, the key characteristics of urban governance include decentralisation, privatisation and multi-stakeholder involvement in urban planning and management.

### *3.2.1 Linking urban governance to urban management*

Urban management has developed into urban governance. Urban governance broadens urban management so as to include other actors and actions. Urban governance is a specific interpretation of, and approach to, urban management – an attempt to move it one step further and to disconnect it from the predominance of public management. Urban management and urban governance share rather the same conditions and ideology. However, while urban management continued to be conceived by the state as being the prime actor and prime representative for urban development, urban governance tries to move beyond this core role of the state by recognising the actual role and potential of other actors and arranging a wider inclusion in the governing process. Urban governance tries to break with the top-down, state-led ideas of running cities. The World Bank has moved the focus of its urban development programme from projects concerned with housing and infrastructure in the 1970s and city-wide urban management activities in the 1980s to strengthening local governments and creating good governance at the local level in the 1990s (McCarney, 1996a). Both decentralisation and democratisation are considered crucial elements in improving governance. They are seen as a way of reducing the size and power of the central state and of improving the accountability of development planning and administration. The management of cities in the Third World is no longer seen as a monopoly of formal government institutions, but forces outside the state also have a significant role to play (McCarney *et al.*,

1995). The emergence of powerful forces at local level within civil society is coupled with national and international support for decentralisation and democratisation, which then leads to new forms of local governance and local ways of solving urban problems (Gough, 1999; McCarney, 1996b; Stren, 1996; Swilling, 1997b; UNDP, 1993; UNCHS, 1996;).

Furthermore, the world in which urban managers function is changing fast and the challenges to be met by local officials are shifting accordingly. The body of knowledge and experience of how to deal with different urban issues is also growing rapidly. New responses are constantly being tried and evaluated. Theoretical developments and practical experiences contribute to a better understanding of the urban development process and the possibilities to influence it (van Dijk, 2001). Three main developments have emerged in the urban development scene:

- the changing role of the government in urban management;
- the increasing role of the private sector in urban development;
- the increasing importance of public-private partnerships (ppp) in providing urban infrastructure and housing, and improving the delivery of urban services (Schubeler, 1996).

The role of governments is changing very fast from one of providers to one of facilitators and enablers. New legal frameworks are created as result of decentralisation and privatisation policies. New priorities are emerging in urban management, such as the need to formulate and implement economic policies at the city level to promote local economic development, to address changing needs due to technological innovations, to address urban poverty reduction actions at local government level and to design new forms of urban governance. Decentralisation and privatisation create space for a large number of actors to participate in the urban development process and to promote participatory decision-making and greater transparency. This will make both public and private initiatives more successful and enable new partnerships and institutional arrangements to emerge.

### *3.2.2 Partnerships and new institutional arrangements*

In recent times, partnerships have become very important in the context of ensuring good governance in the urban setting. The current development debate pays much attention to the potentials of partnerships or co-management arrangements between actors in realising urban development (Baud, 2000; Helmsing, 2000; Stoker, 1998 and 2000). Partnerships can be defined as enduring, mutually beneficial relationships between two or more actors based on a written or verbal agreement, and having a concrete, physical manifestation (in the case of waste management, such things as garbage bins, transfer stations, disposal sites and collection vehicles).

Partnerships involve complex political, organisational and financial interrelationships among the partners. The characteristics of a partnership presuppose that certain preconditions have to be fulfilled before it can be fruitful: a partnership can function only if there is trust between the partners, mutual accountability (Baud, 2000) and leadership.

The following general characteristics for most partnerships can be identified:

- A public-private partnership involves two or more actors (government at all levels, different kinds of private sector actors and different kinds of civil society organisations), at least one of which should be public actor (Batley, 1996; Pierre, 1998; Stoker, 1998).
- Governance-related or public interest partnerships can serve different purposes, but are meant to contribute either directly or indirectly to a public goal (Baud and Post, 2001; Gonzales III *et al.*, 2000). This distinguishes them from exclusively commercial relationships (Peters, 1998).
- Each partner is a principal capable of bargaining on its own behalf, without the need to consult with other forms of authority.
- Partnerships can occur in different degrees of formalisation: including formal and informal arrangements, *e.g.* those that are supported by the rule of law, and those that are embedded in established social practices (Baud and Post, 2001).
- Each of the partners brings something to the partnership, including the transfer of material or immaterial resources. The resources can be in the form of financial capital or can be human, physical, organisational, political, intellectual and socio-cultural.
- The partnership is mutually beneficial without assuming equality between the actors.
- A partnership implies a shared responsibility for the outcome of the activities.

