

**Amalgamated municipalities: An Investigation into Spatial, Economic and Political Transformation of Amalgamated Municipalities, focusing on Ekurhuleni, South Africa.**

by

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I, **Sabelo Tshabalala**, hereby declare that the dissertation/thesis with the title: **Amalgamated municipalities: An investigation into the spatial, economic, and political transformation of amalgamated municipalities, focusing on Ekurhuleni**, which I hereby submit for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** at the University of South Africa, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other institution.

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*But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded (2*

**Chronicles 15:7)**

## **Abstract**

Several South African cities are faced with challenges of rapid urbanisation, overpopulation, spatial inequalities, and poor service delivery. Local municipalities have failed to adequately address the challenges manifested by the apartheid legacy, which continues to plague current developmental initiatives. Post-apartheid urban growth and service delivery programmes have not been able to keep up with the demand for services. Poor governance has been a stumbling block to development since it infringes on the responsibilities of municipalities and prevents them from delivering proper services, which in turn, defeats the plans in place to eradicate poverty and inequality in South Africa. In an attempt to counter these challenges, some municipalities, including the city of Ekurhuleni, have gone the amalgamation route. Municipal amalgamations have been viewed as a way of ensuring that municipalities are large enough to be financially and technically proficient in providing an extensive range of services to communities. The study used a qualitative research approach: interviews, focus group discussions and interviews, and content analysis of strategic documents to collect data. The findings of this study suggest that the implications of apartheid's spatial legacy have had far-reaching consequences for South Africa, as it still dominates the spatial patterns and influences how and where development occurs. While planners have been grappling with addressing the historical spatial legacy that the country faces, new and updated challenges, including urbanization and globalization, have come to the fore. Furthermore, the amalgamation process in Ekurhuleni has not been comprehensive or without its flaws. There have also been some negative trade-offs, which have affected the economic well-being of the communities in the metro. Municipal amalgamations in Ekurhuleni have generated both advantages and disadvantages. Notably, the research findings indicate that implementation has been poor and, as a result, the impact of amalgamation has not been meaningful enough to effectively improve the quality of life for people in the city.

**Key words:** Amalgamation, Municipality, Economic, Development, Spatial, Apartheid, Governance

## Opsomming

Verskeie Suid-Afrikaanse stede staar uitdagings rakende snelle verstedeliking, oorbevolking, ruimtelike ongelykhede en swak dienslewering in die gesig. Plaaslike munisipaliteite het in gebreke gebly om voldoende aandag te gee aan die ontwikkelingsuitdagings wat deel was van die nalatenskap van apartheid. Huidige ontwikkelingsinisiatiewe word steeds deur hierdie uitdagings belemmer. Stedelike diensleweringprogramme in die postapartheid-era kon nie met die vraag na dienslewing hou nie. Swak bestuur was tot dusver 'n struikelblok vir ontwikkeling; dit belemmer ook behoorlike dienslewering deur munisipaliteite. Derhalwe word die planne wat daargestel is om armoede en ongelykheid in Suid-Afrika uit te wis, in die wiele gery. As 'n teenwig vir hierdie uitdagings het sommige munisipaliteite, soos die Stad Ekurhuleni, die samesmeltingsroete gevolg. Munisipale samesmelting word beskou as 'n manier om te verseker dat munisipaliteite, vanweë hulle grootte ná samesmelting, die nodige finansiële en tegniese kapasiteit het om uitgebreide dienste aan gemeenskappe te lewer. 'n Kwalitatiewe benadering is vir die studie gevolg. Onderhoude, fokusgroepe en die inhoudsontleding van strategiese dokumente is as data-insamelingsmetodes gebruik. Die bevindings van die studie dui daarop dat die ruimtelike nalatenskap van apartheid verreikende gevolge vir Suid-Afrika gehad het, aangesien dit steeds ruimtelike patrone oorheers en 'n invloed het op hoe en waar ontwikkeling plaasvind. Beplanners het oplossings vir hierdie ruimtelike nalatenskap begin soek, maar nuwe, moderne uitdagings, insluitende verstedeliking en globalisering, het intussen op die voorgrond getree. Die samesmeltingsproses in Ekurhuleni was voorts nie perfek of omvattend nie en het met sekere negatiewe kompromieë, wat die welstand van gemeenskappe in die metro beïnvloed, gepaard gegaan. Samesmelting in Ekurhuleni het beide voordele en nadele opgelewer; die bevindings beklemtoon in die besonder dat implementering swak was en dat die impak van samesmelting derhalwe nie beduidend genoeg was om inwoners van die stad se lewensgehalte daadwerklik te verander nie.

## Isifinqo

Amadolobha amaningana aseNingizimu Afrika abhekene nezinselele zokukhula ngokushesha emadolobheni, ukuchichima kwabantu, ukungalingani kwezindawo kanye nokungahlinzekwa kahle kwezidingongqangi. Omasipala bendawo bahlulekile ukubhekana nezinselelo zentuthuko ezabonakala ngesikhathi sobandlululo, ezisaqhubeka nokukhungatha izinhlelo zentuthuko zamanje. Ukukhula kwedolobha ngemuva kobandlululo kanye nezinhlelo zokulethwa kwezidingongqangi azikwazanga ukuhambisana nesidingo sezinsiza. Ukubusa ngendlela engafanele kube yisikhubekiso entuthukweni, futhi kukhinyabeza omasipala ekuhlinzekeni ngezidingo ezifanele, okubuye kubhuntshe izinhlelo ezikhona zokuqeda ububha nokungalingani eNingizimu Afrika. Emizamweni yokubhekana nalezi zinselelo abanye omasipala, okuhlanganisa nedolobha laseKurrhuleni, bahambe indlela wokuhlanganisa ekusebenzisaneni nabanye. Ukuhlanganiswa komasipala kubhekwe njengendlela yokuqinisekisa ukuthi omasipala bakhulu ngokwanele ukuba babe nolwazi lwezezimali kanye nobuchwepheshe ukuze bahlinzeke ngezinsiza eziningi emiphakathini. Ucwangingo lusebenzise indlela yocwangingo olusezingeni eliphezulu esebenzisa izingxoxo, amaqembu okugxilwe kuwo kanye nokuhlaziywa kokuqokethwe kwemibhalo yamasu ukuze kuqoqwe idatha. Okutholwe yilolu cwangingo kukhomba ukuthi imithelela yomlando wobandlululo ibe nemiphumela emikhulu eNingizimu Afrika, njengoba umlando usadla anhlamvana futhi unomthelela ekutheni intuthuko yenzeke kanjani futhi kuphi. Ngenkathi abahleli bezama ukubhekana nefa lomlando lendawo, izinselele ezintsha zesimanje sezivele kuqala ezihlanganisa ukufudukela emadolobheni kanye nokuhwebelana emhlabeni wonke jikelele. Ngaphezu kwalokho, inqubo yokuhlanganisa ngokusebenzisanana Ekurrhuleni ayizange ibe yinhle noma iphelele futhi kube khona nokuhwebelana okungekuhle okuthinta inhlalakahle yemiphakathi yasemadolobheni amakhulu. Ukuhlanganiswa kwe-Ekurrhuleni kukhiqize kokubili okuhle nokubi; ikakhulukazi okutholakele kugcizelele ukuthi ukuqaliswa kube kubi futhi ngenxa yalokho umthelela wokuhlanganiswa awubanga nenjongo ngokwanele ukuguqula ngempumelelo izinga lempilo yabantu basedolobheni.

## **Glossary**

ANC – African National Congress

CBD – Central Business District

CODESA – Conference for a Democratic South Africa

CoE – City of Ekurhuleni

COGTA – Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs

DA – Democratic Alliance

EMM – Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality

FDI – Foreign Direct Investment

GEAR – Growth, Employment, and Redistribution

IDP – Integrated Development Plan

IMF – International Monetary Fund

LED – Local Economic Development

NDP – National Development Plan

RDP – Reconstruction and Development Programme

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

SACN – South African Cities Network

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

UN – United Nations

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## **Chapter1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Local governments or municipalities generally use municipal reform as a restructuring tool to assist them in coping with rapid growth. However, they prefer to engage in the amalgamation process to improve in the arena of local planning and to coordinate the respective forms of service delivery (Vojnovic, 2000). Municipal amalgamation is a process where two or more municipalities with shared borders are joined together to become one municipality (Tavarez, 2018). In modern times, municipal amalgamation has been the norm in many countries because of the pressure to increase the size and scope of local government units. The vision of economies of scale held by such amalgamated municipalities is a contributory factor motivating such a developmental initiative (Nakazawa, 2014). Municipal amalgamations are manifestations of an old-fashioned concept that has been part of the political agenda in most Western European municipalities since the 1960s (De Ceunick *et al.*, 2010). They have been informed by two fundamental principles, namely, an improvement in local efficacy and in local democracy (Vetter and Kersting, 2003).

To enhance and accelerate development in local government in South Africa, the government identified Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives as a crucial strategy to address the issues of poverty alleviation and development on the municipal level (Binns and Nel, 2002). Local Economic Development has been critical in working towards efficient and effective municipalities. Importantly, when people cannot afford to pay for municipal services, the financial stability of the local municipality is threatened and with it, its efficiency in providing services. Multiple municipalities around the world have justified amalgamation as a strategic intervention to improve

the efficiency and effectiveness in their delivery of services (Slack and Bird, 2013). In fact, municipal mergers are viewed as a way of ensuring that municipalities are large enough to be financially able and technically proficient in providing an extensive range of services to their citizens (Slack and Bird, 2013). Municipalities merge to improve their financial standing and their sustainability. As such, municipal amalgamation is a critical concept in the local government arena. It should be noted, furthermore, that the amalgamation process is highly framework-driven in the sense that it functions well in some regions but fails in others. It is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach, so that, when implemented, it should be with caution. Political authorities, or municipal areas contemplating municipal amalgamation, should weigh up the advantages and disadvantages prudently and be certain that if they decide to merge, such an action will meet the needs of the community. This research project sought to investigate the extent to which municipal amalgamation could serve as a means to address the spatial legacy of apartheid, namely, economic and social inequalities, and to focus specifically on the period since Ekurhuleni undertook the merger.

Amalgamation reforms are commonly driven by the rationale that, owing to economies of scale, larger municipalities are better equipped to provide local public services at lower unit costs (Tavarez, 2018). It is in fact advised that municipalities should not use it to justify mere municipal reconfiguration. It is against this background that the shortcomings of economies of scale are extensively unpacked in the literature review section. This study pursued an investigative approach to determine the nature of the impact of municipal amalgamation – whether positive or negative – on the citizens of Ekurhuleni. It further interrogated whether the amalgamation policy is functional and viable in the African context or whether it is just another Eurocentric policy guided by post development theory.

## **1.2 Background**

The greatest challenge facing South African municipalities is to provide efficient and quality service delivery to their citizens. The challenges facing the municipalities include service delivery backlogs, the lack of proper governance, institutional weaknesses, maladministration, and corruption (Lee, 2012). These fundamental issues have a negative impact on the community as poor service delivery has a direct impact on livelihoods. Service delivery is a valuable tool for alleviating poverty in South Africa (Burger, 2005) and is a critical aspect of government which has been designed to help improve the lives of people, while also assisting the poor to escape the scourge of poverty (Burger, 2005). Marked by extreme poverty and a high unemployment rate, especially pertaining to the youth, South Africa must support and sustain an increased number of people who are at the mercy of local government services for their survival.

Post democracy, the South African government, led by the ruling party, namely, the African National Congress (ANC), has introduced various policies such as RDP (Reconstruction Development Programme), GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) and recently the NDP (National Development Plan) which have been implemented to address the issue of a developmental deficit. Amalgamation is another policy directed at improving service delivery and has been touted to build efficient and effective municipalities, which can also provide opportunities for exploiting the economies-of-scale philosophy. These policies have not managed to comprehensively address the developmental deficit which has seen an increase in the number of service delivery protests. Population growth has also put a strain on government's ability to effectively provide services while itself also being burdened by poor governance, maladministration, and corruption. All these aspects have contributed to the bottlenecks that have led to a lack in effectively providing services. However, there are

also gaps in the policies that are being implemented. Eurocentric policies, that have enormously influenced South African policies, are often not best suited to the diverse political, economic, and social landscape. The “one-size-fits-all” approach does not work in the African context because European countries are usually less diversified, have smaller populations, bigger budgets, and are also more developed. As opposed to European municipalities, African municipalities do not have large budgets. With due consideration given to the afore-mentioned aspects, as also to its amalgamation with other municipalities, this research project investigated whether the Ekurhuleni municipality has succeeded in establishing an effective infrastructure and in improving its service delivery to the associated communities. The study further investigated how the amalgamation process has addressed the spatial legacy of apartheid and the persistent spatial inequalities.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

Several South African cities are faced with challenges of rapid urbanisation, overpopulation, spatial inequalities, and poor service delivery. Their municipalities have failed to adequately address the developmental challenges emanating from the apartheid legacy which continue to plague the current developmental initiatives. In fact, post-apartheid urban growth and service delivery programmes have not been able to keep up with the demand for services (Mtantato, 2013). Municipalities in South Africa also lack good governance, which impacts on the delivery of services. Poor governance leads to municipalities failing to efficiently operate and maintain their service infrastructure in a cost-effective and sustainable way (Beyers, 2016). The lack of good governance compromises the ability of the municipalities to provide for efficient service delivery. Good governance ensures efficient service delivery, planning, and the implementation of development policies. Effective governance

entails accountability and transparency in terms of financial resources and the rolling out of government programmes in an equitable manner. When there is a lack of good governance, the roll-out of programmes becomes affected, stagnates and has a negative impact on communities. The lack of infrastructural development, as also, the provision of water and electricity, and of refuse removal services, are some of the challenges gripping South African communities. Poor governance presents an obstacle to development as it prevents municipalities from providing for proper service delivery, which in turn undermines the plans in place to eradicate poverty and inequality in South Africa. To counter these challenges, several municipalities have gone the amalgamation route. Municipal mergers are a way of ensuring that municipalities are large enough to be financially viable and technically proficient in providing an extensive range of services to communities (Slack and Bird, 2013). Slack and Bird (2013) further argue that municipal amalgamations have the potential to improve the competence and efficacy of local governments to deliver services, and are, therefore, keenly supported. However, they do not always work out as planned, as they could produce the opposite of the intended goal (Tavarez, 2018).

This research project examined whether government policies such as amalgamation can address the challenges (e.g. service provision, population growth, and unemployment) inherited from the apartheid era and that are currently being faced by the Ekurhuleni metro. This research project further probed the influence of Eurocentric ideologies on the Government's development policies that are currently being implemented in South Africa, and whether they have been able to accommodate the diversity of the country's developmental needs.



#### **1.4 Amalgamation of municipalities**

Municipalities prefer the amalgamation process to improve on their local planning initiatives and to coordinate service delivery (Vojnovic, 2000). Significantly, amalgamation is in fact a political strategy to address different challenges (e.g. the challenging fiscus, failing municipalities, spatial inequalities, and spatial restructuring). Municipal amalgamation has been the norm in many countries in modern times because of the pressure to increase the size and scope of local government units. This vision has in turn been determined primarily by the benefits of economies of scale held by local governments (Nakazawa 2014). Fox and Gurley (2006) argued that in terms of economies of scale, larger municipalities accrue lower costs per resident, while the revenue per resident does not need to change. The Ekurhuleni metro did not undertake the amalgamation process only for fiscal purposes. This initiative was also intended to address spatial, economic, and social inequalities of apartheid era.

While the amalgamation process has paved the way for municipalities to improve service delivery, the metro has struggled to keep up with the demand to integrate development and services in the region. This is because the development that has taken place has been fragmented, it has been difficult to integrate services, especially public transport services. However, these consequences are sometimes far-reaching (e.g. service delivery is affected as the scope of the development initiative becomes bigger, and more money is needed to run the metro).

Municipal amalgamation in modern times has been the norm in many countries because of the pressure to increase the size and the scope of local government units. This has in turn been determined primarily by the vision of economies of scale held by local governments (Nakazawa, 2014). Municipal amalgamations are an old-

fashioned concept that has been part of the political agenda in most Western European countries since the 1960s (De Ceunick *et al.*, 2010). The amalgamations have been informed by a fundamental principle, namely, an improvement in local efficacy and in local democracy (Kersting and Vetter, 2003). However, it should be noted that municipal amalgamations and boundary reforms do not only increase population size; they also introduce organizational changes in local government that might escalate incompetence on the administrative level (Nakazawa, 2014).

There are different aspects that local governments must consider before merging their municipalities. These include the costs of running the new, larger municipality, and of gaining the residents' approval to be integrated into a new service area. A common reason for a municipal amalgamation is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness associated with the delivery of services by the local government (Slack and Bird, 2003). Municipal mergers have been perceived as a way of ensuring that municipalities are large enough to be financially adept and technically proficient in providing an extensive range of services to their citizens (Slack and Bird 2003). Municipalities amalgamate to improve their financial standing and sustainability.

### **1.5 Theoretical framework**

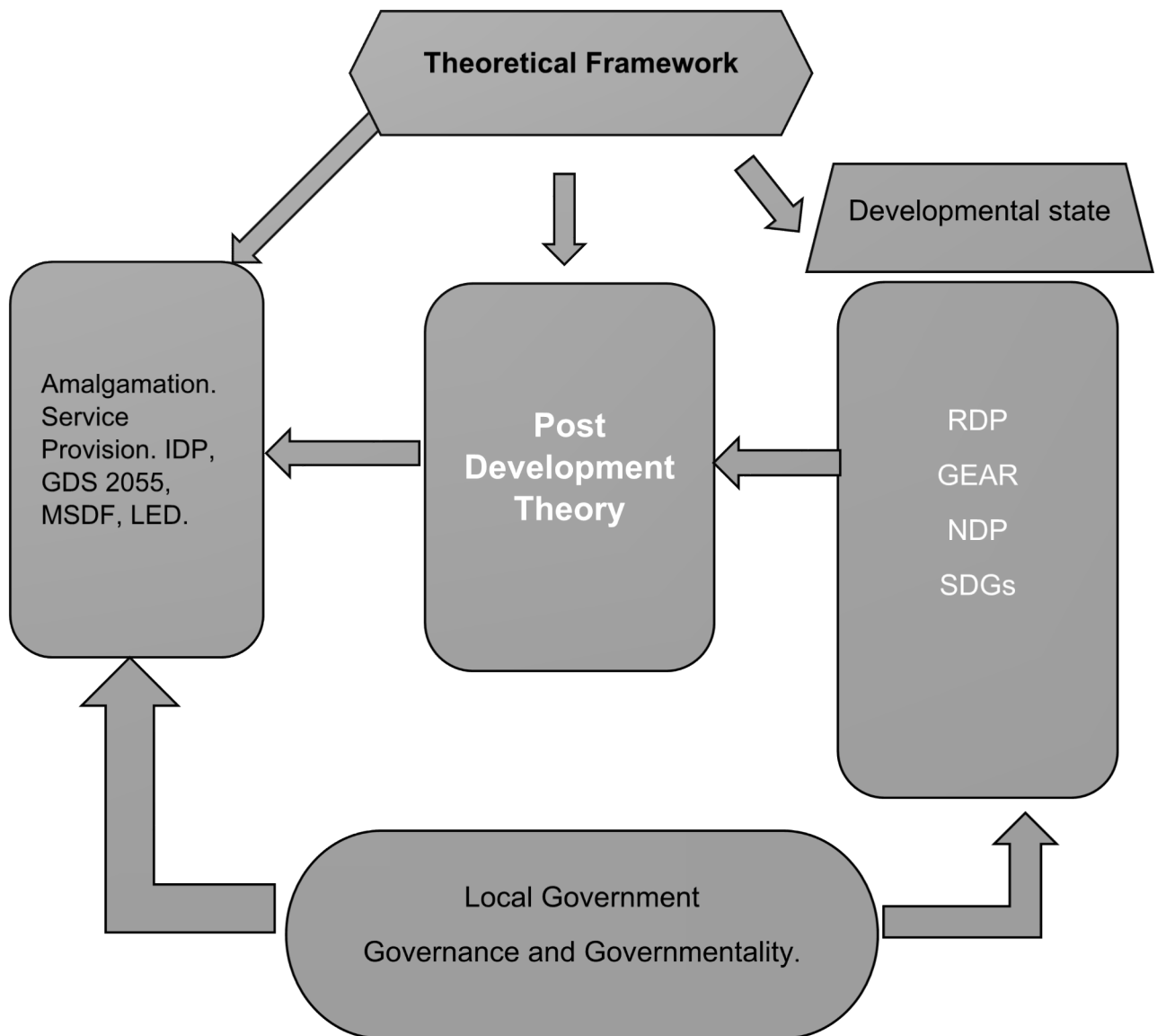
This research project is influenced by post-development theory. Potter *et al.* (2008) define post-development theory as a fundamental reaction to the challenges of development. Peet (1997) argued that the central idea of post-development theory is to understand the discourse on development by pronouncing First World knowledge as power over the Third World. Concisely, post-development theory is centred around the premise that development can only be approved when it is driven by the Western ideology, the ideas of which are perceived as being hegemonic (supreme) and of having authority over the rest of the world. Post-development

theory thrives in an environment of contrasts, where subjects are classified as either good or bad, developed or underdeveloped, and sustainable or unsustainable. Lewis *et al.* (2003) argue that post-development scholars view development as a system of knowledge, technologies, practices, and power relationships that serve to order and regulate the objectives of development. This research project pursued an investigation into the impacts of amalgamation in terms of addressing spatial legacies, inequalities, and service provision. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), a policy introduced by the African National Congress (ANC) led government in 1994 to address the inequalities and imbalances which were instigated by the previous government. The RDP policy was planned to re-direct economic development that had previously focused on one group to the masses of underprivileged people (Bailey, 2017). The policy was intended to be an integrated socio-economic strategy that would help bridge the inequalities which had been caused by fragmented apartheid development. The RDP policy was never given enough time to achieve its key objectives as it was prematurely replaced in 1996, two years after its implementation, by the neoliberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Policy.

The GEAR policy was publicized as an integrated economic strategy for the reconstruction and reformation of the economy and in keeping with the goals set in the RDP (Mathe, 2002). The GEAR macro-economic policy was purported to be a strategy that would grow the economy by reducing restrictions on direct foreign investment, which would promote the privatization of state assets and export-led growth and integration into the global economy as a development strategy (Mathe, 2002). The GEAR strategy was not favoured by the trade unions because they argued that it had stringent fiscal objectives, which were not designed to cater for

the poor. The Congress of South Africa's Trade Unions (COSATU) criticized the policy for having a neo-liberal approach (SAHO, 2014). In fact, the trade unions have never favoured the privatization of state-owned entities. While neo-liberalism advocates for privatization of state assets. SAHO (2014) reports that the GEAR strategy was effective in achieving macro-economic objectives. However, it failed, as initially planned, to address the social challenges of the country, including the mitigation of poverty and the creation of employment opportunities. Mathe (2002) argues that over the years, South Africa has developed sound policies which it has failed to successfully implement because of lack of capacity and of financial resources, and because government has allowed itself to be influenced by neoliberal agenda. This research project aimed to further investigate the possibility of the government integrating Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives into its policies to supplement its poverty alleviation schemes and to grow local economies. This can be achieved by leveraging local resources, which include human, capital, natural, and institutional resources, to ensure that the local municipal area is as independent as possible (Hasan, 1998). The core objective of LED is participatory development as it requires the involvement of different stakeholders within and outside the community. As such, it gives individuals the opportunity to participate and be empowered (Mahlalela, 2014). LED processes should be more structured and formalized to ensure that they meet their intended objectives. Currently, its success is wanting in that there is a lack of structural rigour in the implementation of these objectives. The research project investigated the possibility of advancing a structured approach to integrate LED policies into the post-development framework. Figure 1.1 provides a visual representation of the theoretical framework that will be followed by the research process.

**Figure 1.1. Theoretical Framework**



**Source: (Designed by researcher)**

### **1.6 Aim**

To investigate the spatial, economic, and political transformation of amalgamated municipalities and spatial planning in the post-apartheid period with a specific reference to Ekurhuleni.

### **1.7 Objectives**

- To evaluate how the municipal amalgamation policy has addressed the spatial legacy of apartheid in Ekurhuleni;

- To explore the spatial impact of amalgamation on communities and individuals in Ekurhuleni;
- To investigate past and current spatial patterns and their impact on communities in Ekurhuleni;
- To assess the value of amalgamation as a planning and political tool and its impact on local economic development.

### **1.8 Research questions**

- Has the amalgamation policy managed to redress the spatial legacy of apartheid in Ekurhuleni?
- Has amalgamation provided employment and economic opportunities for the citizens of Ekurhuleni?
- Does amalgamation address marginalization in terms of human settlements?
- Has there been any tangible infrastructural development in Ekurhuleni?

### **1.9 Significance of the study**

While government has designed numerous policies to address the developmental deficit, it has been found wanting in terms of its proper implementation of its policies and its assessment of their impact on communities. Good governance is a huge obstacle in South Africa which obstructs the efforts at addressing those inequalities associated with poverty. This study seeks to assess the value of amalgamation as a planning tool and its impact on Local Economic Development. The study aims to provide critical knowledge on the existing gaps of knowledge in respect of the spatial impacts of amalgamation on communities and individuals. There is a dearth of literature on studies conducted post the amalgamation process in Ekurhuleni and how it has influenced or changed the livelihoods of the people from the previously disadvantaged areas.

## **1.10 Key findings**

Spatial planning in South Africa is still faced with the immense responsibility of integrating the previously fragmented townships by developing an economic infrastructure to serve the associated communities in reasonable proximity to the places where they reside and also enhance the socio-economic status of such neighbourhoods. Spatial planning is a crucial instrument for instituting long-term sustainable frameworks for social, national, and economic development. Its principal role is to integrate the subsectors (e.g. housing, transport, energy and industry) and to advance the national and local systems of urban and rural development, while also considering environmental issues (Economic Commission, 2008). The spatial legacy of apartheid has had far-reaching consequences for South Africa, as the legacy still dominates the spatial patterns and has an influence on how and where development occurs.

While the planners have been grappling with addressing the historic-spatial aspects of this legacy, urbanization and globalization have now become the new modernized challenges that have come to the fore. Characterized as the aftermath of poverty and unemployment, deep inequalities now prevail in the urban areas. Post-democratic South Africa has been battling to eradicate poverty, unemployment and a slow-growing economy. Economic development is essential in promoting and sustaining the common welfare of citizens. It focuses on the key qualities of life which encompass the provision of quality healthcare, the growth of the economy, and the creation of knowledge through research and technological developments. All of these are necessary for survival. Coccia (2018) argues that economic development is nurtured where there are appropriate social systems in place and where they function in conjunction with comprehensive democratic and cultural

values, good economic governance, a structured higher education system, and high-level inventive outputs. Investments in key services such as healthcare, education and technological innovation play a critical role in benefiting countries in that they accelerate economic development and the generation of wealth. At the other extreme, however, the local municipalities in South Africa face immense challenges, such as extreme poverty and unemployment levels, a lack of services, stagnant local economies, a lack of the essential skills required to drive local economic development, a lack of administrative competence, and little success in the implementation of policies (Mashaimate and Lethoko, 2018). A major difficulty facing South African municipalities is how to generate an adequate income to ensure that, in the light of the high rates of unemployment and poverty, the needs of a growing population are met. The state has failed to effectively establish state and municipal departments to service the needs of its citizens; these instruments of development are in fact in a state of disarray. Both the implementation of development projects, and appropriate remedial and timely interventions to deal with problematic issues, are linked to good governance; in fact, without good governance in place, appropriate remedial action is impossible.

Local government is obligated with the responsibility to ensure in a sustainable manner the efficient delivery of quality services to communities, with the objective being to promote social and economic development, and a safe and healthy environment. Since half of the world's population lives in urban areas, most cities across the world are faced with the challenges of urbanisation and poverty. This necessitates a need to design smart cities, which will integrate and coordinate services while concurrently striving to promote the cause of sustainability. Through the amalgamation process the city had a vision of integrating and coordinating



services and accelerating development in the city. The amalgamation process in Ekurhuleni has not been perfect or comprehensive. While it has covered some ground in terms of development, there have been some negative trade-offs, which have affected the well-being of communities in the metro. There is some dissatisfaction in terms of service delivery and the dilapidated infrastructure, which has not been maintained for an extended period. The amalgamation process has thus far not achieved all of its intended objectives. However, development has taken place over time in the city. Amalgamation in Ekurhuleni has generated both advantages and disadvantages.

Notably, the findings of this research have established that the implementation of development projects has been poor and that, as a result, the impact of amalgamation has not been meaningful enough to effectively change the quality of life for people in the metro. The researcher concludes that for the city of Ekurhuleni to achieve success in spatial planning, economic development, and political transformation, good governance is necessary. All these objectives are tied up together and linked to proper governance. Lack of good governance has become a major impediment in the South African democratic system.

## **Chapter outline**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The introductory chapter, which provides the rationale for the study, is inclusive of the motivation, research questions, research design, aim and objectives of the study, as well as the associated ethical considerations.

### **Chapter 2: Literature review**

This chapter provides an in-depth literature analysis of municipal amalgamations and a review of the post-apartheid policies that have been implemented by the ruling party (ANC) to address inequalities and developmental challenges that have been afflicting South Africa since 1994.

### **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter outlines the research methodology adopted in the study. It contains a detailed review of the research approach, design, data collection techniques, and focuses on content analysis, interviews and focus group discussions. It also discusses the methods used for data collection and data analysis.

### **Chapter 4: Spatial legacy of Apartheid and Municipal Amalgamation: The connection**

This chapter focuses on evaluating and examining the relevant literature on the impacts of the spatial legacy of apartheid and its influence on spatial inequality, spatial planning, and the economic infrastructure in post-democratic South Africa.

## **Chapter 5: Data analysis, Interpretation and Discussion**

The chapter analyses, evaluates, and interprets the collected data. The findings and outcomes based on the data are presented in the form of written text, tables, and graphs. Discussion, analysis and interpretation of data was demonstrated in this section. This chapter also demonstrates the outcomes of the research questions and the aim and objectives of the research study.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations**

The chapter provides conclusions emanating from the study and recommendations are made.

## Chapter 2

### Literature review

#### 2.1 Introduction

For years, academics have deliberated on the size of a political authority that would affect the quality of service provision undertaken by the government (Bish, 2001, Meligrana, 2004; Paddison, 2004; and Tavarez, 2018). This stance dates to the period of scholars, such as Plato and Aristotle, who argued that, ideally, municipalities should be smaller, but big enough to be self-sufficient (Dahl and Tufte, 1973). In the current contemporary times, the political sphere is structured in terms of re-organization, federalism, and local and urban politics (Lassen and Serritzlew, 2011). Several European countries, such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands, have significantly changed their local landscape in that they have, on recommendation, adopted drastic reforms and implemented them with the common vision to circumvent the concentration of powers at the central and regional levels (Gustafsson, 2007).

