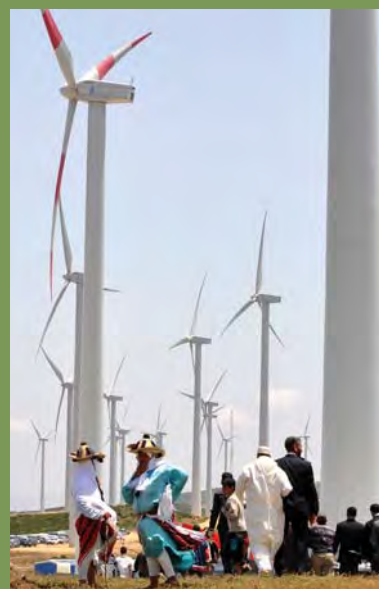# Green Infrastructure for Sustainable Urban Development in Africa

John Abbott

Green Infrastructure for Sustainable Urban Development in Africa

This book shows for the first time how green infrastructure can work in an African urban context. On one level it provides a major rethinking of the role of infrastructure in urban society since the creation of networked infrastructure in the early 20th Century. On another, it explores the changing paradigms of urban development through the fundamental question of how decisions are made.

With a focus on Africa's fast-growing secondary towns, where 70% of the urban population live, the book explains how urban infrastructure provides the key to the relationship between economic development and social equity, through the mediation of natural resources. Adopting this view enables investment to be channelled more effectively to provide the engine for economic growth, while providing equitable services for all residents. At the same time, the management of resource flows integrates the metabolism of the city into the wider ecosystem. This vision leads to a new way of thinking about infrastructure, giving clear definition to the concept of Green Infrastructure.

Indigenous solutions are needed to address the failure of urban development in Africa, which is due, in large measure, to the use of inappropriate Western development models. The history of control over Africa's intellectual space by Western countries and external agencies continues through current planning methodologies and the influence of international organisations. Addressing the issue of how Africans regain control is a prerequisite to tackling the decisions that define the continent's long-term development.

On the basis of research gathered throughout an extensive career, John Abbott draws in particular from his experience in Ethiopia to demonstrate the ways in which infrastructure needs to respond to the economies, societies and natural environments of 21st Century urban Africa.

John Abbott is an international consultant specialising in the management of urban infrastructure, most recently with the government of Ethiopia. Over his career he has worked in local government, NGOs, the private sector and academia, where he was Professor of Urban Engineering at the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Green Infrastructure for Sustainable Urban Development in Africa

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This book draws on experience that covers several decades and has benefited from interactions with many people over that time. With each interaction I have learned something new and would like to offer my thanks and appreciation to everyone, recognising that the list is too great to cover every individual by name. At the same time, there have been a number of specific experiences that have had a major impact on the way I see this world of urban development, particularly in the smaller towns. These fall into three stages. First there was my community-based infrastructure work of the 1980s that began after the South African government changed its forced removals policy. The experience of working with civic associations, both through and after the State of Emergency that was imposed in the mid-1980s, was transforming. In particular, I would like to acknowledge here Mr Zwane, chair of the Kwa Thandeka civic, and his committee; the residents' committee of Ramakodi in the Winterveld; the civic association of Langa, Uitenhage informal settlement near Port Elizabeth, and colleagues at PLANACT, an inspirational development NGO during difficult political times.

The second period was in the 1990s working on informal settlement upgrading in Cape Town. Here I would like to thank Mr Mvumvu, the chair of the New Rest informal settlement Civic Association, for all our work together on upgrading; Siviwe Matika, in memoriam, without whose political influence, support and involvement the work would never have advanced to create a new methodology for informal settlement upgrading; my students of the time Iuma Martinez, David Douglas and Nic Graham; and my friend and colleague Ivo Imperato, currently with the World Bank in Mozambique, who facilitated and supported the linkage between Cape Town and Belo Horizonte in Brazil and the transfer of upgrading practices.

The third phase was in the 2000s working in Ethiopia. This provided the catalyst to finally write this book. My thanks go first to my close colleague and friend Ato Fikreyohanes Yadessa, for his hard work, unfailing support and immense insight; to all in the Ministry of Works and Urban

The failure of western intervention in Africa

Introduction

This book is written on two levels, which will be explored interactively. On one level this is a book about urban infrastructure, and its potential to support a sustainable urban future in the rapidly urbanising countries of sub-Saharan Africa. On a broader level, though, it is a book about the nature of decision-making in development, and ultimately an exploration of how much 'freedom' African countries really have when taking decisions that affect their own development. That African cities (and countries) are underdeveloped is not in question; the real question, which has still not been answered almost fifty years after the majority of African countries achieved independence, is why.

In the first thirty years or so, it was primarily Marxist academics and practitioners who sought to explore this question, and they had a relatively easy task, since the spectre of imperialist hegemony still loomed large in Africa, as did the spectres of both neo-liberalism and neo-colonialism. However, twenty years further on, these arguments about physical and economic domination become ever more difficult to sustain. The condition can no longer be defined solely in terms of a construct based upon the overwhelming power of a dominant economic system. Social concerns are higher up the agenda and the world is more concerned with how to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

And yet the niggling doubt persists. Are we really living in a world where African governments are the masters of their own decisions? Is the answer really as simple as abandoning aid in favour of direct foreign investment? On the other hand, if there is some truth in this belief that sub-Saharan Africa has never fully escaped from colonialism, how can this possibly be justified after so long a period? The problem with the Marxist analysis is that it constantly sought to rationalise events primarily within an economic framework, even if this meant adjusting what it saw to fit with what it believed. This is understandable, since it would not be Marxist otherwise; but it can be limiting. But even after Marxism lost its power to

question, it is still economic analysis that dominates the debate, as the book *Dead Aid* by Dambisa Moyo (2009) shows.

There is an alternative view, though. None of us can claim to be totally free from a value system; that is an integral part of what it means to be human. In this case – and it is important to say this upfront – the ideas and beliefs that underpin this book derive from a value system embedded in the teaching of Keir Hardie, the great Scottish social reformer, whose work provided the moral framework and the social bedrock of our household when I was a child.

That does not imply a socialist perspective, as many might immediately conclude. Such a term is, in any case, fairly meaningless in the world of the twenty-first century, regardless of whether one regrets, or rejoices in, its passing. What it does imply is that the focus of the analysis lies within the social sphere, rather than the economic arena. So while this background does carry its own 'baggage', it at least allows an exploration of the wider development arena outside the confines of a dominating economic construct, and this has enabled an intellectual freedom of thought which, it is hoped, will enable this book to take a different approach to African urban development from those written previously.

Why infrastructure?

The subtext of the book, as is reflected in its title, is urban governance, with a specific focus on infrastructure governance. But governance cannot be separated from the development process (though it often is); hence, it is that process which is central to the study. Ultimately, the objective, as indicated at the beginning, is the creation of a sustainable urban infrastructure base that can provide the foundation for ongoing development, and a basis for sound and effective governance.

At first glance, while urban infrastructure may appear to be an unusual perspective from which to explore wider socio-political issues, it does have its own rationality. First, the failure to provide urban infrastructure is one of the great development failures of the twentieth century, not only in sub-Saharan Africa but in many other developing countries. And yet to date, none of the arguments for this failure, be they rapid urban growth, low income levels or high costs, are fully convincing. So, there has to be another answer, which then begs the question as to whether we are looking at infrastructure in the right way.

Obviously this is not a simple issue. Management and operational capacity constraints are clearly critical issues, and have a role to play, but they are not the core issue. It has then been proposed that what we are dealing with here is a lack of political will on the part of African leaders, a view that UN-Habitat (2008) puts forward when discussing the failure of countries in Africa to decentralise. Again perhaps a possibility; but this too

is questionable, given that the failure is widespread across so many diverse countries.

There is, however, another option, namely that the failure is linked to external interventions. This argument has been discredited to some degree by the ideological dimension of this position, which has generally been situated within an economic discourse. Yet there is a need to look at the role of external actors much more critically than has been done to date. In doing this, however, we need to start from a clearly stated position, which is a recognition that we are no longer dealing with an exploitative development scenario here, regardless of whether or not this was the case under colonialism. On the contrary, it has to be assumed that the majority of those working in the field of development (speaking now specifically of external actors) are well intentioned, knowledgeable, at least within their own specialisations, and genuinely believe they have something to contribute to the development process in Africa.

Finally, we have a third option, which asks the question: what if there is simply too much external input? This debate, to the extent that it exists, tends to focus on the oppressive impact of aid. This has been a recurring theme in the literature on development, going back to the early 1970s,[1] when the focus was primarily political and linked to aid as a tool of imperialism, and continuing to the present time,[2] sometimes with the same focus, sometimes with a different one, yet always strongly passionate – as, of course, are those in the opposite camp who argue the benefits of aid. This polarised, and again often ideological, to and fro sees aid in a direct causal relationship with an outcome, which is either negative or positive depending upon the author you read; yet the debate is still no nearer to a solution now than it was when it began forty years earlier.

So, perhaps the time has come to start looking at this question of external involvement from a different perspective. In keeping with the social reference framework used here, the idea is that, instead of discussing aid per se, we should rather explore the potential for oppression (interpreted here in the sense of suffocation, not exploitation) caused through the sheer weight of external cultural and intellectual involvement.

This last point is the least explored of the three perspectives, yet perhaps the most important, though I would suggest that what we are looking at in practice is some combination of all of them. The challenge is to understand the interplay between them, and in this context infrastructure provides an ideal framework within which to explore the issue. And we do need new ideas. For if there is one thing that we can say, and this is as good a point to begin the discussion as any, is while the past fifty years have seen a continuous shift in external approaches to urban development practice, in an attempt to address this failure, none of them has, to date, proved blindingly successful.

Throughout all this time, though, there has been one inexorable trend in urban infrastructure, which is the steady, but continuous, decline in the 'level of service' provided to urban residents – and in particular to the politically weak group in society known as the 'urban poor'. This has now reached a point, with the 'basic needs' approach to service delivery, epitomised by the MDGs, where the level of infrastructure service aimed for has reached the bottom – the absolute minimum – and can go no lower; yet even this minimum target cannot be achieved. Why? Nobody actually knows. However, we can question the external response, which is to throw ever greater sums of money towards paying ever greater numbers of external western 'consultants' and new specialist 'delivery agencies' in order to meet moving targets. Surely the time has come to recognise that there is a much more fundamental malaise involved here, and the only way to address this issue in any meaningful way is to stop throwing money at 'solutions' aimed at addressing the symptoms, and instead return to the root of the problem and find the real cause.