Partnerships are formed for various reasons. UNCHS (1993) distinguishes between the objectives, the internal dynamics, the socio-economic and political context, and the outcomes of partnerships. In basic urban services, the core objective of partnerships is to provide these services in a more efficient and effective way. However, the overall goal may very well be subordinate to the particular objectives, needs or interests of the actors. In reality, therefore, the challenge is to look for compatibility of objectives, for example between the profit motive of the private sector and the community desire of affordability and equitable coverage.

The *internal dynamics* of partnerships refers to the nature of the collaboration between different social groups having different values, concerns and resources. Although collaboration is rarely on a truly equal footing, concrete projects and inter-

ventions through partnerships can help to manage differences in power and other social inequalities, as well as build new norms, values and practices that contribute towards long-term development goals (Johnson and Wilson, 2000: 1995). In this respect, the concept of social capital – reciprocity within and between individuals or groups based on trust derived from social ties – has emerged. Social capital helps to explain the varying results in different communities, when given the same impetus to perform.<sup>24</sup> In other words, differences in social capital lead to different degrees of synergy<sup>25</sup> in the outcome of partnerships (Baud, 2000; Evans, 1996; Ostrom, 1996). Local governments need to develop a range of partnerships to address different shortcomings in the provision of environmental services and the different needs of communities and areas (Nunan and Satterthwaite, 1999).

As far as the *context of partnerships* is concerned, there are many external macro-level factors over which local partners have very little control, but that do influence the nature and outcomes of partnerships. It is generally believed that market-led macro-economic policies, decentralised systems of administration and institutionalised forms of popular participation (democratic conditions) create a favourable environment for the rise and performance of partnerships (Helmsing, 2000; Post, 1997; UNCHS, 1996).

Finally, the *outcome* of partnerships is the ultimate test of their usefulness as a development tool.

Partnerships between state and non-state actors can mobilise resources, reduce risks, contribute to economies of scale in production and enhance service delivery (Baud, 2001; Helmsing, 2000). Of all government actors, local government is becoming the most important in local governance and its importance will increase in the face of the globalisation process and the rise of inter-city competition (Schuurman, 1997). Since local government cannot meet the challenges of local development on their own, it engages in partnership arrangements with other actors in the urban arena. These partnerships seek to enhance the effectiveness of actions by (a) taking on board all relevant stakeholders and avoiding problems of exclusion and fragmentation, (b) recognising the complex social dynamics surrounding interventions and taking these into account in the design and implementation of actions and, most importantly, (c) saving on costs through resource input and commitment of civil society actors and the synergy resulting from combining skills and re-

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<sup>24</sup> See also the World Bank Working Papers on social capital.

<sup>25</sup> Synergy refers to the win-win situation that may arise from collaboration. According to Evans (1996: 1120-21) it requires complementarity of inputs by the actors involved as well as embeddedness, that is, ties of loyalty and trust that connect the actors.

sources of various actors (Johnson and Wilson, 2000: 1892). In relation to the latter, Baud (2001) points out that a wider range of actors, including the public sector, the large-scale business sector, small-scale enterprises, NGOs and CBOs, professional associations and universities are part of the knowledge infrastructure. CBO and NGO organisations are working together across national boundaries, "learning from each other's best practices" and promoting international advocacy for empowerment. Furthermore, there is a strongly normative claim made for the participation inherent in partnerships.