In fact, European countries have been in the process of undergoing territorial reform and of amalgamating government entities, from smaller to larger entities, the latter being warranted by the need for efficiency and effectiveness in service provision (Kaizer and Steiner, 2012). As of 1970, municipal reforms in Europe have been focused on up-scaling which has given rise to the formation of larger municipalities (Ebinger *et al.*, 2018). There have been several factors in the European context that have contributed to countries deciding to amalgamate local government entities. They are urbanization, fiscal challenges, and the decentralization of policy functions from the national to the local government level (Askim, 2015). Fiscal challenges in Europe have led governments to cut public spending which has negatively affected the quality of service provision and has consequently infuriated residents (Tavarez, 2018). Such

challenges have been a major driving force to reduce the number of government entities in European countries. Amalgamation on the African continent is a relatively scarce phenomenon with the only documented evidence of it in practice being in South Africa. The City of Cape Town was one of the first to engage in the amalgamation process, with the primary justification being to redistribute finances and expertise from the affluent local authorities to the poor local authorities (Slack and Bird, 2013, Todes *et al.*, 2010). The City of Ekurhuleni is yet another that has amalgamated smaller municipalities to form one large municipality. Known as the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, the amalgamation was implemented to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in which local government delivers services (Slack and Bird, 2003). Municipal mergers and boundary reform do not only increase population size; they also introduce organizational changes in local government that might escalate administrative incompetence (Nakazawa, 2014).

There are different aspects that local governments must consider before merging municipalities. These would include the costs of running the new larger municipality and of rezoning and remapping the municipal area. Furthermore, they also need to gain the residents' approval to be integrated into a new service area. Municipal amalgamation around the globe happens for various reasons. However, the common reason is to increase efficiency and enhance service delivery (Vojnovic, 2000; Kersting and Vetter, 2003). Municipalities also merge to increase and improve their financial standing and sustainability. As it is a context-driven process and can be used to address various challenges, municipal amalgamation is a comprehensive process that requires extensive research and meticulous planning. It is not intended to be a "one-size-fits-all" policy; therefore, it is important to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of the process before implementation. In fact, the success of the

amalgamation process hinges on a variety of other policies and developmental strategies that are generally executed by municipalities. South Africa's development continues to be influenced and affected by the country's apartheid legacy. Developmental inequalities in South Africa have emerged from more than a century of the country's operation as a racialized state, as well as from an economic policy that was adapted to the spaces that were previously delimited through the plans of the apartheid government that persisted even after the dawning of the New South Africa in 1994 (Schensul, 1999). This has contributed to a developmental deficit in the country and has negatively impacted the well-being of the citizens, resulting in unemployment and devastating poverty. The accumulative impact of the racially engineered planning framework has resulted in islands of spatial affluence, whereby development has been concentrated only in specific areas (Marais, 1998).

Several development initiatives have been put in place, post 1994, in an attempt to address the fragmented development in South Africa. Such policy initiatives include the well-documented Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was designed to respond to the social and economic challenges in the post-apartheid era. This policy was comprehensive as it sought to address social cohesion and promote harmony in the new South Africa. It was followed by the implementation of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme which was intended to accelerate economic growth and improve the country's competitiveness in attracting investors and to provide a conducive environment for investment. Like the RDP, GEAR was also projected to be a strategic programme to reduce poverty and inequality. Labour unions were not in favour of the GEAR policy, however, as it required workers to agree to non-competitive wages as part of the fiscal discipline that was required to save money and promote economic growth. The common phenomenon is that poverty persists,

and economic growth remains a dream that has still to be attained. Economic growth needs to be supported by Local Economic Development initiatives, because government is still struggling to address development challenges amid the respective challenges of, amongst others, increasing poverty, high unemployment rates, widening inequalities, and a growing population. Communities need to participate in the development process and establish a symbiotic relationship with government rather than depend on government. LED is a key instrument in the alleviation of poverty and in eradicating inequality in post-apartheid South Africa. The fundamental obligation of municipalities is to work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to formulate sustainable instruments that can be applied to meet their needs and advance the quality of services (RSA, 1998).

Another scheme to fast-track development could be the adoption of the developmental state approach. The principle is that the state's economic system should be involved in developing and reinforcing the sovereign ability vested in the government to address the legacy of apartheid, especially its impacts on poverty, unemployment, and inequality (Tshishonga and de Vries, 2011). A developmental state is a state that prioritizes economic expansion through government strategies and puts effective measures in place. To attain the goals of economic growth and development, the state needs to invest more resources in the development of an effective infrastructure, education, Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Chapter 2 provides an analytical discussion on amalgamation as a policy tool to address the legacy of apartheid and its spatial impact on communities. This chapter further analyses the politics of amalgamation in governance, local economic development initiatives, and the developmental state approach to achieving economic growth.

## **2.2 International context of municipalities**

Municipalities are constituted differently in different countries across the world, but all face a common legislative requirement, namely, that of governing and providing services. Municipalities have councils which are put in place so that local governments can be run efficiently and effectively. Local government, which wields both legislative and administrative power, plays a vital role in the general functioning of local government (Nelson, 2010). Furthermore, municipal leadership should be proactive and modify the local government structures to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of the citizens has been advocated (Frederickson and Johnson, 2004; Frederickson, Johnson, and Wood 2004; Mullin, Peele and Cain, 2004).

In the United States of America there are different categories of local government, with the most common ones constituted by the council manager and the mayoral council (Nelson, 2010). Mayor-council governments are characterized by the separation of their legislative and executive powers. This is identical to the centralized system at the national level (Nelson and Svara, 2010). A hybrid local government trend, where the municipalities themselves amend their structures, has been observed. This allows them to be transformative and thus able to respond to community dynamics and challenges (Desantis and Renner, 2002; MacManus and Bullock, 2003). Frederickson *et al.* (2004) maintains that there are nation-wide movements toward greater mayoral authority in manager-council governments and that greater professionalism prevails in such local governments. This debate assumes that the municipalities have the power to adjust their structures at will, whereas this may not be the case in all states. The freedom to play around with structures has merits in that it ensures that municipalities are transformative and flexible in addressing issues of service delivery. Local governments in Europe are organized slightly differently. Local government is



administered under the city, but different countries use different criteria to define a city. The criteria used include population size and density, urban functions and being a recipient of national urban policy funds or having been accorded city status through a charter (Dijkstra and Poelman, 2012). The focus of local governments in Europe is to build and govern smart cities. The aim is to build cities with a well-developed ICT infrastructure, while also leveraging human capital and education in urban development (Caragliu *et al.*, 2009). Hollands (2008) defines a smart city as the “*utilization of networked infrastructure to improve economic and political efficiency and enable social, cultural and urban development*”. Furthermore, in this case infrastructure refers to business amenities, housing, leisure, lifestyle, and ICT services (Caragliu *et al.*, 2009). In Europe, the administrative units are defined differently in line with cultural and structural differences.

Countries use different population density values to define urban municipalities. For example, the Czech Republic and Luxemburg use 2000 inhabitants as the bottom line; Slovakia, 5000, and Spain and Switzerland, 10 000 (Servillo *et al.*, 2017). For various European countries, the status of an urban municipality, town, or other administrative body is determined at a higher administrative level and on an *ad hoc* basis. This is guided by the size of the population of the city (OIR *et al.*, 2006; Santamaria, 2000). In South Africa, large municipalities are governed by metropolitan municipalities, while the smaller municipalities are divided into district municipalities (SALGA, 2017). Local government manages cities and smaller regions which are known as municipalities. The municipalities in South Africa are classified into three categories, as follows:

1. Category A - Metropolitan: a municipality that has exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in the area.

2. Category B - Local: a municipality that shares municipal and executive and legislative authority with a Category C municipality, whose area falls within its jurisdiction.
3. Category C - District - a municipality that has a municipal executive and legislative authority in an area that includes more than one municipality. (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2015/16).

Metropolitan municipalities in South Africa use two types of governing systems, the mayoral executive system, where the mayor has the sole authority, or the collective executive committee system (South Africa Yearbook, 2018/19). Category B and Category C municipalities follow the executive and legislative decision-making process. After the 2016 local government elections, municipal boundaries were restructured, which resulted in the country having eight metropolitan municipalities, 44 district municipalities, and 205 local municipalities (South Africa Yearbook, 2018/19). The restructuring resulted in the amalgamation of the Randfontein and Westonaria municipalities to form Rand West City (West Rand District Municipality, 2016).

The new municipality was driven by the poor financial performance results of the local administration that had been running the two municipalities. Financial administration is currently a major governance issue for most local governments in South Africa (Ncube and Monnakgotla, 2016). This has been the justification behind municipal amalgamations, which is a route that has been taken to achieve a solid fiscus and a functional and efficient government. It appears that the smaller municipalities in South Africa are finding it a huge challenge to provide proper governance and adequate services as a result of their poor handling of their finances and their deteriorating infrastructures. The appropriate size for a local government municipality to function efficiently has been a topic of discussion globally, but because of the different schools

of thought, there has been no consensus in this respect (Newton 1982, Goldsmith and Rose, 2002; Karlsson, 2013; and Denters *et al.*, 2014). In terms of municipal amalgamations, this concept has dominated in several local governments in European countries such as Sweden, Belgium, and Denmark (Loughlin *et al.*, 2011). Schaap *et al.* (2010) argues that the process of amalgamation in Europe is split into two categories, namely, the “big bang” process and the “step-by-step” process. The big bang process is described as an immediate nationwide set of mergers, where most of the municipalities are involved, while the step-by-step process of mergers only affects a few municipalities at a time and ultimately leads to a gradual increase nationally in the size of the amalgamated municipality (Schaap *et al.*, 2010).

As regards municipal reforms, several industrial countries have instituted large-scale municipal reforms in the last few years to improve local government economies. This has been motivated by policymakers who believe that larger municipalities can exploit economies of scale and reduce expenditure (Eichenberger and Frey, 2006). Larger municipalities are perceived to be able to provide a variety of public services and goods, while also resisting macroeconomic setbacks because of resource sharing (Hinnerich, 2009). Over the years, academics have not found a common ground in terms of the municipal reforms and the perceived economies of scale that can be achieved through reforms. The efficiency and feasibility of local democratic practices and participation in terms of the state of municipalities has not yet been comprehensively proven. Schaap *et al.* (2015) maintains that the fundamental tenet behind amalgamation policies lies in the hypothesis that local municipal problems emanate from a municipal size that is too small and thus inadequate. The tendency for policymakers to assume governing challenges and for democratic discrepancies to arise is linked to the size of the municipality. This school of thought is derived from the

assumption that the effectiveness of a local government is influenced by the equivalence between the scale of the social problems, the scale of governance, and the scale of public involvement (Baldersheim and Rose, 2010). While amalgamation has become the norm in Europe, it is still a relatively new concept in Africa, a continent that has not as yet been fully embraced by cities. Furthermore, most African cities are still lagging in terms of infrastructural development, and there are still significant challenges with the provision of services.

Local governments have used municipal reform as a restructuring option to enable them to cope with rapid growth. To improve local planning and to coordinate service delivery, municipalities prefer to opt for amalgamation (Vojnovic, 2000). Significantly, amalgamation is a political strategy that can be implemented by the ruling party as a policy to address different challenges such as the ailing fiscus, failing municipalities, spatial inequalities, and spatial restructuring. In modern times, because of the pressure to increase the size and scope of local government units, which is in turn determined primarily by the vision of economies of scale, amalgamation has been the norm in many countries (Nakazawa, 2014). Fox and Gurley (2006) argue that in terms of economies of scale, larger municipalities tend to accrue lower costs per resident, while the revenue per resident does not need to change. As a result, an amalgamated municipality would be more efficient and also in line with the economies of scale (Reingwertz, 2012). However, some scholars have challenged the notion of economies of scale as a justification for municipal reforms. Tavarez (2018) argues that most local reforms aimed at amalgamating local governments have not been motivated through empirical research and reliable data analyses. Furthermore, academic research has had a very limited influence on governmental development schemes (Dollery *et al.*, 2008).

Thus, if government policies are not informed by empirical research, their policies will continue to be characterized by shortfalls and limitations, which will ultimately have a negative impact on governance and the provision of services. Importantly, the amalgamation of municipalities does not guarantee improved service delivery or economies of scale (e.g. when municipalities reduce costs, the quality of the services they render also depreciates (Reingwertz, 2012). As such, amalgamation then becomes ineffective and fails to provide economies of scale, and instead, there is merely a shift in policy leading to budget cuts and an inferior level of services (Reingwertz, 2012).

It is worth noting that economies of scale are not constant throughout the wide range of services provided by local governments. As a case in point in a municipality that is capital intensive and where the focus is on developing the infrastructure, there will be prospective gains because of the increased population numbers since fixed costs can be spread across a larger number of citizens. However, in a municipality that is labour-intensive, service gains are lost because the provision of more services requires the employment of more people to meet the demand for services (Tavarez 2018). Bouckaert and Kuhlman (2016) argue that in the current situation, financial challenges are influencing municipal amalgamations, but with the optimistic prospect that larger municipalities can expediate economies of scale to save small and dwindling administrative units. Some of the arguments that have been raised that support amalgamation as a way of achieving economies of scale are listed below;

1. Economies of scale and possible collaborations - the assessment that municipal obligations can be executed more effectively in larger municipal units, and that the expenses can be reduced.

2. Adverse demographic trends can trigger depopulation in small municipalities and lead to challenges in service delivery in terms of the cost of local services
3. The need to respond to changing dynamics (e.g. adjusting to developing settlements, transport networks, and municipal boundaries).
4. Economies of scope - the assumption that increased public services can be delivered in larger municipalities, especially where amalgamations are linked to decentralization (Dafflon, 2012; Steiner *et al.*, 2016; Heinelt and Kubler, 2005).

There is also a school of thought that is against amalgamations as a way of achieving economies of scale. Their arguments are presented below.

1. Diseconomies of scale - the increase in the size of the output results in a greater increase in the average costs and requires huge investments in service delivery.
2. A decline in the accessibility of services and access to local administration
3. A decline in political participation - it is argued that amalgamation reduces voter turnout because there is the perception that votes weigh less in large municipalities in terms of the potential impact they would have in the bigger scheme of things.
4. The links between citizens, their representatives, and local administration are fast fading. Municipal amalgamations affect the direct contact between citizens and their political representatives because the number of citizens-per-councilor ratio declines after mergers (Copus, 2006; Denters *et al.*, 2014; De Ceuninck *et al.*, 2010).

This re-affirms the argument that municipal amalgamations do not automatically guarantee economies of scale as there are varying circumstances in municipalities which can either offer a great platform to facilitate economies of scale or a platform that is hostile and not viable for economies of scale. Furthermore, the costs of managing a municipality are more likely to escalate considerably when population growth reaches a certain threshold, which will then result in diseconomies of scale (Lassen and Serritzlew, 2011). When municipalities amalgamate, the euphoria of a new administration can become a pull factor for people looking for opportunities and employment, which could rapidly inflate the population. This could result in an increase in the demand for services which requires the local government to then increase its budget and gear it up for service delivery (Bish, 2001).

Therefore, there are different aspects that local governments must consider before working towards the merging of municipalities. They could include the costs of running the new larger municipality and of rezoning and remapping the municipal area. Furthermore, they need to gain the approval of the residents to be integrated into a new service area (Dollery *et al.*, 2008). For amalgamation to be successful, both proper governance and political stability are required to ensure the smooth delivery of services and accountability from all involved stakeholders. Not everyone is in support of municipal amalgamations. In fact, scholars have argued that mergers do not necessarily lead to economies of scale. The major reason for this is that municipal areas differ and face different challenges. Therefore, because the challenges of governance vary from simple to complex, economies of scale cannot be uniform (Boyne 1992; Dollery and Flemming, 2006). Tavarez (2018) argues that economies of scale can be successfully achieved in local governments that have smaller populations, ranging between 25 000 and 250 000 residents. As a result of

the need for municipalities to provide specialized services on an extended scale and in response to an increased demand for them, larger municipalities can easily lead to diseconomies of scale (Holzer *et al.*, 2009). The alternative to the amalgamation debate challenges the earlier arguments that “bigger is better” and suggests that amalgamation cannot be a blanket approach, or a one-glove-fits-all process.

The proponents of the alternative to amalgamation advocate for intermunicipal collaborations and the contracting out of municipal services (Bish, 2001). Local governments wanting to achieve economies of scale could enter into flexible trade agreements with their neighbouring municipalities which could include the sharing of resources with other municipalities and the procurement of services from private service providers or other local governments, which could contribute to their escape from a rigid form of governance (Dollery and Flemming, 2006; Tavaréz, 2018). In Australia, the amalgamation of municipalities has come under the spotlight with serious criticism. The identified shortcomings have been fuelled by the failure of amalgamation initiatives in several cities which were observed from the real-world outcomes of amalgamation programmes and as opposed to the predicted outcomes (Dollery and Byrnes, 2005).

A case in point is that although the government of the state of Victoria alleged that its comprehensive structural reform process would produce direct cost savings of 20%, the cost reduction amounted to only 8,5%. This can be attributed to competitive tendering and restructuring failures. The predicted savings in South Australia amounted to 17,4%, while the actual savings tallied up to only 2,3% (Allan, 2003). The amalgamation process is complex and there are no guarantees that the set goals will be achieved as there are various implications in place which would include different stakeholders, the community, and service providers buying into the



vision to merge local institutions. Holzer *et al.* (2009) argues that amalgamations are unsettling and usually have negative consequences for democracy, which causes tensions among the affected and interested parties. Political representation in amalgamated municipalities is another impediment which could become a challenge. This would depend on the type of communities that are merged, the demographics and the electoral processes (Sorenson, 2006). It is very important for local governments to incorporate and encourage community participation and to consult widely when contemplating the amalgamation of different local authorities.

Changes in the municipal size require a balance between the two sectors, namely, the economy and democracy, which subsequently pose complex challenges to the functioning of the local government (Dearlove, 1979; Martins, 1995; Kjaer and Mouritzen, 2003). Reingwertz and Serritzlew (2019) argue that not enough research has been conducted to conclusively prove the strength of the relationship between the size of the municipality and the cost of services per resident, and therefore the argument that amalgamations lead to economies of scale has not as yet been comprehensively verified. The scholars who are against the amalgamation of municipalities contend that mergers do not produce economies of scale or cost reductions since there are various factors, including the cost of services, lack of development, and political challenges. These scholars posited that municipal amalgamations are mainly influenced by political struggles and fundamentally there are no assurances that economic gains will in fact materialize and that democratic costs can be prevented (Drew *et al.*, 2019; and Reingwertz and Serritzlew, 2019).

### **2.3 The South African Experience**

Access to municipal services helps to advance the quality of life and assists the poor in their escape from poverty (Burger, 2005). South Africa is a country faced with

inequalities because of its colonial and oppressive history emanating from the apartheid era (SASAS, 2016). Apartheid planning and discriminatory systems, such as influx control and group areas legislation, contributed to the extreme dysfunctionality and unsustainability of urban settlements (Mahanyele-Mthembu, 1997). The spatial exclusion reminiscent of the past apartheid era embodied a substantial dimension in the historic development of urban settlement patterns in South Africa and is deeply rooted in the apartheid period (Maylam, 1995). The dawn of apartheid and the development of early European settlements through the mechanism of the Group Areas Act contributed to conditions that intensified the spatial displacement of African populations. This was due to the increasing scarcity of arable land and livestock, the demand for slave labour and for trade in valuable resources (Van Wyk, 2012; Pienaar, 2014). Municipal officials stringently regulated housing developments in the separate residential locations, while implementing inadequate or unsuitable town planning programmes (Strauss, 2019).

When influx control was abolished, it gave people the freedom to migrate from rural areas to urban areas in search of a better life, education, and employment opportunities. The downside to this trend is that it created a huge demand for housing and accommodation, with the result that the uncontrolled urban sprawl led to chaos and an increase in the practice of squatting, which led to informal settlements (Coupe, 1994). The Group Areas Act was used to relocate the black people to new locations on the urban periphery, which resulted in long distances to work and poor access to a range of urban amenities and economic activities. Consequently, cities and towns developed along expansive, random lines, the patterns of development standing in sharp contrast to the relatively low density white suburbs, which dominated the scene (Harrison and Todes, 2015). The post-1994 government pursued its vision of being

impartial to its handling of the post-apartheid cities, towns and rural areas, with no clear policy to either support or discourage migration because of its sensitive nature and its apparently negative effects on both the “push” and “pull” effects of the “sending” and “receiving” areas (in the context of population migrations).

The vague approach towards urbanisation translates into a reactive, indifferent, and sometimes even aggressive approach towards the informal settlements and backyard shacks that sprang up. Unfortunately, there is no consistent national policy for planning and handling the current momentous process of urbanisation (Turok, 2012). The apartheid system did not only segregate races; it also established a sense of inequality via the different forms of housing, geographical locations, landscapes, as well as the distribution of amenities and facilities (Spinks, 2001). *“The spatial legacy of apartheid separated the majority of people from economic activity, trapped disadvantaged communities in poverty and underdevelopment, created inefficient cities and robbed poor, rural people of secure livelihoods”* (Motlanthe High Level Panel, 2017).

The apartheid government established numerous small municipalities which dedicated service delivery to the white minority population, while their strategy was to locate the black townships in the peripheral areas surrounding the cities and towns. As such, the black people were disadvantaged in terms of service delivery and economic opportunities (Todes *et al.*, 2010). Apartheid city planning has left a significant spatial legacy in South Africa (Mtantato, 2013). The spatial gaps in the material welfare of the people of different races are stark and deeply etched in the societal landscape. Within every city and town, the exclusive business areas and upmarket suburbs with their first-class facilities are juxtaposed with overcrowded townships and squalid shack settlements (Motlanthe High Level Panel, 2017). In fact, the South African cities are still trapped in the legacy of racially segregated human settlement patterns (Mtantato,

2013). The racial divide established by the apartheid government was basically initiated through the relocation of black Africans to the peripheral areas of the city, away from the services that it delivered and the amenities that it provided (Houston, 2011). For citizens to grow up in different worlds, with an unparalleled social infrastructure and opportunities of all types and forms, and of livelihood and lifestyle opportunities on the one hand – in the white suburbs –, and just the opposite on the other – very little in the black townships – is a phenomenon that largely destroys trust across a society (Turok, 2018).

Furthermore, apart from these shortcomings, most cities in South Africa still face challenges of rapid urbanisation, overpopulation, and spatially disjointed communities, which, in conjunction with one another, intensify the pressure on urban services and the infrastructure, especially on the periphery of the urban centres (Mtantato, 2013). Like numerous cities around the world that are faced with challenges of poverty, unemployment, inequality, the fair distribution of opportunities, and wide gaps in salaried employment (UN, 2009), the South African situation is no different. As a result, the democratic South African government has introduced various policies, such as the RDP (Reconstruction Development Programme) and the GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) programme which were meant to address the respective socioeconomic challenges faced by the previously disadvantaged people. The Reconstruction and Development Programme was meant to embrace an integrated, comprehensive socio-economic policy which envisioned a campaign to organize all the people and the resources of the country towards eradicating the outcomes of the apartheid policy and to build towards a democratic and non-racial future for the South African society (Corder, 1997). With the main goal being to eradicate poverty and deprivation (ANC, 1994), the RDP policy was built around the following six principles,

which were meant to ensure that the programme was comprehensive and would effectively address the plight of the poor. The relevant principles were as follows;

1. The formulation of an integrated and sustainable programme;
2. The implementation of people-driven processes;
3. Guarantees for peace and security for all;
4. The focus on nation building;
5. Establishing a link between reconstruction and development;
6. Ensuring thorough democratization for South Africa (Corder, 1997).

To ensure that the implementation of the policy transitioned smoothly, the RDP policy was broken down into five key strategic programmes which were classified as follows:

1. To meet basic needs for water, electricity, jobs, health, and land;
2. To develop human resources (e.g. education, training, and the removal of barriers).

To build the economy, the objective being that it should be inclusive and should cater for the previously disadvantaged;

3. To democratize the state and society and thus create a united and peace-loving society;
4. To permit the participation of the poor and also their empowerment in the implementation of the RDP (Corder, 1997).

The RDP policy was a well-designed policy crafted to respond to the developmental deficit that emanated from the apartheid government's systematic oppression of people of colour, while concurrently offering white people the opportunity to develop economically and socially. The policy was comprehensive as it sought to address social cohesion and to bring about peace in the dawn of the "New South Africa".

However, the policy had significant flaws – both strategic and pragmatic. However, the way in which the policy was disseminated to the disadvantaged communities was flawed as it promoted a political rhetoric, creating the impression that everyone would be provided with free housing, electricity, and water. This election promise has caught up with the government as municipalities are currently raking up high bills for unpaid electricity and water.

It was not practical to offer all these essential services for free, and the fiscus was never going to afford it, it was a case of over-promising and under-delivering. Gumede (2008) argues that the ANC-led government landed itself in this conundrum because building a democratic state was “simply not an option”; it constituted a ‘moral imperative’ since the country’s continued stability depended on it. Another shortcoming of the RDP was that its office was in the presidency and it was understaffed. This restricted the RDP in its capacity to execute government plans that would bring harmony and peace to a country on the brink of a revolution (Karriem and Hoskins, 2016). In 1996, the office was closed, leaving the state with no strategic supervisory agency.

This subsequently led to a change in the market-focused GEAR macro-economic programme, which was to be accommodated within the Ministry of Finance (Karriem and Hoskins, 2016). GEAR was a macro-economic policy that was designed to speed up economic growth, be attractive to foreign investment and improve competitiveness (Mazibuko, 2013). It was touted to be a policy that would reduce poverty and inequality through rapid economic growth (Streak, 2004). Importantly, GEAR was intended to shape the economy and promote quick growth and be competitive, both locally and internationally (Mazibuko, 2013). Being too optimistic, GEAR set up high expectations as it claimed that the macro-economic policy would be responsible for contributing to

the creation of 1.3 million jobs from the period of its implementation until the year, 2000 (Terreblanche, 1999). The GEAR policy relied on achieving this goal of job creation through the co-operation of the trade unions by offering labour market reforms, equitable wages and additional jobs, which would be created through infrastructural development in the public sector (Terreblanche, 1999).

The labour unions were against the GEAR policy; as such, it was virtually impossible for them to agree to co-operate in terms of the negotiated wage offers<sup>1</sup>. It is because GEAR was grounded in the need for market-led growth, fiscal and monetary discipline, and investor confidence, the government was forced to exercise restraint in its spending (Terreblanche, 1999). Unfortunately, GEAR failed to live up to expectations and had staunch critics in the trade unions. Mazibuko (2013) argues that GEAR lacked a proper conceptualization of poverty and unemployment; instead, it vaguely referred to economic growth with the anticipation that while reducing poverty, the economy would grow rapidly and create jobs.

Terreblanche (1999) contends that unlike the RDP document, which was expansively discussed by the ANC alliance, GEAR was not advanced by any other consultations within the ANC; even the top ANC officials were not familiar with the details before its public release. Davids (2009) labelled GEAR as being influenced by the Washington consensus policies imposed by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO) on developing countries. Ultimately, two members of the tripartite alliance condemned GEAR, namely, COSATU and the South African Communist Party (SACP). The two alliance partners labelled GEAR as a neo-liberal macro-economic model that would result in job losses and an increase in

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<sup>1</sup> They were unacceptable to the workers as the poverty rate was very high in the light of the oppressive nature of the apartheid government policies.

casual work, as opposed to permanent jobs, in an era generally marking a rise in unemployment, poverty, and inequality (Davids, 2009). The unpleasant legacy of poor economic development which continued to have an adverse impact on the growth and development of the country (Binns and Nel, 2002). To stimulate economic development, Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives were introduced by the government. LED is defined as a participatory process that stimulates and enables partnerships amongst local stakeholders and communities (Canzanelli, 2001).

LED is grounded in the co-operative design and implementation of strategies based on the competitive use of local resources. For LED to be effective, it needs to be formalized, structured, and integrated into government programmes. Integrated Development Programmes (IDPs) were identified as appropriate to drive and implement LED enterprises in municipalities. The 1998 White Paper stated that IDPs provide authoritative tools for municipalities to provide integrated and coordinated services (RSA, 1998). Gunter (2005) argued that IDPs are regarded as an effective way of implementing LEDs because they help develop capacity for government departments to ensure that LED processes are consolidated and streamlined.

With the South African history of apartheid, more ground still needs to be covered to alleviate poverty, to create employment opportunities and to develop the economy. Municipalities need to sustain their attempts at service provision to address poverty while also executing the LED programmes, which are designed to empower the communities they serve. The core responsibility of municipalities is to work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to formulate sustainable mechanisms to meet their needs and advance the quality of their services (RSA, 1998). To meet the development objectives of local communities, local governments are required to take full responsibility for both social development and economic growth to ensure that



the economic and social conditions are favourable for creating employment opportunities (Binns and Nel, 2002). The future sustainability of metropolitan areas in South Africa will be influenced by decisions taken to prepare for growth and development. These decisions must be taken within the context of planning for the apartheid legacy, where poor communities have been consigned to housing on the periphery of urban areas (Mtantato, 2013). Post-apartheid urban growth and service delivery programmes have not been able to keep up with the demand for services, particularly within the transportation and human settlement sectors (Mtantato, 2013).

#### **2.4. Development inequality in South Africa**

Developmental inequality in South Africa materialized from more than a century of the country being a racialized state, with its economic policy organized into spaces through the pervasive planning of apartheid (Schensul, 2009). The apartheid philosophy was ostensibly embodied in a national policy; however, its implementation and impact were powerful in the local context because the most resilient aspect of apartheid inequality was based on the foundations of local racialization and constructed through local planning to separate and constrain people by race (Schensul, 2009).

To improve service delivery and address the structural inequalities caused by the apartheid legacy, Ekurhuleni Municipality took a decision to amalgamate smaller municipalities into one large entity. Ekurhuleni amalgamated nine towns, that had developed independently and in competition with one another, to form one metro (MSDF, 2011). The launch of the metropolitan meant the disestablishment of nine local government administrations (Benoni, Boksburg, Springs, Brakpan, Nigel, Edenvale, Kempton Park, Germiston, and Alberton), which were absorbed into this new mega administrative structure (Ekurhuleni, 2012). On the other front, because the mining

towns in Gauteng province had grown randomly around the Johannesburg urban area and all the way to the East Rand (Ekurhuleni), a new urban trend emerged: urban development was now redirected and diverted away from the conventional town planning programmes, which had previously catered for the provision of services (Growth and Development Strategy, 2015). Instead, this trend resulted in fragmented growth in the main towns and in the townships and spatially isolated habitats in the peripheral areas around the cities and towns. In response to these challenges the Metro in 2011 introduced a development scheme that was coined as Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (MSDF).