What is needed here is a complete rethink of the way in which urban society functions, particularly a society where the majority of the residents are poor. In that context a rethink about the role of urban infrastructure in sub-Saharan Africa, and associated delivery processes, is not only essential, but central to the discussion. Unfortunately, we still live with a mindset about urban infrastructure that was created in the nineteenth century for a world that was completely different from the one we now live in. Sub-Saharan Africa of the twenty-first century is a quite different place as compared with Britain in the nineteenth.

A second reason why infrastructure should be seen as a basis for African development relates to the symbiotic relationship that exists between infrastructure, the social construct of an urban society, and the physical environment. Before the Reagan–Thatcher economic reforms of the 1980s, urban infrastructure was grounded largely in a social development construct. The degree may have differed, with America, not surprisingly, having a more dominant economic focus; yet even there the social context existed, as embodied by the American concept of 'public works'. This means that underpinning the provision of urban infrastructure to the rich countries of the world in the twentieth century was the principle not simply of social improvement but also of social equity – a principle that is far more crucial to political and social stability in Africa than the economic principle that has replaced it: affordability.

Thus, infrastructure is about far more than technology; that is only the physical manifestation. Rather, infrastructure is an integral part of the social and cultural framework of an urban society. So, it is to that framework that we must look first to initiate change and develop a new approach. Such a rethink would need to be broad in scope, involving not only a new approach to the social, economic and political framework that

underpins urban development, but also, and perhaps more importantly, an exploration of the external intellectual forces that shape that framework. It is to this last issue that we must turn first, to begin our analysis, if we are to reach an understanding of the wider canvas upon which urban development plays itself out.

Who really controls African development?

On a superficial level, the determinants that have led to the current urban conditions which prevail throughout most of sub-Saharan Africa are relatively straightforward: inappropriate policies and ineffective implementation strategies result in poor decision-making which leads to failed outcomes. How easy it is, for those looking in from the outside, particularly in the western countries, to blame this on weak leadership, or corruption, or simply mismanagement by African governments. This book will argue that not only is this far too simplistic an answer but, more worryingly, it is grossly unfair and inaccurate. To get to the heart of this failure we need to delve much deeper, and explore one central, albeit quite complex, question, which is: *who really made the decisions that led to the current urban condition?* Or, phrased slightly differently, *where did the ideas come from that failed repeatedly, time after time?* And the heart of this central question is not: who makes the decisions; but rather: who decides who makes the decisions; and who actually decides what decisions will be made, where they will be made, and how they will be made? The real issue is not who decides – the answer to that is fairly straightforward; the real question is who decides who decides, and that is far more complex. Whatever the answer, this book would argue that one thing is clear: wherever the location for the decisions about exactly what decisions African countries can take may be situated, it is certainly not in the capital cities of sub-Saharan Africa.

Those Marxist analysts of old, looking at colonial history, highlighted a critically important issue, namely that colonial oppression was as much an oppression of the culture as it was military dominance and economic exploitation; yet they failed to follow the exploration of this strand of colonial oppression through to its logical outcome. The reason for that failure, of course, is that Marxism, while recognising the greater oppression, always returns to its (perceived) roots in economic oppression, and in doing so misses the deeper and more insidious oppression of the colonised countries, which is, on the one hand, not simply the oppression of the cultural space, but also, on the other hand, and less well documented, the domination of the wider intellectual space.

The nineteenth century was the industrial age, when mechanics ruled and the perceived future was one driven by technology for the benefit of society. And we have to acknowledge that many Africans also bought into the technological dream. Now, though, as we view it only 150 years later,

we can see that this advance came at a huge cost. It was not only an accumulation of wealth that was occurring through industrialisation; it was a theft of resources, perhaps unintended but no less a theft for that, coupled with a transfer of the true exploitation cost of industrialisation elsewhere, in the form of an ever-growing debt burden. And the bank that had to carry this burden of debt was the biosphere. That of course is the core of the climate change debate with regard to carbon output. The real issue is not how much carbon different countries discharge to the atmosphere now; the question is how do we allocate a cost to the benefit gained from adding all that carbon to the atmosphere previously?

This issue of carbon discharge was not, of course, recognised at the time. The technologies developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were based upon an open-ended supply of resources and, equally important, a boundless space in which to discharge the waste. That model is now coming up against the reality of the earth as a closed system. Yet we cannot simply blame technology for our present impasse, though we will need to seriously change our view of, and approach towards, technology. The first step is to go broader, to assess the nature of the system that operates the technology.

In an article entitled 'All Cultures Are Not Equal', Kenan Malik[3] (2002) quotes a statement by the Marxist writer and theorist C. L. R. James as follows: 'I denounce European colonialism.... But I respect the learning and profound discoveries of Western civilisation' (James, 1980, p. 179). Malik then goes on to say:

> James was one of the great radicals of the twentieth century, an anti-imperialist, a superb historian of black struggles, a Marxist who remained one even when it was no longer fashionable to be so. But today, James' defence of 'Western civilisation' would probably be dismissed as Eurocentric, even racist.

This analysis by Malik provides the key, with the use of the word 'civilisation', but previously we have tried it in the wrong locks. As a result, we have been forced back on clichés, such as neo-colonialism or neo-liberalism, to try to explain what lay behind the unopened door. Much more telling, when it comes to exploring how a colonising race first obtains, and then retains, dominance over other societies, is the exploration by the historian Peter Berresford Ellis of how the Romans defined their relationship with the least well known of their serious antagonists in their early development phase: the Celts. Speaking about this relationship in the context of the Druids – the 'Celtic intelligentsia' – he writes:

> The early surviving sources about the Druids are written in support of Rome and its conquest of the Celts and suppression of the Druids. In

AD 54 the Roman Emperor Claudius officially prohibited the Druids by law. It was an obvious move for Rome to make: in order to conquer any people and absorb them, you first have to get rid of their intellectuals and destroy their cultural knowledge.

(1998, p. 63)

Here we see two elements at play that define all forms of oppressions: control over the intellectual debate and the suppression of the intellectual base of the oppressed. It is to these aspects of oppression that we must look to understand the current development scenario in Africa.

The words of Berresford Ellis quoted above are timeless, and could just as easily describe the oppression of the indigenous African population in South Africa under apartheid, but are they valid elsewhere? After all, apartheid was a special case, was it not? In addition, there is the valid point that Africa was not the only continent to suffer colonial oppression. Many other countries found themselves in the same situation; and the majority have found mechanisms to deal with the consequences more effectively than is the case across generally in sub-Saharan Africa.

To understand the wider (sub-Saharan) African canvas, we need to understand more fully the way in which external dominance shifted over time, and the forces that drove this shift. In the sections that follow, I will argue that the way in which the colonial relationship evolved in the sub-continent (sub-Saharan Africa) is quite different from how it did so in other countries, and that Africa, because of its history, was not capable of emerging from colonial control in the way that countries in other parts of the world were able to do. The focus in the book is concerned primarily with anglophone Africa, since it is an exploration in English, and here the locus of external control was Britain. This was therefore a critical relationship. This book will argue that it remains critical to this day, and that British influence is much more deeply ingrained than has been assumed previously, with unintended, yet fairly catastrophic, consequences for Africa. The use of the word 'unintended' is intentional and critical. This book acknowledges that the British government and the British people have, by and large, the best of intentions towards Africa. What is being explored is the nature of cultural and intellectual domination in a modern context, a context dominated increasingly by global, English-language media, with the term 'media' being used here in its widest sense to reflect all forms of communication. This domination by the English-language media leads to the question: to what extent does the use of one specific language as a global communication vehicle enable, or facilitate, cultural domination by those, in this case primarily the American and the British, who have it as their home language?

Of worldviews, paradigms and *Weltanschauungen*

Worldviews

Berresford Ellis's book on Celtic history in Europe,[4] quoted earlier, provides an interesting analogy that is surprisingly relevant to the present context. For the author shows how there were two, quite diverse, views of this important civilisation, but that the vast majority of people who read history know only one: that written by the Celts' conquerors, the Romans, who clearly had their own specific perspective and agenda. It is said that the victors define history, but there is a more subtle, and relevant, point here, namely that it is those who write the books (or who generate the websites) who define the perceived reality; and it is this perception that matters.

The problem is: how do we penetrate the perception to arrive at a deeper truth, or even an alternative view? Berresford Ellis's book on the Celts of course deals with history, and describes the problems of trying to get beyond the interpretation of events provided by a historical dominant culture (Roman) that no longer exists. That is a minor problem compared to the one we face here. For seeking to explore the impact of a dominant culture from within its own time, while that dominance is still in force, is even more difficult. What we are looking at in the exploration of anglophone Africa is a dominant culture, and that dominant culture is referred to as Anglo-Saxon.[5]

The first problem we encounter when we seek to understand the nature of a dominant culture is related to the way in which we communicate, using a verbal language, which in turn requires a vocabulary. Those belonging to a dominant culture, by the very nature of a culture, have little need for words or phrases that describe how they control cultural and intellectual space; after all, their view is the accepted reality. So, we come up against a conundrum: those whose language dominates define the ideas, not only through their ability to define the common usage of words and phrases, but also through the absence, or at least the paucity, of words to describe how the subservient cultures view the dominant one.

To the extent that we can speak of this phenomenon of cultural and intellectual domination at all, we do have the term 'worldview', as being something that reflects '[t]he overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world' (*Free Dictionary*, 2010). Yet while this may express the condition at a very broad level, it is also very imprecise, not least because it is itself a translation of a German word, *Weltanschauung*, a term that will be returned to later.