Obviously, this is a very optimistic view on the potentials of partnerships. In the real world, there are many obstacles, such as the unequal power relations between external actors and project beneficiaries, the difficulty of ensuring wider participation, and the transaction costs involved in dealing with a variety of actors (Baud, 2000). Although partnerships provide each of the actors involved with benefits, this does not imply equality among them, for in most relationships like this issues of power are at stake. It should also be noted that, even though partnerships might suggest a degree of stability, they should be seen as expressions of people's practices that have an inherent tendency to evolve, adapt and dissolve in response to changing circumstances (Baud and Post, 2001; Hordijk, 2001).

### *3.2.3 From privatisation to public-private partnerships*

Several sorts of joint arrangement can be identified where state agencies and private bodies act in mutual endeavour, working in parallel rather than dividing roles hierarchically (Batley, 1996). Partnership in joint schemes is most likely to occur where there is a strong possibility that opportunities for private investors will be generated by government involvement. The public sector's contribution might be either to undertake necessary investments which private firms are unable to perform due to their large scale, high risk, or the difficulty of charging consumers. Presumably, there should be an equal conviction on the governmental side that there will be public gains from private investment. In the urban sector, these conditions seem most likely to exist in the case of the acquisition of land and the installation of infrastructure for housing and commercial development (Batley, 1996).

Proponents of private sector participation claim it generates increased efficiency in service delivery, a more rapid and efficient decision-making process, reduced financial burdens on governments for wages, fewer restrictions in work and hiring practices and more flexibility in adjusting the types and levels of services to changing needs (Batley, 1996; Cointreau-Levine, 1994; Lee, 1997; Rondinelli, 1993 and 1997; World Bank, 2000). There is, however, still an ongoing debate about the desirability and efficacy of privatisation (Rondinelli and Kasarda, 1993). It is obvious

that the government remains responsible for guaranteeing a minimal level of basic services, especially in case full cost-recovery is impossible. Therefore, in case of privatisation, the government maintains a role in order to supervise and monitor the performance of the private-for-profit sector, to ensure equitable access to services for all urban residents and to rate performance and unit costs (Bernstein, 1993). Governments very often talk about private-for-profit sector involvement only in terms of "formal sector" companies and fail to recognise the crucial role played by informal operators, community groups and NGOs (Hardoy *et al.*, 2001), which have been playing very important roles in the provision of many essential social services. This bias results in a preference for large-scale, technocratic solutions to the problems of service delivery. The test of alternative arrangements for service provision must be how efficiently and effectively they produce and deliver services (Batley, 1996).

In most public-private models, there has been an implicit bias against small-scale local enterprises. Local authorities prefer to contract to large-scale enterprises or foreign companies because they can use legal sanction if they do not comply with the terms of the contract. Some local authorities do so because of a perceived "prestige" they derive from such large-scale projects (Baud *et al.*, 2000; Baud, 2000; Post, 2002 and 1999; Rakodi, 1993). Such partnerships are also more likely to provide certain financial advantages to government officials (Baken, 2000; Batley, 1996; Baud, 2000). It is widely accepted that the combined resources of public, private and civil society might produce outcomes towards sustainable development more than the sum of the outcomes of the individual partners. This factor greatly influences the call for movement from privatisation to public-private partnerships. Partnerships facilitate synergy, the pooling of resources, defending the interests of the most vulnerable, providing safety nets, safeguarding against private monopolies with regard to the delivery of essential services and possible abuse of the market in resource allocation and the promoting of joint-ventures for certain services such as water supply and waste management, which are crucial to human survival but which cannot be wholly privatised. Partnerships therefore enable combinations of different actors in order to facilitate a better delivery of essential public services.

The concept of partnership is the coming together of a large number of actors with a common intent to provide a service, despite their different interests. Co-production might help change the views of social scientists towards the hypothetical "Great Divide" of public versus private sector (Ostrom, 1996). However, certain services can best be provided solely by the state, others solely by the private sector and yet another group of services could best be provided through public-private partnerships.

### *3.2.4 Challenges for partnerships*

Within urban environmental management there is often a call for partnership to put resources and interests together in order to allow the system to work more effectively and efficiently. The argument put forward by academics and researchers in the international arena, which is striking a sympathetic chord in political circles, is that partnership is the way out of the problem facing urban managers, particularly in developing countries, of how to provide effective and efficient public services while still caring for the environment. However, there is still a gap between the development of ideas and the translation of these ideas into practice. Partnerships pose tremendous challenges, such as:

- the development of mutual trust;
- leadership capabilities and experience among weaker partners;
- accountability;
- inclusiveness to the partners (*e.g.* the local authorities and contractors often take part in
- the decision-making involving contracts, while consumers are left out);
- from a top-down to a bottom-up approach to decision-making;
- a degree of autonomy of the partners.