It aimed at addressing the fragmented development which tended to intensify the spatial inequalities in the metro. The MSDF is a significant and strategic framework aimed at achieving spatial development. As such, it constitutes an investment in the municipality's geographical space (MSDF, 2011). The MSDF, a consultative process which involves public participation, is undertaken by the municipality, and is mandated by legislation and the constitution to accelerate development and to meet the social and economic objectives of the municipal area in question. The preliminary MSDF document highlighted the importance of creating a new municipality which would address and transform the fragmented and exclusive spatial infrastructures reflected in each of the nine fragmented towns that were to be amalgamated (MSDF, 2011).

Nkhumeleni (2017) argues that the MSDF is a critical framework as it involves a collaborative effort to incorporate several municipal policies and, as such, to create a new, larger, holistic and sustainable municipal structure. The MSDF vision was to address the spatial fragmentation in the Ekurhuleni region which could be largely attributed to the spatial legacy of apartheid. To achieve success in such a major spatial development would depend on the meticulous implementation of the various policies

of the metro. Furthermore, because the livelihoods of many people would be impacted by the prevailing spatial inequalities which were depriving them of free access to a wide range of social and economic amenities, such an initiative for amalgamation could not be taken lightly. The MSDF is supported by the Growth and Development Strategy (GDS), 2055, which is a framework embraced by the Ekurhuleni municipality to address the various developmental challenges in the region.

The GDS framework is a strategic metro plan to improve and accelerate spatial, economic, and social development in the Metro. Spatial reconfiguration is aimed at achieving modernisation in terms of the public service, the economy, human settlements, and urban development, as well as in the upgrading of the public transport infrastructure (Growth and Development Strategy, 2015).

The GDS 2055 identifies five priority objectives, namely

1. to re-industrialise: to create jobs and for economic growth;
2. to re-urbanise: to achieve sustainable urban integration;
3. to re-govern: to create effective cooperative governance;
4. to re-mobilise: to achieve social empowerment;
5. to re-generate: to benefit from a sustainable environment (Growth and Development Strategy, 2015).

These identified priority areas are very important as they cover a variety of issues that are afflicting the Ekurhuleni Municipality. In fact, the spatial challenges facing the metro have been heightened by the amalgamation of the nine spatially independent towns and the 11 administrations, none of which has been subjected to the pre-interim and interim phases of local government transformation, as defined by the Local Government Transition Act of 1993 (MSDF, 2011). The Local Government Transition

Act of 1993 was promulgated to provide a revised provisional measure to promote the restructuring of local government and the establishment of provincial committees that would adjudicate the delimitation of the areas of jurisdiction and the election of transitional councils in the interim phase (Local Government Transition Act, 1993).

The Ekurhuleni spatial planning blueprint should align with the provincial and national spatial planning imperatives so that the former do not deviate from what is operationally required from the national programmes. The provincial spatial plan is coined as the Gauteng Spatial Development Framework, 2030 (GSDF) and is responsible for the spatial planning and programmes in the province. The Gauteng Spatial Development Framework, 2030, was designed to be an integrated, coherent vision of an ideal settlement form, transportation network, and economic development plan for the province (GSDF Executive Summary, 2013). It is a strategic plan that is proposed to guide development in the province in such a manner that it will fulfil the developmental needs of the public, while also stimulating the development potential of the province (Nkhumeleni, 2017).

Importantly, the GSDF 2030, strives to direct, align, organize, and synchronize all development spending in the province to safeguard rapid, sustainable, and inclusive provincial growth and township redevelopment which will in turn permit significant spatial transformation (GSDF Executive Summary, 2013). The GSDF 2030, is a blueprint for spearheading spatial development in the province; it also informs all other strategic plans for the municipalities that fall under the region. In 2015, the Gauteng Provincial Government took a decision to review the GSDF 2011, a pronouncement that was also supported by the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) (Act 16 of 2013), which came into force in July 2015 (GSDF Executive Summary, 2013). This resulted in the GSDF 2030, which aims to direct, guide, focus

and align, coordinate, and synchronise all development spending in the province; and to ensure rapid, sustainable, and inclusive provincial economic growth and township redevelopment, thereby enabling decisive spatial transformation (GSDF Executive Summary, 2013).

The SPLUMA Act is designed to provide a framework for spatial planning and land use management in South Africa and to specify the relationship between spatial planning and the land use management system and other types of planning (Spatial Planning and Land Management Act, 2013). The Act further seeks to provide guidelines for inclusive, developmental, equitable, and efficient spatial planning in the different sectors of government (Spatial Planning and Land Management Act, 2013). It is, therefore, crucial that all municipalities in the Gauteng province align their strategic plans to respond to the objectives of the GSDF. The GSDF is informed by six spatial development objectives, which are liveability, concentration, connectivity, conservation, diversity, and viability (GSDF Executive Summary, 2013).

These objectives are important as they seek to address the vast spatial inequalities in the province which affect the way people live, and their ability to make ends meet in a society that is devastated by unemployment and poverty. Spatial inequality continues to be a defining feature of settlement patterns in Gauteng where location and the areas where jobs are concentrated do not match up with the areas where people stay (City of Johannesburg, 2016). This problem persists throughout the province, and to address it, the respective municipalities need to work hand-in-hand to draft spatial plans that will respond to the challenges of inequality.

## **2.5 Municipal Demarcations**

The institutional framework for the South African government was introduced in 1996 after the adoption of the democratic constitution, which resolved to establish the three organs of government, namely, national, provincial, and local government (DPLGA, 2007). The South African constitution envisioned a vigorous local government system which would provide a democratic and responsible framework for local municipalities, ensure the provision of services in a sustainable manner, promote social and economic development, and promote a safe and healthy environment (Constitution, 1996). The Municipal Structures Act defines a municipality as the structures, political office bearers and administration staff, a geographic area, and the community that the municipality serves (Government Gazette, 2000).

The municipality is an organ of the state, which exercises legislative and executive powers. The municipal powers are applied in an approach of co-operative governance, which allows the three organs of government to work together effectively. Municipalities are responsible for governing the areas that fall under their jurisdiction as determined by the official demarcation of the area and the boundaries. Demarcation is important for the following reasons:

1. It enables a municipality to fulfil its constitutional responsibilities, which include the provision of a democratic and accountable government to serve the local communities within its jurisdiction.
2. It provides services to communities in an equitable way.
3. It promotes social and economic development.
4. It fosters effective governance and integrated development (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2015/16).

As endorsed in Chapter 7 of the Constitution (CoGTA 2020), the functions of a Demarcation Board are to determine or re-determine municipal boundaries. Importantly, the responsibility of the Demarcation Board is to ensure smooth governance by ensuring that the board provides the following support services:

1. Advisory services in terms of legislation and the required Acts;
2. The delimitation of wards for municipalities;
3. The submission of recommendations to parliament on provincial boundary issues when issues arise during the process of determining municipal boundaries (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2015/16).

The determination of municipal boundaries is a critical process required for the successful transformation of a local government (Bekink, 2006). For municipalities to efficiently provide services, boundaries need to be clearly demarcated so that service provision is equitable, and the services are accessible to all communities served by the municipality. The Demarcation Act 27 of 1998 established an independent municipal demarcation board, which abided by the prescribed criteria and procedures for the determination of municipal boundaries (Local Government, 1998).

The demarcation of new municipal boundaries does not mean that the challenges faced by municipalities will be solved overnight. It is a process that takes time for local government to get it right as there is a need to put in place proper processes and the structural requirements necessary for transformation and development (Smith, 2000). Municipal boundaries play a vital role in terms of political, financial, and social issues because boundaries regulate what each municipality is responsible for (Bekink, 2000). Municipal boundaries regulate the scope and character of a municipality in terms of the voting population - whether it be wealthy or poor, or of the region, whether the

infrastructure is good and developed/efficient or poor (Smith, 2000). Thus, the objective of government is to meet the constitutional requirements by providing services and putting in place measures to develop and address infrastructural challenges. The provision of services should be equitable between poor and wealthy areas. Importantly, municipalities should not demarcate boundaries solely on the basis of wealth. Municipal boundaries play a vital role in governance as they determine whether a municipal area is a feasible proposition for developmental initiatives, or sustainable, as this has an impact on the potential income and anticipated expenditure (Bekink, 2006). Local citizens also share a connection with municipal demarcations as they are linked to services, opportunities, and social amenities. When boundaries are demarcated in a way that interrupts their social and economic plans, many citizens may find it difficult to integrate and be part of the municipality. They then associate and invest their interests in other municipalities which may in turn inhibit them from participating in the local economic activities (DPLGA, 2007).

This may negatively impact on the efficiency of the municipality. A case in point is the Khutsong community, which fought for their municipality to fall under Gauteng instead of the North West province. Preferring to be under the Gauteng province, they engaged in violent protests, and by presenting their case to the Constitutional Court, they were eventually granted their wish (IOL, 2007). The people of Matatiele have also recently been fighting for their municipality to fall under KwaZulu Natal rather than under the Eastern Cape province. This is evident from their marches to demonstrate their dissatisfaction (Mhleku, 2018). It has become a widely accepted phenomenon in South Africa for people to show their displeasure through protest marches, which are usually violent and disruptive. Thus, it can be concluded that demarcation does indeed play a vital role in the functioning of a municipality and can accelerate service



delivery, which in the longer term could bring about a decline in service delivery protests.

## **2.6 Developmental state**

The concept of a developmental state is indicative of a state that intervenes and leads the direction and pace of economic development (Caldentry, 2008). The developmental state is predominantly associated with the same type of economic policies that were adopted by East Asian governments in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and specifically, the post-World War II Japanese economic model (Caldentry, 2008). The success of state-led economic development initiatives throughout the 1970s and 1980s in East Asia led to an increase in the popularity of the developmental state approach (Ngqebe, 2017). Japan is renowned for having led the charge by adopting the developmental state approach, which resulted in the shifting of its fortunes from being destitute to its rise to become the second-largest economy in the world (Ngqebe, 2017). Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan followed suit and implemented the developmental state approach, which was later to be known as the Four Asian Dragons or the Four Asian Tigers (Caldentry, 2008).

Thus, these countries were able to achieve success through a sequence of interventions by their respective governments:— policies such as tariff protection, the allocation of grants, and policies embodying other forms of control played an important role in their chosen course to intensify production and to raise the level of their economic production (Caldentry, 2008). Importantly Caldentry (2008) argued that the developmental state and its related policies are not exclusive to Japan or East Asia. A comparable type of model, although more restrictive, was followed in Latin America during an era extending from the end of World War II to the beginning of 1960. State interventions included economic interventions, exchange rates, and monetary and

sectoral policies to promote the industrialization of Latin America (Caldentry, 2008). A developmental state is one that drives economic development, as well as industrialisation, in the interests of the public good. The concept is said to be an institutional model that adopts an unrestrained sovereign approach as justification for the high levels of growth of industrialised nations and upholds the state as central to and beneficial for economic development (Mhone, 2004).

However, the developmental state concept appears to be in absolute contrast to neoclassical (or neoliberal) economics that has long argued that 'state interference' obstructs economic growth by inhibiting market stability and results in destructive outcomes (Gumede, 2015). It is worth noting that the success of a developmental state relies hugely on the power relations and the integrity of the seated government. A developmental state is one that prioritizes economic development through government policies and is able to put effective measures in place. To achieve this, the state needs to establish new formal institutions that can collaborate with both the formal and the informal sector and exploit new opportunities for trade and profitable production (Bagchi, 2000).

Importantly, the success of a developmental state lies in its ability to promote and achieve economic growth by creating practical institutions that can guarantee growth (Habib, 2008). The developmental state prototype assumes a strong role in that it drives such development by establishing favourable conditions (e.g. in the context of education, infrastructure, and health) to foster such development. This requires the implementation of proper measures to protect the national industry in the current times, which are marked by the emergence of the global economy, as also to promote sustainable economic growth (Marwala, 2009). Currently, there is no consensus by policymakers on the viability of a developmental state and on the model that South

Africa, as a country, is or should be following. Hirsch (2013) concurs with Mathekga (2013) that, comparatively speaking, democratic South Africa, post 1994, is in the infant stage. Mathekga (2013) argues that because the political system is immature and undeveloped, it is too early to say whether South Africa could in fact become a democratic developmental state. Bagchi (2004) argues that it is worth observing that a considerable body of the literature on the notion of a developmental state has focused on economic growth and development. For example, this author further defines a developmental state as one with a government that prioritizes economic development in its public policies and states that it can incorporate effective instruments to promote such objectives.

For the developmental state approach to function successfully, certain strict conditions need to be met. Johnson (1982) recognized three features that characterize the Japanese developmental state model. The Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) is the vital institution that allows the developmental state to put in place small and inexpensive, as well as a professional organizational structure in its quest to establish an efficient state of governance. Secondly, the success of a developmental state requires that the government which is in power and in charge of leading economic development should be protected from powerful interest groups so that it can set and bring to fruition its economic priorities (Johnson, 1982).

When the African National Congress (ANC) came into power after the democratic elections of 1994, the government sought to implement the principles of a developmental state. The conviction was that the state economic interventions would develop and strengthen the sovereign capacity to address the legacy of apartheid, especially the impacts of poverty, unemployment, and inequality (Tshishonga and de Vries, 2011). The apartheid legacy left a huge developmental deficit – to the extent

that the New South African government had the task of introducing new economic and development policies to improve the welfare of the people, while also raising the country to new heights. As the dawn of the New South Africa took over, the previously disadvantaged groups had hope that their lives would improve, and that democracy would be for them a ticket to escape from the scourge of poverty and inequality. However, the new government soon ran into challenges as it rolled out its mandate. This was due to its many promises and its inability to deliver. Some of the promises were just not practical and feasible. Leftwich (2000) argued that the success or failure of a developmental state hinges on the role played by politics. The role of politics is essential in establishing a developmental state and would, therefore, focus on its developmental aims and performance (Leftwich, 2000).

Politics can have a positive influence on the success of a developmental state and in its approach to accelerating economic development, provided that the principles of good governance, such as accountability, transparency, and sustainability, are practised. However, the improper influence of politics could have a detrimental impact on the objectives of the developmental state. Abuse of political power, corruption, and a lack of accountability could result in the objectives being stifled or delayed. Cummings and Nørgaard (2004), provided an alternative concept, coined as the state-structure nexus, which is a critical characteristic of the developmental state.

These scholars highlight the importance of the organizational capacity of the state, as well as its technical capacity, in building a developmental state. Importantly, this is the ability to develop industrial elites and to safeguard state autonomy, institutional coherence, and economic performance (Cummings and Nørgaard, 2004). The South African government is still struggling to address developmental challenges amid a wide range of challenges, which include increasing poverty, high unemployment rates,

inequality, and a growing population, economic growth needs to be supported by Local Economic Development initiatives. Furthermore, communities need to participate in the development process and establish a symbiotic relationship with government rather than depending on government. LED has been and still is a key instrument in the alleviation of poverty and in eradicating inequality in post-apartheid South Africa. The fundamental obligation of municipalities is to work together with local communities to find sustainable ways to formulate sustainable instruments to meet their needs and advance the quality of services (RSA, 1998). In its quest to drive the strategy of the developmental state, Government has been faced with numerous obstacles emanating from the strong conviction among nations that advocate “neo” for liberalism (Tshishonga and de Vries, 2011).

There is a belief that the state’s involvement will hamper progress. Often, wealthy nations are opposed to the policies supporting state interventions which constitute a significant part of the developmental state. Notably, post-development theory, centred around the principle that development can be acceptable only when it is driven by the Western ideology and, incorporates ideas that are strongly imposed by hegemonic states. The South African government has several bilateral agreements with various First World countries which provide a diplomatic impasse in its quest to properly implement developmental state intervention. External institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have heavily criticized South Africa for wanting to pursue the economic direction of a developmental state (Tshishonga and de Vries, 2011). Practically, South Africa needs to come up with policies that will stimulate economic growth and address the development deficit. The South African government has struggled to provide services and to achieve strong economic growth over an extended period. It is paramount now that the country should take a bold step to

eradicate the poverty, unemployment and inequalities that continue to ravage the country. Having a strong economy is beneficial for any country as it promotes employment opportunities, fosters infrastructural development and maximizes the provision of services to the citizens. Service delivery accelerates development and in so doing, bridges the poverty gap and improves the welfare of people. With a working population and efficient service delivery, municipalities can benefit from the opportunity to increase their revenue to become sustainable and competitive.

## **2.7 Integrated Development Plan**

The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is an important planning tool that was introduced in post-apartheid South Africa. It is a strategic document used as a planning instrument which guides and informs planning and development in municipalities (Manzini, 2016). Integrated Development Planning for local government is a system of planning that proposes linkages and synchronization among all activity sectors that impact on the operation of a local government (Orange *et al.*, 2000). IDP consists of a five-year plan which details development plans inclusive of infrastructure, economic and social development. It was introduced in 1996 by an amendment to the Local Government Transition Act (LGTA), which was planned as a tool to assist local authorities in transformation and in fulfilling the objectives of the government-backed Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Harrison, 2001). The White Paper on Local Government, published in 1998, highlighted the role of the IDP as essential to the following reasons;

1. Providing long-term vision for the development of a locality;
2. Aligning the financial and human resources of the municipality through the implementation of strategies;

3. Helping municipalities to focus on the environmental sustainability of their delivery and development strategies;
4. Providing a basis for annual and medium-term budgeting.

Since 2000, as promulgated by the Municipal Systems Act No 32 of 2000 (Harrison, 2001), IDPs have been mandatory for all municipalities in South Africa. The Local Government Municipal Systems Act (32 of 2000) for operative purposes defines the IDP as a plan which must be implemented by each municipal council within a recommended period subsequent to the commencement of its election term. IDPs are in place to assist municipalities in coordinating development in a systematic way. Importantly, they are in place to accelerate service provision and improve the wellbeing of people, post democracy. Mathebula (2018) argues that the appropriate, efficient, and effective implementation of the IDP in a municipal environment warrants the acceleration of service delivery, as anticipated by the citizens, from a government. An IDP document contains the following content which serves as a good foundation for a well-structured strategic document:

1. A vision for the long-term development of a municipality;
2. An assessment of its existing level of development;
3. A spatial development framework, which should include basic guidelines for land use management;
4. Operational strategies;
5. A financial plan;
6. Key performance indicators and performance targets (RSA, 2000).

Harrison (2001) argued that there are different and ever-changing perceptions regarding IDPs within government alliances. For others, the IDP is an instrument to

drive a needs-based approach, which would promote impartiality, transformation, and participatory governance. However, for some, the main role of the IDP is to support the effective allocation of finances and resources by guaranteeing that budgets would be linked to the strategic objectives of the municipality and expenditure would be prudently prioritized (Harrison, 2001). The proper implementation of an IDP allows it to function as a foundation from which service delivery can be improved in municipalities (Mathebula *et al.*, 2016). The success of an IDP relies heavily on its proper implementation, efficiency, accountability, and good governance.

However, failure to coordinate and implement the strategic vision of the IDP has had multiple implications, such as wasteful expenditure and, importantly, failure to provide for efficient service delivery. Improved service delivery in municipalities is critical and that the IDP serves as a catalytic agent for proficient and effective planning processes that result in the successful delivery of services (Ngubane, 2005; Skosana, 2007; and Dlulisa, 2013). South African municipalities have a well-documented record of poor service delivery; as a result, there has been an increase in service delivery protests across the country. Alexander (2010) states that service delivery protests assume the form of mass meetings, the drafting of memoranda, toyi-toyiing, road blockades, tyre burning, looting, the demolition of buildings, and confrontations with the police.

Protests over service delivery evidently originate in the poorer communities, especially from shack settlements and townships, rather than from the more affluent suburbs (Alexander, 2010). This demonstrates that there are fundamental challenges faced by municipalities that impede them in their proper implementation of IDPs. The lack of governance and financial accountability are major obstacles to efficient service provision. There is an unquestionable connection between an IDP and service delivery since the objectives of the IDP become the services to communities once they are



carried out (Mathebula, 2018). The entire range of municipal services is integrated into an IDP and serves as a management planning tool for improving service delivery. Academics have criticised the IDP process as lacking capacity and are aware that local municipalities rely on external consultants to produce IDP documents, which results in simplified processes that are hypothetical rather than practical (Harrison, 2001; and Gunter, 2005). Several municipal councils have failed to adequately implement IDPs as a result of the following challenges:

1. A number of municipalities delegate their duties to advisors who support and drive government processes;
2. There is a poor link up between the planning processes at the regional and local scales;
3. There is a lack of clarity in respect of the roles of officials and councillors, as set out in the IDP procedures.
4. The link in terms of the planning and budgeting processes between government and the service providers is weak (Harrison *et al.*, 2000).

These aspects have a negative impact on the way in which municipalities function and in their ability to efficiently provide services to communities. The lack of clearly defined roles and accountability in the IDP processes make it difficult to audit and to successfully implement objectives, plans, budgets, and adequate service delivery. Mathebula (2018) argues that service delivery can be enhanced only once an IDP is understood by all the employees of the municipality. Essentially, a strategic document as important as the IDP should not only be the business of senior management employees, but also all municipal employees, including cleaners and other general employees, if its strategic objectives are to be turned into services (Mathebula, 2018).

Gunter (2005) observed that certain municipalities fail to acknowledge ownership of the IDP process. As such, municipal managers do not take the initiative to control the process and do not categorize the IDP as the driving force behind development. This has led to the mediocre integration of the IDP into municipal systems, and the ineffectual planning amongst government departments and other similar domains, which means that the relevant processes become fragmented and service delivery is hindered (Gunter, 2005). Furthermore, apart from these operational challenges, municipalities also struggle with financial challenges, inadequacies in their expert support systems, and failing municipal infrastructures (Mathebula, 2018).

As prescribed in the IDP, financial resources are critical in assisting with the delivery of services. A number of municipalities struggle with financial governance challenges, which cause backlogs and thus impede efficient service delivery (Mathebula, 2018). Furthermore, financial mismanagement is linked to a lack of expert support, which could come in the form of guidelines from research institutions, or an advisory board, and which could provide strategic assistance, with due attention also given to proper governance and priority areas in the IDP in respect of service provision.

Mabuza (2016) argues that the successful implementation of an IDP is achieved by acknowledging and efficiently implementing its appropriate strategies, through the effective monitoring of the processes that it propounds, and the evaluation of its outcomes. Taking stock of the available resources (e.g. the financial and human resources) and ensuring that the resources are used prudently and efficiently are further interventions that are required for the successful implementation of an IDP (Mabuza, 2016). There are a number of challenges that prevent municipalities from properly implementing an IDP. Madzivhandila and Asha (2012) observe that insufficient skills, limited capacity, and poor financial management at the local

government level are stumbling blocks to the effective implementation of an IDP. Also, the different departments within the municipality do not have well planned, cooperative working relationships among themselves which results in a lack of horizontal integration, with departments not talking to one another, and, therefore, a lack of coordination (Madzivhandila and Asha, 2012). Phago (2009) recognizes that another challenge obstructing the implementation of the IDP is the lack of public participation. Poor public participation in the development and execution of an IDP has been diagnosed as a problem affecting most South African municipalities (Phago, 2019).

In their study, Maleka and Asha (2020) interviewed an IDP officer, who indicated that municipalities are encountering problems with their lack of funds which prevents them from providing for the needs of their communities. The non-payment by residents for municipal services (e.g. for refuse removal, water) and property rates, which together offer a source of revenue to the municipality, makes it virtually impossible for municipalities to provide efficient services to their communities. This creates bottlenecks and frustrates the poor. The lack of substantial participation by citizens and local stakeholders threatens the credibility of an IDP as it no longer reflects the needs of the community and the established priorities (Madzivhandila and Asha, 2012).

The IDP is designed to fast-track service delivery and accelerate development, especially for disadvantaged communities. Therefore, it is prudent that public participation should be goal-directed and reflect a cooperative spirit so that the municipality can be aware of the needs of the community. It should align its programmes with the needs of the citizens and also be cognisant of and aligned with the national government programmes/plans, which should also be responsive to their needs. Communication between the two levels of government should also be

encouraged - to a certain degree. A case in point would be for the IDP to encompass some of the objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP), a national government framework. The National Development Plan is a national strategic plan which aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030 through a set of initiatives, which include the growing of an inclusive economy, training in building skills, enhancing the capacity of the state, and endorsing leadership and partnerships throughout the society (National Development Plan, 2011). To achieve these objectives, it is crucial to orchestrate synergy between the different strategic frameworks and policies that are being implemented from the national to the local government level. The NDP framework proposes a South Africa that is poverty-free, and a reduction in all forms of inequality. Concurrently, it aims to achieve rapid economic growth and importantly to equip the youth with better educational opportunities (NDP Executive Summary, 2012).

Significantly, the citizens should also reciprocate and meet the municipality halfway by protecting and taking care of the investments made by the government. Municipal buildings (clinics, libraries, service centres) and parks should be conserved and not be vandalised. Importantly, those who are able to pay for services should be encouraged to be diligent in this respect and to do so, so that municipalities can have the revenue to provide services and develop communities. South African society remains extremely inequitable: too many people live in poverty and too few are employed, while the quality of school education for most black learners is poor. The apartheid spatial divide continues to overshadow the societal landscape and a large segment of the youth is disadvantaged through unemployment and the lack of opportunities. These circumstances are due to the legacy of the apartheid era, which continues to determine which segment of society gets opportunities and which does

not (NDP Executive Summary, 2012). Technological innovations are changing and disrupting the way institutions operate and function.

## **2.8 The role of technology in good governance**

Around the world, countries with advanced economies offer people a digitally satisfying environment, which is filled with voice-operated devices and the means to access instant information and facilitate communication (Filippov, 2015). Many governments and public administrations in the world's advanced economies have embraced and embarked upon an intensive programme of digital transformation (Alter *et al.*, 2014). Information is the key to good governance because it directs decisions and the various processes - from simple to complex (e.g. service delivery and matters of security) (Schonberger and Lazer, 2006). This has forced governments to digitalize and adopt electronic systems as part of their day-to-day practices. Technology is also a valuable tool to enhance the way government functions and provides services to people. These enhancements can be achieved by devising improved systems, incorporating amongst others, digital technology, to organize, plan, and implement.

As technological inventions emerge and governments adapt to the economic environment, their policies are meant to embrace these technical enhancements (Faulk *et al.*, 2005). Critically, there should also be proper governance structure in place to successfully implement these interventions. Governance is not only about representation through government programmes; it is also a matter of implementing interventions as government programmes do not necessarily function in isolation (Barretta and Busco, 2011). It is through technologies that political plans and government programmes reach their full potential for implementation (Rose, 1990). Technologies are instruments for making interventions possible. They include measures of analysis and evaluation, techniques of documentation, terminology,

professional specialization, as well as organizational structures (Hacking, 1983; Miller and Rose, 2006). Government technologies are strongly influenced by collaborations, partnerships, and cooperation among the different stakeholders, and thereby achieve the realization of successful government programmes.

A case in point is the IDP, a multi-faceted strategic document, which requires collaborations among the different government departments, stakeholders, and service providers for the successful implementation of its strategic objectives. IDPs are critical as they drive the development plans of local government. Furthermore, there are also budgets aligned to the strategic plans, and for their successful implementation, proper governance, administration, and monitoring are necessary. Miller (2006) argues that joint ventures, public private partnerships, strategic alliances, networks, and cooperative inter-organizational relationships actively illustrate exactly how new policies and government programmes can be improved upon to be better organized and improve on the competence and efficacy of service delivery.

The importance of partnerships amongst organizations is critical for a functional government because it promotes collaboration, the sharing of ideas, and enhanced problem-solving within the respective government sectors. Barretta and Busco (2011) describe the technologies of development as innovative and have predicted them as probable approaches for improving performance through the more efficient use of resources, greater competitiveness, and improved customer services. The technologies of the government framework require cooperation among partners which must be continuously monitored and managed through an appropriate governance structure. However, little research has been conducted on the governance of organizational networks and the influence of governance structures on the effectiveness of systemic networks (Provan and Kenis, 2008).

## 2.9 Service Delivery

Municipalities should adopt innovative methods to deliver municipal services and should invite external stakeholders to participate in local government (Joseph, 2002). It is evident that most communities are dissatisfied<sup>2</sup> with the quality of services provided by local government. Reddy (2016) captures the definition of service delivery as the distribution of basic products and services emanating from the basic needs of communities, especially in the areas of housing, water, and sanitation, land, electricity, and infrastructure. Mangai (2017) argues that the satisfaction<sup>3</sup> level of citizens emanates from comparisons made between the quality of service delivery and their perception of government's performance in delivering services. Many South Africans live in abject poverty and depend on service delivery for their survival. As such, public perceptions on service delivery are critical.

The perceptions of the public regarding their level of satisfaction in terms of the municipal services delivered to them could improve the functioning of municipalities in key performance areas. Understanding the insights of citizens and their experience of these services could allow municipalities access valuable feedback on the efficiency of their service delivery (Masiya *et al.*, 2019). Assessing governance can, however, be a challenge since the measurement of these standards is complicated by the variety of standards used (e.g. measuring perceptions, governance indicators, and legislative indicators) (Hallward-Driemer *et al.*, 2011). Public entities are open to public scrutiny and are made stronger by the feedback received from stakeholders, who, in this case, are communities. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), cities all around the world are facing severe challenges in

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<sup>2</sup> Satisfaction is described as an appraising attitude or behaviour towards an experience or object (James, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Satisfaction is described as an appraising attitude or behaviour towards an experience or object (James, 2009).

terms of service delivery because of rapid population growth (OECD, 2010). As a result of the appalling quality of service provision and the urgent needs of the poor, issues of service delivery in developing countries are a challenge that needs to be addressed (Besley and Ghatak, 2007). Good governance is documented as an objective to achieving economic growth and development indicators (Gisselquist, 2002). Good governance is an international best practice standard which is mandatory for governments to exercise in their processes and services to communities since it fosters market exchange, stimulates investment and innovation, and works towards the mitigation of poverty (Jha *et al.*, 2013). Globally, service provision is linked to good governance and accountability. Different cities function differently but the common appraisal system for good governance is based on public critique, perceptions, and the level of satisfaction. International best practices emphasize that good governance is linked to efficient service delivery. A government is required to lend an ear to the community it serves so as to regularly evaluate its needs and to deal with the areas of concern, about which dissatisfaction is expressed (OECD, 2010).

It is further critical for governing institutions to conduct surveys to appraise their services and performance and to guide them in crafting strategies that are responsive to the needs of the communities that they serve and to improve on their weaknesses. The development of new policies and approaches should go hand in hand with measures to augment the accountability of the administration and to build relations of mutual respect and confidence between councillors and the administration (Joseph 2002). Thornhill (2011) argues that the South African public service is characterized by three incapacitating factors that contribute to its weaknesses, amongst others, the pervasiveness of corruption, the interference of politicians in administrative functions, and the lack of appropriate skills. Furthermore, in local government, 32% of the



municipal managers have less than five years of managerial experience, 46% less than one year's experience, and 68% less than two years' experience. This is due to the practice of cadre deployment, namely. the appointment of a person based on their political affiliation (Thornhill, 2011). According to Kroukamp (2008), another crucial contributing factor to the weakness of local government is that its management capacity is ineffective, the training of managers is not relevant to the tasks at hand, and the lack in rotating senior managers to ensure the exposure of management to all aspects of service delivery. There are serious inconsistencies between the performances of municipalities across South Africa. The Auditor General's (AG) Report for 2014/15 financial, for instance, indicates that the provinces with the highest percentage of municipalities with clean audit assessments were the Western Cape (73%), Gauteng (33%), and KwaZulu-Natal (30%) (Ndevu and Muller, 2018).