This term 'worldview' has also been described as '[a] collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group' (*Free Dictionary*, 2010). Yet this interpretation does not sit easily with the

previous one. How, for example, does one go down to the level of those individual beliefs conceptually? The fact is that we have taken a term that has real meaning in another language, in this case German. When we translate it into English we may be able to use it up to a point; but we are not able to take it to a level of detail, because for a dominant culture there is simply no need to do so. That is the paradox we face when we seek to explore dominant cultures: we simply lack the terms that might help us in that task.

Paradigms

But we do have a term: 'paradigm' – isn't that appropriate? Well, actually, no it isn't. The word 'paradigm' was created, in its modern form, by the historian of science Thomas Kuhn in the 1960s. Prior to that, it had been used in its Greek derivative form to describe distinct concepts in linguistics and science (Kuhn, 1996). Kuhn 'gave *paradigm* its contemporary meaning when he adopted the word to refer to the set of practices that define a scientific discipline at any particular period of time' (Wikipedia, 2010e). His own preference, and the translation in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, interprets the word as a pattern or model, but mainly an 'exemplar'. In this context, then, if we seek to use this word in the context of a dominant culture, then the impact is to reinforce that culture rather than question or challenge it.

This problem is compounded when we look at the second element of Kuhn's exposition of the word, which is that paradigms are incommensurable, meaning that 'two paradigms cannot be reconciled with each other because they cannot be subjected to the same common standard of comparison' (Kuhn, 1996). And the whole purpose of an exploration of a dominant culture and its impact is constructed around a presupposition of different 'standards', since culture is itself linked to a value system.

Thus, the word 'paradigm' is used quite easily by those already within the dominant culture, since the very definition of the term acts to reinforce the dominance of that culture, or at best to question it gently and safely from the inside; but it is totally inappropriate for use in exploring the dominant culture from the outside. To say so is not being pedantic; if we use words that mean something else, then we risk misdirecting the debate and blocking meaningful analysis. We are left with only one solution. If we are serious about unbundling the worldview of the dominant culture, then we have to integrate the word *Weltanschauung*[6] into the English language; for only then can we really begin to understand the full cultural and intellectual implications of domination.

At this point, you, as a reader, have just undergone your first test. If, in reading this, you fail to see the point of the discussion, then this means

that you most likely belong to the dominant culture; that is, you are comfortable with an Anglo-Saxon worldview. If, on the other hand, you find the discussion intriguing and are interested in seeing where it is going, then you are probably someone who is situated outside the dominant culture; that is, there are aspects of the Anglo-Saxon worldview that you experience as oppressive, or at least constraining.

Weltanschauungen[7]

There are several components to the term 'Weltanschauung', as we would expect from such a complex idea. In the first instance, a Weltanschauung 'describes a consistent (to a varying degree) and integral sense of existence and provides a framework for generating, sustaining, and applying knowledge' (Wikipedia, 2010c). That is exactly what we are talking of here. And if we see the existing Anglo-Saxon worldview as a dominant Weltanschauung, then we also can see how any challenge to that view is extremely threatening, calling into question not only the value base of the dominant culture, but also the knowledge structure that it uses to underpin that dominance.

The second aspect relates to language, which is described as follows: 'The linguistic relativity hypothesis … describes how the syntactic-semantic structure of a language becomes an underlying structure for the Weltanschauung of a people through the organization of the causal perception of the world and the linguistic categorization of entities.' Further, 'The language of a people reflects the Weltanschauung of that people in the form of its syntactic structures and untranslatable connotations and its denotations' (Wikipedia, 2010c).

In linguistics, the exploration of this side of the Weltanschauung is often used to better understand different peoples, in the way that Whorf in the United States used it to contribute to an understanding of different Native American minorities (Wikipedia, 2010d). In terms of the current dominant Anglo-Saxon Weltanschauung, however, we can see how the overwhelming use of English as a global language contributes to, and partially explains, the extent of the dominance of the current Anglo-Saxon world order.

The third aspect of the Weltanschauung, which is actually the one of greatest relevance to this book and its topic, picks up on the aspect described above as 'the linguistic categorization of entities'. In this context, Kay and Kempton (1984) made the observation that '[a]s linguistic categorization emerges as a representation of worldview and causality, it further modifies social perception and thereby leads to a continual interaction between language and perception' (Wikipedia, 2010c). This sentence is absolutely crucial to an understanding of what is driving urban development in Africa today. It is not that the current all-pervading

dominance of economics (whether it is the capitalism decried by Marxists, or the value of foreign direct investment beloved by capitalists) is unimportant. It is rather that economics is only one of several elements that comprise the greater Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung*, or worldview. In its use of this expression (Anglo-Saxon) the book differs from the French interpretation, arguing that the original (French) definition of the term, which the authors perceived as being grounded primarily in economics, failed to see the wider intellectual and cultural domination that is implicit in a global hegemony. This is, of course, because the French always refused to accept the reality of global cultural domination (at least by anyone other than themselves) – but that is a separate debate.

It is on this wider stage, then, that the notion of an Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung*, described previously as 'a collection of beliefs', becomes critically important. I will show how these beliefs extend into every aspect of development thinking, and in doing so how they predefine the development path, particularly in urban development, and so constrain African freedom of action. That is the basis for intellectual domination which constitutes, in an African sense, a continuation of colonisation, the only distinction being that we have moved from physical occupation to the colonisation of Africa's intellectual space. Before we can move on to explore these issues further, though, we first need to explore how we came to be there in the first place.

The rise of Anglo-Saxon hegemony, 1815–2009

There is a broad recognition, evident in numerous books and newspaper articles, that the world is changing, and the changes that are coming will bring about a new world order. A much more interesting question is what lies at the heart of the change. In a book on the rise of American power in the Pacific region, Bruce Cumings argued that the dominating American role in the world emerged out of Cold War necessities, 'ow[ing] more to NATO than to Plato' (Cumings, 2010, p. 5, quoting David Armitage). In writing this, the author follows the commonly accepted view that dominance is linked to a combination of military force (alternatively viewed as a military-industrial complex) and economic power.

In 2002, O'Brien and Clesse published a collection of essays on the nature of British and American hegemony in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While this may have generated a great deal of angst and soul-searching around specific terms, such as 'empire', for example, the broad gist of the evolutionary process was clear. Britain rose to military dominance in the period after the Napoleonic Wars, but slowly lost this over time as other powers, including the United States, Germany and, in the Far East, Japan increased their military power. In economic terms, Gilpin (2002) argues that

> [t]he world has known only two eras of economic liberalism based on a hegemonic power. From the late nineteenth century to the outbreak of World War I [1914], Great Britain led the efforts for trade liberalisation and monetary stability. Similarly, the United States led the world economy following World War II [1945].

Regarding what happened between 1914 and 1945, Gilpin (2002) goes on to state that '[t]he United States emerged from World War I with a clear vision of the new international order that it wished to create'. However, linked strongly to the fact that the United States went through a strongly isolationist period between 1918 and 1941, it was only able to initiate this new order after the Second World War (1939–45). In what Gilpin terms this 'Rooseveltian vision', the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council, would guarantee world peace, and the IMF, World Bank and International Trade Organisation 'should be responsible for promotion and administration of an open and multilateral world economy'. Most importantly,

> The postwar international order was to be based on the Atlantic Charter and its Four Freedoms (today's 'human rights') in whose name the United States and its allies had fought the war. Within this structure, the victors would build the peaceful, prosperous, and humane world that had eluded mankind after World War I.
>
> (ibid.)

This idealised model of course failed to materialise in the form originally envisaged, primarily because of the rise of the Soviet Union and the creation in its place of a duopolistic view of how the world order should develop. The result was a return to a situation where military power became increasingly important in the struggle to protect western security against a perceived Soviet threat.

Such a brief summary cannot do justice either to Gilpin's paper or to the wider debate if the objective is to discuss either military or economic hegemony, but it does give a representative snapshot; and a detailed discussion of Anglo-Saxon hegemony, important as it may be, is not the primary objective. Rather, the objective is, first, to illustrate the extent to which the discussion on British and American hegemony is defined almost exclusively in terms of economic and military power; and then, following from this, to show how a critically important facet of hegemony, namely social hegemony, interpreted here to mean external domination of another people's cultural and intellectual space, is defined primarily by its absence from the debate. Once this gap is highlighted, and the importance of social hegemony recognised as a critical issue, then it becomes possible to see why the real cause of African underdevelopment has been

so misunderstood, and subsequently misrepresented, in the West, and particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries.

Africa, like many of the poorer parts of the world (termed the 'Third World' at that time), was buffeted by the dualistic power struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States, but the majority of African countries were merely pawns in a game between the Great Powers, rather than players in their own right. In this situation, the sheer economic power of the western institutions, led by the World Bank, was clearly of critical importance in shaping development policy, as the structural adjustment programme of the 1980s so clearly illustrated. On the other hand, though, I shall argue here that this has created something of a smokescreen, hiding what is, in the longer term, a much more intrusive and pervasive form of intervention: that of social hegemony. As a result, it was actually in the social arena, and particularly that of its intellectual space, where much of Africa was most deeply impacted upon, if not subsumed, by Anglo-Saxon hegemony. That is Africa's missing debate and that is the issue which is explored here.

Control over cultural and intellectual space takes two forms, destruction or co-option, generally acting in tandem, with the choice being linked to the military potential of the opposition. Again it is useful to look at history first, since we can view history more easily outside of the emotional influence that exists when viewing these topics in the present. Using the Romans again, we can see that they destroyed the Celts' intellectual base, since the Celts posed an ongoing military threat, but they co-opted the Greek intellectual base because by that time the Greeks no longer posed a military threat.

These references to the Romans, which may appear at first glance to be totally irrelevant in a book intended to focus on Africa, are extremely valuable in aiding our understanding of the current domination scenario, as I will show a little later. Equally, though, there are many other applications of the suppression–co-option model from more recent times, which demonstrate the fact that this is a standard approach for groups seeking to dominate others. Thus, the apartheid regime destroyed the African intellectual base centred on the University of Fort Hare in the 1950s, before seeking to co-opt a more malleable black South African 'leadership' in the 1970s. And the British Empire, of course, has many examples of this, not least of them being Ghana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia), particularly when those cultural models challenged Anglo-American economic hegemony.