If the development system is not tailored and officials are not trained, partnerships can become counterproductive. Urban managers should also listen to the people in the art of mutual consultation wherever possible. The old administrators have been trained in a certain way and are so accustomed to working that way that they do not want to change things nor adopt other views, reforms notwithstanding. They think people should listen to them rather than vice-versa. As Pieterse (2001) notes, leadership by city authorities and mayors can make an enormous difference to the preparedness of municipal governments to come to terms with their new role in a new context. The twin challenges of urbanisation and globalisation present an opportunity for city governments to rethink fundamentally how they function and how they intend to develop their localities (WDR, 2000). The "business as usual" approach is a recipe for disaster.

Effective development requires partnerships at different levels of government, the private sector, donor groups and civil society. National governments need to provide the guidance agencies and organisations require to coordinate their efforts to remove bottlenecks to development (WDR, 2000: 3).

### **3.3 Urban management and the environment**

A successful city is one that meets multiple goals such as a healthy living environment and a congenial working environment for its inhabitants. This includes not only a clean and safe physical environment and access to food, shelter and adequate income, but also satisfying work and accessible and fair education opportunities for all citizens (Baud *et al.*, 2001; WHO, 2001). This can be realised, among other things, by organising sufficient as well as efficient water supply and by providing for sanitation and garbage collection and disposal, drains, paved roads and other forms of infrastructure and services that are essential for the health of all. A healthy city also provides an open and responsible government that involves people in making decisions about their own lives. Finally, a successful city also has an ecologically sustainable relationship between the demands of consumers and businesses and the resources, waste sinks and ecosystems on which they draw. Achieving these goals implies an understanding of the link between the city's economy and the constructed environment, the physical environment in which they are located (including soils, water resources and the climate) and the biological environment (including local flora and fauna), including the changes therein. Therefore, the notion of a "healthy city" has often been linked to economy, equity and environment. In this section, we will focus on the environment, linking up with the global debate on sustainable development.

#### *3.3.1 Coming to terms with sustainable development*

Urban management and the environment are issues which have gained considerable prominence on the political agenda. They range from local concerns about land use or recycling to global problems discussed at major meetings of world leaders such as the Rio Conference in 1992, the Istanbul Conference in 1996 and the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, where major policy issues such as Agenda 21, habitat and climate change were outlined. These issues are closely connected to the global debate on the "sustainable development" of our planet, which has become a matter of great concern. As outlined in the global Agenda 21 of the Earth Summit – the blueprint for sustainable development – "...the growth in the world population and production combined with unsustainable consumption patterns is placing an increasingly severe burden on the life supporting capacities of our planet. These interactive processes affect the use of land, water, air, energy, and other resources" (UNCED, 1992). Since the publication of the *Limits to growth* (Meadow *et al.*, 1972), which contains the first global analysis of the discussion on environment and development, several related global events that followed, including the publication of "our Common Future" (WCED, 1987), have raised awareness and contributed to the concept of sustainable development. The main argument in the debate on sustainable development is motivated by emerging global and domestic concerns about

how to ensure that socio-economic and technological developments, and particularly consumption patterns and waste disposal practices, meet current needs in all regions of the world without compromising the needs of future generations. It was also inspired by the premise that economic and other development policies should be based on six principles of sustainable development, namely internalisation of environmental costs, risk aversion strategies, intergenerational equity, intra-generational equity, conservation of biodiversity and enlightened institutions.

In recent times, discussions on sustainable development have focused on a wide range of issues, such as economic impact assessment of environmental regulations, economic modelling in response to global changes, macroeconomic policy and economic growth, trade liberalisation and investment in services. In this chapter, we will limit the discussion to the impact of the sustainable development debate on urban environmental management in a poor developing country. We will look at why urban (environmental) management and partnerships have become major issues within the overall debate on sustainable development.