However, the AG further indicated that the audit results of municipalities in the Eastern Cape, Free State, and Mpumalanga are beginning to show signs of recovery from many years of poor audit results (Ndevu and Muller, 2018). The poor performance of municipalities in South Africa has had a devastating effect on their communities, with their dissatisfied members taking to the streets in protest. As demonstrated by the spate of service delivery protests over the years, there has in fact been and still is an absence of public confidence in the local government system. In 2009, service delivery protests intensified, with Gauteng and North West being the most distressed provinces, and Mpumalanga the worst affected by the demolition of public and local government infrastructures which resulted in the burning of a library and the municipal offices (Ndevu and Muller, 2018). Leggassick (2010) contends that over the last 10 years, service delivery protests in South African cities and towns have not only been over inadequacies in the delivery by local government of sanitation services, water,

and electricity, but have also been about the lack of a democratic ethos and accountability from elected officials. Service delivery relates to the provision of public amenities, tangible and intangible services<sup>4</sup>, and of tangible goods (Johannison 2007; Venter, 2010). Furthermore, the provision of basic social, health, education and infrastructural services is a critical foundation for the daily activities that maintain the quality of life of local citizens (Halseth and Ryser, 2006). Service delivery of a high quality is an objective that municipalities should seek to strive for and set instruments in place to achieve, and thus add value to the lives of their citizens (Gronross and Raval, 2011). South African municipalities are in fact under pressure to respond to the basic needs of their disadvantaged communities.

This challenge is further compounded by limited budgets and technical skills (Kanyane, 2014). Back in 2003, Sangweni (2003) expressed an important challenge; – that the South African public administration should adopt reforms to enhance performance and municipal service delivery to reform the restraints of the apartheid legacy. The prerequisite to improve performance was motivated by the state's realisation that municipal service delivery and access to appropriate municipal services should not be limited to a privileged few, but that it is a constitutional right for all people, particularly those who were previously marginalized and disadvantaged (Kanyane, 2014). Maserumule (2010) remarks that when the ruling party assumed power in 1994, it inherited a virtually insolvent state, which resulted in a government burdened by critical evaluations of its legislature, the latter meant to respond to community needs and to create and monitor plans for effective service delivery to all sectors of society. (Ndudula 2013). Reddy and Naidu (2012) emphasize that municipal

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<sup>4</sup> Tangible services are interpreted as the services that are visible to local communities (e.g. public housing, roads, water, sanitation systems, and public transport (Ndudula 2013). Intangible services are considered crucial but are not necessarily visible (e.g. public drainage and sewage systems, and public standards).

services are critical and necessary to ensure that an acceptable and a reasonable quality of life is met, If not adequately provided for, they would compromise public health and the safety of the environment. Municipalities are tasked with the responsibility of collecting, securing, and spending public funds, and importantly, with ensuring that services are provided to local communities. The communities that they serve depend on them for a better life and a higher standard of living which should be enhanced by quality service provision. However, many people from the previously disadvantaged communities still live in abject poverty and rely on government for their survival. Owing to their poor background, most of these people have had limited opportunities to prosper.

In fact, it is the inadequacy of their municipalities in providing good healthcare, educational and social services that puts them on the back foot. The declining employment opportunities are also adding further strain to their lives. This places them in a disadvantaged position, as evidenced by the rapid influx of migrants to the urban areas and the mushrooming of informal settlements here. Notably, municipalities are responsible for using their financial resources to address the basic needs of their communities for an effective, infrastructure and the distribution of electricity and water, as well as refuse removal services and spatial development (Reddy, 2016). This is not always possible, however, owing to numerous operational challenges encountered by municipalities. The local government budget and expenditure have not produced the expected results, and critically ineffectual governance, poor spatial planning, an inadequate social infrastructure, and substantial service backlogs have been identified as restraints to poverty reduction and economic growth (Govender and Reddy, 2012). For municipalities to improve service delivery, there is a need to integrate proper planning and an effective infrastructure into the actual rolling out of services, especially

to previously disadvantaged areas. There is a need to properly design and implement Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), which will assist in accelerating development in local municipalities. The IDPs should also be cognisant of the priority areas and align themselves with the objectives of the National Development Plan 2030 (NDP), which also aims to eradicate poverty in South Africa.

## **2.10 Governance and governmentality**

Good governance is a set of processes that is used to ensure that the alignment of the sovereign power of command is disciplined to achieve the primary objective of government, namely that of securing the health, wealth, and happiness of the population (Chamberlain, 2014). Foucault argued that the focal point of good governance is to attain good welfare and security for the population *en masse* rather than for a select few political elites (Joseph, 2009). Governments are put into power by people. Therefore, they ought to serve all the people, especially the destitute. Government programmes should be people-centred and driven by the needs of the society, where the collective goal is to improve social and economic development. In recent years, several sovereign states have had their governance mandate side-tracked by the corruption, party politics, and grandiosity that they live in once they come into power.

The art of good governance lies in government being able to achieve a balance in the fiscus and the responsible use of power (Jessop, 2007). Fukuyama (2013) defines good governance as government's ability to make and enforce rules and to deliver services, regardless of whether it is democratic or not. Importantly, governance is about the state performing its directive by carrying out the wishes of the electorate and not about the goals set by the sovereign power (Harrison, 2004). Governmentality focuses on the art of the government to ensure the welfare of people, that people are

governable, and that the code of conduct is adhered to (Chamberlain, 2014). Governmentality is about holding government accountable for its decisions and shortfalls regarding the security and welfare of the electorate, and the delivery of services to them. Governmentality is fundamentally about how institutions behave and their ability to provide an extensive framework to ensure that their practices are meaningful through the construction of specific objects/subjects of governance (Joseph, 2010). Governmentality is a system of keeping a government in check by scrutinizing how it exercises its power through the various institutions, practices, procedures, and techniques, which act to standardize social conduct (Joseph, 2010). Foucault in his discourse, argues that governmentality is not a termination of sovereignty, but the beginning of a three-way (triangular) relationship involving sovereignty-discipline-government (Joseph, 2010; and Lemke, 2001). This triangle emphasizes the need to enhance the needs of the population, to improve their health, welfare, happiness, and their productivity (Joseph, 2010).

In the South African context, good governance has proven to be a difficult task. This could be attributed to historical challenges, a lack of proper training, party politics, and the criminal elements that underlie corruption. A number of municipalities are struggling to provide services and manage their finances which has resulted in public discord (Jain, 2010). Lack of good governance has also made it difficult for municipalities to be efficient, accountable, and transparent. Over the years, there has been an increase in service delivery protests which have virtually rendered some parts of the country ungovernable (Mfene, 2009). In South Africa, a lack of good governance impacts on the delivery of services. Poor governance leads to municipalities failing to efficiently operate and maintain their service infrastructure in a cost-effective and sustainable way (Beyers, 2016). South African municipalities are struggling to provide

quality and efficient service delivery to their communities. Administrative challenges include corruption which emanate from poor governance, corruption, and maladministration, all of which have a negative impact on the delivery of services. The constitution of the country clearly proclaims that municipalities should prioritize and accelerate their provision of services to serve the basic needs of their communities and ensure that they have access to municipal services (Mafunisa, 2008). It is also the responsibility of the seated government to address those challenges that impede service delivery in a proactive and co-ordinated way. These measures should also include the development of an infrastructure (Ching and Chan, 2004; Venter, 2010). Access to municipal services helps advance the quality of life and assists the poor in escaping poverty (Burger, 2005).

Local government is tasked, among other things, with ensuring that services be provided to communities in a sustainable manner, thus promoting social and economic development and a safe and healthy environment (Constitution, 1996). Owusu-Ampomah and Hemson (2004) argue that as opposed to developed countries, service delivery is playing a greater role in local government in South Africa and other developing countries. This is due to the high poverty levels and the established constitutional provisions to deal with that issue. They reason that service delivery in South Africa is perceived as an instrument and a social agreement to create social inclusion and raise the living standards of the poor majority, previously excluded by the apartheid government (Owusu-Ampomah and Hemson, 2004). Furthermore, development in South African cities should be guided by sustainable practices. In fact, it is important that while addressing this historical issue, the structural challenges are carried out in such a way that they will not compromise resources for the future.

## **2.11 Sustainable cities**

Cities are a key influence in the goal to achieve global sustainability because of their high levels of consumption, production, and waste (UNEP, 2012). Sustainability is a challenge facing both developed and developing cities; it is further exacerbated by rapid population growth and urbanisation. Cities must navigate economic growth, the depletion of materials, the production of waste and the emission of gases in their course to attain sustainability (UNEP, 2012). The way cities consume resources, use space, and reduce carbon emissions is crucial, as they need to be sustainable to provide healthy and favourable living conditions for their citizens.

It is also fundamental for cities to practise sustainability and have practical principles of sustainability in place to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Cities are vital to global sustainability as they accommodate huge populations and economic activities, but most world cities are faced with the challenges of urbanisation and poverty. The Sustainable Cities Index (2015) defines sustainability as defined by the United Nations, as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. With growth in population numbers, resource depletion can easily accelerate if no proper sustainable measures are put in place. As a result of rapid population growth, cities are under immense pressure to provide adequate housing.

There are also conglomerates that have undertaken various projects around the city. With the balancing of these two contrasting needs, namely public housing provided by government versus private developers, space becomes a challenge. Corporates, having financial muscle, can buy vast tracts of land and privatise. While local authorities are struggling to find land for housing. Furthermore, owing to unemployment and low incomes, people cannot afford to buy their own houses. As

a result, they end up being marginalised because they can only gain access to housing on the periphery of the city. Evidently, there is a huge demand for housing in Ekurhuleni which has resulted in the mushrooming of informal settlements in areas in the vicinity of, amongst others, Primrose, Wadeville, and Benoni. These informal settlements do not have piped water, sanitation and waste removal services; they are also lacking in health services and in access to public transport. A city can be considered as “smart” when investments in human and social capital, communication technologies and infrastructure actively foster sustainable economic development and a high standard of living, with wise resource management exercised through an open and excellent government (Smart Cities Study, 2019).

In response to the need to build a smart and sustainable city, the Ekurhuleni metro has identified the need to build an aerotropolis in the city to complement the existing industrial base. It will be linked to human resources and the logistics network which will, as such, enable the city to support development in the metro. An aerotropolis is a city that has an airport at its centre, with its infrastructure, economy and land use focused on the airport. Kasarda (2015) defines an aerotropolis as a city built around an airport with the emphasis in the context of strategic planning on industrial and commercial land use, offering its businesses speedy connectivity to their suppliers, customers, and other enterprises and partners, both nationwide and globally.

The aerotropolis in Ekurhuleni will be centred around the OR Tambo International Airport. The vision of the City of Ekurhuleni aerotropolis is to build prosperity for the city and the Gauteng City Region, both of which would be largely based on job creation. The citizens of Ekurhuleni will benefit from the creation of new jobs, the expansion of the social infrastructure, and an improvement in their standard of living (Ekurhuleni, 2020). The aerotropolis framework seeks to link the infrastructure,



transport networks, and the enterprises associated with economic and social development and establish them as priority areas to create an environment that is conducive to grow the existing developments and investments, and also to create new opportunities for development and investments. A successful aerotropolis entails coordinated investments in land use and multi-modal forms of overland transportation that support one another and are to the economic and environmental benefit of businesses, land owners, local governments, and the broader region (Kasarda, 2009). The Ekurhuleni aerotropolis project is expected to be rolled out for the next 30 years and is envisioned in the future to include various developmental initiatives as warranted by the level of economic development at that stage. Other initiatives can begin immediately but must be in place to permit the subsequent stages of the Ekurhuleni Aerotropolis Master Plan to proceed (Ekurhuleni, 2020).

## **2.12 Conclusion**

Local governments in South Africa are facing various challenges, including poor service delivery, poverty, unemployment, and the slow growth of the economy (Ncube and Monnakgotla, 2016). One third of South African municipalities is categorized as unsustainable and distressed, another third is at risk, and the last third is efficient and sustainable (COGTA, 2015). Local governments around the world also face similar administrative challenges, which have in themselves promoted the phenomenon of municipal amalgamations to respond to the obstacles on the course to good governance. The concept of amalgamating municipalities is driven by the need to remedy dysfunctionality and to develop strong financial performance, self-reliance, and sustainability (Ncube and Monnakgotla, 2016). Municipalities are under pressure to provide efficient services to rapidly growing populations, to supply the burgeoning demand for housing and services, and also, the difficult economic environment. Slack

and Bird (2013) raised a critical argument that the larger municipalities perform better than the small and divided municipalities because it is perceived that the former can lead to improved productivity, cost savings, and superior service provision. In most cases, the amalgamation of municipalities is predominantly intended to exploit economies of scale. However, there is no concrete or empirical evidence to validate this hypothesis. In numerous countries, amalgamations have constituted part of the national restructuring process, which has caused municipalities to undertake new obligations and has also required financial spending (Allers and Geertsema, 2016).

The crucial argument around municipal amalgamations is that the outcome of the process varies according to each of the municipalities. In some cases, amalgamation can affect municipal spending, which can result in higher spending, while in others, spending can be reduced but not sufficiently to impact on total spending (Breuning and Rocaboy, 2008). Municipal spending is mostly affected by population size, the area of jurisdiction, and the scope of the required service that is to be provided. Amalgamation can in fact reduce the costs of a municipality; however, the spending cannot be reduced enough to effectively achieve the goal of economies of scale.

Municipal amalgamations are further instituted to assist poorly performing local government institutions. The poor performance of a municipality leads to financial mismanagement and poor service provision to communities. Good governance is tied to efficient service delivery, financial accountability, and the implementation of programmes that are responsive to the needs of the community. Service provision is linked to good governance, which has been a missing link in South African municipalities. This is evident from the current service delivery protests that have engulfed municipalities countrywide in South Africa. Municipalities are entrusted with public funds which obligates them to ensure that services are efficiently delivered to

the communities that need them. A large proportion of the population is from the previously disadvantaged population group and lives in dire poverty, which makes them dependent on government services for sustenance. For municipalities to effectively provide services, they need to have proper governance structures and mechanisms in place.

Numerous municipalities are impeded by nefarious actions, such as corruption, nepotism, and financial mismanagement. Government institutions should be people-driven and prioritize the needs of the electorate, which has invested its trust in them to deliver their mandates. The Batho Pele (“People First”) principles should be strictly adhered to by South African municipalities as they have pledged to uphold values of courtesy, value for money, access to services, high standards, openness, and transparency. These are the overarching standards that government institutions should honour in their quest to improve the living standards of people, while concurrently also promote accountability, transparency, and sustainability within their very own ranks.

## Chapter 3

### Research Design and Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

A research methodology provides an operational framework, assembled according to facts, which provides meaning to concepts (Krippendorff, 2004). It is not only limited to the use of research methods; it also examines the logic behind the methods implemented by the researcher. This section discusses research methods, tools and measures employed in the study to collect data. The study used qualitative research methods, and the methods used to analyse data. This section focuses solely on data collected according to the content analysis method.

#### 3.2 Research design

Research is described as a systematic process of discovery and an evolutionary process to supplement human knowledge. It requires a careful and systematic method for solving problems and acquiring new knowledge (Bhattacharyya, 2006; Thomas *et al.*, 2011). A research design aids the researcher in using his/her common sense and clarity of thought, so necessary for the management of the entire research study. This research project probed whether the amalgamation policy adopted at local government level was able to address the spatial legacy and inequalities of the apartheid era in Ekurhuleni. Qualitative research methods were used to gather data for the study, as they are particularly suitable for capturing the depth and richness of human experience. The research questions presented below guided the inquiry and investigation into this study;

### **3.3 Qualitative research approach**

Qualitative research is a form of inquiry that involves non-numerical data, such as responses to interviews, written text, observations, and case studies (Remler and Van Ryzin, 2011). Its approaches are mainly focused on interpretation and understanding the presented data since the collection of the data and the analysis are sensitive to the social and cultural context of the study (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2016). A qualitative research approach was preferred for this research project because of its ability to provide rich data, while also providing a comprehensive understanding of the issues being studied, which could be either social or cultural phenomena.

The advantages of using a qualitative research approach include a detailed description of the participants' opinions, experiences, and feelings, and an interpretation of the significance of their actions (Denzin, 1989). Chalhoub-Deville and Deville (2008) maintain that the qualitative approach is used to accomplish reflective understanding of aspects related to the design, administration and interpretation of text. Qualitative research approaches enable the researcher to gather information while attaining a thoughtful understanding of the dynamics of smaller and larger groups, or even the perspective of leaders, for example, in government and organizations. The qualitative research technique is defined as a method where the research problem is studied in its innate setting rather than in a research laboratory (Creswell, 2007).

### **3.4 Content analysis**

Content analysis was used as an analytical technique. Research that uses qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as a medium for communication, with devotion to the content or the contextual meaning of the text

(Lindkvist, 1981; McTavish and Pirro, 1990; and Tesch, 1990). Textual data can be in verbal, print, or electronic form and could have been gathered from narrative responses, interviews, focus groups, observations, or the print media (e.g. articles, books, or manuals) (Kondracki and Wellman, 2002). Content analysis was used to examine the municipality's Integrated Development Programme (IDP). The documents of the strategic framework, termed Growth and Development Strategy (GDS) 2055, were used as part of the investigation into the amalgamation policy that has been formulated for Ekurhuleni. The IDPs that were analyzed were for the years 2011, 2016, and 2021. The investigation probed and reviewed their content to ascertain whether the amalgamation process was in fact addressing the spatial legacy of apartheid and the consequent inequalities in Ekurhuleni. It is because the amalgamation policy is not well documented in Africa and South Africa, inductive content analysis was used for the IDPs and the GDS 2055 documents.

Inductive content analysis is used when the existing knowledge about the phenomenon is limited or when knowledge about the subject is fragmented (Elo and Kyngas, 2008). For this research project, the conventional content analysis approach was followed up with data collected through an analysis of textual data from strategic documents and the responses to the open-ended questions posed in the interviews and focus group interviews. Conceptual analysis, also known as thematic analysis, was also undertaken. The process included the analysis of concepts and themes that appeared across several texts. It contributed to a description and interpretation of data relating to the respective issues raised in the participating groups, and to textual data from the IDPs and the GDS 2055 documents. To perform a good analysis of the content to be studied, the researcher should develop a coding scheme which allows him/her to assign categories to the text. Importantly, the coding scheme should be

linked to the research questions and objectives, should be selective (should not try to capture everything) and critically, it must focus on the relevance and significance of the data. The data analysis process commenced with the researcher reading the data repeatedly to engage with the content and to understand its significance in the context of the aim and objectives of the research study.

Qualitative data analysis necessitates that the researcher should possess some smart sense of innovation in organizing the raw data since the entire process of analysing the data requires a breaking down of the raw data into manageable segments (Shava *et al.*, 2021). Upon completion of this process, the researcher was able to derive themes and codes for a systematic data analysis approach. To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of this exercise, the researcher used parallel coding. Headings, themes, numbering, and classification were used to organize the different data sets, which were grouped accordingly and analyzed. Effective qualitative data analysis plays a critical role in achieving research outcomes, and efficiently designed qualitative data analysis techniques involve the use of computer packages to enhance credibility and trustworthiness in such research (Shava *et al.*, 2021).

The collected data were organized and themed using the four research objectives of the study. The classification used was for the different objectives to be colour-coded (objective 1, red, objective 2, purple, objective 3, blue, and objective 4, green) to ensure that the data were organized in themes and grouped appropriately. Content analysis has three phases or segments, namely, pre-analysis, material examination analysis of results, and interpretation (Bardin, 2011). The first segment of content analysis comprises the data preparation phase, which includes organizing the documents and grouping them appropriately. The second segment involves the breaking down of the data by creating codes and grouping the codes accordingly. The

last segment focuses on examining and analyzing the data, linking the datasets, generating perspectives, and extracting data for discussion and presentation. In the last segment, the raw data is processed to arrive at meaningful and rational conclusions. The above-mentioned steps help the researcher to come up with particular results/findings, presented in the form of tables, diagrams, and figures. Significantly, the encoded data is interrogated according to the research objectives and the theoretical framework (Friese, 2019). The researcher applied this approach to manage, organize, and examine the data collected for the purpose of this study. Data analysis was performed using the conventional qualitative content analysis approach.

### **3.5 Conventional qualitative content analysis**

Conventional qualitative content analysis involves the process of encoding categories that are derived directly and inductively from the raw data. This approach is used for grounded theory development. Qualitative content analysis can be used to analyse different types of data, but most importantly, the data need to be converted into written text before analysis can commence. If the data are sourced from existing texts, the selection of the content must be substantiated in terms of the essence of the information that the researcher wants to understand (Patton, 2002).

The researcher arranged the data into themes which were informed by the research objectives. Key themes were then derived from the questions around the research objectives which influenced the angle (perspective) and direction of the type of data to be extracted from the strategic documents. The data were then arranged and encoded into different themes using the Atlas TI software. For analysis and interpretation, the data were extracted from the Atlas TI software, where encoding was performed according to the determined themes. A theme that applied to the first research objective, namely, spatial inequality. The first objective sought to evaluate how



municipal amalgamation policy has addressed the spatial legacy of apartheid. *“Further, when considering South African cities within the ‘historical’ back-drop of apartheid, urban design has the potential to reconcile the often unmet needs of the urban population”*. This dataset was regarded as important as it spoke to the persistent spatial inequalities in Ekurhuleni. The second objective addressed the impacts of amalgamation on the citizens of Ekurhuleni. This dataset was extracted from the theme’s spatial organization patterns and inequalities that were encoded under spatial patterns and inequalities. The second objective sought to explore the spatial impact of amalgamation on communities and individuals. *“Ekurhuleni’s journey to establishing an effective and efficient local government started with the mammoth task of having to merge the different administrative systems responsible for governance and service delivery in the nine towns and seventeen townships”*.

The third objective sought to investigate past and current spatial patterns and this dataset was extracted from the themes, apartheid spatial legacy and amalgamation and that were encoded. *“The absence of an urban core, juxtaposed with high population densities over vast stretches of land supporting largely, mining, agriculture, logistics and industrial economic activities, would in time expose the City to being the perfect arena for a new approach to spatial and economic transformation”*. The last objective focused on amalgamation as a planning tool and this dataset was extracted from the themes, amalgamation and sustainable city that were encoded. *“The city’s unique spatial configuration further provided a platform from which key development corridors and nodes would begin to emerge”*.

These italicized excerpts are some of the data extracts used as examples to illustrate the pattern of themes and coding. Qualitative content analysis is critical to research as it includes extracting objective content from the text to examine meanings, themes,

and patterns that are obvious or that are underlying in a particular context. What sets this method apart from many other qualitative methods of data analysis, is that it concentrates on only selected characteristics of the raw data (Schreier, 2012). Significantly, qualitative content analysis enables researchers to comprehend social reality in a subjective but scientific way (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2005). Since qualitative research produces large quantities of rich data, it is imperative, and also of practical worth, for researchers to use this method to analyse selected attributes or themes.

The researcher appraised material from the IDPs and GDS 2055 documents which necessitated that the data analysis exercise would go beyond a mere description of amalgamation and the phenomenon of the spatial legacy of apartheid. The researcher went in depth into evaluating the impacts of the pre- and post- democratic spatial legacy of apartheid, and how amalgamation has been considered as a political policy and undertaken to mitigate and respond to spatial inequalities and fragmented development.

### **3.6 Trustworthiness and reliability in content analysis**

Qualitative content analysis is one of the numerous qualitative methods currently available for examining data and interpreting its meaning (Schreier, 2012). A precondition for successful content analysis is that data can be condensed into concepts that define the research phenomenon in question by creating categories, concepts, a model, a conceptual system, or a conceptual map (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008; Morgan, 1993; Weber, 1990). Content analysis can be used in both inductive and deductive analyses, both of which are driven by a process that involves the preparation, organization, and the recording of data. The advantage of qualitative research is that it deals with abundant amounts of data that can be interpreted and

coded in a rational and trustworthy way (Moretti *et al.*, 2011). For this study, the collected data were organized and themed according to the four research objectives of the study. According to Graneheim and Lundman (2004), for findings emanating from a qualitative content analysis to be trustworthy, there should be some measure of critical reflection and analysis when approaching the text. As such, the researcher must ponder how to go about confirming the credibility and conformability of the data at the organization stage. The researcher used textual data from strategic documents and transcribed the data from the interviews and the focus group interviews that he conducted.

A conceptual analysis, also known as thematic analysis, was then undertaken. The process included the analysis of concepts and themes that appeared across several texts which helped in the description and interpretation of the analysed data relating to the different variables (e.g. the demographic attributes of the participant groups) and the textual data from the IDPs and GDS 2055 documents. For the findings of the research to conform or comply with the prescribed requirements set for it, means that the data should correspond to the information that the participants supplied and that the interpretations of those data are not fabricated by the investigator (Polit and Beck, 2012). Textual data from the strategic documents were cross-verified. It was a case of returning again and again to the data to check whether the interpretation rang true to the relevant data, and whether the identified trends could be corroborated by information gleaned from other interviews. Kyngäs *et al.* (2014) proposes that the credibility of an inductive content analysis, which was the method used to analyse the strategic documents for this study, can be established by checking for the representativeness of the dataset as a whole.

### **3.7 Interviews**

Qualitative research interviews aim to describe and attach meaning to fundamental themes in the life world of the subjects in question (Kvale, 1996). They seek to uncover both information about the research topic and the meaning that the respondents attach to the related variables. This helps the researcher uncover rich data which would otherwise not have been readily available. Interviews serve as a vital source of information since the interviewer can unearth in-depth information around a topic by investigating the story behind the participants' experiences, (McNamara, 1999). The interviews conducted for this research study were semi-structured and designed to be open-ended so that the flow of the discussion could be spontaneous and allow for follow-up questions to be posed to encourage participants to elaborate on their responses and provide additional information.

Eighteen (18) interviews were conducted with the employees from the City of Ekurhuleni. They were from various departments, namely, Institution Strategy and Monitoring, Human Settlements, City Planning, Economic Development, and the Office of the Chief Whip. Deductive content analysis was used to analyze the responses to the interviews. This method is used when the structure of the analysis is processed on the foundation of previous knowledge and the purpose of the study is to test a theory (Kyngas and Vanhanen, 1999). The interviews were used to test the amalgamation policy and to investigate whether it was achieving its key intended objectives. The data collected from the interviews were arranged into themes and allocated according to the relevant research objective and colour scheme.

### **3.8 Focus group interviews**

The purpose of a focus group interview is to collect quality data in a social context which allows the researcher to understand a specific problem from the viewpoint of

the participants (Patton, 2000; Khan and Manderson, 1992). Focus groups are useful when a researcher aims to establish people's understanding of and experiences around the research subject and also, the reasons behind their pattern of thinking (Dilshan and Latif, 2013). Importantly, focus group interviews are appropriate for investigating sensitive topics, which can range from politics, religion, and health issues, such as HIV/AIDS (Dilshan and Latif, 2013).

Lasch *et al.* (2010) and Onwuegbuzie *et al.* (2010) recommend that the size of a focus group should be between six and 12 participants, so that the group is small enough for all participants to talk and share their views, and yet large enough to create a diverse group. The purpose of the focus group interviews was to engage the members of the general public who have resided in Ekurhuleni pre- and post-the amalgamation of smaller municipalities into one metro and gather their perceptions metro and amalgamation. The intention was to map the "journey" and to gain information on the nature of the transition in terms of how the spatial inequalities have been and are being addressed and to view the current state of development in Ekurhuleni.

Open-ended interview questions were used to allow participants to freely express themselves, without limit, and to allow participants from the different schools of thought to share their opinions and insights. Three focus group interviews were conducted, the first two groups were each made up of six participants, and the third group of four participants. In total, 16 people participated in the focus group interviews. Deductive content analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the focus group interviews. These were arranged into themes and allocated according to the relevant research objective and colour scheme. The same approach used for the content analysis of the strategic documents was used to

organize, manage, and analyze the data for the interviews and focus group interviews.

### **3.9 Sampling**

Convenience sampling was used for this research study because of its practicality and the ease of access it presented to the participants. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling whereby the cohort of the target population meets a certain criterion (e.g. easily accessible, in close geographical proximity, availability, and willingness to participate) in the study (Dornyei, 2007). The interviews were conducted with 18 officials from the City of Ekurhuleni and were chosen from the different departments. This group was conveniently selected on the grounds that they possessed institutional knowledge of the municipality's spatial plans and processes required to implement projects.

The information they provided helped the researcher obtain rich data that was instrumental in providing an in-depth understanding of the municipality's internal processes and strategies. Sixteen (16) participants were selected to participate in the focus group interviews. They were chosen from the public and the criteria they were required to meet were that they had been residents of the former small municipalities and were currently part of the new amalgamated metro. Snowball sampling was used to select the participants for the focus group interviews. This is a sampling technique that uses a chain referral system, where the identified participants provide the contact details of referrals as potential recruits to participate in the study. These referrals were made up of participants who had unique qualities (e.g. in terms of the duration of their period of residence in Ekurhuleni). It was in fact difficult to find participants for this research study who were (and still are) residents of Ekurhuleni, pre and post amalgamation, as people tend to change their place of

residence. In fact, some only commenced their period of residence in Ekurhuleni post amalgamation. Etikan *et al.* (2015) concur that snowballing is one of the most well-recognized forms of non-probability sampling, a method which is specifically appropriate when it is difficult to reach the population of interest and to compile a list of the population – a serious hurdle for the researcher. There were three focus groups, with six participants in two of the groups and four in the other group. The participants' ages ranged from 36-75.

They were chosen because they were mature and had knowledge of current affairs and the issues affecting their community. With the focus group interviews, the aim of the researcher was to gain the public's perspective on the development projects that were being rolled out by the municipality and the challenges that they were encountering in terms of the developments in Ekurhuleni. In the analysis of the data, the researcher also used the collected data to determine whether the views of the municipal officials and those of the employees were coordinated or contradictory. This proved invaluable in putting the different points of view into perspective.