The growth of the Roman civilisation is also helpful to an understanding of America today, particularly the way Americans have viewed this 'culture of the intellect'. The two nations (Rome and the United States) both came from a weak indigenous cultural base, but they reacted to culture quite differently. The Romans saw this lack of culture as a weakness

and realised the need to create one rapidly if they were to become a dominant world power. They did this by first co-opting, and then integrating and adapting, the Greek cultural heritage. This recognition was also a reason why they perceived both the Carthaginians and the Celts as such a threat, because both of these competing societies combined military strength with an indigenous cultural heritage that could be perceived as more advanced than that of Rome, certainly in its early period of development.

Americans did not see culture in the same way, nor did they attach the same importance to it. That is not to say that the United States was totally without a cultural base. It had learned from European history, rejecting much that it saw, for example the monarchical system, but integrating aspects it considered important. From this, and its own experience, it developed three 'big ideas' that were to stand the test of time: capitalism as an economic model of development; democratic government; and the centrality (and rights) of the individual in society – all of which we see coming through in the 'Rooseveltian vision' described earlier. The United States also had its academic base, which was becoming ever more powerful and respected, in institutions such as Yale, Harvard and MIT. At the same time, though, it also had a strong element in its society that could be described as 'anti-intellectual', creating a body of opinion that retains an important influence in the Republican Party to this day. One important outcome of this anti-intellectual outlook was that during the period when cultural hegemony was being imposed most strongly on Africa, between the two great wars of the twentieth century (1914–1939), America was in an isolationist phase, with its main intellectual input into global development still in the future.

That is a particularly important point when it comes to shaping the international institutions. Thus, it could be argued that the United States could shape the IMF and the World Bank, since both of these institutions operated primarily in the economic sphere where America sought to impose its own capitalist model of development. However, this did not apply elsewhere; it was the social and cultural heritage, for example, that was most influential in shaping the various UN development institutions, and the United States could not shape these alone. Rather, the influence that shaped the United Nations, at least in respect of its socio-cultural perspective, came from elsewhere, mainly from Britain and its Dominions, and only to a lesser extent from the United States and France. Britain and the United States may have shared the 'big ideas' of democracy and individual human rights, but the way these translated into practice on the ground – that is, the mechanisms through which other countries would meet these outcomes – was based to a large degree on British practices at the time.

As a result, when the focus is specifically directed towards Africa, we have to adapt the way that we see Anglo-Saxon hegemony, because we

have to be able to view American global cultural and intellectual domination in a way that incorporates the British role more directly. Because we live in the present, we do tend to see the world purely in terms of American hegemony. Yet to understand the African situation we have to expand our outlook and view it in the context of a continuum of dominant Anglo-Saxon culture that began with Britain's defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, was shared with the United States during the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries, and then taken over progressively by the United States after 1945.

What makes this period in history so important is the way in which global domination was transferred from one power (Great Britain) to another power (the United States of America) in a way that ensured the continuation of a common cultural value system, made easier of course by the use of a shared language. For without British support, particularly in the enforced intellectual domination of the Empire, it is questionable whether America, for all of its military and economic power, could have achieved broader cultural dominance of the global institutions that was necessary to shape the world in its own image. Conversely, and equally relevant to this discussion, it was only by being able to operate within the same cultural framework with the United States that Britain was able to continue to exert its authority, and impose its own version of the Anglo-Saxon worldview (*Weltanschauung*) on Africa.

The impact of the Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung* on Africa: the urban experience

It is the contention of this book that the imposition of ideas that are grounded in the Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung* has been extremely damaging, not only to Africa's development per se but also to Africa's ability to develop for itself. During the colonial period the way in which the *Weltanschauung* was imposed was obvious, since it was linked directly to physical occupation. The assumption, at least among the general public in the West, is that, with independence, African countries increasingly took responsibility for their own destinies.[8] This book will argue that the opposite is in fact the case, certainly with regard to urban development. Far from there being a lessening of control, the power exerted over urban development in Africa today is stronger than it has ever been before; yet because external actors are so deeply embedded in the dominant Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung*, they are simply unable to see the extent to which this is the reality.

Urban infrastructure has been at the heart of international debate on urban development in Africa, in one form or another, from the beginning. The provision of infrastructure (primarily for the white colonial elite) was the basis for the colonial city, and it was the inability to expand

this system to the wider population that drove the debate in its initial post-colonial phase. As a result, much of Africa's urban development practice, as constructed by external agencies, has been a direct outcome of the inability of those same agencies to address infrastructure delivery in Africa effectively.

While their response to this failure may have taken different forms at different times, these nonetheless tend to coalesce around three distinct strands of development, the full extent of which only began to emerge from the global social, economic and political upheavals of the 1980s. The first of these was the rise to prominence of urban spatial planning as a major force in urban development, which resulted in the current situation whereby spatial and economic development are perceived as the basis for new urban growth and regeneration strategies. In this strand, urban infrastructure is defined as a supporting service for planned land development. The second strand, which was linked to the privatisation drive of the 1980s, resulted in the commodification of certain public services, which were defined as utilities – a term that speaks for itself. The third strand, to some extent a response to this, was a recognition that the 'urban poor' were being left behind by the wider development process and marginalised by privatisation. Abandoning key principles of social equity, which had driven urban development in Europe and America, and underpinned the United Nations, external agencies, acting more out of despair than good sense, chose the lowest common denominator option of seeking to provide only basic services to the poor. Thus, rather than seeking inclusion of the poor into urban society, this strand reinforced social exclusion and institutionalised a two-tier society in Africa – a recipe for ongoing political instability.

The failure to create a viable and sustainable infrastructure model for African cities was situated, of course, within a context of rapid urban growth, which saw the collapse of the colonial urban model of government, and a breakdown of urban structures of control. These developments led initially to greater centralised government control, followed by a gradual reversal and a widespread acceptance, among African governments, of the principle of decentralisation as the basis for urban governance. All these changes provide an ideal justification for the western argument that the ensuing urban development failure was the fault of African governments.

What I will show in this book is that the real failure lies with the choice of infrastructure models, both then and now. Initially this was no one's fault; the British infrastructure model was considered the ideal and proved itself so over a period of a hundred years, certainly in Western Europe and the United States, to the extent that it provided the framework for the success of western urbanisation. It is only recently that the weaknesses of this system have started to emerge, when we see its fundamental

incompatibility with a world that requires models constructed around environmental sustainability. To address this incompatibility, the western countries have to deal with their massive installed infrastructure base, which requires an emphasis to be placed on measures of mitigation. Africa presents a completely different scenario. There, the need is for a new infrastructure model grounded in the principles of environmental sustainability. The irony is that sub-Saharan Africa, with its low level of urbanisation, and African towns and cities generally, with their low installed infrastructure base, are ideally suited to lead the way in creating this new model. Yet we are locked into an Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung* that is incapable of seeing outside of its own historical development trajectory, and still seeks to impose a modified version of its own urban system on other countries.

The converse of this failure to create an infrastructure model is the over-reliance on urban planning, again played out within an Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung* that built on the (totally inappropriate) British urban planning model. The collapse of African urban government, in the colonial aftermath initiated a period of reflection, led primarily by the World Bank but also involving UN and western donor government agencies, about how cities could best be managed. The outcome was a new discipline of Urban Management, formally established as a programme by UN-Habitat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1986.[9] The most important point to note about this discipline was the way in which it accepted, and incorporated, the three strands of the urban development construct outlined earlier, and the way in which it is intimately linked to a dominant urban planning paradigm (using the term 'paradigm' in its scientific sense, as described previously). This paradigm – that is, the urban development model that currently dominates international thinking – is grounded in the concept of a universal (and, of course, Anglo-Saxon) planning model, applied with regional variations.

The paradigm is based on the following logic flow, described in simplistic terms. First, the West has developed an extensive understanding of how to plan and develop cities. Second, this model is driven by private-sector investment, and the role of urban planning is to facilitate that. Third, this experience can be extrapolated to become a global model, tested by experience and analysis in the major cities around the world. Finally, the model, which is clearly the only option on the table (is it not?) can then be extended to all urban areas in all countries; and we can all sleep safely in our beds at night. That the paradigm takes as its benchmark the mature cities of the western countries, all of which just happen to have a fully installed infrastructure base, is not even an issue for discussion. Similarly, the fact that this British planning model emerged in a quite specific geographical context (the United Kingdom), where it too only came to prominence after the cities had completed the construction of their

infrastructure base, and where its success even on its home territory is seriously questioned, is considered immaterial.

When we move outside of Britain, the primary focus of exploration (and case-study material) for this urban planning development paradigm is the large conurbation, as is clearly evident from all recent UN-Habitat work on urbanisation over the past twenty years. It is based upon two lines of reasoning: first, that the areas in question operate in an open global economy; and second, that all cities in the developing world are on trajectory towards maturity, as defined by the model of western cities. On this (still unproven) hypothesis, the British-based urban planning paradigm has been bought into by virtually every single international development agency that has any involvement with urban development; and it is sold as a reality to non-western governments. There is just one major problem[10] with this idealised view when we look at Africa: almost 70 per cent of urban residents live in small towns, and they are neither moving towards the state of a western mature city nor engaged in the global economy! This book will show that, specifically when the urban areas in question are the secondary towns and cities of Africa, this paradigm is invalid, and this logic path fatally flawed. African small towns present a development pattern that is quite unlike anything experienced previously, certainly in the past 400 years, and require unique solutions tailored to their condition.

In addition, the paradigm is itself grounded in a *Weltanschauung* that is specifically Anglo-Saxon, the symptoms of which have already been discussed. The outcome is an assumption that the (primarily British) urban planning model is the only valid basis for urban development; that is, it is a global development model. This is simply a false assumption, situated wholly within an Anglo-Saxon worldview. There are other, quite different models of urbanism – the Brazilian 'Plano Global' used as a basis for favela[11] upgrading is one such – and several of these have a far better track record than does the British model. Their only problem, of course, is that they exist outside of the dominant Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung*, and the experiences are written up in a 'foreign' language, immediately downgrading their relevance and importance.