The concept of sustainable development has become a very important policy tool in development circles since the 1990s. This growing interest was fuelled by serious concerns about the environmental implications of human activities. Despite increasing interest in and knowledge of environmental limits and the debates about it since the late 1970s, the development debate generally ignored these limits because the ecological concerns had not yet entered the political arena in the 1980s. By then, development debates were dominated by how to respond to debt repayment crises and economic stagnation in a political context that emphasised the downsizing of government and a greater importance to market forces and export-driven development. Environmental concerns were largely ignored. Economic stagnation or decline in many nations forced them to focus attention on the macro-conditions for economic stability and prosperity. But the publication of *Our Common Future* in 1987 and *Agenda 21* in 1992 helped to bring key environmental concerns back to the forefront of international and national debates that development had to consider.

Since the publication of these reports, considerable progress has been made in policies and practice towards sustainable development goals. However, those whose primary concern was "environment" tended to ignore development concerns, while those whose primary concern was "development" ignored environment issues or misunderstood the different dimensions of depleting environmental capital. This dichotomy in emphasis tended to create more confusion. As Hardoy *et al.* (2001) pointed out, the most common distortion of the concept of sustainable development is to ignore the "development" aspects altogether. The concept of sustainable de-

velopment has encouraged "development" to consider its ecological implications. It has also come to include a concern for meeting human needs and by considering the underlying economic, social and political causes of poverty and deprivation. The current unsustainable lifestyles of people, particularly those in rich income countries, and insatiable human demands in the midst of scarcity and depletion of resources call for sustainable development.

The term "sustainability" is most widely used with reference to ecological sustainability *i.e.* in terms of whether the burden on natural resources by a specific project or broader programme of human activities and its other environmental impacts (of, for instance, the generation of waste) can be sustained (Hardoy *et al.*, 2001; Pugh, 1996). This is also the way it will be used in this study. The use of the term is based on the understanding that there are ecological limits – for instance to the natural resources that are necessary for economic development and to natural systems whose functioning is affected by building and infrastructure and by the discharge of waste from production and consumption.

The concept of sustainable development is very important for an analysis of the complementarities and conflicts between different environmental and development goals and for demanding recognition of the finite nature of many natural resources and systems. However, the term "sustainable development" is used so loosely and given so many different meanings by different people that it often creates confusion. One of the main ambiguities and sources of disagreement in the use of, or debate on, the term "sustainable development" or "sustainability" is *what* is to be sustained *i.e.* particular natural resources, particular areas (or ecosystems) or particular human activities or institutions? And, if we know what is to be sustained, at what scale is it to be sustained? Locally, at city level, at national level or globally?

### *3.3.2 Local responses to global demands for sustainable development*

In the aftermath of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, which endorsed the global action plan "Agenda 21", local authorities were called upon to develop their local contribution in the form of a Local Agenda 21. A Local Agenda 21 is basically an integrated urban development or local action plan that combines the different economic, social and environmental goals as defined by the discussion on sustainable development. The call for developing Local Agenda 21 has led to processes of participatory planning in a wide variety of cities, both in the developed and the developing countries (Environment and Urbanisation, 1998 and 1999; ICLEI, 1999; O'Riordan and Voisey, 1998; UNCHS, 1999). Local Agenda 21 is a relatively new planning tool and a new approach to urban environmental management, in which partnership arrange-

ments play a prominent role. The increasing involvement of many different actors in the urban planning process has been enhanced by new approaches such as "action planning" (Barros, 1991; Hordijk, 2000: 22) and "strategic planning", using city-wide consultations (UMP, 1999).

In the wake of the creation of Local Agenda 21 programmes, a strong and growing movement emerged that asserts that the management of cities is in urgent need of revision in order to take adequate account of environmental problems (Atkinson *et al.*, 1999). In developing countries, however, the emphasis has been primarily on how to mitigate the negative environmental side effects arising from the inadequate provision of services often referred to as the "brown agenda" in a rapid urban growth. This "brown agenda" refers to environmental health problems associated with the lack of safe drinking water, sanitation and drainage, inadequate solid and hazardous waste management, uncontrolled emissions of industry, traffic and low-grade domestic fuels, etc. (Bartone *et al.*, 1994: 5).