### **3.10 Triangulation**

Triangulation is described as the mixing of data or methods so that different perspectives or viewpoints can enhance and shed more light on the information (Olsen, 2004). Johnson (2017) states that triangulation is a powerful tool that facilitates the validation of data through the process of cross verification from two or more sources. The process of triangulation of data is important as it helps strengthen the research process by increasing the validity and credibility of the dataset (Johnson, 2017). To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the research process, data triangulation was applied by examining and evaluating the different sources of collected data. Primarily, content analysis was undertaken to analyze data from the

IDP and the GDS 2055 documents. The next step was to interpret and analyze the responses to the interviews with the officials from the City of Ekurhuleni. The final step was to analyze the focus group interview results. Data analysis was conducted using the grounded theory, which is a research technique concerned with the generation of theory, which is grounded in data that have been systematically collected and analyzed (Noble and Mitchell, 2016). The researcher categorized and collected data in Ekurhuleni with the goal of arriving at conclusions built on the basis of a theoretical framework of the collected data.

This was necessary because the grounded theory approach circumvents the traditional method of starting the research process with a pre-conceived framework or hypothesis (Glasser and Strauss, 1967). The grounded theory provides the researcher with the opportunity to design the necessary abstract concepts and proposals upon which the researcher constructs a theory or a conceptual theoretical framework (Glasser and Strauss, 1967). The collected data were studied carefully and encoded according to the similarities found among them. This enabled the researcher to shape a conceptual paradigm that was combined with the respective datasets in the construction of the conceptual framework.

All the datasets were subsequently consolidated, and from the results, a specific viewpoint was deduced. The triangulation of the data aided in ruling out bias from the study, while concurrently providing a rich analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of how amalgamation has influenced development, the spatial legacy of apartheid, and inequality in Ekurhuleni. The process of triangulation was conducted by applying the comparative method to the available data. Some themes appeared repeatedly which convinced the researcher that the data provided by the participants and that were gleaned from the documents were credible and trustworthy.



Furthermore, the labelling by the respective participants of the common and recurring themes as of high importance provided the rubber stamp of approval to indicate that the collected data were trustworthy. Guba and Lincoln (1981) uphold the tenet that qualitative data are credible when others can acknowledge experiences after only having read about them.

With this process of data triangulation to endorse the credibility of the data, and the fact that multiple sources of data had been used, the research process confirmed the credibility of the study. Content analysis of the relevant documents provided the background data that helped explain the *status quo*, while the interviews with city officials provided the means to scrutinize the documents and to verify what was contained in them. By means of the information provided by the public participants in the focus group interviews, the researcher came to understand and explain the attitudes of the communities to the process of amalgamation.

### **3.11 Data corroboration**

Corroboration is a method that appraises the quality of the answers by considering the trustworthiness of the sources from which the answers are obtained. Instinctively, an answer obtained from a reliable source is more likely to be the correct answer (Wu, 2016). Corroboration is a critical process in research as it seeks to confirm the reliability and trustworthiness of the research process. In fact, the research process is only complete once its reliability can be validated. The quality of information is critical to achieving the research objectives of an investigative study, which relies on in-depth information and rich data from its reference sources. For this research project, the participants were city officials who had been employed by the city for a period of 10-15 years and had been exposed to the different strategic frameworks that had been developed and implemented over the years. The

information the officials provided in the interviews corroborated the information that was presented through the content analysis process (the IDP and GDS 2055 documents). As per the objectives of the city, the information provided by the city officials provided greater insights into the plans and programmes of the city and put the data in perspective.

Wu (2016) concurs that responses from reputable sources carry more weight in verifying answers and data obtained from participants, while the use of information from a single source often results in low quality and, in some cases, insufficient data. As such, multiple sources and numerous participants are necessary if quality data are to be collected. Also, worthy of note is that such data serve as a reputable means to corroborate information. After the triangulation process had been completed, the collected data were successfully corroborated so that the criteria for evaluation and critical analysis could be adhered to.

### **3.12 Data analysis**

Data analysis is described as the process that a researcher uses to organize data into a narrative that is interpretable (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). Since the methods of data analysis and interpretation are logical and thorough, a dense, rich, and detailed description of the findings of a research study, and their significance, can be presented. Marshall and Rossman (1999) define data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the volume of collected data. Furthermore, data analysis is portrayed as complex, ambiguous and time-consuming, but also as an innovative and enthralling process. Data analysis has three important components, namely, the organization of the collected data, the classification and compression of the data, and the identification of the associated themes and patterns emanating from the data. Analyzing quantitatively requires the analysis and interpretation of a rich and

detailed text which, in its turn, requires compression of the text, examination of the text, and the incorporation of the examined data into a frame of reference (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The researcher performed an inductive content analysis of the IDP and GDS 2055 documents to evaluate the impact of the amalgamation policy in terms of service delivery in Ekurhuleni. Interviews and focus group interviews were evaluated by organizing the data into themes to achieve a detailed understanding of the perceptions of the participants in this research study as regards amalgamation.

Furthermore, the collected data were cross verified through an investigation and evaluation of the data sources against the collected data. The data collected through the content analysis process was examined *versus* the data collected from the interviews with the city officials and subsequently compared to the perceptions of the public in terms of the impact of amalgamation on development, economic transformation, and the quality of service delivery. The collected data were encoded using the Atlas TI qualitative data analysis tool which entailed developing themes and arranging data according to specific themes. During the process, 10 codes, which were linked to the four research objectives and research questions of the study, were created. In the process of developing themes, overarching themes linked to the study emerged. To accommodate them, ten codes were created. The emerging themes interlinked well with the research objectives and questions and were further supported by the available literature.

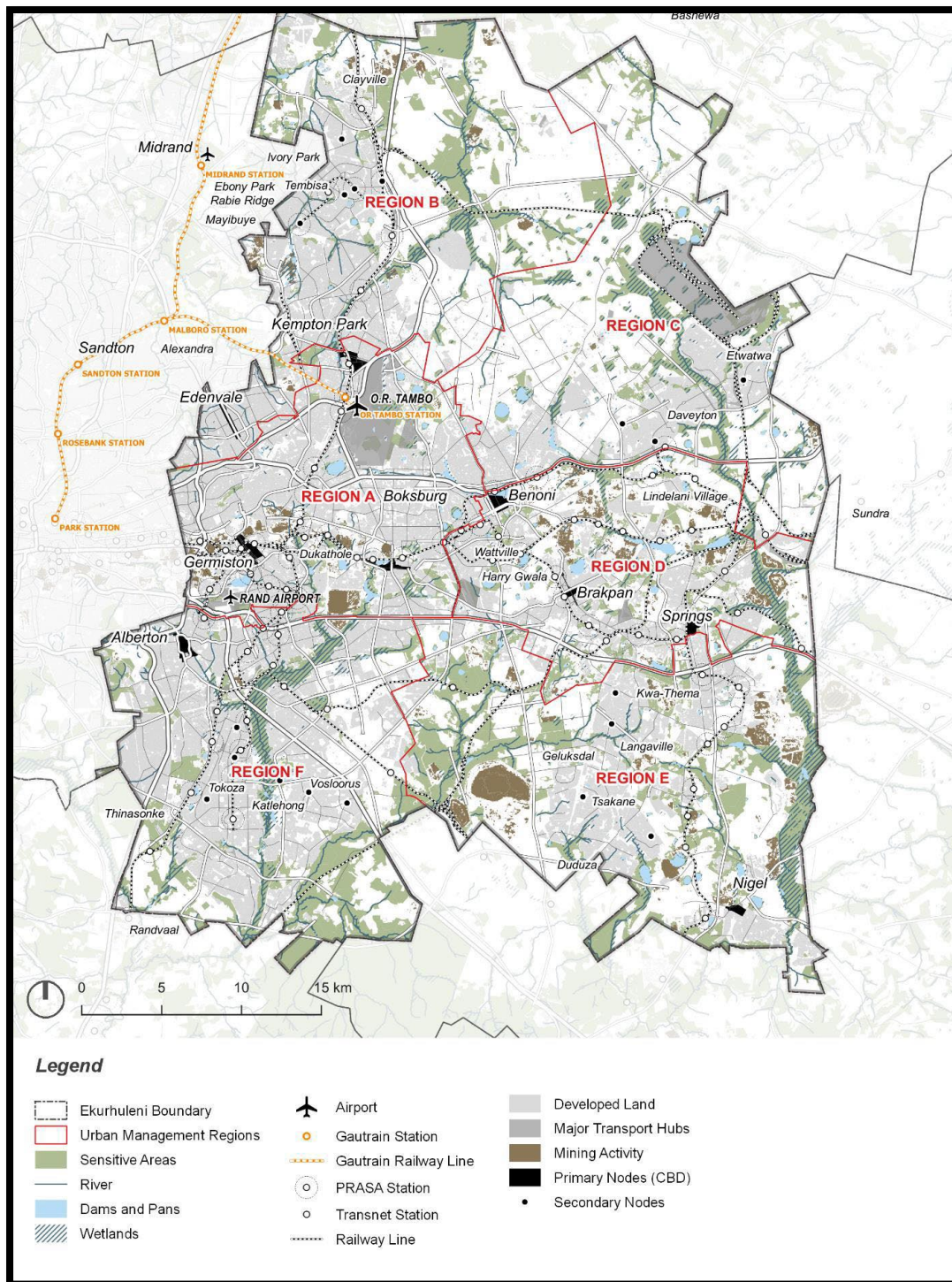
### **3.14 Study area**

The headquarters of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality was chosen as the suitable site for this study since Ekurhuleni represents the amalgamation of the largest number of merged municipalities into a single metropolitan municipality. This provided a good spatial representation of amalgamation as there were multiple

areas and municipalities that were incorporated through this process. Ekurhuleni is one of the six metropolitan areas in South Africa and one of the three metropolitan municipalities in Gauteng (Huchzermeyer *et al.*, 2004). Ekurhuleni was previously known as the East Rand and covers a surface area of 1 924 km<sup>2</sup> (SACN, 2004). A flourishing mining industry stimulated the growth of a substantial manufacturing support base in the area (SACN, 2004). In 2010, the magnitude of the region's GDP (Gross Domestic Product) amounted to R163 billion (SACN, 2004).

Ekurhuleni has a population of 3 178 470 people, with a population density of 1609 persons/km<sup>2</sup> (Statistics RSA, 2014). The region experienced a population growth ratio of 2,47% between 2001 and 2011 (Statistics RSA, 2014). Ekurhuleni is vastly urbanized with 99,4% of the population living in urban settlements that range from informal settlements to elite urban residential suburbs (Statistics RSA, 2014). Ekurhuleni, which is a Tsonga word which translates as "Place of Peace", was chosen as the study area because of its rich history in manufacturing, as an industrial hub and because of its rapid growth in terms of development. However, with all these promising reviews, the levels of poverty and unemployment in Ekurhuleni are very high (SACN, 2004). With these contrasting fortunes, the study has the potential to make remarkable findings in this research area.

**Figure 3.1 Map of Ekurhuleni**



Source: (Ekurhuleni 2016)

### **3.15 Ethical considerations**

The nature of this study was low risk and did not require participants to divulge their names, personal information, or medical history and it did not include minors. Participants were given the option to refrain from answering questions or for opting out of the study any time they might wish to. If they decided to opt out, they were assured that nothing would be held against them, and that participation was strictly voluntary.

The participants were encouraged to feel comfortable and to relax in order to freely engage in the study and express themselves. Data collection for this research project was ongoing prior to and post the 2021 local government elections. Prior to the elections, some of the participants from the municipality were reluctant to make themselves available for the interviews. There were others who expressed their availability but turned down the request to be interviewed, while others cancelled the scheduled interviews at the last minute. Regardless of these challenges, the principles of research integrity were maintained, and no participants were forced or compelled to participate. The researcher applied and was granted the CAES ethics clearance (2020\_CAES\_HREC\_012) to conduct the research and collect data.

### **3.16 Conclusion**

Research methodology is the spine of any research inquiry because it provides authenticity and ensures that the study advances comprehensive and strictly unambiguous findings. This chapter focused on outlining and discussing the research methods that were used by the researcher during the data collection phase. The researcher further discussed the rationale and significance of the research approach and methods undertaken during this research inquiry. The study focused on qualitative content analysis, a valuable method for collecting data through interviews and focus group interviews. The sources of data for this research included both

primary and secondary sources. The collected data were analysed and cross-referenced against the data collected by analyzing the content of strategic documents and the data collected through the interviews. This chapter helped the researcher to manage the research process and assured him that the research study was on track, efficient and manageable. In fact, it proved to be a crucial component of this research study and, therefore, a cornerstone of this research.

## Chapter 4

### **Spatial legacy of Apartheid and Municipal Amalgamation: The connection**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines literature on the spatial legacy of apartheid and its impact on spatial planning and economic infrastructure in post democratic South Africa. The focus was on evaluating and examining the literature regarding the impacts of the spatial legacy of apartheid and how it has influenced inequality, planning, and the economic infrastructure in democratic South Africa. This review chapter also addresses the first research objective, which seeks to evaluate how the municipal amalgamation policy has addressed the spatial legacy of apartheid. The chapter further investigates and provides an account of how the City of Ekurhuleni has responded to address the challenges produced by the spatial legacy of apartheid. City planning in the apartheid era, as well as apartheid's discriminatory systems, such as influx control and group areas legislation, contributed to the extremely dysfunctional and unsustainable urban settlements that challenge local government today.

The apartheid system not only segregated races; it also deeply entrenched spatial inequality through aspects such as housing, geographical location, landscape, and transport (Mahanyele-Mthembi, 1997). With the demise of apartheid, and the radical change in government, the city of Ekurhuleni reassessed its local government structures and functions. In December 2000, the local government authorities of the nine cities and towns in the eastern region of Gauteng entered a new era with the formation of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (Ekurhuleni, 2012). The launch of the metropolitan municipality meant the disestablishment of nine local government administrations, which were absorbed into this new mega administrative structure



(Ekurhuleni, 2012). Currently, the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality includes within its sphere of authority several historical mining towns and cities that, pre-democratic South Africa, each had their own central business district (CBD), suburbs and character.

#### **4.2 Apartheid geographies**

South Africa has a well-documented history of apartheid, which produced a society characterized by inequality, marginalization, and fragmented development. The country epitomises a multi-national site of interest on matters of reconciliation and transformation within a historical context, but with ethnic hostility, racial exclusion, and the catastrophic mismanagement of its diversity still having the upper hand (Steyn and Ballard, 2013). Apartheid city planning had discriminatory systems such as influx control and group areas legislation in place, which contributed to dysfunctional and unsustainable urban settlements, especially for the black population. As such, apartheid government not only segregated races; it also entrenched inequality, clearly manifested in the different forms of housing, geographical locations, landscapes, and the distribution of facilities (Spinks, 2001).

The spatial legacy of apartheid has had long-lasting effects, which still negatively impact upon people, even in the democratic dispensation. Foster (2005) makes a critical observation that places have an explicit significance for people, who attach meaning to them; in fact, they resonate with emblematic and emotional significance. All people carry with them a sense of place identity, and significantly, identity with their place of abode/village/city/region/province/country on a personal level.

The components of this particular space are not only intimately linked, but dynamically support one another. Since space has a significant meaning and shapes the identity

of people, it then influences their lifestyle decisions in terms of the amenities and services (e.g. education, employment, recreation) that they require to acquire these benefits. Madlalate (2019) defines Apartheid Geography as the presence of racially distinctive spaces that can be tracked back to the colonial encounter, which resulted in the conception and maintenance of racially-identified spaces, tied up with racial and class-based discrimination and an uneven distribution of social goods and public amenities skewed in favour of white people. While Mbembe (2004) argues that apartheid in South Africa attempted to establish a distinct racial moral order through spatial groupings, the physical distance between races was essentially understood to consecrate the moral distance between them. The stark inequalities produced through the apartheid legacy have unfortunately persisted and are further reproduced in the modern-day South Africa. It is evident in the vast variations in service delivery and the quality of services provided to the previously disadvantaged areas (e.g. the townships) as opposed to those provided to the wealthy suburban areas.

This has created more problems as people move around searching for a better life in terms of employment and a home and has seen in the increase in informal settlements. Establishing Apartheid Geography as a subdiscipline of Geography was motivated by the brutal exploitation of black people's need to access space through racist, social, and economic policies that were manifested in an assortment of discriminatory laws. The result was that black people were categorized into a separate group through marginalization, involuntary (forced) migration, a lack of secure tenure, and legal prejudice. This discriminatory form of development is the core of the current crisis in South Africa and the beginning of dysfunctional service provision, which has further been plagued by the present-day challenges of poor governance, corruption, and financial maladministration. Thus, the City of Ekurhuleni has had to respond to these

challenges since they affect the wellbeing of its residents and the development potential of the city.

#### **4.3 Municipal amalgamation policy as a tool for addressing the spatial legacy of apartheid**

Cities are the key growth centres of economies. Rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, service delivery problems and inadequate public transportation facilities and services are some of the important challenges that cities across the world are currently facing (RSDF, 2015). In addition to these challenges, South Africa is still grappling with the effects of apartheid spatial planning which, in terms of development, benefited some areas while disadvantaging others. During its period of the apartheid government delivered efficient services to several small municipalities, but these services were dedicated to the white minority population only. The townships were disadvantaged in terms of service delivery and economic opportunities because, in terms of the discriminatory policy of the apartheid government, they were strategically located on the peripheries of cities and towns (Todes *et al.*, 2010).

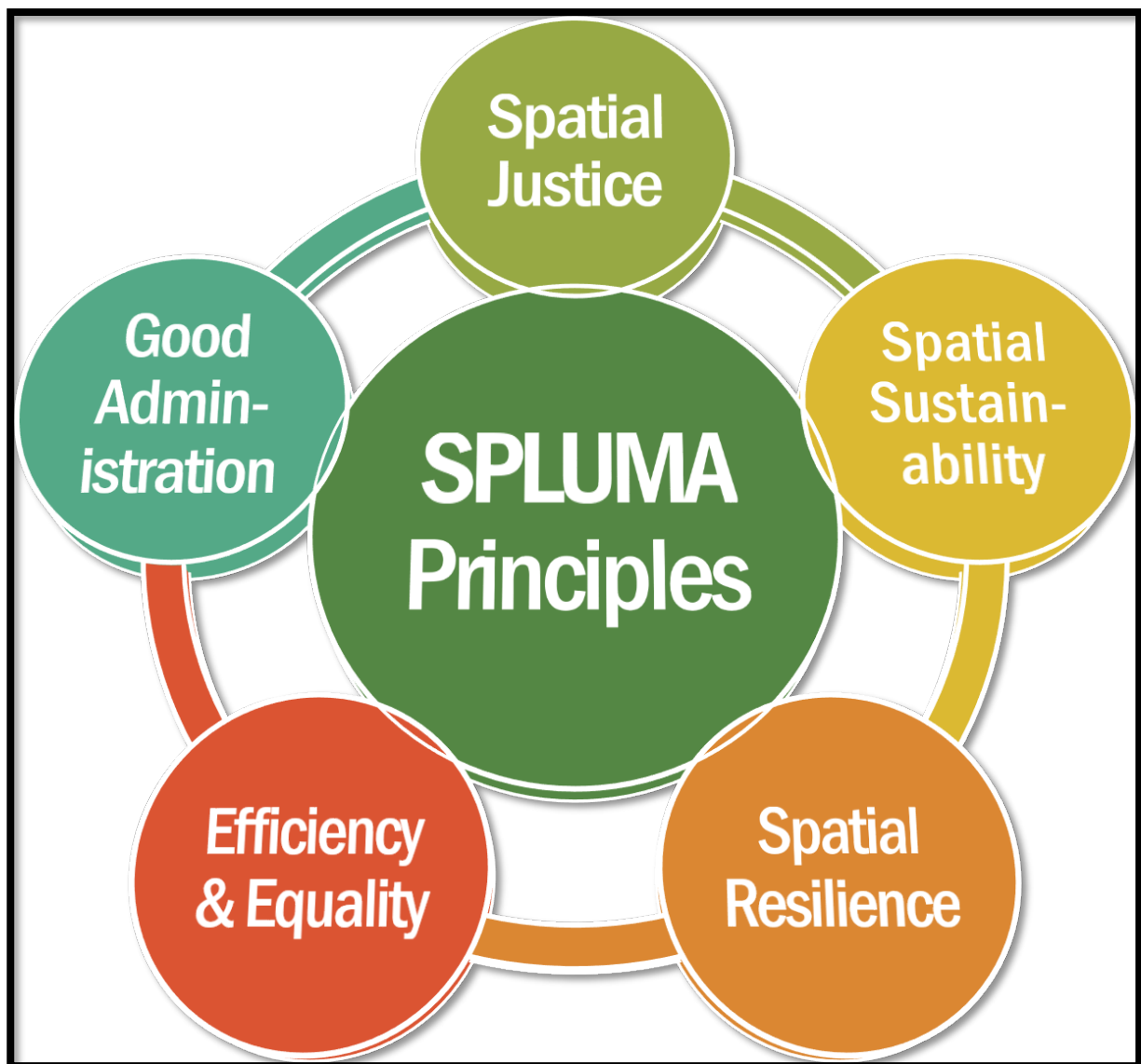
The socio-economic and spatial challenges created through the amalgamation of the nine towns and the 11 local administrations under the jurisdiction of the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality called for a strategic response. This gave rise to the Growth and Development Strategy, 2055 (GDS). In conjunction with the GDS, the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (MSDF) and the Regional Spatial Development Frameworks (RSDFs) aimed at driving the desired spatial development of the metropolitan area, as planned in terms of Section 25(e) of the Local Government Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) (RSDF, 2015). In turn, these strategic frameworks are guided by the recently promulgated Spatial Planning and Land Use Management (SPLUMA) Act 16 of 2013 that came into effect in 2015. SPLUMA was

established to provide a standardized system of spatial planning and land-use management throughout South Africa so that municipalities could apply land-use control (SACN, 2015). These interventions were initiatives to address the spatial inequalities which were systematically produced through the spatial legacy of apartheid.

#### **4.3.1 SPLUMA as a tool for spatial transformation**

Cities across South Africa have the huge task of addressing spatial inequality. Spatial transformation, which incorporates economic development, inclusivity, mobility, and access in a sustainable way, is required to drive local and national development projects (SACN, 2015). SPLUMA is anchored in five principles, namely, spatial justice, spatial sustainability, efficiency, spatial resilience, and good administration (Hoole, 2016; Nel *et al.*, 2016). SPLUMA is a unique spatial planning framework that has been endorsed to guide development and is centred around spatial principles, spatial development, and frameworks, land use management, and policies and legislation. Figure 4.1 illustrates the interconnectedness between the SPLUMA principles and the principles of the development goals.

**Figure 4.1 SPLUMA Principles**



**Source: (National Spatial Planning Data Repository, 2018).**

The principle of spatial justice is important as it emphasizes the need to redress the spatial setting, inclusion aspects, and flexibility relevant to all types of settlements, as also, the tenure systems and the upgrading of informal settlements (Nel *et al.*, 2016). SPLUMA is a key blueprint that has been adopted nationally to drive the process of addressing the spatial inequalities that were produced by the apartheid legacy in terms of spatial planning. This has resulted in the need for spatial transformation in cities to

mitigate inequalities that perpetuate poverty in South Africa. Williams (2000) described spatial transformation as “friction-ridden planning in motion”. This pertinent explanation recognizes that spatial transformation is provocative, continuous, and requires reinvention, reimagination, and exploration (Bickford, 2014). It is crucial that the SPLUMA principles should be applied in line with the MSDF and IDP because the metropolitan SDFs and IDP are not only owned by the municipality alone; they are also the mechanisms for all governments to achieve delivery of services and to accomplish regional goals and objectives (Nel *et al.*, 2016).

In the post-apartheid era, a number of development initiatives have been put in place to address the developmental deficit, which necessitates improvements to and the upgrading of human settlements, and economic and social development. In the year 2000, a political decision was taken to amalgamate nine small towns and 11 administrations to form one metropolitan city, called Ekurhuleni. The decision to amalgamate was influenced by the need to improve service delivery, to integrate services, to develop an effective infrastructure, and to improve spatial planning.

#### **4.3.2 Regional Spatial Development Framework (RSDF) and Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (MSDF)**

RSDFs are strategic guidelines for the spatial development of a region. They provide a framework for the preparation of more comprehensive and area-specific plans (RSDF, 2015). A metropolitan municipality is required to prepare Regional Spatial Development Frameworks (RSDFs) for its area of jurisdiction, to expedite the development of the metropolitan municipality as imagined in the MSDF (MSDF, 2015). The aim of the RSDF is not to be prescriptive at a location-specific level, but instead, to provide a framework for clarifying the vision, planning principles, and structuring elements of the region (RSDF, 2015). The MSDF can be observed as a preliminary

phase towards conducting future spatial development to accomplish a more sustainable metropolitan city structure, which, in its turn, can lead economic and social development in Gauteng (MSDF, 2015). The MSDF in Ekurhuleni carries and drives the policies of the metro to address the spatial initiatives which are contained in the various strategies. Importantly, the MSDF is aligned to the National Development Plan and the provincial and municipal Growth and Development Strategies. The role of MSDF is to address spatial inequalities in the metro which have resulted from the apartheid spatial legacy. The history of poor infrastructure development in township which is exacerbated by poverty and unemployment is heightened by spatial inequalities. The MSDF is anchored by five principles, namely, spatial justice, spatial sustainability, spatial resilience, spatial quality, and spatial efficiency (MSDF, 2015).

#### **4.3.3 Spatial Justice**

Spatial justice refers to the determination that there should be a fair and impartial allocation of space for socially valued resources and the opportunities to utilize them (Soja, 2009). Equal distribution of resources is important for the realization of economic and social development, especially in the previously disadvantaged communities. Spatial inclusivity plays a crucial role in developing communities as it enables people to participate in economic activities and to benefit from the social amenities that are provided by the state. Pursuing the objective to strengthen justice or to lessen injustice is fundamental to all societies; it is in fact a foundational principle for sustaining human dignity and fairness (Soja, 2009). Budlender and Royston (2016) argue that the model of spatial justice has the potential to be constitutionally powerful in South Africa, where both a justifiable state obligation and an activist commitment to the concept may be used to transform the spatial forms issuing from the apartheid era.

Spatial sustainability involves spatial planning that promotes the principles of socio-economic and environmental sustainability by encouraging the protection of prime agricultural land; promoting land development in locations that are sustainable; and limiting urban sprawl (MSDF, 2015). Spatial sustainability advocates that development should be implemented within the existing resource base, without compromising environmental issues. The NDP declares that sustainable patterns of consumption and production should be supported, and ways of living promoted that do not damage the natural environment (NCP, 2012). Spatial resilience is best defined as the capacity of the urban spatial system to resist, adapt, and recuperate from shocks and change (Lu *et al.*, 2021).

Spatial resilience is tied to sustainable development as it requires that city planners design human settlements and development initiatives that will be flexible and able to deal with climate change impacts. Cummings (2011) argues that spatial resilience emphasizes the importance of location, connectivity, and a resilient perspective, all of which are based on the idea that spatial variation in the patterns and processes at various levels both impacts upon and is impacted by local resilience. The Ekurhuleni metro has adapted spatial resilience to achieve and align with its development objectives and, as a framework.

The objective is to safeguard communities and livelihoods from the spatial impacts of socio-economic and environmental shocks. Mitigation and adaptability, the latter being accommodated by flexibility in spatial plans, policies, and land-use management systems, are the means by which these positive effects can be achieved (MSDF, 2015). Lastly, spatial efficiency completes the linking of these principles. It also plays a critical role as it is about the respective synergies between different economic activities which should be interconnected to be efficient.



Sarzynski and Levy (2010) define spatial efficiency as the geographic arrangement of businesses and residences, the physical infrastructure that links the region (transportation, communication, green space), and the orientation of each towards the other that reduces the time, effort, or cost required to conduct economic activities for the whole municipal area. Spatial efficiency is therefore understood as the ease through which economic activities are geographically organized and managed within an area.

These principles are critical in shaping and driving development to ensure that the wrongs of the past are eradicated and mitigated in a sustainable manner. Importantly, development should be equitable and be implemented in a way that will not re-enforce old spatial challenges or create new complications. This is critical aspect to get right because it then filters to addressing the development deficit in the metro.

#### **4.3.4 Developmental deficit**

With the developmental deficit in the country, it is important that metros do not get carried away and rush to accelerate the development of their infrastructures without first considering the spatial, climatic, and environmental impacts. Development should be driven by principles of sustainability which are key to long-term growth and expansion. Future development is also reliant on spatial quality, as the quality of a space determines the level of development that will take place there. Furthermore, the quality of a spatial location is the extent to which it gratifies the expectations of a community. These expectations are defined by the principles pursued by the community for its development - more precisely, its spatial development (Knops, 1987). Spatial quality is centred around strategies, policies, designs and efficient creativity in the use of spaces. It applies to buildings, landscapes, and the infrastructure.

### **4.3.5 The Growth and Development Strategy**

The City of Ekurhuleni developed a strategic framework, named the Growth and Development Strategy 2055<sup>5</sup>, which consists of a phased development approach. The phased development approach is divided into three segments or phases which are all meant to address spatial, economic, and social inequalities. The three phases of the GDS 2055 are the Delivering City (2012 - 2020), the Capable City (2020 – 2030), and the Sustainable City (2030 – 2055). The Ekurhuleni GDS (2015) defines a delivering city as a comprehensive, firmly managed, empowered, and resourced EMM organization that will be able to rise to the challenge of delivering services that are nationally competitive, consistent, financially sustainable, competent, and innovative. The metro gave itself an eight-year period to design and provide an improved service provision framework that will focus on a high standard of service delivery. It should be noted that quality service delivery takes time to achieve as metros must put systems in place that will respond to the needs of communities. Importantly, infrastructure also needs to be in place to efficiently provide services to different communities with different developmental challenges.

### **4.3.6 Delivering city: service provision**

Nealer (2014) describes service delivery as the provision of public services, benefits or gratifications that include both the provision of tangible goods and intangible services. By nature, humans are complex beings who use different barometers to evaluate their level of satisfaction in terms of service delivery; hence, there can never be complete satisfaction in terms of service delivery. The service delivery protests over the years stand testimony to this in South Africa. Jowell and Eva (2009) captured this very well when they argued that social well-being is about how well human needs are

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<sup>5</sup> The MSDF, which details the principal strategic plans of the city, is summarized in the GDS 2055.

met across innumerable spheres, which could be the physical, economic, social, environmental, emotive, and spiritual spheres, as well as individual's appraisal of their own lives and the way in which their society operates. The country is still recovering from the impacts of the spatial legacy of apartheid which has presented numerous challenges. While the challenge of spatial inequality persists, the population has grown rapidly, so much so that the need for service provision and human settlements, especially in Ekurhuleni, has been exacerbated. The deterioration of the infrastructure in the city has also contributed to the challenges of providing services and resulted in backlogs. Sewage leaks are a common sight in townships. They result from the increased population numbers, the result being numerous backyard rooms, shacks, and informal settlements. All of these combined place massive strain on the aging water and sanitation infrastructures.