This Anglo-Saxon-based 'international' model of urban development is challenged here, and the book will demonstrate that it is totally unsuited to addressing the needs of Africa's secondary towns and cities in the twenty-first century. The basis for the model is the mature city of the West, while the history too is that of the West; and such is the lens through which Africa is ultimately viewed. That is not to deny that many of those writing about African urban development have direct experience of African cities. What I am saying, though, is that those researchers operate within a specific *Weltanschauung*, and use a specific planning paradigm, both of which are grounded in a specific way of seeing, and thinking

about, the world; and that this approach is totally inappropriate to the needs of towns and cities in sub-Saharan Africa at this point in time.

Exploring the symptoms: the major pathways for western control over African urban development

In the book *Dead Aid*, mentioned earlier, Dambisa Moyo (2009) argues the case against aid in the form that it currently takes. Her arguments are focused on the broader social, political and economic implications of aid at a country level, where she asks the question, '[W]hat kind of African society are we building when virtually all public goods – education, health-care, infrastructure and even security – are paid for by Western taxpay-ers?'[12] The debate about aid is extremely important in discussing African development. However, this is only one aspect of western influence. What is of equal, and possibly greater, importance is the way in which operating within an Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung* exerts control over Africa's intellec-tual space and constrains African countries in their ability to make the key decisions that affect the lives of their citizens.

The power of the Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung* to dominate anglophone (and other) African countries' intellectual space will vary from sector to sector, as well as from country to country. The debate here is about urban development and, within that, urban infrastructure management. This is a particularly useful base for an exploration of intellectual control, since it is arguably the arena of development where the external influence is great-est – the arena of development where Anglo-Saxon influence is most dom-inant and most deeply entrenched. As a result, we have a totally nonsensical scenario where, on the one hand, it is external actors that, to all intents and purpose, decide Africa's urban development path while, at the same time, it is African leaders who are blamed for the failures that result from implementing these flawed ideas.

There is an interesting consensus, from a range of people who come from quite different political perspectives, that Africa suffers from aid dependency and that Africa's problems would be solved if aid were reduced. These arguments are well made, and slowly countries are coming together, both donors and recipients, and starting to discuss alternative funding mechanisms, for example donor harmonisation.[13] At the same time, there is also a need to be realistic: not only is aid entrenched, but a number of key western countries are actually increasing the amounts of aid they provide. Even if all aid were stopped with immediate effect; the impact of aid would take years to reverse.

This book argues that the relationship between western and African countries is actually far more complex than simply a debate about devel-opment aid, and that in order to reverse the current situation of aid dependency we first need to understand more fully the nature of that

relationship, and the full extent of that dependency; for it extends far beyond a simple economic relationship. And if we are to go deeper, to the heart of the relationship, then we need, above all else, to understand the full impact of Anglo-Saxon control over the intellectual space; only then can solutions be developed to manage the internal–external relationships more effectively. This section defines the nature of western influence in a different way from that used previously, using as a frame of reference this concept of intellectual control and looking at how it plays itself out. At this stage, we are looking, if you like, at the symptoms – or, phrased in development terminology, at the development imperatives accepted and used by external agencies. Later chapters will take this exploration deeper to look at the underlying core issue, which is actually about who decides on roles and relationships in a society – hence the important linkage within this book between development and governance.

If we look at the specific area of development that relates to urban infrastructure delivery and management, the range of external influences can be grouped into four thematic areas, termed here 'forces of influence', whose interaction results in the complex structure shown in Figure 1.1. Arguably, each one of these forces of influence could be countered relatively easily if it were the only external 'intellectual idea' impacting on African development. What makes external control so powerful, and so dominant, is the combination of all four together, which is then further underpinned by the western academic research and knowledge base. To change the situation and begin to provide African countries with greater intellectual space, it is necessary to understand how each of these thematic forces of influence work. At this point we are looking primarily at the symptoms; that is, the way in which external dominance and control is exerted. These symptoms will then be explored in greater detail in
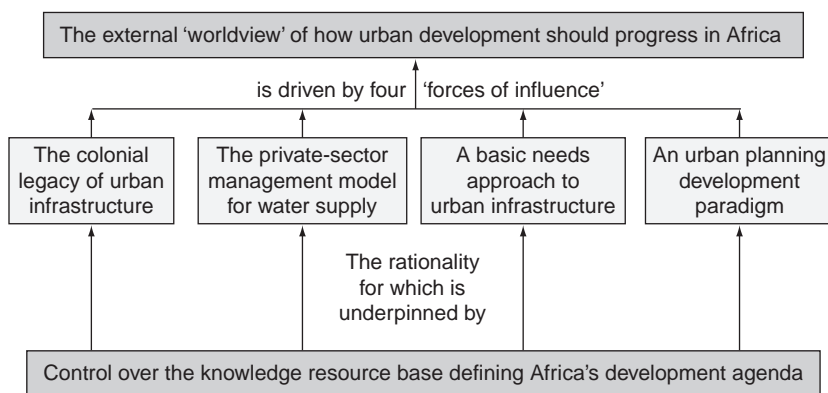
Figure 1.1 The four 'forces of influence' directing urban development in sub-Saharan Africa.

Chapters 2 to 5, taking the exploration to the next level and looking at the deeper malaise that underlies the symptoms.

External force 1: the colonial legacy of urban infrastructure

The era of colonialism may have ended, but its legacy lingers on, and in many ways continues to grow. While occupying what is now anglophone Africa, Britain set up a framework of government. Some form of government was clearly necessary, but the form adopted was one situated within Britain's quite specific political, socio-economic and philosophical construct, which together comprised the original Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung*. This legacy will be shown to influence each of the remaining three thematic forces of influence. At the broader level, though, the two most important elements are the inherited political process (in particular, the relationship between the legislature and the executive) and the specific nature of the policy formulation process. Regarding the first of these, the full impact has never really been explored fully in a development context; yet it is a crucial element of the decentralisation debate in particular. As such, it will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Regarding the second, Britain has a quite specific approach to policy that differs significantly from that of many other countries, both within Europe and elsewhere in the world. Its approach is grounded in an empiricist philosophy that places an emphasis on output-orientated planning. It also operates a system within which the relationship between policy, strategy and practice is particularly obscure and where the lines are extremely blurred. This approach to policy has been adopted by many African countries, yet the book will provide strong reasons to believe that this may not be the most appropriate policy construct for Africa to adopt; on the contrary, its adoption is more likely to impede the development process.

This expectation that African countries use the Anglo-Saxon approach to policy exposes Africa to extensive, and often unwarranted, criticism and intrusion into areas of national sovereignty, especially when policies fail to set out explicitly how they will be followed through into an action plan. This criticism extends across every group of actors in the development field. From academics, through development NGOs, to emergency relief organisations, Africa provides an open house for any group that wishes to critique what African countries are doing. And the irony is that much of this criticism comes from academics and NGOs whose own country (Britain) has a questionable track record when it comes to measuring the success of infrastructure policy, as Chapters 3 and 4 will indicate. What we are dealing with here is not objective analysis. Those carrying out the critique are judging Africa subjectively from within their own *Weltanschauung*.

Yet when African governments object to the actions of western NGOs, for example on the grounds that they are interfering in the internal affairs of another country, their actions are often criticised as an attack on human rights, and an indication that the countries concerned are oppressive. There is too little understanding of the reverse scenario: that the attitude of many external, non-government groups is intrusive and does impinge on national sovereignty. Rarely do these external groups even try to situate this criticism within the specific social, cultural and intellectual framework of the host country; instead, they expect that country to be judged solely in terms of the *Weltanschauung* of their own society and their own value system. The impact of this continuous stream of criticism, and the way in which it exerts dominance over the intellectual space, plays a major role in preventing African academics, researchers and practitioners from developing their own indigenous policies and indigenous models of development.

External force 2: the private-sector model for water supply

The failure to match infrastructure to urban growth in the post-independence period led the World Bank to argue that infrastructure should be broken down into sectors, which would then be managed separately. This separation would enable the private sector to become more active, and thereby improve the level of service 'delivery', particularly in the sectors termed utilities (covering water, power, telecommunications and mass transport). Private-sector activity has proved particularly contentious in the water sector, where management of water supplies by the private sector has led to a strong backlash, particularly from public-sector unions and many in the NGO movement.

This has now become a debate that is primarily ideological, on both sides, with African governments often being caught in the middle. But at least this ideological perspective has brought this specific thematic issue into the public arena of debate. In addition, the arguments in favour of private-sector management of infrastructure are also being reconsidered, even in western countries, following the 2008 financial crisis, and influenced by the debate on climate change. Even in Britain, which was one of the major ideological proponents of private-sector management of infrastructure, the government began, for the first time in over twenty years, to discuss the role of the state in setting infrastructure policy, discussing openly whether it should take back control over energy (see Chapter 5).

Unfortunately, this whole debate is actually distracting African countries from a deeper exploration of the core issue, which is how to build an effective working relationship between the public and the private sectors. The issue here is not primarily one around privatisation; it is, rather, a debate around the dominance of a specific *Weltanschauung*. In Anglo-Saxon

countries, free-market capitalism is probably recognised by outsiders as the main expression of the Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung*: a model that sees private companies having a significant control over the economy, with a minimum of regulation. There is absolutely nothing wrong with countries taking this approach; the problem arises when this *Weltanschauung* becomes dominant and is then imposed on others regardless of whether or not they share that view, as has been done in Africa.

Yet it is almost impossible to persuade those situated within this dominant economic *Weltanschauung* that other forms of relationship between the public and private sector can and do exist, and even work effectively. This is ironic given that three of the countries to emerge strengthened from the 2008 financial crisis, China, Germany and Brazil, all follow their own models as regards how the relationship between the public and the private sector functions, none of which can be even remotely described as free-market capitalism.

Nevertheless, those situated within the free-market capitalist *Weltanschauung* refuse to recognise any failings within their own model. To them the historical argument is irrefutable; after all, surely capitalism would never have become dominant in the first place had it not been the best – would it? Essentially this is an application of Darwin's biological theory of natural selection to the field of economics, a questionable transposition. An alternative interpretation is simply that capitalism is more ruthless and more effective in exploiting resources than other systems, thereby transferring wealth from the global commons to the individual more quickly and easily. Does this transfer of wealth represent value added, or is it simply asset-stripping under a different guise? There is no clear answer; it all depends on your *Weltanschauung*. What matters, though, and what is really needed in Africa, is the intellectual space for governments to develop their own management models and build their understanding of the relationship between their public and private sectors from within their own *Weltanschauung*, not an imposed Anglo-Saxon one.