### *3.3.3 Ecological footprints of cities*

Urban development leaves tremendous ecological footprints (Rees, 2000). Cities transform environments not only within the built-up area but also at considerable distances around them. They require a high input of resources, such as fresh water, fuels, land and all the goods and raw materials that their populations and enterprises require. The more populous the city and richer its inhabitants, the greater the demand for resources, and in general, the larger the area from which these are drawn (Hardoy *et al.*, 2001; Rees, 2000). Water needed for industrial processes, for supplying residential and commercial buildings, for transporting sewage and for other purposes is returned to rivers, lakes or the sea at a far lower quality than that originally supplied. Solid waste collected from city households and businesses is usually disposed of on sites in the region around the city while much of the uncollected solid waste generally finds its way into water bodies, thereby adding to pollution. Air pollution generated by city-based enterprises or consumers is often transferred to the surrounding regions through acid rain. Cities are therefore major centres of resource degradation (Hardoy *et al.*, 2001).

The total area of land required to sustain a city is several times greater than that contained within the city boundaries or the associated built-up area. In effect, through trade and natural flows of ecological goods and services, all cities appropriate the carrying capacity of other areas. Prosperous cities can transport their waste and dispose of it beyond their own region. In extreme cases, they ship it abroad (Hardoy *et al.*, 2001), particularly to poor areas. However, this is meeting with resistance from local residence in the areas where such waste is transported to

or dumped. This clearly shows that activities in cities are not sustainable and that cities depend on others to survive.

### **3.4 Urban environmental management**

The concept of ecological footprints shows why urban environmental management is more than urban management. It shows one of the weaknesses of urban management thinking and prevents us from confining all attention to the city's management as such. The concept of ecological footprints also forces us to look beyond the city's borders. It brings the "green" and "brown" agenda into the debate and shows the need and possibilities of bridging the gap between them (see Hordijk, 2000; Satterthwaite and Macgraham, 1996). In this section we will discuss how this is reflected in the concept of urban environmental management.

As seen in the previous section, the contribution of cities to environmental problems is quite enormous. Environmental degradation increasingly threatens the development potential of cities and directly impedes socio-economic development. Failing to deal with the problem today will lead to a much greater problem (and higher costs) in the future. For development to be truly sustainable cities must find better ways of balancing the needs and pressures of urban growth and demand with the environmental opportunities. However, in reality, sustainable cities do not exist. All cities are inherently unsustainable because they consume and create much more waste and degradation than the environment can replenish and than sinks can absorb. Most cities therefore now strive to make a transition towards sustainable development (Hordijk, 2000).

It was only in the 1980s that researchers, academicians, development organisations, urban inhabitants and those who have responsibility for managing the cities (Atkinson *et al.*, 1999) started focusing on the possibility of mitigating these problems. As in the case of urban management, the concept of urban environmental management originated with the rise of managerial thinking in urban development among neo-liberal economists and planners. Urban environmental management is linked to urban management and sustainable development. In simple terms, urban environmental management is urban management with a special emphasis on the environment.

Despite growing interest in urban environmental management in both developmental circles and among academicians and researchers, a coherent analytical framework for analysing urban environmental management issues still does not exist (Frijns and Mengers, 1999). Various attempts at defining urban environmental management only try to explain the term (*e.g.* Bartone, 1996; Hardoy *et al.*, 2001; Mitlin, 1992; Pugh, 1996, 1999 and 2000; Safier, 1992; Satterthwaite, 1999, 1998

and 1997). Even though all these attempts include a link to the conceptual framework of urban management, urban management itself lacks a clear conceptual definition (Pugh, 1996 and 2000; Stren, 1993; Werna, 1995). But what is urban environment management and what are its competing views? What is its rationale? Why is it necessary? In this study, we refer to urban environmental management as a body of ideas for managing the urban environment within the context of sustainable development.