Damaging service delivery protests then ensue and have become a problem for municipalities as communities are breaking down the municipal infrastructure in a struggle to force their councillors to attend to their complaints (Patience, 2015). Many of these protests have been in response to an infrastructure that has not been appropriately managed and maintained. Communities do not have access to basic services, such as water, electricity, usable roads, and systems to dispose of their wastewater (Sosibo, 2014). As a result of this conundrum, tension and conflict have arisen in the quest of the municipality to find a balance between providing efficient services against the maintenance of the existing infrastructure and the upgrading and building of new infrastructures. Unfortunately, communities have become frustrated with the slow pace of service provision and the upgrading of the infrastructure, which has resulted in protest action. It is the municipal infrastructure that bears the brunt of this frustration. Patience (2015) argues that the infrastructure is deteriorating at a

faster rate than that which was projected. Many of these amenities/resources that should be in good working order are overloaded, no longer operational, or need complete renewal. Service provision is further affected by the non-payment of rates and taxes by communities resulting in severe outcomes for municipalities in terms of revenue collection.

#### **4.3.6 Revenue collection by municipalities**

The Municipal Property Rates Act (2004) governs the levying of property rates. In spite of the need to adopt property rate policies, local municipalities and metros still have the responsibility of raising revenue through property rates (Shava, 2020). For municipalities to be sustainable and provide services to communities, they need to collect revenue because the budget allocated by the national government is insufficient. The justification for the collection of property rates is to fund socio-economic services (e.g. street lighting, stormwater systems, municipal roads, and refuse collection) (Shava, 2020).

The non-payment for services has had a detrimental effect on the provision of quality services. This has been proven by the slow progress made in infrastructural development and the maintenance of the existing infrastructure. The ability of the townships to provide satisfactory municipal services has deteriorated as a result of the revenue deficiency and the lack of willingness to pay for municipal services (Khale, 2015). Furthermore, the global pandemic of COVID19 has aggravated the collection of revenue in Ekurhuleni which resulted from the disruption of the economy and the scores of people who lost their jobs as companies and industries retrenched their staff and reduced their workforce. The pandemic has affected the payment of rates, which has in turn severely affected the budget of the metro. Various reasons have been advanced by communities for non-payment of services. They include unemployment,

poverty, and the historical and proverbial 'promise' that claimed that post democracy, services would be free. According to Khale (2015), the mindset of non-payment of municipal services emanates from the liberation struggle against apartheid, where failure to pay the municipal rates was intentional meant to serve as an act of defiance against the government at that stage. The challenges of the city in terms of revenue collection began with the global recession of 2008 and intensified with the Moody ratings, as people lost their jobs and as a result of the high inflation rate. Ensor (2020) maintains that there has been a drop in revenue because of global and local economic weaknesses that were compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. As economic activities weaken, municipalities in South Africa suffer financial anguish that ensues from uncollected revenue.

In retrospect, quality service delivery requires municipalities to have an extensive budget because maintaining an effective infrastructure is expensive, and waste removal, just one of the responsibilities of the municipality, demands financial resources. Ekurhuleni metro has faced challenges in terms of revenue collection, which has also delayed its eight-year plan of becoming a "delivering" city. The eight-year plan was too ambitious to address the service delivery challenges in the city because the amalgamation of the small towns which meant that the metro had to service a vast number of communities which were experiencing various service delivery and infrastructural challenges. Furthermore, the economic challenges and high unemployment rate have affected revenue collection. The service delivery backlogs are also likely to have a negative impact in the next phase of development, which is called "The Capable City". According to the GDS timeline, the second phase of development was scheduled to extend from 2020 - 2030.

The focus of the Capable City (2020-2030) is on economic development, which demands that unemployment and poverty in the city be addressed. The Ekurhuleni plans seek an ethos of acclimatization to the needs and evolution of the energy sector so that it can facilitate the establishment of a flourishing and inclusive industrial economy and significantly reduce the high unemployment rate and poverty. Exceptional inter-governmental collaboration, manifested in the provision of a competitive package of services and investment options would be crucial to the success of such an initiative (Ekurhuleni GDS, 2015). Addressing poverty correlates with service provision. Consequently, the city must accelerate and master efficient service delivery to its communities. While promoting development, service delivery improves the welfare of people, and bridges the poverty gap.

A large number of South Africans live in abject poverty and depend on service delivery for survival, which is what makes public perceptions on service delivery critical. With a working population and efficient service delivery, municipalities have an opportunity to increase their revenue to make them sustainable and competitive. To achieve this, the city needs to create an environment conducive to economic growth. In this way, it can offer people opportunities for employment and participation in the economy, which will contribute to development and increased revenue. The city, in conjunction with the Gauteng province, is collaborating with other interested parties to build an aerotropolis, which is projected to create jobs and provide an economic stimulus.

#### **4.3.7 Capable city: Aerotropolis**

Kasarda (2013) defines an aerotropolis as a city built around an airport with a strategic planning focus linked with industrial and commercial land-use to offer its businesses a speedy connectivity to their suppliers, customers, and enterprise partners, nationally and worldwide. In essence, an aerotropolis incorporates smart city planning as it

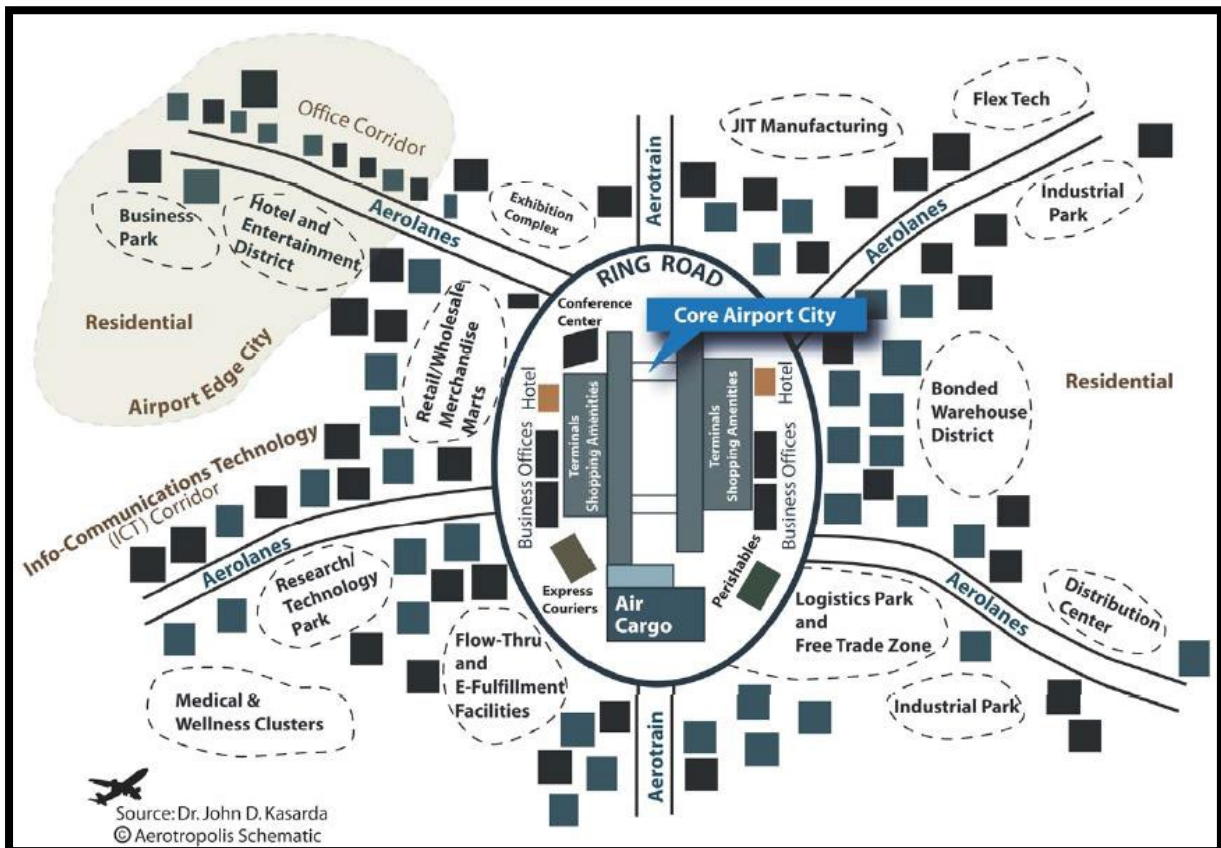
encourages mixed land use (economic/residential) and access to a variety of economic and social activities. The idea of the Aerotropolis of Ekurhuleni embraces the vision to build prosperity for the city and the Gauteng City Region, the essential base being job creation. As the aerotropolis grows and flourishes, so too should the residents of Ekurhuleni benefit from the creation of new jobs, the expansion of the social (public) infrastructure, and an improvement in the standard of living for all (Aerotropolis Ekurhuleni, 2018). The Aerotropolis will be advantageous to the development of the city as it embraces the mixed land use which has been a new form of development undertaken by the metro.

Mixed land use is advantageous in the context of the Ekurhuleni residents, who come from a history of fragmented development and housing (apartheid spatial planning), largely in the peripheral areas around the city, and away from amenities. Historically, the residents of Ekurhuleni have had to travel to and from the various townships to their feeder cities to access the social and economic amenities and infrastructure essential to making ends meet. Currently, the government is attempting to bring development to the people which has resulted in infrastructural developments in the townships and the emergence of mixed land use in the already established towns.

Aerotropolis is yet another project embracing mixed land use around the OR Tambo International Airport precinct which aims to accelerate economic and social development. The aerotropolis is a framework that represents a set of developmental initiatives, including coordinated infrastructures, commercial real estate, and government policy interventions to upgrade the urban and employment assets of the airport area, reduce ground-based transport times and expenses, and expand air-route connectivity, thereby attracting investment, creating jobs, and boosting aviation-generated trade in high-value goods and business services (Kasarda, 2013). Figure

4.2 illustrates the spatial land use concept of an aerotropolis where the mixed land use concept strategically incorporates both residential and economic activities in a particular space to make access and interconnectivity seamless.

**Figure 4.2 Aerotropolis Schematic**



**Source: (Kasarda, 2010)**

#### 4.3.8 Ekurhuleni- Towards developing a sustainable city

Ekurhuleni is aiming to achieve a governance system that will provide an integrated, efficient, and regionally well-connected spatial structure, a logistics-oriented infrastructure, and a well-oiled network of collaborative partnerships with civil society and communities in the city. The city has set a time span of a decade to achieve the objectives of the so-called Capable City and will need to work hard to achieve success. This is primarily due to some of the building objectives associated with the Delivering



City Phase overlapping into the Current Phase of the Capable City. Thus, the city has the mammoth task of trying to balance the two phases to ensure that the last phase is not delayed and that a smooth transition and achievement of the objectives of the three development phases can be assured. The last phase, namely, the Sustainable City Phase (2030 – 2055) represents a long-term vision of the city. The City of Ekurhuleni aims to achieve its status as a sustainable city that will encourage a clean, green, and sustainable manufacturing facility, geared specifically to the markets of the African continent, and a city development network that will reduce poverty and unemployment (Ekurhuleni GDS 2015). This phase consolidates all the objectives of the two phases as it encourages a sustainable way of providing services, eradicating unemployment and poverty, while promoting economic development that will be sustainable and enable the City of Ekurhuleni to achieve the status of a smart digital city.

#### **4.3.9 Building a smart city**

A smart city and smart sustainability are often categorised as the application of ICT in smart urban structures to achieve sustainable development, meaning that the needs of today are met without sacrificing the needs of future generations with respect to economic, social, and environmental aspects (Giffinger and Hui, 2015). A smart city is an integrated system, using technology-based solutions, in which human and social capital interacts (Nkhumeleni, 2017). The objective of a smart city is to cost-effectively achieve sustainable and flexible development and a high standard of living based on a multi-stakeholder, municipality-centred partnership (Lee, Gosling, and Irvin, 2008). A city can be considered “smart” when investments in human and social capital, communication technologies and infrastructure actively foster sustainable economic development and a high quality of life, with wise resource management exercised

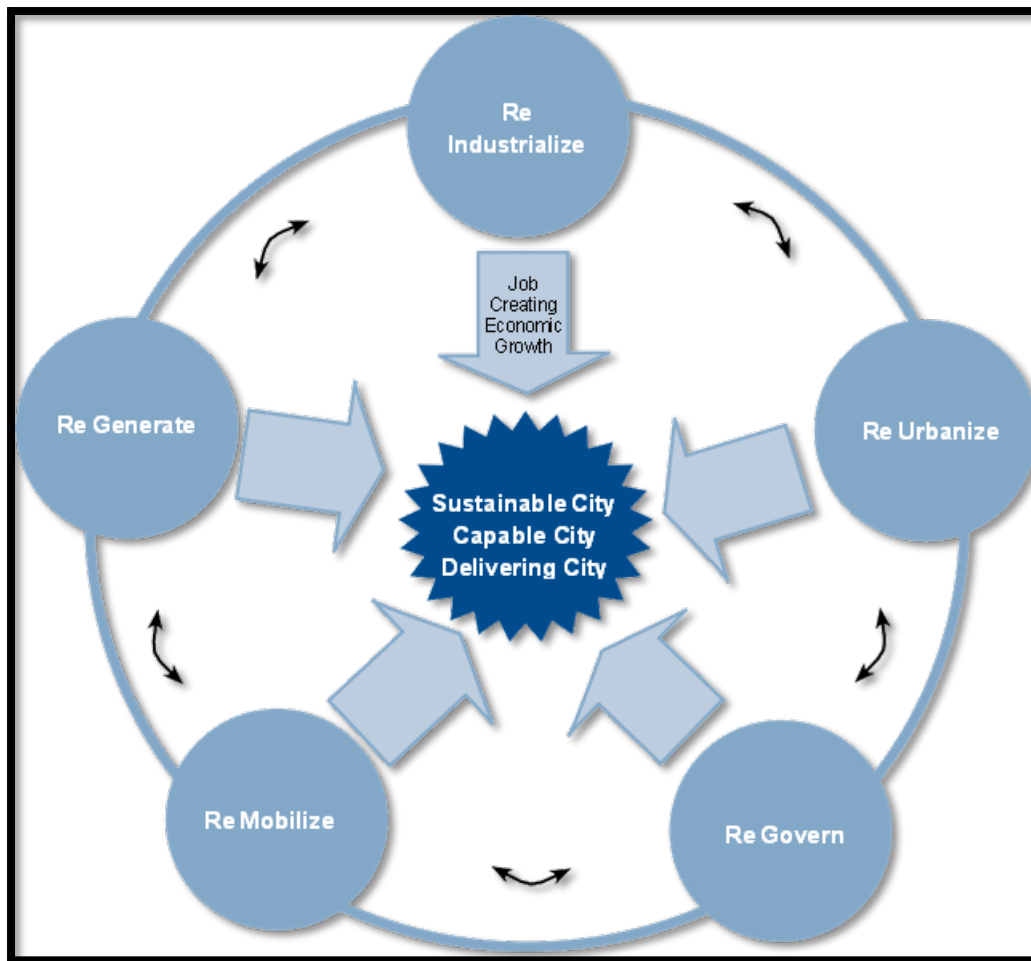
through an open and excellent government (Smart Cities Study, 2019). A smart city aims to build an inclusive city which allows all citizens access to services and amenities equivalent to those of a global city, and opportunities to participate in the economy and to benefit from the amenities. Under such circumstances, inclusivity is important as it allows people to participate in the economy and thus become independent and able to make a living, the end result being reduced poverty (Ekurhuleni GDS, 2015).

The new global trend is to design smart, digital, and sustainable cities that embrace technology and promote green city development. The concept of a green infrastructure has developed internationally as a way of knowing how green assets and ecological systems function as part of the infrastructural foundation that supports and sustains society, builds resilience and secures the provisioning of ecosystem services in human-dominated city landscapes (Colding, 2011; Harrison *et al.*, 2014). Urban green infrastructure plays a vital role in providing ecosystem services to cities. These services benefit urban dwellers directly but are also key to the climate change adaptations and alleviation strategies that cities are facing because of the increase in climate-related risks within cities (Pasquini and Enqvist, 2019).

#### **4.3.10 Plans to reach targets: GDS 2055**

The city of Ekurhuleni plans to achieve these targets through five strategic principles, namely, Re-urbanize, Re-industrialize, Re-generate, Re-mobilise, and Re-govern, as shown on Figure 4.3 below.

**Figure 4.3 The GDS 2055 five strategic imperatives**



**Source: (City of Ekurhuleni, 2021)**

The Re-urbanise theme is entrusted with driving the process of re-urbanisation of highly connected and networked spaces to guarantee a compact and sustainable city. It will also include the revitalization of the neglected and deteriorating areas of the city, supervising and guiding growth, facilitating upward mobility in the formal and informal housing sectors and, importantly, providing affordable accommodation in well located areas and effective and reasonable access to places of work, shopping nodes and facilities within the city (Ekurhuleni GDS, 2015).

The target of the Re-urbanise principle is to formalise and improve the standard of accommodation in the city through the process of upgrading human settlements, the latter including the upgrading and re-blocking of informal settlements. The re-blocking programme has led to the intensification of the refurbishment of the electrification system of informal settlements and an increase in the provision of public lighting, which includes streetlights and high mast lights (Ekurhuleni, 2021).

With the re-blocking process, the city is making sure that informal settlements are liveable and conducive to a satisfactory standard of living. This is due to the realization by the city that mostly informal settlements lack proper tenure arrangements, property rights, and quality dwellings since they are located in geographically hazardous areas and lack basic services. The re-blocking process incorporates the re-arrangement and re-alignment of shacks into organized clusters that create more space so that the city can build a municipal infrastructure (e.g. install water and sanitation pipelines, and electric lines) to advance the mediocre conditions that the people residing in the informal settlements have to contend with (Ekurhuleni, 2021).

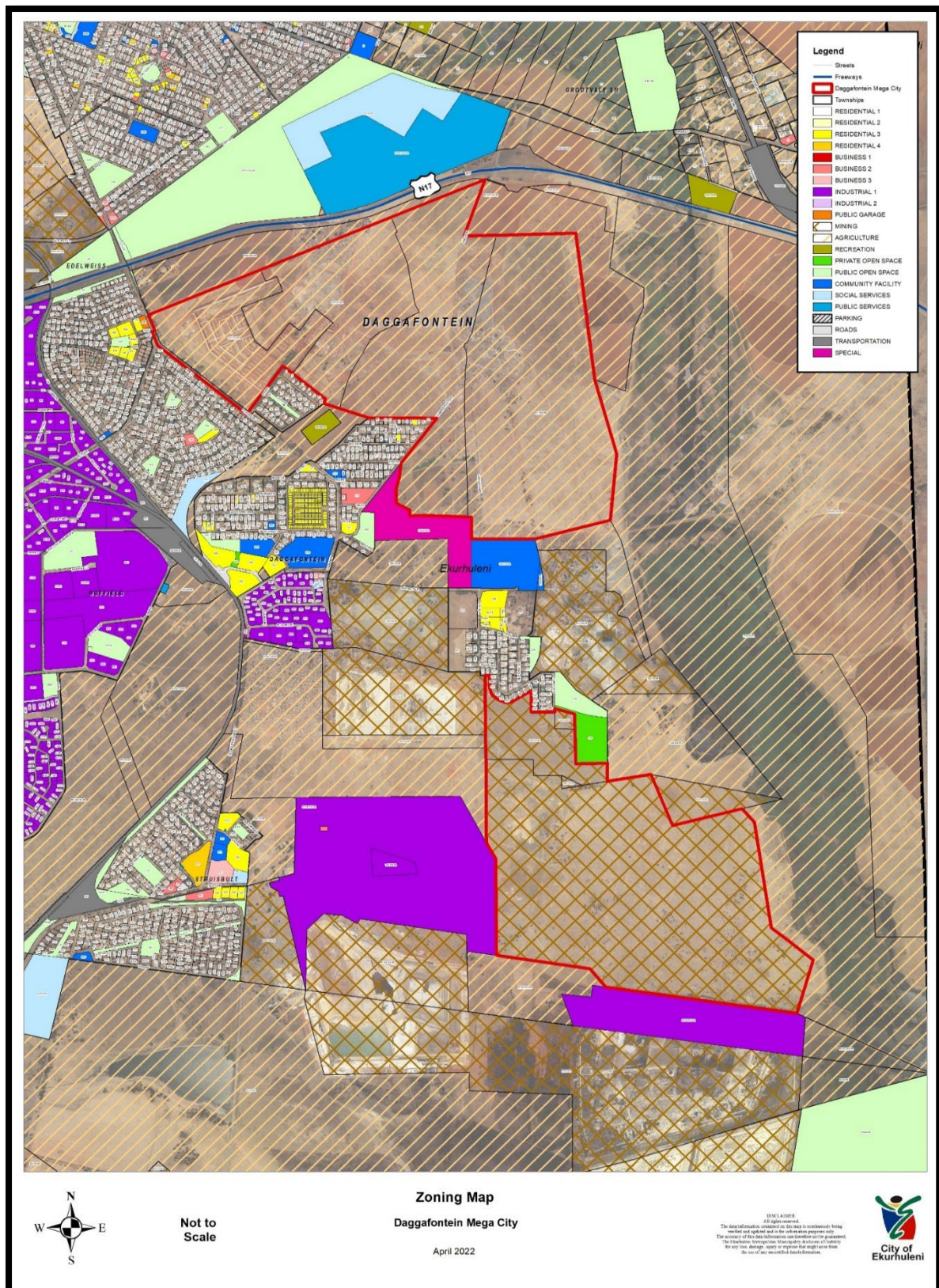
Re-urbanising is a critical part of service delivery which can be used to address the demand for human settlements and to find a way of addressing spatial inequalities. The livelihood of scores of people will improve with the availability of water, sanitation services and electrification which make life more manageable for the poor and unemployed, particularly for those living in the informal settlements. Another initiative of the Re-urbanise concept was the human settlements development project which focused on mega housing projects to address housing challenges and spatial inequalities of this municipal area. The city has launched a total of 15 mega housing projects that are currently on-going and in different phases of development (Ekurhuleni, 2021). One of the mega projects, named Daggafontein mega city

development, which was commenced in 2019, is a smart city development that is characterized by mixed land-use functions and incorporates various types of housing and commercial areas. Mixed-use developments are often a response to renew the vitality of neighbourhoods, to alleviate transportation problems, and to address densification issues. The concept pertains to a sustainable community and responds to modern-day state and local sustainability measures (Wardner, 2014). Mixed-use developments are improving the way people experience and interact with their residential areas as such initiatives open up opportunities for participation in various economic activities, which, through their proximity to the residential areas, offer the benefit of convenience. Mixed-use developments are distinguishable from their live-work-play facilities and amenities which are all incorporated in a single development. The commercial enterprises are available for shopping or for employment while the services and amenities are accessible to residents for, amongst others, recreation and entertainment (Hirt, 2012; Wardner, 2014).

#### **4.3.11 Plan for Daggafontein**

The Daggafontein Mega Housing Development is located within the Greater Springs area and is bordering on the Edelweiss Extension, south of the N17 Highway. It is intended for development as a smart city, the aim being to deliver world-class housing and to address challenges that have existed in the past and have continued into the present day (Gauteng Infrastructure Funding Summit, 2018). This development consists of subsidized housing and RDP housing types which have the sole purpose of addressing the huge demand for human settlements in the city. The Daggafontein development comprises 15 511 subsidised housing units with a total of over 17 000 units spread over an area of 750 hectares (Ekurhuleni, 2021). Figure 4.4 is a map of Daggafontein showing the mixed use of land.

Figure 4.4 Map of Daggafontein Mega City



Source: (Ekurhuleni Online Maps, 2022)

New developments in the metropolitan areas are guided by the smart city and sustainability agenda and are intended to address the historical challenges of spatial inequality. Hence, the new houses have larger than normal stand sizes to encourage a feeling of openness and independence, and the houses themselves are constructed so as to allow the owner to enlarge the building if required. The Smart City Model seeks specifically to address the spatial planning legacies of the apartheid era and to establish key, replicable controls to unlock the future of human settlements in South Africa (Gauteng Infrastructure Funding Summit, 2018). The social systems established during the apartheid era failed to meet the socio-economic needs of the country, high levels of unemployment and poverty, a highly unequal distribution of income, and low levels of infrastructural investment became deeply entrenched in the country, during the economic calamity of the 1990s (Gumede, 2015).

#### **4.3.12 John Dube mega housing project**

Another mega housing project is the John Dube Development Project, which is being built in the land bordering on Duduza. The John Dube Development Project is a development which will become a brilliant example of the advantages of collaboration between government and the private sector in the development of a much needed infrastructure and a socio-economic upliftment programme in South Africa (Gauteng Department of Human Settlements, 2017). The private sector plays an important role in assisting the municipality in its provision of services and in meeting its development objectives (Ekurhuleni, 2021). On its own, the South African government cannot meet the huge demand to deliver a proper infrastructure on time. It requires a collaboration between the public (government) and private (business) sectors) which is currently lacking (Mashwama *et al.*, 2019). As such, the country is confronted with massive service delivery backlogs arising from its neglected and deteriorating infrastructure.

This dire state of affairs has had a negative impact on the country's economic growth and thwarted its efforts at improving the lives of its inhabitants. The John Dube mega project has also integrated mixed land use plans into its development programme in that it has created a different housing mix, comprising the following:

1. 1500 Breaking New Ground (BNG) stand-alone houses;
2. 4110 RDP walk-up units;
3. 2203 Finance-linked Individual Subsidy Programme (FLISP) stand-alone units;
4. 270 military veterans' units;
5. 700 rental stock units;
6. 848 affordable bonded units;
7. 900 site and service stands (Gauteng Department of Human Settlements, 2017).

This project is designed to incorporate smart and city attributes and also a mixed land use model. This will improve the lives of the residents of Duduza and the surrounding areas by bridging the inequality gap through the provision of human settlements, commercial activities, and the creation of employment opportunities. Ekurhuleni is a transitional and convenient region for migrants in that it is their first port of call when they arrive in Gauteng. This is one of the factors that has contributed to the high unemployment rate in the metropolitan area and has created an overwhelming demand for human settlements and service delivery, both of which require innovative solutions from the city. The commercial aspect of the development of the John Dube village is meant to address economic development which will bridge the unemployment and poverty gaps through job creation for the duration of the project and after completion. Various economic initiatives that will accelerate economic



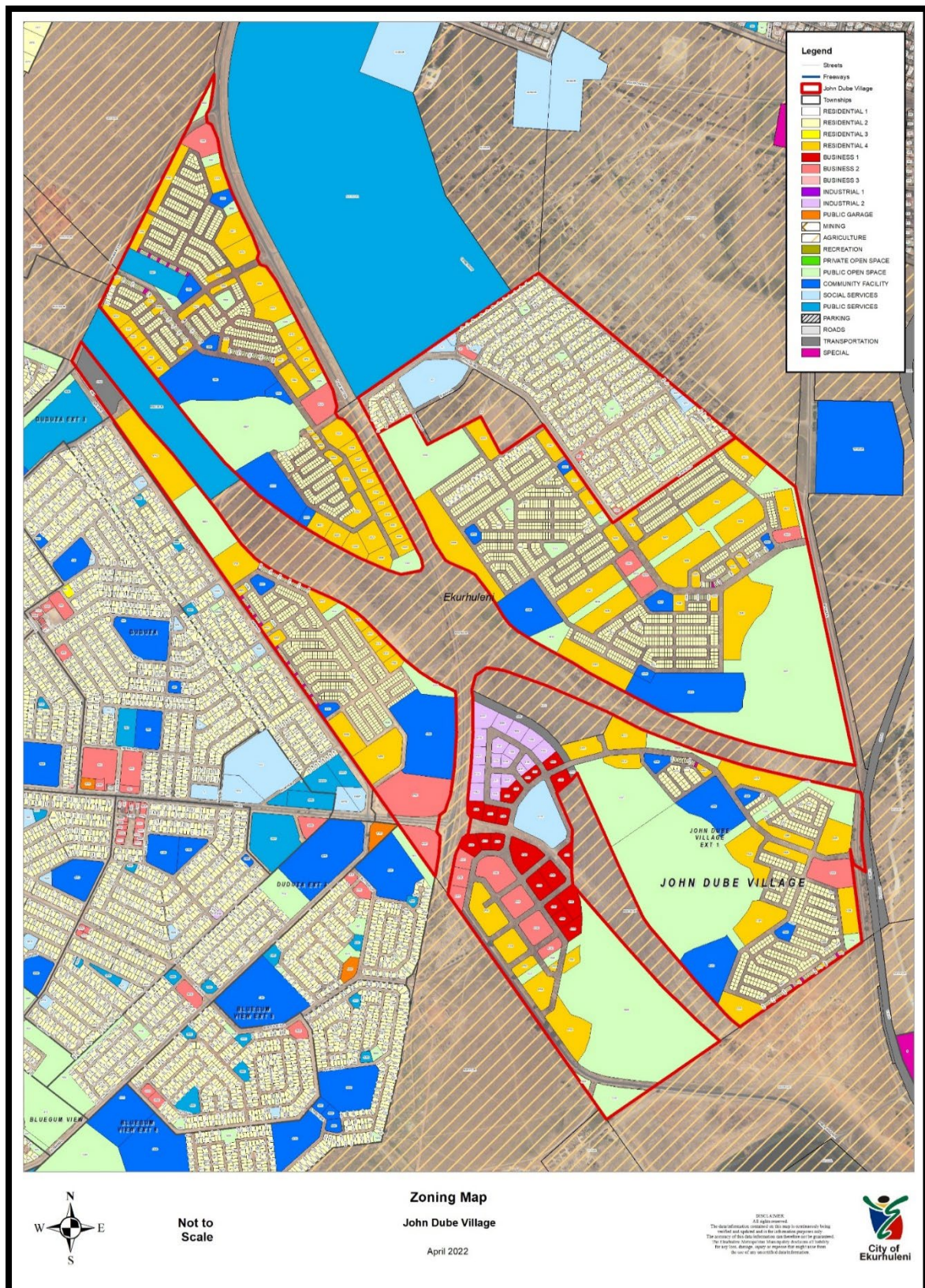
development have been planned for the commercial hub. The commercial activities in the development will encompass the following:

1. A CBD with a new civic centre;
2. Business and first-order community facilities;
3. An industrial and manufacturing zone;
4. Multi-nodal hubs;
5. Eight business facility sites;
6. Seven primary schools and three secondary schools;
7. A university;
8. A theme park, hotels, and a convention centre (Gauteng Department of Human Settlements, 2017).