External force 3: a basic needs model for urban infrastructure

The expansion of internet access and global visual coverage gives an immediacy to human events that tends to take crises out of perspective. An aeroplane crash that kills everyone on board is a tragic accident, with a deeply personal impact that evokes an emotional response among those seeing scenes of the aftermath. Yet there is also an alternative perspective, which is that air travel is in fact far safer, in terms of the ratio of fatalities per kilometre travelled, than is travel by car. But facts are not the issue here; it is the visual and emotional impact of several hundred people killed in a single event that carries the day.

Africa has more than its fair share of crises, and many of these, such as HIV/AIDS, the impact of drought or the impact of diseases such as malaria, also evoke a response on a deeply emotional level. And because they often need funding to ameliorate the impact, and the bulk of this funding comes from the West, they are presented in a way that is most likely to provoke an emotional response. Yet humanitarian aid per se constitutes only a small fraction of the total aid budget – 'small beer when compared with the billions transferred each year directly to poor countries' governments' (Moyo, 2009, p. 9). The risk with this approach is that, over time, the humanitarian response begins to define the development agenda, and the boundaries between humanitarian relief and long-term development become blurred. This is now happening with the rapidly increasing use of 'targets' to define goals, as illustrated for example with the MDGs. In this evolving scenario, development outputs are becoming of far greater importance than systems and structures.

This variant of the product versus process debate is driven almost exclusively by Britain and its Department for International Development (DFID), although it has been adopted increasingly by other donors. And of course it reflects the extent to which the UN development agencies follow what is essentially a British social development model.

Measuring output through quantitative indicators has always been an element of assessing the effectiveness of development programmes. What has changed is the conversion of indicators to development drivers, a far more controversial shift. If we ignore for the moment whether the use of targets in this way is effective (and this book will seek to demonstrate that it is not), the use of a target-based approach has major implications for government. First, its implementation requires a centralised state, and in this context it is contrary to the principle of decentralisation. In addition, it undermines the role of local government in society and has the result of making local government ineffectual as a development agent in its own right (as the example of South Africa used in Chapter 5 will indicate), turning local government into a delivery agent of central government. Finally, it provides donor agencies with immense leverage over African governments, to the extent that their national sovereignty is seriously undermined – all, of course, in the name of development, and often of poverty alleviation. When this is combined with the emotive nature of aid, any African government choosing to oppose this approach is perceived, in the donor country, as obviously being insensitive to the needs of its own citizens. After all, who can object to every family having a toilet? The reality is that one can't, and perhaps shouldn't, object; but is that the only issue? Isn't it equally important to ask who will clean up the mess when the pit latrines are overflowing, because delivery-driven targets did not consider the need for an effective long-term institutional framework?

Thus, we have to be extremely careful when we begin to allow humanitarian responses to drive development. When we work with people to address a crisis, we can deal with them directly. When we begin to apply these social interventions within a development framework, then we have to realise that they are no longer value-free; instead, they operate within the value system of the dominant *Weltanschauung*.

Development is not only about targets; it involves systems of government, and reflects specific views on the role of government, the nature of community, the role of the individual in society, on the role of the state in society, on the role of the private sector in society – and the list goes on. When a crisis occurs, it is possible for those on the outside to become subsumed by the immediacy of the event, and the need to save lives. As the nature of the intervention changes from a humanitarian response to one concerned primarily with long-term development, however, the thinking needs to change, from one that simply defines targets to one that supports the development of operational systems and institutional structures. Unfortunately, this transition occurs less and less frequently, as target-based approaches suited to a humanitarian response come to dominate the longer-term development agenda. DFID, and the British government, as the major proponents of this approach, have to show their own electorate that the aid they provide is producing immediate 'results'.

External force 4: the (British) urban planning paradigm

The fourth thematic force of external influence, the urban planning paradigm, is possibly the least expected, yet in many ways the one with the greatest negative impact. This is not to imply that planning is in any way 'wrong' or 'bad'; simply that it is based upon an external model that has failed, over the period of more than thirty years since it became the dominant urban development paradigm in Africa, to demonstrate any ability to provide a sustainable urban development framework. That it has failed, in a historical context, is fairly widely recognised; that it continues to be seen as the basis for urban development is due primarily to the absence of a credible alternative.

The urban planning model used, certainly in anglophone Africa, is based upon the British system of urban planning. Unfortunately, this particular urban planning model has two fundamental flaws that convert to destructive forces when transferred to an Africa development scenario. The first is its basic rationality. Historically, urban planning was a paper-based discipline that sought to create a land-use map prior to settlement taking place. As a result, when applied in an African context, it always lagged behind the urban growth curve, and failed to demonstrate how it can move ahead of this process to create a formal plan that leads, rather than lags, the urbanisation process itself. Africa needs a different model:

its own model; to define the relationship between the people and the land, which is much more interactive.

The second flaw revolves around the relationship between urban planning, urban infrastructure and urban economic development. In its evolution in Britain, urban planning emerged from a development model that perceived infrastructure first as a support service for social development and second as an engineering function. In this worldview, economic development is driven by externalities, such as private-sector investment, that can be facilitated by a planning process. However, as Chapter 2 will illustrate, there is actually an alternative view, which was prevalent in the United States: that infrastructure is itself a development driver. Unfortunately, by the time that urban planning in Britain emerged from the dominant engineering paradigm in the 1970s, the bulk of the urban infrastructure base had been completed and there was no evidence to support this alternative view. Instead, the initial perception was actually entrenched by the neo-liberal approach of successive British governments. As a result, this has become the de facto urban planning model for sub-Saharan Africa.

Viewed in this context, urban planning provides a classic example of how dominant cultures control the intellectual space of others. It is epitomised by the saying 'think global, act local'. This reflects a worldview that could only emanate from a hegemonic, culturally dominant group: for who actually defines what is meant by global in a developmental context? Who defines the 'global' value system that underpins the development model? What we see is the power of a small, self-selecting group who dominate the intellectual debate, creating 'models' of planning and urban management for developing countries, and then defining their rationality through a process of self-affirmation. A model of this kind is then 'verified' as being a global development model by using comparative research that is based, almost exclusively, in the megacities and large urban conurbations. Once accepted as a global model, it can then be extrapolated to cover all urban areas, with local researchers expected to 'adapt' it to local conditions. How is it possible, under these conditions, to create an African urban spatial model?

Control over the intellectual space by western agencies and academics

In any given developmental scenario it is natural to expect that the perception from the outside will be different from that from within. These different ways of seeing a development construct derive partly from the different perspective (e.g. the global and the local) and partly from the fact that people come from within different *Weltanschauungen*. In an ideal world these internal and external views should be able to interact to

mutual benefit, creating a symbiotic relationship. However, when it comes to development, the benefit accruing to the host country from that relationship depends to a large extent upon the balance of resources and the nature of the interaction across the resource divide.

Thus, China, for example, is quite willing to listen to international experiences, and sends many students to Europe and the United States. At the same time, though, China has both the power and the political will to define the boundaries of influence in this external thinking, and develop its own solutions.

Brazil is another example of where the interaction between the external and the internal is broadly successful. Like China, Brazil also has a strong indigenous base of academics and professionals. At the same time, it is less powerful and therefore potentially more vulnerable to external influence. In this case, though, the major safeguard against external domination stems from the fact that Brazil is protected by its language. Because relatively few people in Anglo-Saxon countries speak Portuguese, and only limited numbers of Brazilians speak English, the language barrier acts as a filter, allowing information flow but ensuring that it does not turn into a one-way flood.

Of all the countries, or regions, of the world, there is one where this balance between the internal and the external does not apply, and that is sub-Saharan Africa. There are many reasons why that is the case; and while each in itself may not appear particularly problematic, it is the combination of factors that creates the imbalance. On the African side there is the weak intellectual and human resource base, coupled with the continued leakage of graduates, and the high level of dependence on external donor funding. On the other side there is the colonial heritage (particularly the institutional heritage), the high level of ongoing patronage in the relationship, the large number of professionals from Anglo-Saxon countries working on 'Africa' (relative to the number of African professionals), and the power of donor funding to influence both development policy and implementation strategies.

These are all different ways of controlling knowledge generation and knowledge flows. The huge imbalance between internal and external access to, and control over, Africa's intellectual space represents a continuation of western colonialism. Perhaps those in the West do not realise this; they may not intend it, and they may not even wish it to be so. Yet the condition that exists in the relationship between the West (both as individual countries and as de facto controllers of the international development agenda) amounts to nothing less than the colonisation of Africa's intellectual space.

This book will argue, and seek to demonstrate, the sheer power of Anglo-Saxon concepts and ideas to direct and control the direction of development in Africa. The Anglo-Saxon research community is the most

powerful in the world, currently dominating much of the research and controlling the academic journals that are the lifeblood of the wider global research community, providing its members with intellectual credibility and building and sustaining their reputation. African development issues provide only a minute fraction of the output from this research community, and the topic as a whole has a low profile. Partly as a result, those who research and write on the subject are small in number and are concentrated in just a few institutions. The result is that they have a high degree of control over the material that is written and the ideas that are generated.

The nature of the academic discourse varies from one research area to another. In the political sciences, for example, there may be a degree of open debate, owing to the nature of the subject, giving greater access to indigenous input and alternative views of African political development. In other areas, though, particularly those associated with urban development, the debate is more closed. There are a number of reasons why that is the case. On a purely academic level, any paper on Africa struggles to achieve the level of academic rating necessary to sustain the points required by the more prestigious universities for their staff, points that are vital if the university is to maintain its 'ranking' as a top university. There is simply a far wider audience interested in experiences in Europe, the United States or, increasingly, China. Africa is not a mainstream issue in the research community.