Urban environmental management can be understood as being part of the overall urban management framework. It involves the planning, design, operation and implementation of related urban environmental policies, procedures and technologies to address urban environmental problems from both the "green" and "brown" agenda. Adequate urban environmental management addresses both agendas. This makes it even more difficult to define it adequately. It cannot be confined to the "green" agenda issues of preserving natural resources (striving for sustainability in an ecological sense), but has to include development objectives, such as access to environmental services ("brown" agenda issues). Thus, urban environmental management is more than natural resource management in an urban context. Urban environmental management has to deal with both the goals of ecological sustainability as well as one of the development goals of sustainable development, *i.e.* access to basic services.

In relation to the different agendas, we can distinguish between a narrow and broader view of urban environmental management. The narrow view – also referred to as mainstream or neo-liberal – combines growth and productivity with environmental protection focusing environmental concerns mainly on "brown" agenda problems. Under the narrow view, "green" agenda issues are neglected and environmental problems are considered manageable. Though mainstream development only embraces the "brown" agenda, it is often labelled as urban environmental management. But urban environmental management in the broad sense also includes the "green" agenda<sup>26</sup>: which cares, for instance, about the carrying capacities of sinks.<sup>27</sup> Central to mainstream urban environmental management thinking is the idea that economic growth is a necessary precondition for improving the environment. A major thrust of mainstream thinking is the linkage of an improved urban environment with urban growth and productivity. It results from the belief that the market

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<sup>26</sup> See Satterthwaite and Macgraham in a book edited by Pugh (1996) on ways of bringing the brown and green agenda together, *i.e.* bridging the gap.

<sup>27</sup> A sink is a reservoir that uptakes a chemical element or compound from another part of its cycle. For example, soil and trees tend to act as natural sinks for carbon dioxide. Each year, hundreds of billions of tons of carbon in the form of CO<sub>2</sub> are absorbed by oceans, soils, and trees.

mechanism ensures economic growth, which enables public and private actors to invest in the improvement of the environment (World Bank, 2000). It is a belief that people will only be able to invest more in improving the environment when they are better off economically. Mainstream thinking thus sees a synergetic relation between growth and the protection of the environment, with growth as a necessary condition.

Many writers contest this narrow view (*e.g.* Hardoy *et al.*, 2001). According to them, it is the lifestyle of rich-income cities or areas, in particular, which forms a major threat to the environment. Whilst the narrow view mainly follows a business-like public management approach, the broad view attempts to combine ecological sustainability with a focus on human needs fulfilment and major changes in productivity and consumption patterns, notably in the North. The alternative view on urban environmental management (*i.e.* the broader view) thus focuses on achieving a higher level of environmental considerations, while satisfying basic human needs, thus bridging the gap between the “brown” and “green” agenda. In this broader sense, urban environmental management concerns the management of human and material resources and processes that convert these resources into various useable products and services and their by-products (including waste). Urban environmental management, in the broad view, is also concerned with the effects of these processes (which may be negative or positive) within and beyond the urban area and their contribution to sustainable development.

In theory, urban environmental management should develop from a genuine sustainable development perspective. If one takes Satterthwaite’s (2001) concept of sustainable development<sup>28</sup>, then urban environmental management should clearly be something qualitatively different from the “urban productivity plus” scenario as propagated by the World Bank.

However, developing countries want environmental policies to reflect their own priorities and not curtail their legitimate desire for economic growth. They mostly adhere to the narrow view of urban environmental management. They have shifted the environmental focus to issues of the so-called “brown-agenda”, *i.e.* water supply, sanitation, solid waste collection and housing (UNCHS, 1996). Urban environmental management in terms of satisfying criteria of sustainable development is the exception rather than the rule. In practice, therefore, urban environmental management is

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<sup>28</sup> According to Satterthwaite (2001) the concept of sustainable development means that development should consider its ecological implications. Furthermore, development should also include a concern for meeting human needs by considering the underlying economic, social and political causes of poverty and deprivation.

urban management with sometimes no more than a symbolic concern for the environment. This environmental concern is usually not more than an add-on. City administrators do not really think in terms of sustainable development and do not operate in terms of the "green" agenda (*i.e.* the agenda of ecological sustainability). The major thrust of urban environmental management in practice remains (i) to promote urban economic prosperity and (ii) improve urban environmental services.