The land on which the John Dube development has been developed is at a central location to the southeast of Ekurhuleni. This makes it perfect for the development of an integrated, multi-functional new city, which will offer new housing opportunities and a variety of urban commercial, industrial, and institutional amenities, and job opportunities to the greater Kwatsaduza (Kwa-Thema, Tsakane, and Duduza) area (Ekurhuleni, 2021). The city should prioritise infrastructural development by speeding up the process and aggressively pushing for it, while also promoting smart cities that are environmentally friendly. Importantly, the city should design and build modern human settlements fit for young professionals. As a response to one of the Sustainable Development Goals (2015), the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development significantly values the importance of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, and resilient. Access to adequate housing is considered essential to enhance the living conditions of low-income groups and to allow them to advance socially and

economically (Tramontin and Qwabe, 2017). Figure 4.5 is the map of John Dube which shows the mixed use of land.

Figure 4.5 Map of John Dube Village



Source: (Ekurhuleni Online Maps, 2022)

#### **4.3.13 Leeuwpoot Housing Project**

Another enterprising mega development is the Leeuwpoot Housing Project which is to the south of Boksburg. The Leeuwpoot development is a mixed-use business area, comprising government and industrial offices, retail and residential units, commercial enterprises and warehouses, as well as community facilities (Ekurhuleni Strategic Urban Development, 2020). The common trend of these mega housing developments in Ekurhuleni is that the key objective is to provide affordable housing, which enables people from different salary scales to have access to decent and dignified human abodes. The Leeuwpoot Housing Development is an affordable housing development of roughly 4,620 housing units, with a total land area of 95.0112 hectares (Ekurhuleni Strategic Urban Development, 2020).

This development project is like the other two projects as it also incorporates housing projects (BNG, FLISP, and Social Housing) for a range of income groups, and the serviced sites phase of these mega projects will revitalize the township economy and investment in the infrastructure. This development project is strategically located close to the Boksburg CBD and various business and industrial nodes, which have served to increase the range of employment opportunities and access to economic activities.

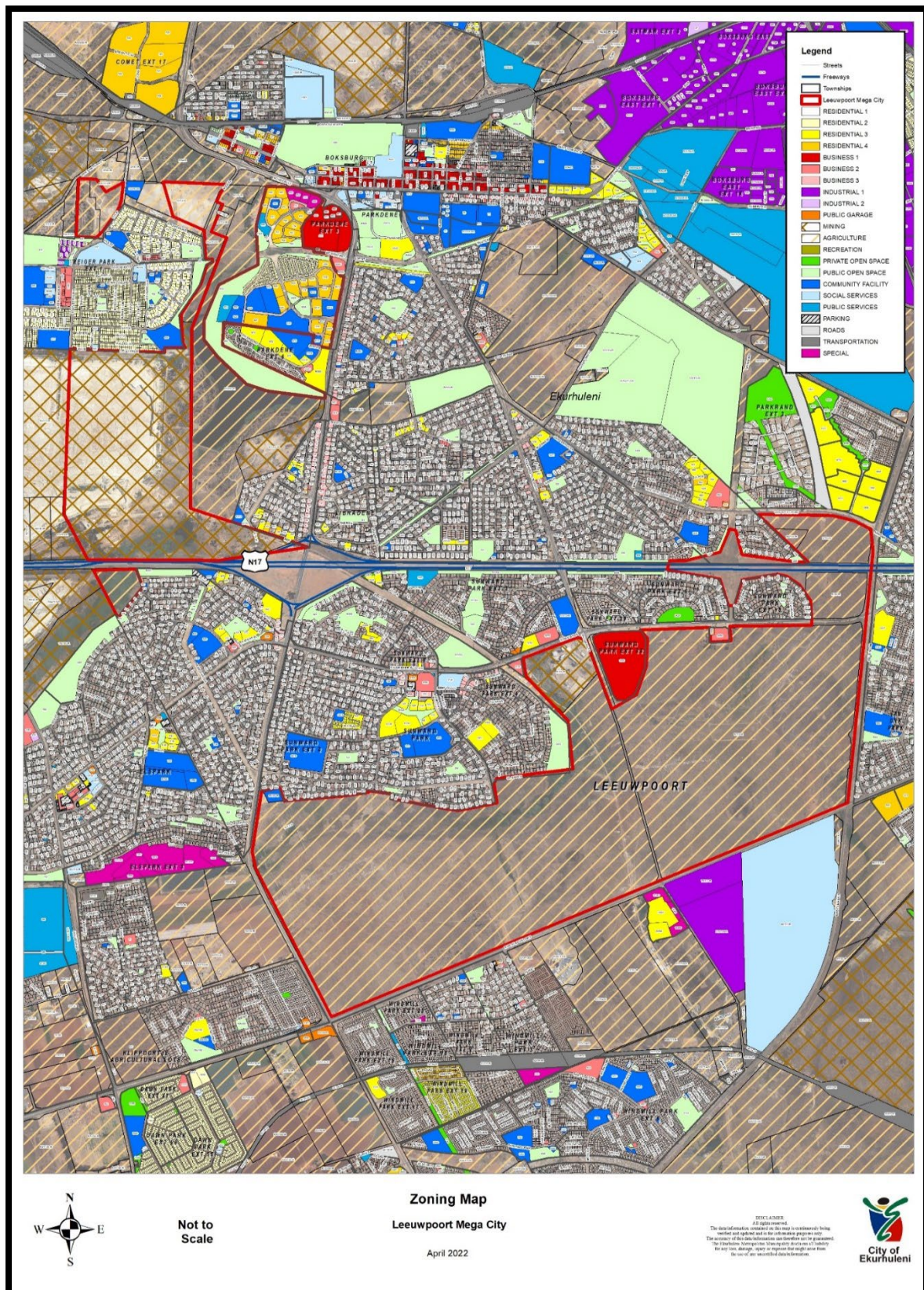
The projected advantages of this development are presented as follows;

1. It will act as a key organizing feature in the sub-region, encouraging a range of housing options to meet the different and changing needs of the households in the area.
2. The site complies with the goal of the Ekurhuleni Growth and Development Strategy 2050: to promote infill development and densification.

3. As an infill development, the project integrates the various pockets of development in the area into a cohesive urban environment.
4. Human settlement development with housing subsidy funding promotes the more cost-effective use of the existing bulk service infrastructure (Ekurhuleni Strategic Urban Development, 2020).

Figure 4.6 below is a map of Leeuwpoot that illustrates the mixed use of land.

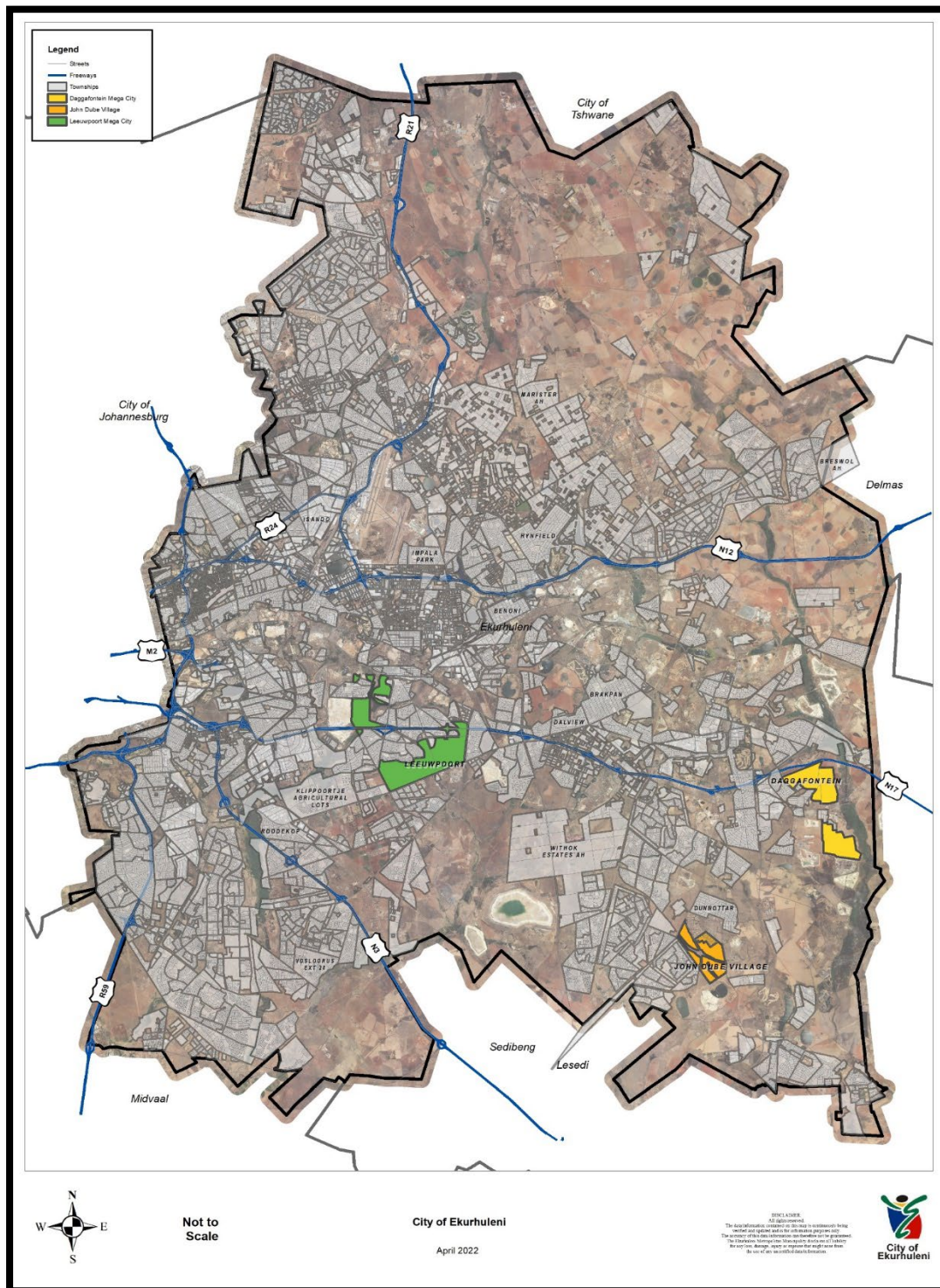
Figure 4.6 Map of Leeuwoort Mega City



Source: (Ekurhuleni Online Maps, 2022)

Figure 4.7 is a map of the three mega developments in the context of their location in relation to Ekurhuleni.

**Figure 4.7 Map of Ekurhuleni**



**Source: (Ekurhuleni Online Maps, 2022)**

These mega development projects will totally change the outlook of the city and if they are successfully completed, will go a long way to bridging and addressing the spatial inequalities which emerged historically as part of the spatial legacy of apartheid

#### **4.3.14 Re-urbanizing the city**

The principle of Re-urbanizing the city is crucial as it seeks to achieve the integration of human settlements, promoting safer communities, protecting the natural environment and the sustainable use of resources, and creating an inclusive environment that will enable inclusive growth and job creation (Ekurhuleni, 2021). Importantly, the design and building of smart and digitally smart cities is a step in the right direction since, globally, cities are incorporating innovative digital systems that enhance their provision of services and are responsive to the needs of their electorate.

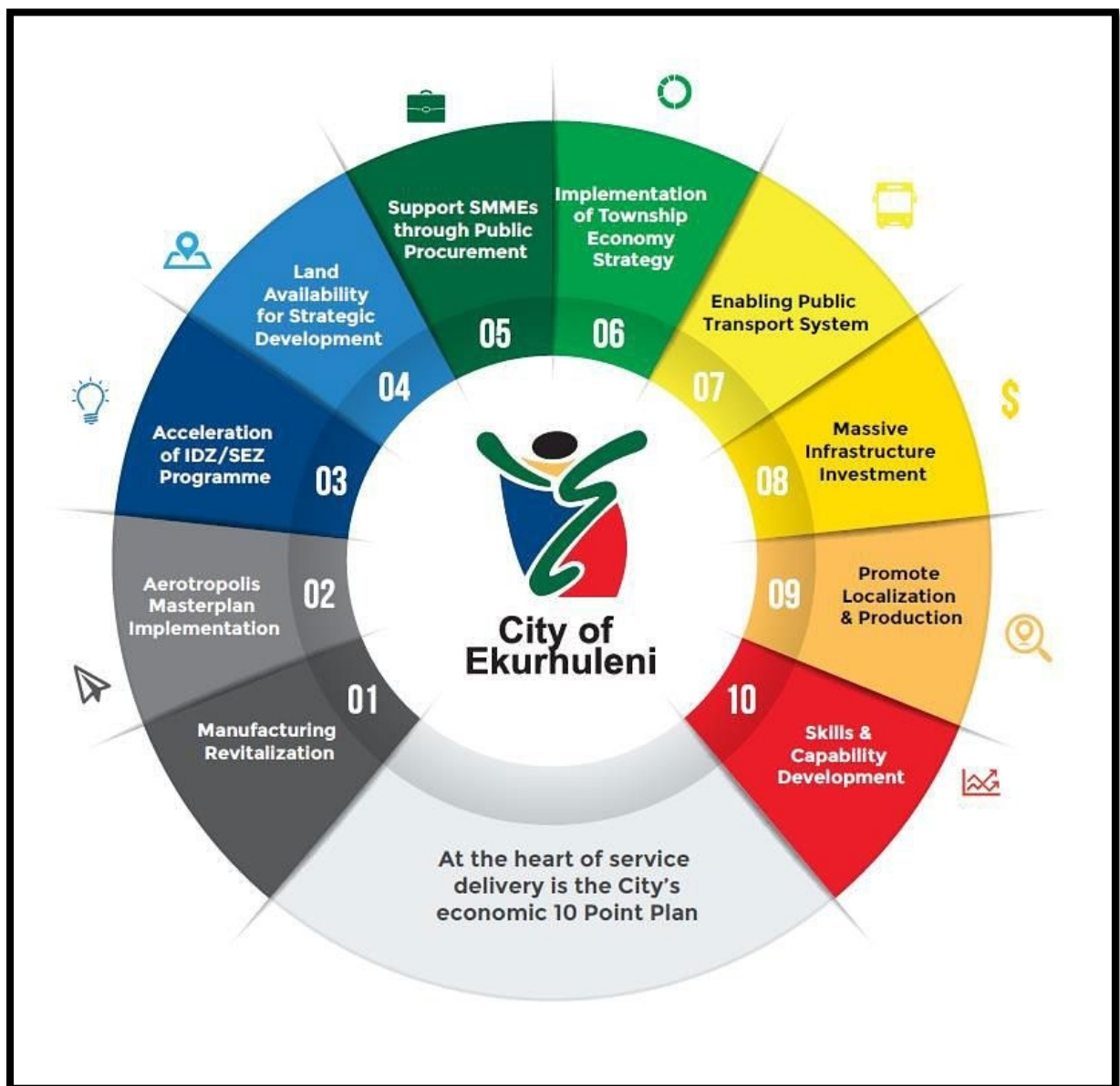
The City of Ekurhuleni has some service backlogs which need to be addressed: they will require innovative solutions, which will also need to tackle spatial and socio-economic inequalities. The multi-pronged GDS strategic requirements seek to address these challenges. Following on from the Re-urbanise process, the next principle under discussion is Re-industrialise, which focuses on job creation and economic growth. In the long run, South Africa has been in a low-growth trap since the beginning of her democratic rule in 1994, which has resulted in an infinitesimal reduction in household poverty levels, linked with high levels of inequality that are on the rise (Allen *et al.*, 2021).

The rate of inequality has risen exponentially and has resulted in more people being trapped in poverty and unemployment, which has also been compounded by the rapid growth of the population. Faulkner *et al.* (2013) argues that for South Africa to become more inclusive, more people need to work. An increase in the percentage of people



employed will have a substantial impact on overall poverty and the distribution of income. The City of Ekurhuleni is also plagued by a high unemployment rate, the municipality has drafted a 10-point economic revival plan to mitigate the challenges of inequality, unemployment, and poverty. Figure 4.8 shows what is envisaged in the economic revival plan.

**Figure 4.8 10-Point Economic Revival Plan**



Source: (Ekurhuleni, 2021)

The revival plan focuses on different aspects to stimulate economic development in the city. Specific initiatives that stand out include manufacturing revitalisation, making land available for strategic development, enabling public transportation and skills, and capability development. Manufacturing plays a critical role in enhancing the economy and also creates job opportunities, both of which have a positive impact on economic development.

The respective rates of unemployment, poverty and inequality in South Africa are high in relation to the rest of the world. To meet these challenges, more and better jobs need to be created. In fact, a strategic source for these types of jobs can be found in the labour-intensive manufacturing sector (Bhorat and Rooney, 2017). Manufacturing in the city has declined significantly, mainly because it depends on other sectors, which are in different locations around the country. Ekurhuleni's current economy is consequently a manifestation of the poorer performance of more labour-intensive downstream manufacturing initiatives compared to the capital-intensive sectors, such as the manufacture/processing of basic chemicals, non-ferrous metals, and iron and steel (Machaka and Roberts, 2011).

The revival plan seeks to revitalize this manufacturing industry, which will also resuscitate the economy of the city and create job opportunities. The city has also made land available for strategic development. This has been evident through the various mega development projects for human settlements and the Albertina Sisulu Corridor, which is strategically located around the OR Tambo airport. The development around the airport incorporates the aerotropolis project and the manufacturing hub, both of which have been earmarked for economic revival and development. Investment in the capital-intensive manufacturing sector in the Albertina Sisulu Corridor in Ekurhuleni is promising. The development of Ekurhuleni as a freight

logistics base, and the aerotropolis as the hub incorporating mega projects, is on the cards (Ekurhuleni IDP, 2021). The Albertina Sisulu Corridor has been built around the airport, on the R21 freeway, which runs through Kempton Park to Tshwane. There are various developments and commercial industries e.g. the Riverfields Development Project, the Plumbago Industrial Park Development Project, Green Reef Mega Projects, the OR Tambo Special Development Zone, and Gibela Rail Manufacturing Plant along this corridor which interconnect to maximise the benefit of the mixed use of space/ land. The Ekurhuleni Aerotropolis is the City's economic growth pathway intended at shifting the economy of the entire Gauteng City Region and harmonizing the distribution of economic activities around Ekurhuleni to create over half a million new formal jobs over time (Ekurhuleni IDP, 2021).

The city plans to reinforce this economic hub by upgrading public transport to enable easy access and interconnectivity. Furthermore, it is implementing an Integrated Public Transport Network (IPTN), which, in line with the national policy, aims to transform the public transport system through the provision of a high quality and affordable public transport system (Ekurhuleni, 2021). Public transport is an essential driver of economic development as it facilitates access to education, job opportunities, recreation, and workplaces, enabling people to make a living and participate in society.

Importantly, public transport should be planned in a way that it will integrate and tightly intertwine with other systems, which include humans, infrastructure, industries, and the economy (Lawton, 2014). For a city to be sustainable, all development projects, including transportation, should be sustainable. To achieve sustainable transportation, cities need to properly invest in the sustainable policies formulated by the state, and the transport infrastructure and corridors that will enable fast access for commuters. The IPTN will provide integrated public transport through an integrated rail and road

transport system that will serve the city. This development will be implemented in different phases: – Phase 1 is the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system (Ekurhuleni, 2021). The completed Phase 1 of BRT operates between Tembisa, Isando, Kempton Park, and O R Tambo International Airport. There are plans to extend the service to other areas, such as Boksburg, to accommodate the industrial park. The BRT is named “Harambee” and there are plans to develop the service further into Vosloorus. In fact, negotiations are taking place with different stakeholders (the taxi industry) (Ekurhuleni, 2021).

All these initiatives are fundamental to laying a strong foundation for skills and capability development because the economic environment should be conducive to nurture these skills, and crucially, the youth should be able to access the economic hubs. This is where the importance of an integrated public transport is critical as the youth, especially those from previously disadvantaged areas, need to manoeuvre effortlessly around the city from different locations. The city has lined up innovative programmes for the development of the youth which have the potential to create ground-breaking partnerships, and which will, in turn, and if implemented and managed well, eradicate poverty and inequality.

#### **4.3.15 Regenerating the city**

The third strategic principle of the GDS 2055, is Re-generate, which focuses on environmental wellness, the protection of the natural environment, and the advancement of resource sustainability. South Africa as a country is faced with water scarcity and the absence of clean and reliable energy which are further compounded by the challenges of pollution and over-consumption of these resources. Water is an important resource and if managed effectively and equitably, it can play a crucial empowering role in bolstering the resilience of social, economic, and environmental

systems in the light of rapid and unstable changes (United Nations, 2015). The City of Ekurhuleni has put measures in place to promote sustainable water use, which includes the reclamation and reuse of wastewater and the harvesting of rainwater (Ekurhuleni, 2021). Hendriks (2018) argues that water is the foundation of sustainable development and is essential for reducing the global burden of disease and developing the health, wellbeing, and productivity of populations. Cities are further guided by the SDGs, with Goal Number 6 emphasizing that states should ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation services for all. The city has improved access to water and waste management. This has been facilitated through the re-blocking of informal settlements. The demand for waste removal has increased rapidly in line with population growth, which has resulted in an increase in backyard rooms and informal settlements.

The city maintains that it has a comprehensive waste management programme in all 112 wards which includes collection in formalized areas (723 980 service points) and over 170 000 households in 119 informal settlements (Ekurhuleni, 2021). The city is further pushing for alternative energy sources and is leaning more to a renewable energy policy to align with the sustainability agenda of modern smart cities and digital cities which are driven mainly by the unpredictable supply of electricity by the state-owned enterprise, Eskom. Electricity supply has been unstable for several years, with new terms such as “load shedding” and “load reduction” being introduced as measures to manage the demand for electricity.

The city is advocating for renewable energy as a strategy to reduce the dependence on the national grid, the protection of national resources, and the strengthening of pollution control (Ekurhuleni, 2021). Furthermore, the city is taking care of the natural environment, which includes the beautification of parks, the maintenance of

graveyards, the cleaning of dams and a project which cleans up the environment and offers educational awareness campaigns on littering. Notably, the city is also planning to set up a world-class botanical garden at Gillooly's Farm; also, a Safari Park, thus catering for recreation, education and tourism (Ekurhuleni, 2021). Parks are important as they improve the aesthetics of the city, which plays a role in attracting people and can also greatly improve the value of the area in terms of property rates, appeal, and the popularity of that area for prospective homeowners. Page and Connell (2010) maintain that urban parks are regarded as important community resources that play a crucial role in enhancing the mental, physical, and spiritual health of city residents and creating prospects for social cohesion across all age groups, gender, and race. Parks are also vital for urban ecosystems because they have trees which act as filters that remove harmful pollutants in the air; they also collect carbon, which helps to alleviate the impacts of climate change.

#### **4.3.16 Re-mobilising the city**

The fourth strategic principle of the GDS 2055 is Re-mobilise, which aims to accomplish social empowerment with an objective to promote safe, healthy, and socially empowered communities. One of the social empowerment initiatives of the city has been to build its own science university to empower and to facilitate capacity and skills development for the youth. The city has already undertaken a feasibility study to build its own university, which will be called O R Tambo University of Science and Technology, and the plans have been submitted to the Department of Higher Education (Ekurhuleni, 2021). The City of Ekurhuleni has for years been the only metropolitan municipality without its own university in the Gauteng province and this has seriously disadvantaged the youth because, over the years, the demand for university education has risen exponentially as a result of population growth.

Universities play a significant role in that they have positive impacts on the growth and development of the city in which they are located, as they provide human capital, science, innovation, and support for democratic values (Valero and Van Reenen, 2019). South Africa as a developing country needs to invest in more educational institutions which will promote science, innovation, and academic excellence, all of which are crucial for solving some of the challenges that afflict the country (e.g. poor governance, lack of leadership and accountability, corruption, nepotism), and developmental challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

Universities are the creators of human capital, and skilled workers are more productive than unskilled workers. Universities can help industries directly by collaborating with them. Their main mission is the training of a highly skilled labour force, which qualifies organizations to process and use knowledge and subsequently compete in the knowledge-based economy (Valero and Van Reenen, 2019; Charles, 2006; Etzkowitz and Leydesdorff, 1995). Having a university in Ekurhuleni will be beneficial to the city as it will aid in skills development and in stimulating economic development through collaborations with different institutions. Ultimately, more people will be permitted to participate in the economy.

The importance attached to a city that builds its own university is a key initiative and part of the development objectives - part of a bigger picture of infrastructural development and urban regeneration in the city. Another initiative of the city to Re-mobilise is the improvement of public healthcare, which is an intervention aimed at promoting safe and healthy communities. The intervention focuses solely on the provision of improved access to Primary Health Care (PHC) through the upgrading of the infrastructure in the existing clinics, building additional facilities, and extending their operating hours, all of which are intended to alleviate barriers to healthcare

(Ekurhuleni, 2021). The growing population is putting a major strain on healthcare provision in Ekurhuleni and countrywide which makes it difficult for people to access good healthcare and subsequently creates a backlog. People then end up suffering from ailments that are easily curable. Despite the number of commendable goals having been set by government for enhanced service delivery in healthcare, accounts by the media and communities in 2009 indicated that services in public health institutions were deteriorating and failing to meet the basic standards of care and patients' expectations (National Department of Health, 2012). Access to healthcare is a basic human right that is enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, and it is the responsibility of government to ensure that human rights are protected. The city has the mammoth task of improving the state of its clinics and hospitals - one of the greatest challenges it has had in terms of service delivery and governance.

The following are the challenges faced by patients when accessing clinics and hospitals:

1. Prolonged waiting periods because of the lack of human resources;
2. Unpleasant experiences;
3. Poor hygiene and inadequate infection control measures;
4. Increased lawsuits because of avoidable errors;
5. Scarcity of resources in terms of medicine and equipment;
6. Inadequate record-keeping (Maphumulo and Bhengu, 2019).

These challenges have been well documented country-wide over the years and are tied to service delivery and governance. The city needs to prove that, as a world-class city, it has the integrity to address and reduce these challenges in the healthcare sector. This action can be achieved by identifying the challenges; coming up with a



strategy; and then collaborating with the provincial government, which is the custodian of public healthcare. The provincial government will not be able to eradicate these challenges on its own - it needs assistance. Fortunately, the city is in a strategic position to provide support, leadership, and good governance.

#### **4.3.17 Re-governing the city**

The fifth strategic principle of the GDS, 2055, is Re-govern, which focuses on political governance and is aimed at supporting participatory development in local government. The city is pushing for a system that will promote accountability and responsiveness through the important quality of transparency that it is striving for in all its municipal processes (Ekurhuleni, 2021). Lack of good governance has made it difficult for municipalities to be efficient, accountable, and transparent. Over the years there has been an increase in service delivery protests which have rendered some parts of the country almost ungovernable (Mfene, 2009). Municipalities in South Africa are also faced with a lack of good governance, which impacts on the delivery of services. Poor governance leads to municipalities failing to efficiently operate and maintain their service infrastructure in a cost-effective and sustainable way (Beyers, 2016).

The City of Ekurhuleni has been strategically using the Separation of Powers model to ensure that service delivery and governance are effective. The Separation of Powers doctrine is founded upon the need to preserve and uphold the freedom of the individual, and the mechanism it advocates is to divide and distribute the power of the government to prevent dictatorship, arbitrary rule, and other forms of abuse of power (Lekalakala, 2022). The Separation of Powers model ensures that the legislature and the executive have their own responsibilities within the council and that everyone is held accountable for their actions. In this case, the core mandate of the legislature is scrutiny and supervision, the promulgation and reviewing of bylaws, as well as

meaningful participation. The executive is tasked with service delivery, planning, and execution (Lekalakala, 2022). The Separation of Powers doctrine is critical for good governance, especially with the new coalition government, as it helps the executive and legislature to perform, be accountable, and transparent. Kgosana (2017) proposes that for municipalities to be assertively said to be well-governed, they must be effective instruments of service delivery, symbolised by sound judgement, financial sustainability, and good governance in general. The city prides itself on having achieved unqualified audits for three executive years as proof of accountable, transparent, and responsive governance (Ekurhuleni, 2021). A capable state requires well-governed municipalities so that they can play their role in prioritising the nation's developmental objectives (National Planning Commission, 2013). South African cities are plagued by service delivery backlogs, which are commonly tied to a lack of proper governance and accountability which perpetuates social inequalities.

While the City of Ekurhuleni has done well to receive unqualified audits, it is still faced with service backlogs in some areas of its constituency. They tend to exacerbate the spatial and social inequalities as population growth continues increasing rapidly and with it, the expansion of informal settlements. The Re-govern principle is critical as it reflects the vision of the city to attain sound governance and to put in place measures that will ensure a smoothly and successfully run city, which will be responsive to the needs of the citizens and eradicate inequalities. The five strategic principles of the GDS 2055 are very significant as they group different aspects of governance to ensure that the vision of spatial reconfiguration is achieved to address spatial inequalities, upgrade and accelerate infrastructural development, promote social and economic development, and realize good governance.

#### **4.4 Evaluating the impact of the amalgamation process in Ekurhuleni**

Local government is given the task of shaping and redesigning communities and environments to advocate for a democratic, cohesive, and non-racial society. Furthermore, its role is to endorse the Bill of Rights, which advocates for the principles of human dignity, impartiality and freedom (South African Local Government Association, 2015). Amalgamation is a political process which is implemented to address small municipalities and encourage them to improve service provision by capitalizing on pooling their resources into a bigger pot and spreading them equally to all communities. Allers and Geertsema (2016) adopt a view that amalgamation takes place because some municipalities are too small to effectively carry out the task bestowed on them. Importantly, amalgamation does not provide an automatic guarantee that it will work out perfectly and that service provision will be efficient and thorough, mainly because it is not a one-size-fits-all process.

Municipal amalgamation does not always result in good outcomes as municipalities must deliver services to a larger and diverse electorate, which can lead to deficiencies in the system (Suzuki and Ha, 2018). Furthermore, amalgamation is a long-term process and not an instant success as the employees must be oriented to the new project and deal with the disruptions brought by the changes. Since it implemented its amalgamation plan, the City of Ekurhuleni has for the past 22 years been working on perfecting its service provision and efficiency in running the municipality; this has been through the roll-out of different policies and programmes that have been reviewed regularly and on an annual basis. Slack and Bird (2013) meticulously emphasize that the capacity and quality of local public services and the competence in the way they are delivered in a metropolitan area depends to a substantial extent on how its governance institutions, specifically, its formal governmental entities function. For

municipalities to effectively provide services, they need to have a proper governance structure in place because numerous municipalities in South Africa are impeded by reprehensible actions such as corruption, nepotism, and financial mismanagement. Government institutions should be people-driven and concentrate on the needs of the electorate which has invested trust in them to deliver their mandate.

Amalgamation in Ekurhuleni has accomplished some success, with certain milestones having been achieved, which has improved the basic livelihoods of the previously disadvantaged communities. Since the inception of amalgamation, the city has managed to provide services, including electrification, water and sanitation services to its communities and improved the habitability of informal settlements through the upscaling of services by means of the re-blocking programme. However, amalgamation is still a work in progress and has attained success in crafting the city identity and in achieving greater uniformity (equality and standardization), and generally working towards achieving the vision of the city, namely that of creating a smart, creative and developmental city.