As a result, the limited size of the academic 'pool' of Africa specialists then creates a group where the specialists engage with each other and expound to the rest. It is analogous to some of the aristocratic families of old, where a limited gene pool leads naturally to inbreeding. The limited numbers lead to a stifling of creativity. Coupled with this, the power of bilateral donors in particular to guide and shape the research agenda is increasing dramatically as these agencies consolidate their control over the funding for applied research in the area of African urban development. Finally, this condition is reinforced by the fact that this very limited group of specialists is responsible for the majority of publications generated by the international institutions, particularly the World Bank and the United Nations organisations. The result is an unhealthy and incestuous relationship between the international and the bilateral agencies on the one hand, and the university and wider research groups on the other.

I am not implying that this is a racially exclusive group. On the contrary, researchers from low- and medium-income countries are welcomed as part of the group, and it is becoming more international. However, instead of expanding the debate, the newcomers are drawn into the Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung*, for two mutually reinforcing reasons. First, the large majority of these new members, from whatever background, attended university in either Europe or the United States, and the large majority live and work in

one of those two geographical areas. Hence, new members coming in may bring some new insights from personal experience but are nonetheless soon drawn into the group in what is a classic example of the three phases of group-forming in group dynamics: inclusion, influence and intimacy (Srivastva *et al.*, 1997). Second, of course there is the nature of the postgraduate resource system itself. Based as it is upon the use of precedent and empirical analysis, the new studies have to be situated within the framework of existing literature, which is itself part of this same body of knowledge and existing developmental *Weltanschauung*. Taken together, the result is intellectual hegemony, and it is this hegemonic grouping that provides the knowledge base for the Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung*.

The collective impact of external influence on Africa

The view of western, and particularly British, involvement in Africa is completely polarised, depending on whether you are an African living on the inside, or a Westerner, particularly a British person, viewing the situation from the outside. Let's take the latter perception first.

The majority of African countries gained their independence in the 1960s, meaning that the impact of colonialism, viewed from the present, is moving from a personal experience into a more historical perspective of events. As a result, there is often a genuine puzzlement among many people in Britain, particularly among the younger generation, who were not even alive in the colonial era, as to why African countries continue (or so it seems to them) to mistrust the West, and still blame the West for what appear to be their own failings. This perception was neatly summed up in an article in a British newspaper in the context of President Obama's inaugural visit to Africa in July 2009. The correspondent phrased it as follows:

> He [the American president, Barack Obama] can do something no other Western leader can do. He can pick up the phone to an African president and talk to him straight – as an African, without fear that he can be accused of neo-colonialism or racism, the weak but poisonous defence against Western pressure by many African rulers.
>
> (Dowden, 2009)

On the other hand, there is the African perspective, which was neatly summarised in an interview that Graça Machel[14] gave to the British newspaper the *Guardian* (Machel, 2010). In this discussion, focusing primarily on Zimbabwe but also covering the issues of climate change and carbon dioxide emissions, 'she indicated that the crisis in Zimbabwe has revealed the shortcomings of a persistent imperialist mindset', and her interview included the following statements:

'Can I be a little bit provocative?' Machel said. 'I think this should be an opportunity for Britain to re-examine its relationship with its colonies. To acknowledge that with independence those nations will want to have a relationship with Britain which is of shoulder to shoulder, and they will not expect Britain to continue to be the big brother....

'The more the British shout, the worse the situation will be in terms of relationship with Zimbabwe. That's why sometimes I really question, when something happens in Zimbabwe and Britain shouts immediately. Can't they just keep quiet? Sometimes you need just to keep quiet. Let them do their own things, let SADC (Southern African Development Community) deal with them, but keep quiet, because the more you shout, the worse [it is].'

Asked if Britain's attitude is patronising to its former colonies, Machel replied: 'I'm afraid so. And what I'm saying is they have expectations which do not always coincide with what are the aspirations and expectations of those who are their former colony.'

The greatest single challenge in Africa today is for the external countries, and the agencies they control, to understand the nature of *Weltanschauung* – to understand how much of what they do and how they act reflects their own understanding of the way in which they see the world; and that this is not necessarily the way that others see it. The problem is that when yours is the dominant *Weltanschauung*, it is almost impossible to achieve an objective perspective. And there is anyway no reason for such introspective exploration, simply because yours is the dominant view.

The implications of external control over Africa's intellectual space

There are two characteristics that are necessary for development ideas to flourish. The first is an internal research capacity, which creates ideas, and the second is the freedom to debate, which nurtures and improves ideas. UNESCO saw the critical importance of building research capacity in higher education in developing countries and ran a programme to support this development for a number of years. Unfortunately, it was phased out in 2008. This programme dealt with core research, and even this cannot be sustained. There are now western donor programmes (the European Union runs a major one) in which western universities have to collaborate with universities in low-income countries. While such

collaboration may have a (limited) impact in building individual research capacity in Africa, it does little to further original thought or indigenous analysis. Because of the way in which it is structured, the outcome is simply that more African researchers are drawn into the dominant western *Weltanschauung.*

The combination of the four sources of thematic influence outlined above, underpinned by control over the knowledge and research base, is having a devastating effect in stifling African development. It totally dominates Africa's intellectual space and, because it is imposed from the outside, it is a form of colonisation. For this reason, what is happening here can be described as a colonisation of Africa's intellectual space. There is little scope here for Africa to break free of this colonisation, yet this is what it must do if it is to develop its own future.

Yet in spite of the odds against it, it is possible for Africa as a whole to take back its intellectual space. The key lies in two actions. The first is for Africans to take back control of their own governance, and to control the governance agenda. The second is to empower the collective organisations emerging from Africa (the African Union, the African Development Bank, the Southern African Development Community, the African Ministers' Council on Water) to take the lead in managing this governance agenda.

This discussion is about the relationship between knowledge, power and responsibility. Anecdotally, this recalls a personal comment that a community leader, recently out of detention, made about the apartheid regime in the 1980s, which was along the following lines:

> The greatest oppression of the apartheid regime was not what the police did to us, and it was not the forced removals policy, evil as those were. It was the way they prevented us from gaining knowledge. They saw that knowledge was the real source of power, and by preventing us from gaining knowledge, they sought to keep control over us.[15]

There are different ways of controlling knowledge. The huge imbalance between internal and external access to, and control over, Africa's intellectual space, is one of them, whether intended or as the outcome of history or circumstance. To deal with this imbalance, though, it must first be recognised; only then can the real question be asked as to how to change this situation. To a large degree, external institutions, and governments, take an ostrich-like 'head-in-the-sand' approach to this issue. And one of the ways in which this attitude plays itself out is through what I term here the Newtonian physics approach to development. This concept will be described in greater detail in Chapter 2, but briefly it is based upon the Newtonian view that the observer in a scientific experiment is independent of the process being observed. Quantum mechanics demonstrates the fallacy of this concept when it comes to the level of sub-atomic particles;

it shows quite clearly that the observer is also an integral part of the experiment.

And so it is with external actors in African development, particularly, though not solely, in the field of urban development. These external actors control the intellectual space almost entirely, and they are involved not only in defining the output, but also in the minutiae of processes. Any western website of an organisation involved in African development will talk proudly of its achievements – and this is across the development spectrum, from national departments for international development, through NGOs and academics, to the private sector. Rarely, though, will you find examples of their failures on these organisations' websites: those are all the responsibility of African governments.

This control of intellectual space is the real failing of aid, and responsible for the failings of current western approaches. If you control the intellectual space, and development is built on ideas that emerge from that space, then you have to accept responsibility for the failures. Of course African governments must accept some responsibility, but the western countries must accept a great deal more. The world of ideas, and the reality of the dominant *Weltanschauung*, place African development on a par with particle physics: there are no independent external observers – everyone involved is a player, and they all influence, and help to shape, the outcome.

The importance of secondary towns and cities in sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is in the midst of an exponential growth curve that will see its population increase from approximately 800 million in 2007 to over 1,400 million in 2030, and perhaps as many as 2 billion people by 2050 (UN-Habitat, 2008, p. 4). Even on their own, these growth figures are huge; however, they are also being accompanied by a demographic shift which means that urban centres will be accounting for an increasing share of this growing population.

The urban population[16] of sub-Saharan Africa was approximately 70 million people in 1970, a figure that represented less than 10 per cent of the total population. By 2030 this figure is projected to be approximately 760 million, at which point urban settlements will account for approximately 54 per cent of the total population. And on current trends, by 2050 the urban population could be in excess of 1,200 million, at which point Africa would be 60 per cent urbanised. The impact of these changes is encapsulated in Figure 1.2. In 2007 the urban population was estimated to be around 373 million.

Of equal significance to the rural–urban demographic shift is the internal urban settlement pattern. UN-Habitat, the United Nations agency
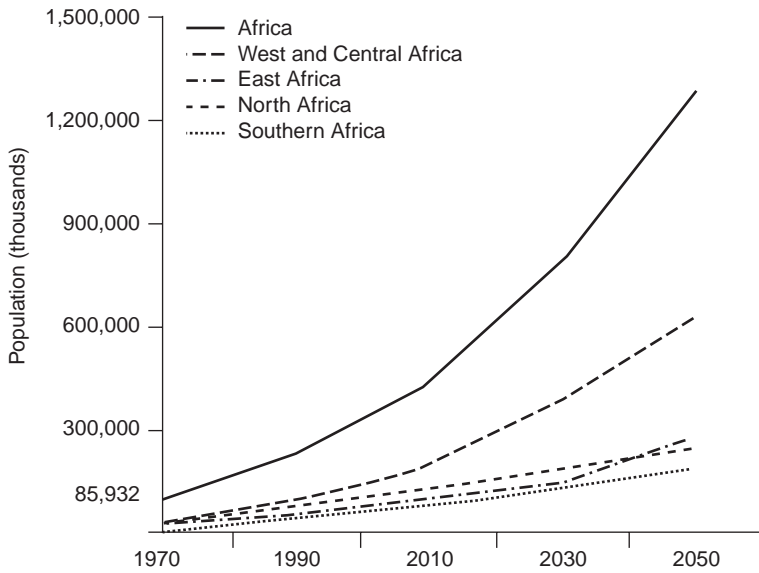
Figure 1.2 Projected urban population growth in Africa 1970–2050 (UN-Habitat, 2008, p. 6).

with responsibility for urbanisation, focuses almost all of its attention on large cities (those with over 1 million inhabitants). Clearly, this is an important sector of the urban population. In 1970 there were no cities with a population of more than 1 million inhabitants in sub-Saharan Africa. By 2008 the number of cities exceeding this population had reached 41. Figure 1.3 shows a map of Africa with the cities of over 1 million people indicated, as of 2007. This map illustrates the extent to which sub-Saharan Africa is essentially a continent of primate cities,[17] particularly if Nigeria and South Africa are excluded, while UN-Habitat (2008) also highlights the growth of a number of regional development 'corridors'.