Urban environmental management comes at a price. Given their magnitude, it is reasonable to ask whether the so-called "improvements" justify current expenditures on environmental quality. This is the familiar mainstream idea: protection of the environment must satisfy economic criteria rather than sustainable development criteria; a sort of cost-benefit analysis. The cost of additional improvements in environmental quality is generally increasing. Secondly, there is a growing feeling that while there are still serious threats to be addressed, the marginal benefits of further regulation are diminishing, even while the marginal costs are increasing. Thirdly, standards need to be set with at least one eye on regulations in other countries, in order to be competitive in attracting investment and creating jobs. Finally, while pollution is still seen as something to be avoided, it is no longer widely viewed as a symptom of moral weakness but rather as an unfortunate by-product of our industrial system that has to be controlled. Whilst some critics feel environmental decision-making should never be reduced to a mere economic calculation, others see nothing wrong with asking how much is being spent and what we are getting for our regulatory money, *i.e.* a sort of input-output analysis (Potney, 1998). However, there are many things which are difficult to put a market price on, though they are very important to human survival and environmental sustainability. This is exactly what a more ecological view on sustainable development, hence the broader view on urban environmental management, emphasises. The environmental agenda needed in urban management should centre on enhancing the capacity of the city authorities, professional groups, NGOs and community-organisations to identify and address their environmental problems (Hardoy *et al.*, 2001). If there is no proper control over public goods, then it is the environment that suffers.

There are many issues concerning the environmental impacts of cities that have to be dealt with at other spatial levels than the city, *i.e.* at national and international levels. If this does not happen, urban environmental management would be in vain. If, for example, there are no appropriate laws at the national level, the local authority will be operating in a vacuum. The simultaneous or supportive actions at other spatial levels are preconditions to be fulfilled to make urban environmental management work. Much of the action required to actualise urban environmental management depends on decisions and actions in the national political arena – national

laws, plus regulations and controlling bodies. If, for instance, a proper institutional framework is not put in place, it is the local level that suffers.

### **3.5 Conclusions**

The task involved in urban management and the environment is huge. Since it is widely acknowledged that neither the city authorities alone, nor the private sector can provide all the essential services, it is imperative to pool all resources for the common good through inclusive governance. Partnerships between state and non-state actors can help to mobilise resources, reduce risks and contribute to economies of scale in the production of goods and services (see Baud, 2000; Hordijk, 2001; Post and Obirih-Opareh, 2002). Current policies of decentralisation and privatisation are aimed at creating appropriate institutional arrangements to enable the public and private actors to work towards achieving a common goal with better results. Government and non-public agents should team up to provide economic infrastructure for development and efficient service delivery. Partnerships are major tools in urban environmental management policies, linking directly to the governance perspective. They are based on the complementarity of inputs and require certain conditions to be fulfilled, such as trust and the autonomy of partners. There are many types of partnerships, perhaps even more than actually discussed in literature, involving a broad range of actors, arrangements, purposes and outcome.

In this chapter, we have seen that urban environmental management is very similar to urban management. The two concepts are based on similar principles, the most important difference being that urban environmental management looks further beyond the city boundaries, especially in terms of the environmental consequences of urban development. In practice, urban environmental management is broader than urban management because of its concern for the environment. In the case of urban management, environmental concerns are narrowed down to "brown agenda" problems (*i.e.* environmental health issues), often paying only lip-service to environmental concerns.

A more principled approach to urban management tries to link urban environmental management to sustainable development and sees sustainable development as meeting both human needs and satisfying considerations of ecological sustainability. Such an approach enhances different patterns of production and consumption and moves from a public management idea to an urban governance perspective.

We have seen that we can only genuinely speak of urban environmental management if the following characteristics apply:

- Satisfaction of the “brown” agenda, notably access to decent housing and services.
- Healthy working conditions and a healthy living environment.
- A development pattern that reduces the use of natural resources and does not deplete sinks and hence respects ecosystems and biodiversity.

With respect to the process, urban environmental management seeks to include all actors in planning, decision-making and implementation as well as integrate different sectors of the economy.