Major cities are critically important, particularly in terms of their wealth generation capability, as a second UN-Habitat report, detailing the state of world cities in 2009, indicates. However, from an African perspective this rapid growth of major cities, and the subsequent international focus that follows this, is also seriously problematic. For as UN-Habitat's own report highlights, there is another urban world out there, which is that of the secondary towns and cities. These smaller urban centres hardly feature in the international literature, and yet

> [t]he rapid urban population growth in Africa is, contrary to common wisdom, not absorbed by its largest cities. In the foreseeable future,

Figure 1.3 Map showing cities in Africa with populations greater than 1 million people (UN-Habitat, 2008, p. x).

the intermediate cities (towns with less than 500,000 inhabitants) will be the localities where two-thirds of all African urban growth is occurring.

(UN-Habitat, 2008)

So, it is in the small towns and cities that the real crisis of urbanisation exists, yet this is where human and financial resources are most limited. In this regard, UN-Habitat has failed Africa. While it may be able to produce important and valuable work on the megacities, as its 2010 global cities report on this topic indicates, its *State of African Cities* report (2008) focused on this area of megacities totally to the exclusion of these secondary towns and cities. More than anything else (although its report on slums comes a close second), this report demonstrates just how deeply UN-Habitat has been absorbed, as an international organisation, into the Anglo-Saxon intellectual ambit, as well as the dominant Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung*. While the megacities and major development corridors clearly have an important role in any urban analysis, if only because of the

secondary towns and cities. More than anything else (although its report on slums comes a close second), this report demonstrates just how deeply UN-Habitat has been absorbed, as an international organisation, into the Anglo-Saxon intellectual ambit, as well as the dominant Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung*. While the megacities and major development corridors clearly have an important role in any urban analysis, if only because of the economic impact of these regions, they still account for less than one-third of the urban population.

At least UN-Habitat was honest in admitting knowing virtually nothing of the secondary cities and small towns; yet this admission is not enough. Africa's future urban sustainability depends on how these secondary urban areas cope with urbanisation. Large cities have the financial resources and create their own urban dynamic; and they do interact with the world outside. Small towns lack access to this level of resources and their sphere of engagement is much smaller and more localised. As a result, they require a different approach. It is to these secondary cities and towns that this book is addressed. And as the book will show as it evolves, the developmental approach needed will be completely different from any currently available.

Outline of the book

This book argues that existing approaches to urban development in Africa have failed, and that the primary reason for this failure lies in the use of western development models. If African countries are to develop alternatives, though, then a radical shift in thinking about the nature of development will be required. For such a shift to take place, change is required on two levels. On the higher level the imperative is to liberate Africa's intellectual space from external control, in order to enable indigenous thinking to drive the development process. On a practical level there is a need to break free of the constraints of the traditional western model of urban development that was created almost two hundred years ago to deal with urbanisation under conditions that were fundamentally different from those that exist today.

Successful approaches to urban development depend, ultimately, upon successful approaches to infrastructure delivery and management, and that underlying construct provides the rationale for this book. We urgently require a new model, and a new way of thinking about infrastructure and its role in society, both of which will be provided here. To achieve these outcomes the analysis and discussion have been divided broadly into three parts: history, practice and future direction.

The first part, running from Chapter 2 through to Chapter 5, will explore the evolution of urban development from its colonial past to the present time, looking at the forces that influence and guide the way that

decisions are made, as well as the nature of the decisions themselves. Chapter 2 will look at the broad urban development trajectory of the later decades of the twentieth century and the growth of external control over Africa's urban development process, showing how this represented a slow but persistent imposition of external intellectual control.

Chapter 3 will explore the evolution of infrastructure, following the thread from its origins in England and comparing its development there to the way that infrastructure planning evolved in the United States, with the objective being to understand not only how this development happened but also the nature of the relationship between urban infrastructure and broader views of development. Chapter 4 will then take the British experience and look at how it was transferred across to anglophone Africa under colonialism; as well as the way in which it developed subsequently. This examination will provide a wider canvass from which to explore the impact of the Anglo-Saxon *Weltanschauung* on African urban development.

Chapter 5 will move the focus from the technical and managerial aspects of urban development to the institutional structures associated with decentralisation. This chapter will highlight the extent to which the failure of African governments to decentralise has been caused by external forces. Furthermore, the outcome of this failure was not only the growth in power of external agencies but, equally importantly, the undermining of local government in Africa, brought about primarily by the policies and practices of those same external agencies.

The second part of the book, dealing with practice, is made up of two chapters, 6 and 7, both concerned with events in Ethiopia. From an African perspective this is a critical component of the book, since it illustrates the full extent to which African countries would be fully capable of generating their own solutions if western countries and agencies would simply withdraw from their current domination of African intellectual space. The first of the two chapters will describe Ethiopian development in a broad context, divided into three phases. The first will explore Ethiopia's early history and lays the foundation for understanding the country, while the second will look at Ethiopia's modern history, from 1991 to the present time. The third phase will comprise events that took place during a five-year study of eighteen secondary towns in the country. The initial findings of this study will be carried forward into Chapter 7, where the outcome will be explored in greater detail. The chapter will provide both a (brief) technical and strategic analysis showing how the country moved from a condition where infrastructure was viewed as comprising purely a supportive role in an urban planning process to one where it became recognised by government as the major driver of social and economic development in the secondary towns. It is this transformation in thinking that lays the foundation for a completely new way of approaching urban

development in sub-Saharan Africa, the outcome of which is to demand a radical rethinking of the role of both urban infrastructure and urban planning in African development.

The third part of the book will deal with the future direction of urban development in Africa. To do this it will take the lessons from all of this diverse history and use it to create a new approach to urban development, using as its context the secondary towns – an approach that, for the first time, is grounded in African experience. This third part comprises four chapters, which together will provide a comprehensive framework for sustainable urban development in the secondary towns of sub-Saharan Africa. Chapter 8 will begin this process by setting out a new methodological approach that can explore the current urban condition free of external bias and external influence. Using this approach, it then makes the case for a new policy process to be founded on a deeper understanding of the extent to which urban infrastructure is the major driver of development in the secondary towns of sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, it will show how urban infrastructure is the main driver of economic, social and environmental development in the secondary towns.

Chapter 9 will build on this concept of infrastructure as the main development driver to create a new urban development model. Combining the concepts of a city metabolism and an urban ecology, the chapter will show how the use of infrastructure to mediate resource flows in and around the city can integrate economic, social and environmental goals and objectives. This new relationship between urban infrastructure and the flow of urban resources then provides the framework for the new sustainability model that can be applied to the secondary towns and cities. This new model is the foundation for Africa's green urban infrastructure revolution.

Building on these principles, Chapter 10 will develop this concept of green infrastructure through a new approach to the delivery of infrastructure services, linking these back to different resource systems that together constitute the wider global ecology. For each of these systems, which include all infrastructure services, from water through energy, spatial management and sanitation to the digital surround, the chapter will develop a new technological and management framework.

Once this technological and management framework has been created, it becomes possible to create a new institutional structure with a framework linking green infrastructure and urban governance in a single integrated relationship. This is the basis for Chapter 11. Again this requires a new way of thinking about urban social systems, and particularly about the nature of good governance when applied in an African urban context. The chapter will show how the needs of urban good governance differ significantly from the good governance requirements at a national level, being linked much more directly to the services provided by local

This discussion will lead to a new urban good governance model that would enable local government to play a key role in the delivery and management of green infrastructure across the full range of infrastructure services, while at the same time redefining the concepts of public–private and public–community partnerships in a new way that is free of western ideological preconceptions.

Chapter 12, the concluding chapter, will draw together the findings from the different part of the book. In doing so, it will complete the circle initiated at the beginning of Chapter 1, by returning to the two levels of exploration. At the local level the conclusions will summarise the new approach to urban infrastructure that provides the basis for the sustainable development of the secondary cities, showing how it is the correct choice of approach if we wish to integrate economic development with social equity and environmental sustainability in the context of fast-growing, low-income towns and cities in Africa. At the higher level the book sets out how African countries can break out of the currently self-perpetuating cycle of external dominance of the subcontinent's urban development agenda to reclaim control over their intellectual space, and thereby provide their own indigenous capability to ensure long-term, sustainable urban development that is geared to the needs of Africa in the twenty-first century.

Chapter 2

The evolution of urban development

Introduction

There is by now a fairly strong international consensus in the West that people in the 'developing' world, including those in sub-Saharan Africa, should be able to make the critical decisions that affect their lives for themselves, and should be able to shape their own future. While I accept that this is a genuinely held belief, it remains pertinent to ask the question: to what extent does this belief translate into practice? That is clearly a difficult question to answer, exploring as it does the balance between opportunities and constraints on the one hand, and the mechanisms of decision-making on the other. Perhaps it is too complex, or perhaps it is a question best left alone; but whatever the reason, it is a question that is given insufficient attention in the urban development discourse.

With colonial rule more than half a century in the past, the international view would appear to be that the onus now lies with Africans themselves to take responsibility for the current situation in their countries. Some political scientists question the validity of this assumption, arguing that the impact of colonial rule still runs deep; but the majority would probably disagree. UN-Habitat (2008), for example, explicitly places the failure of African governments to decentralise squarely on the shoulders of African politicians, blaming them for a lack of political will; while studies of urban development, as well as of both decentralisation and governance, continually emphasise that the major cause is linked directly to decisions taken in the African political arena. Certainly, political leaders have to take some of the responsibility; but is this really a debate situated only in the political arena, or for that matter only in Africa?

Are the failings of African urban development political, or are they systemic?

The issue of where the responsibility lies for the current situation in Africa raises a fundamental question about how political decisions are made