Administratively, amalgamation in Ekurhuleni has been successful. However, physically and spatially, it is still a work in progress, mainly because the City of Ekurhuleni is a multi-nodal city that has no Central Business District (CBD). Its multi-nodality is because the Witwatersrand mining belt was traditionally the focal point around which the various towns and settlements were established. Consequently, the city lacks a primary core which in itself is a contributing factor to the character and identity of the metro (CoE, 2021). There has been some progress, however — an ongoing advancement in infrastructural development and the provision and more effective maintenance of tarred roads, electricity lines, water pipes, and of a sanitation service. These improvements are indicative of the city's compliance with sustainable

developmental goals SDG 6, which seeks to ensure universal and fair access to water and sanitation, and SDG 7, which focuses on access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all; they also fall in line with the South African government's ethos in its acknowledgement that access to basic services is a crucial means of improving the lives of its people and local economic development (UN, 2015). Consistent and quality service provision has proved to be a vital component of development in developing countries and has resulted in the enhancement of livelihoods for many people, especially those living in abject poverty. Basic services are well-defined as services that safeguard a respectable and acceptable standard of living in communities and allows for the creation of environments in which public health and safety can be promoted (RSA, 2000). Amalgamation has brought mixed fortunes in Ekurhuleni. The metropolitan council acknowledges that on the one hand, service provision has vastly improved, and more people are reaping the benefits of having access to electricity, water, sanitation services, and roads. However, more challenges have come to the fore.

Challenges include the surge of informal settlements, an aging and deteriorating infrastructure (water and sewage pipes), electricity challenges (illegal connections), and declining income *versus* increasing expenditure, which results in inconsistent service delivery. Lastly, the damage to the public infrastructure, solely because of service delivery protests from disgruntled communities has had far reaching impacts on the gains accomplished in terms of development and the upgrading of communities. There has been decay and deterioration of the infrastructure and the indirect emergence of ghost towns as the developmental trajectory has moved closer to where the people are settled. A consequence is that there is now one city – one metro – but the respective areas within it are of a different character in terms of their developmental

levels. The development, implementation and maintenance of a basic infrastructure are essential for nurturing basic standards of living and economic activity in cities and towns. Amalgamation in Ekurhuleni has brought positive changes in terms of development and improved service delivery, the latter anchored in the city's vision of being a world class and developmental city. Amalgamation has been successful because it has ensured the integration of service provision, the standardization of services, and the provision of uniform services across all communities. Furthermore, improvements in integrated development, budgeting and the service delivery model have been recognized.

While the city has done well in centralizing service delivery, it needs, however, to speed up the building of the university and address the spatial fragmentation in the city. Despite the development and improvements to the infrastructure and service provision, there is still more to be done and room for improvement. As has already been proven by the satisfaction surveys discussed earlier and the persisting service delivery protests that keep springing up in the respective townships, there are still discrepancies in the provision of services which are a cause for dissatisfaction amongst the communities.

To address the spatial inequalities and to integrate and refine service provision, while concurrently contending with the growth in population numbers, as well as the indirect consequences of development, are indeed mammoth challenges facing the Ekurhuleni metro. In fact, these challenges reproduce the problems associated with the spatial legacy of apartheid, and result in increased unemployment and poverty in the city. The new climate of coalition governments on the local government scene to solve such problems also often results in unpredictable outcomes, which could, on the negative side, be unstable in that they might have a detrimental impact on service

provision and the efficient running of the city. In fact, Booysen (2021) asserts that coalitions in local government are inclined to heighten problems in the political-administrative interface. However, there have been some extraordinarily stable coalitions, which have been able to protect the administration from political infighting and to build administrations that perform extremely well.

A coalition government can be advantageous and beneficial because the political parties running the government must be accountable to one another and the electorate, which they are serving. The greatest challenge presented by a coalition government is its unpredictable nature, which could have far-reaching impacts on local governance and disrupt the efficacy of service provision, financial management and the sustainability of the city. Political factionalism and polarization have contributed to the weakening of municipal functionality. This has been attributed to scuffles over access to state resources which have led to a culture of patronage and favouritism and rendered the formal municipal accountability system unproductive and unreachable to many citizens (De Visser and Steytler, 2009).

The South African government does not have a good track record of service provision for a variety of reasons, namely, it has been an impediment, unfortunately, at the expense of poor people, who rely on municipal services for their survival. Municipalities are considered as the custodians of the public coffers and have subsequently been mandated with the responsibility of using these resources to address the basic needs of local communities, particularly the infrastructure, electricity, water, and refuse removal, and the spatial development of localities (Reddy, 2016). While Ekurhuleni has been complimented on the local governmental level as having a stable coalition, it still has to stand the test of time. This is because the Democratic Alliance (DA) won the metro from the African National Congress (ANC) in

the 2021 local government elections. A change in government brings advantages and disadvantages. According to observations of the new order of politics in the Republic, these changes have proved to be disruptive. This is as a result of the political parties invariably fighting one another to prove which party is better, and stooping to shenanigans that make the meetings ungovernable, their protests rapidly turning violent.

#### **4.5 Appraising economic policies impact on Ekurhuleni**

Development policies play a fundamental role in the transformation of states as they are designed to address development challenges and eliminate poverty and inequality, and to promote and preserve sustainable development. Breakfast and Phago (2013) observe that as a result, South Africa has continued to experience some economic growth. However, this growth has failed to be inclusive and has resulted in high unemployment rates that have been influenced by the concept of developmentalism. The latter concept is entrenched in the idea of building a large middle class, which lies at the heart of neoliberalism, where business and professionals are considered as the drivers of contemporary markets. Development discrepancies in South Africa continue to create an unequal society, which undermines the gains of attaining a democratic state that champions equality and social justice.

The South African developmental challenges were systematically engineered by the apartheid era's spatial planning initiatives through the Group Areas Act of 1950, which geographically separated the different race groups and was the foundation of urban residential development under the apartheid government. Post democracy, a number of developmental policies have been put in place to address and eradicate the long-lasting effects of the apartheid spatial legacy, which still persists today. This section seeks to place the different developmental policies that have been implemented by



the South African government under a microscopic lens to determine their overall impact on the state of the country over the years.

#### **4.5.1 The Developmental state**

A developmental state is one that positions economic development as the leading priority of governmental policy and structures efficient mechanisms to promote this goal (Bagchi, 2000). Caldentry (2008) described a developmental state as a state that intervenes and leads the direction and pace of economic development, which in itself aims to achieve success through a sequence of policy interventions, including policies focusing on the economic and social welfare of the state. A developmental state plays a dynamic role in overseeing economic development and using the resources of the country to meet the needs of the people, while also aiming to stabilize economic growth and social development using state resources and state influence to fight poverty and increase economic opportunities.

The ANC government's policies have mostly been designed to be pro-poor and to be a beacon of hope for people of South Africa. This has been proven by their stance of governing on the basis of the developmental state philosophy. The post-democratic government had a huge responsibility in rebuilding the economy and social cohesion to create a functional and just society. Government has introduced and implemented various developmental policies to respond to the developmental challenges that were distressing the country. Theoretically, the developmental policies introduced were technically good and provided detailed plans on addressing the different challenges. However, because of poor processes, corruption, a lack of good governance and oversights being the order of the day, implementation has invariably been met with serious failure and even sabotage. Consequently, some of the unfinished developmental policies were abandoned and replaced with new policies.

Unfortunately, all these changes came with great financial cost, while people were trapped in poverty, inequality, unemployment and challenged by poor service delivery. A brief analysis of some of the developmental policies that were introduced by government since the inception of the democratic state follows.

#### **4.5.2 The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)**

Post-democratic South Africa introduced the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was an integrated programme aimed at eradicating poverty and responding to the development challenges, which included meeting the basic needs of the population, democratising the state and society, and rebuilding the economy. RDP was driven by six principles which are encompassed in an integrated and sustainable programme, considered to strive for a people-driven process, peace and security for all, nation building, linking reconstruction and development and the democratisation of the society. The principles embraced were included in this programme of action meant to rebuild a broken and wounded society, plagued by social inequalities and communities that required the implementation of massive development programmes in terms of infrastructure and the provision of basic services.

The policy promised huge interventions but upon evaluation, was found wanting. It under-delivered overwhelmingly and as opposed to what it had envisioned to achieve, had little impact on society Bailey (2017) highlights a litany of challenges that have rendered the RDP project catastrophic. They include the location of the RDP houses, the quality of the houses, the illegal occupation of the houses, the sale of RDP houses, their title deeds and the housing backlogs. The location of the houses is problematic because most of them are built on the periphery of the city and are as such away from amenities, such as schools, clinics, and local government institutions. In fact, these

amenities are not easily accessible to the people in some of the areas where the RDP houses are built. This has resulted in a reproduction of the spatial legacy of apartheid, which continues to aggravate spatial inequalities that are prevalent even in the democratic dispensation. The quality of the houses has also been reported to be contentious in that the residents of the low-cost houses complained of cracks in the houses, poor workmanship and defects in the houses, with some of them having to be demolished and rebuilt. Moolla *et al.* (2011) affirmed that there has been intense criticism of the substandard building standards and quality of these housing units.

While facing these challenges, the housing backlog, together with the sluggish delivery of low-cost homes, has further widened the gap between homeowners and shack-dwellers. This has led to frustration and even desperation in the residents, who are languishing under poor living conditions and tempted to engage in the illegal occupation of these houses. The latter challenge has arisen mainly because the process of assigning and handing over houses has been and still is so long and tedious.

The illegal occupations rob the deserving beneficiaries of a home because those whose names appear on a waiting list find that the house allocated to them has already been occupied illegally. This causes tensions in communities which can sometimes be deadly and is one of the factors that undermines the objectives of the RDP programme of achieving social cohesion, democracy, and unity. While the programme had a great vision and plans to develop South Africa post democracy, its full potential and mission has never been accomplished. In fact, and unfortunately, it failed because of poor management, maladministration, and lack of accountability. The history of RDP housing has also exposed disturbing levels of fraud and misconduct in the social

services of the state. For this reason, social organizations and service delivery protests by poor communities are on the rise (Bailey, 2017).

#### **4.5.3 Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR)**

GEAR was planned to shape the economy and influence quick growth and to be competitive, both locally and internationally. Importantly it was meant to be appealing to foreign investment and to improve competitiveness (Mazibuko, 2013). The policy was introduced in 1996 and preceded the RDP policy that had been launched in 1994 after the democratic government assumed office. GEAR was a policy to embrace a conservative fiscal policy, aimed at responding to the tough financial conditions, poor economic growth, and low growth output that the democratic government had inherited. The fundamental objective of the GEAR strategy was to stimulate the economy to greater levels of growth, development, and employment to support a better life for all South Africans, who at the time were grappling with a firm decline in the labour absorption capability of the formal sector. There was a need to transform the economy into a quickly growing one, proficient in arresting the problems of societal transformation, joblessness, and development (Mahadea, 1998).

In essence, GEAR was a macro-economic policy that was based on the foundation of fiscal discipline to suppress inflation, to lower the budget deficit, and to build a strong economy that would be able to create sustainable jobs and significantly redistribute income and opportunities in support of the poor. However, the trade unions were against the GEAR policy. They felt that it was too rigid and that the wages offered to the working class were unfavourable to the workers in the light of their impoverished state that had emanated from the oppressive nature of the apartheid government policies. The fiscal discipline of the policy was viewed as oppressive to the working class by the labour unions, the Tripartite Alliance partners, the Congress of South

African Trade Unions (COSATU), and the South African Communist Party (SACP). These entities felt disregarded. In fact, they argued that there had never been a proper and open consultative process on the policy as was the case with RDP. Gevisser (2009) hypothesizes that the GEAR policy was developed in collaboration with World Bank consultants and academics with the aim of attaining fiscal restraint and investment-friendly tax incentives that the international financial institutes subscribed to similar interventions.

However, the policy was a total deviation from the redistributive RDP policy, which, in essence, was soon considered as outdated. Continuity is crucial when designing development policies as it allows the process to be integrated and to undergo the various stages seamlessly rather than to have to change plans and policy direction. Furthermore, continuous processes are fundamental to ensuring accountability, which can be accomplished by regular appraisals and reviewing processes to determine their strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, the lack of consultation with the different stakeholders resulted in the weakening of the policy as it suffered huge criticism and lack of support from the trade unions, which could alternatively have added input to strengthen the demands made rather than to push for the policy to be rescinded.

The policy was presented with an iron fist and there was no room for consultation and negotiations; it was considered a *“fait accompli,”* which is a French expression ordinarily applied to define an action which is finalized before those impacted by it are able to question or overturn it (Gevisser, 2009). The positive impacts yielded by the GEAR policy were that the volume of South African exports was increased, there was a greater diversity of products, with the majority made up of a varied range of non-mineral products. As a result, the Rand became stronger and consumer spending increased (Sunday Business Report, 2002). The downside of GEAR was that it was

unsuccessful in respect of its plan and promises for eradicating poverty and inequality, and, notably, job creation throughout the GEAR period. The post-GEAR period was calamitous, as private investment failed to yield any results and civic investment in capital goods was insufficient for rapid growth (Manuel, 2002; Mail and Guardian, 2002; Business Day, 2002a). It is, therefore, difficult to make an objective ruling as to whether the GEAR policy failed or achieved its intended purpose because, while it was heavily criticised by its opponents, it did achieve some good, when at the time, the local and global economic conditions were not conducive to rapid growth. South Africa had inherited a dysfunctional economy, while globally the slow-down in the world economy in the late 1990s had a negative outcome on the performance of the markets. COSATU (2001) felt that GEAR had failed to meet its growth, employment, and private investment targets, and that instead, it had destabilised progress on the development front for pursuing the macroeconomic policy demanded by neoliberal macroeconomics and the international investment community.

Owing to the conservative macroeconomic policy, which aimed at keeping private investment in South Africa by boosting local investor confidence. Ramos and Manuel (2002) argued that the state of the country would probably have been worse. There is no conclusive standpoint on the GEAR policy as there are different perspectives on its perceived success or failure. While it was destined for failure, it was also due to the failure to engage in a comprehensive and exhaustive consultation process, that external economic conditions made it challenging for the policy to reach its full potential. However, it can be clearly concluded that the policy failed to address and eradicate poverty, the low level of development and inequality, all of which were engineered by the legacy of apartheid.

#### **4.5.4 The National Development Plan (NDP)**

South Africa's National Development Plan acts as a handbook on what developmental path the country should follow to fight historic inequalities and other challenges for achieving inclusive economic development (Van Wyk, 2020). South Africa remains an extremely unequal society where too many people live in poverty and are unemployed, while the quality of school education and infrastructure for most black learners is also poor. The key objective of the NDP is to eliminate poverty and reduce the inequality levels by the year 2030 (South African Government, 2013). The NDP framework advocates for a South Africa that is poverty-free and a reduction in all forms of inequality, while achieving rapid economic growth, and importantly, equipping the youth with better educational and vocational training opportunities. The National Planning Commission has observed that progress in the direction of achieving the NDP's main goals has been slow as opposed to what was projected. The effective execution of these goals was the essential focus of the NDP. However, this emphasis on the execution of the relevant goals has not been interpreted into an overpoweringly positive lived experience (National Planning Commission, 2017).

Policy implementation in a democratic state such as South Africa is burdened with red tape, that is heavily inclined towards the political and administrative wings of government. Consequently, it becomes a long-winded process before it can be successfully implemented. It is prudent to note that public policies should focus on the following; In terms of government's course of action, its policies should include long term plans, look towards the future, and purposively eradicate the societal challenges that may possibly prevail in a particular geographical area (Goodwin *et al.*, 2006; Makhetha, 2015). Goodwin *et al.* (2006) systematically categorises public policy as an art of "persuasion", mainly because it requires the acts of deciding, selecting,

legislating, and engaging all the significant stakeholders. As such, for successful implementation, public policy should be seen as the product of a multi-faceted process that requires cooperation and support, and a proactive stance from the different stakeholders. In fact, the different wings of government need to embrace and play their role if a public policy is to be effective, especially in the South African context, where the government is multi-tiered, extending from the national to the provincial and to the local level. The review of the NDP by the National Planning Commission (2017) has uncovered that a key challenge in the failure of the NDP to achieve its objectives has been the incapacity of different segments of society to place the more important national interest before their own interests. The nonexistence of trust between government, business and labour, and the political and ideological conflicts within the state and in the governance of the country are further challenges crying out for attention. All these aspects have caused a shift: the NDP is no longer the central focus of government. On paper, the NDP appears to be a solid framework for development. However, practically, the envisaged results have not been forthcoming. This has been proven by the prevailing inequalities, poverty and the high unemployment rate, all of which are skyrocketing in the country. The primary goal of the NDP is to improve the standard of living and to guarantee a dignified way of life for all; however, that goal has not been adequately met and there has been no substantial advancement recorded since the inception of this developmental framework. The ability of the state to manage the development agenda of the NDP has been tarnished because of the destabilization and pillaging of crucial state institutions, the ineffectual management of the public service, the lack of support for small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMME), increasing debt, and diminishing confidence (National Planning Commission, 2017). The overarching impact of these circumstances is manifested in the weakening



of government institutions which in its turn has resulted in poor service delivery, slow economic growth, and the prevailing inequalities. Together the mentioned aspects have undermined social justice and cohesion, which have always been the dream of the democratic government. Nevertheless, because the NDP is a long-term development plan that is reviewed regularly, interventions to salvage and prevent the further weakening of the policy could hopefully offer a possible lifeline. Failure to realize this possibility will indeed result in another unsuccessful policy. The South African government has a developmental state agenda and produces theoretically sound development frameworks, which are frequently undermined implementations emanating from a lack of supervision, the poor coordination and synchronization of projects (harmonization) by the incapable state institutions, corruption, and a lack of proper and efficient governance. Regrettably, the poor bear the brunt of these failed policy interventions, which inadvertently produce deep social, spatial, and economic inequalities that remain engrained in the social fabric.

Gumede (2017) argues that development in Africa entails more than good economic management and that building state capacity in the quest to achieve wider human development goals urgently requires an efficacious democratic developmental state. Such a developmental state should address not only economic issues, but also social development issues. South Africa is weakened by its incapacity in not possessing a good governance structure to provide an environment that is transparent and accountable. Without proper governance, the state cannot effectively provide successful developmental interventions that will fast-track growth and respond adequately to the needs of the electorate. Good governance upholds the rule of law and strives to minimize corruption, while in its decision-making process, it is considerate of the views of the minority and the helpless, and, significantly, receptive

to the present and future needs of the general public (UN, 2015). The South African government has failed to practise and display the principles of good governance which are the foundation and building blocks for strong and clean governance. The principles of good governance are accountability and transparency, and that the government should be consensus-driven, favour equity, inclusivity, and participation (UN, 2015). The South African government has been demoralized by serious moral challenges, which signify that the developmental interventions have been motivated by greed and are steeped in corruption and financial mismanagement.

#### **4.6 Integrated Development Planning in Ekurhuleni**

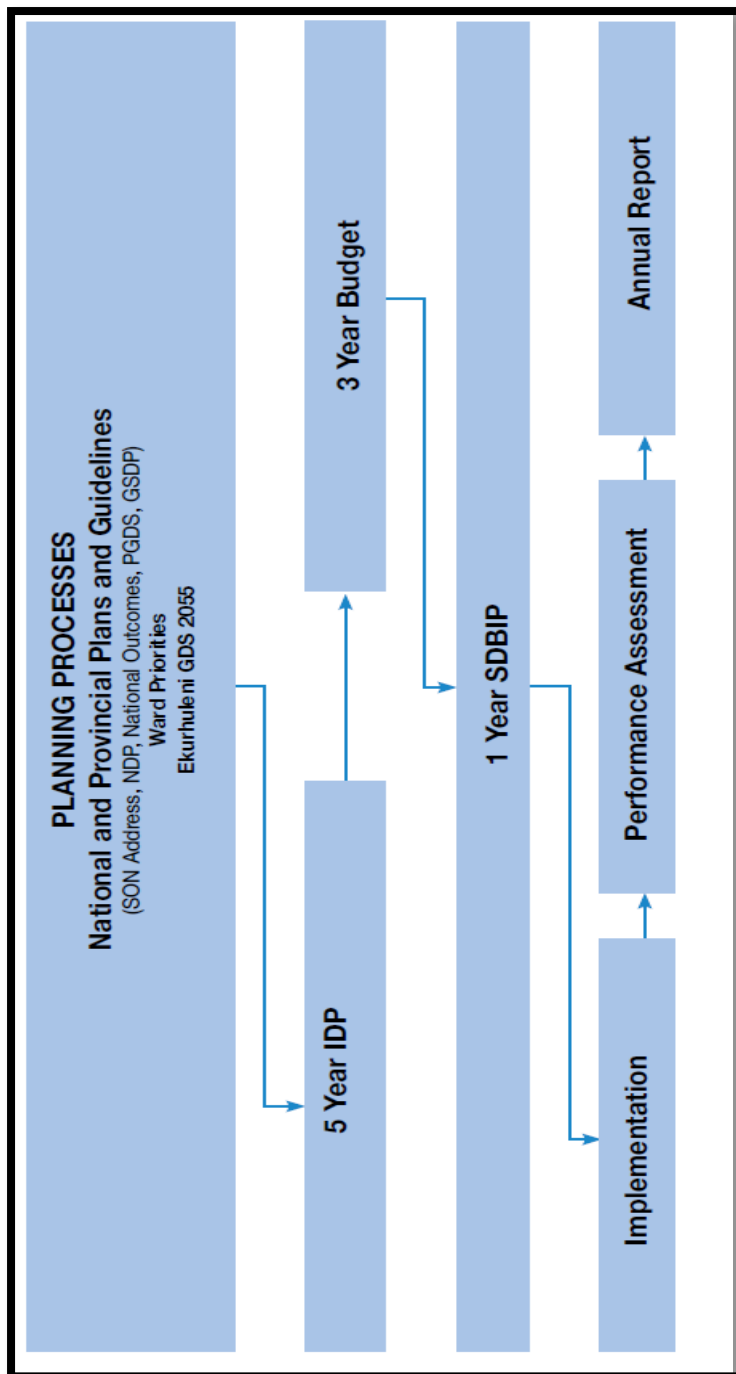
Local government remains a significant role player in supporting a basic infrastructure and the efficient delivery of services to the development of communities. The developmental role afforded to local government requires adequate administrative competence and the application of good strategic tools; hence, an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) is one of the tools that has been made available to help local authorities in accomplishing their developmental obligations (Asha and Makalela, 2020). The success of an IDP strongly relies on effective implementation, efficiency, accountability, and proper governance.

Failure to coordinate and implement the strategic vision of the IDP has multiple implications, such as wasteful expenditure and, importantly, failure to provide an efficient service delivery system. Political issues both within the local municipality and the national government have had a negative impact on governance and service provision, and one of the greatest impediments to service delivery is corruption (Manamela, 2021). Since they have suffered intermittent and poor service delivery, communities are largely dissatisfied. Having failure by government to provide efficient services has sowed distrust in them, to the extent that the people have no faith in the

IDP, and other action programmes initiated by the government. A functional public service is fundamental to enhancing the quality of life of the people and without an effective public service, the relationship between the public and those who govern becomes critically constrained (Public Servants Association, 2015). The municipal services that need to be provided are integrated within the IDP, which assists as an administrative planning tool for improving service delivery. In terms of Section 26 of the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000), an IDP must replicate the dream of the municipality, the operational stratagems, development priorities and purposes, local economic development aims, internal transformation needs, the spatial development framework, a disaster management plan, a financial plan, key performance indicators, and performance targets. Scholars have critiqued the IDP process as lacking capacity and that local municipalities have over-relied on external consultants to produce IDP documents which resulted in simplified processes that were theoretical rather than functional (Harrison, 2001; and Gunter, 2005).

The aim of the IDP focuses on the continuous development around the implementation of the municipality's five-year objectives and with priority for improved service delivery and responsiveness to the residents of Ekurhuleni (Ekurhuleni Budget Review IDP, 2022). The IDP is divided into different sections that deal with the various strategic components, which break down the key areas of the service delivery mandates that the city has set out to achieve. In terms of the Systems Act, all municipalities must embark on an IDP process to generate IDPs, as the IDP is a statutory requirement which has legal status and supersedes all other plans that guide development at the local government level. Figure 4.9 presents the IDP process in Ekurhuleni.

**Figure 4.9 IDP Planning Framework**



**Source: (Ekurhuleni IDP, 2013/14)**

The IDP is an overall planning instrument of the city which is informed by the strategic planning initiatives of the city (GDS, MSDF, RSDF, NDP, etc) and the public participation meetings, where the public is invited to participate and raise issues

around their developmental needs. The vision of the City of Ekurhuleni is to create a smart, creative and developmental city which is anchored in the mission of the city to provide acceptable and people-centred development services that are reasonable, suitable and of high quality (CoE, 2021). The IDP is meticulously designed to focus on key strategic objectives, namely, infrastructure and services, economic and social transformation. These objectives are intended to respond to the developmental needs of communities and to enhance the standard of living, both of which are linked to the strategic plans of the city (GDS, MSDF, RSDF, NDP). A dissection of the IDP for the years 2010-2015 under infrastructure and services showed that the focus was to determine a clear identity for the city, its spatial development, improvements to the roads and transport system, an upgrading of the service infrastructure, environmental management, urban renewal, and ICT.

The City of Ekurhuleni has always grappled with the challenge of having to formulate a clear identity as to its character since it does not have a clearly defined core economic area. Through the GDS 2055 strategy, the city focused on achieving, by 2025, a well-developed and lively primary economic area to reveal its distinctive character and identity (Ekurhuleni IDP, 2013/14). This was linked to the vision of the city as the driver of spatial development and to thereby work towards an integrated and equitable city. This would be achieved through the various human settlements and the industrial and economic development projects through the respective corridors along the N12/17 and the R21 which aim to integrate development in the urban core and in the townships on the periphery.

#### **4.6.1 Spatial development and addressing apartheid's spatial legacy through the IDP process**

Harrison and Todes (2015) highlighted that the foundation of the urban spatial policy in South Africa should be focusing on opening up and increasing access to the benefits of living in towns and cities, particularly in respect of closeness to jobs, to other livelihood opportunities and to services and amenities. Access has been a barrier to equality in South African cities, especially for the previously disadvantaged areas (e.g. townships and rural areas). In pursuit of redressing spatial inequality and the apartheid land imbalances, Chapter 5 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 highlights that the IDP should make provision for a land-use management system that will be guided by a spatial development framework (Republic of South Africa, 2000).

Table 4.1 below further demonstrates the significant aspects that the spatial development framework needs to focus on to ensure that spatial inequalities are addressed. Spatial planning provides a robust platform for embedding sustainable and equitable socio-economic and environmentally sound development, while there is also evidence that proposes that the lack of or unproductive spatial planning often involves substantial susceptibility to environmental degradation, natural disasters, inadequate basic services, overextended municipal finances, and socio-political conflict over land and housing (Mashiri *et al.*, 2017).

**Table 4.1. Key performance areas for IDP**

Key Performance Areas	Strategic Areas
<p><b>Spatial Planning</b></p>	<p><b>Land-use management:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify areas suitable or unsuitable for land-use development.</li> <li>• Identify areas where land development initiatives should be discouraged.</li> <li>• Identify areas in which to intensify land development.</li> <li>• Should be sustainable;</li> <li>• Should be equitable and efficient;</li> <li>• Should be integrated</li> <li>• Should involve a fair capital expenditure framework;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should involve development programmes,</li> <li>• Should demand environmental impact assessments.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Spatial reconstruction:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address apartheid land injustices.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate formally segregated areas with major movement routes.</li> </ul>
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**Source: (Umtshezi Local Municipality, 2012)**

Improving roads and transport is another crucial aspect of spatial planning, which enhances access to economic opportunities and social amenities. This is another way of bridging inequalities. Public transportation facilitates mobility and provides people with access to services, economic and recreational opportunities. Through the IDP, the City of Ekurhuleni made provision to develop an integrated and well-maintained transport infrastructure, and integrated public transport systems to guarantee a high degree of mobility and a wider range of choices for commuters. Public transport, when well-planned and well-implemented, has the capacity to reduce economic and social inequalities because it improves mobility for those who do not own cars and who therefore require transport when searching for job opportunities. Poor individuals who cannot afford public transport miss out on economic opportunities and are, therefore, more likely to suffer social exclusion as a consequence of transport poverty. In fact, Marcuse (2009) argues that transport poverty leads to deprivation and alienation, which can lead to civil disobedience and conflict.

The city is further engaged in programmes to upgrade service infrastructure and to thus improve the provision of services and their equitable distribution across all areas in the city. Infrastructure is the essential mechanism for development, and structures such as roads and bridges are needed for a country to function properly. Significantly, infrastructure promotes economic development by boosting productivity and supplying services, which enhance the quality of life (Gaal and Afrah, 2017). With the intervention of the GDS 2055 strategy, the city has undergone a massive



infrastructural upgrade programme which has seen an increase in people who have access to housing, electricity, water, and sanitation services, and who have been provided with tarred roads and stormwater drainage systems. The financing of the public infrastructure is crucial to accomplishing greater productivity and competitiveness, reducing spatial inequalities, and supporting the development of new job-creating sectors. Significantly, the building of an infrastructure generates employment and broad-based black economic-empowerment opportunities, thus further supporting the goals of the NDP (Department of Public Works and Infrastructure, 2022). Infrastructural development is further linked to urban renewal in the city which is aimed at attaining functionality and sustainability in urban areas which in their turn ensure easy access to amenities, mobility, and a smart city.

Urban renewal is one of the most efficient approaches to enhancing the spatial and environmental quality of a place (Zheng *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, this will require the city to invest in its ICT infrastructure and upgrade its functionality to digital platforms to ensure that it can respond to the modern era, where technology dictates the way in which it functions and promotes efficiency. Goal 9 of the SDGs talks to the concept of building a resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation, while Goal 11 supports the vision of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Globally, city metropolitan councils are entrusted with the responsibility of building cities that will be responsive to the needs of their communities through the provision of quality services, an inclusive environment and a just society. To develop well-informed societies where individuals can avail themselves of equal opportunities to learn, grow, build, and engage with each other, access to an ICT infrastructure is fundamental. This is because the economic and political importance of smart cities

cannot be overlooked, specifically as regards resolving social, economic and environmental challenges (Boffin and Fundi, 2017). It is crucial that the IDP should make provision to address these crucial issues as, in line with the terrible spatial legacy of apartheid, they continue to cause problems for the previously disadvantaged communities. However, inevitably, from 2016-2021, the IDP has been consolidating and supporting the respective development agendas for the city which focus on a pro-poor ethos. This entails concentrating on improving and upgrading the lives of the poor. The pro-poor agendas, aimed at the short and medium-term priorities, support better quality and impactful service delivery.

While upholding the quality service levels in the affluent areas, the City of Ekurhuleni is concomitantly fast-tracking and improving the access of the poor to quality municipal services (Ekurhuleni Budget Review IDP, 2022). As proved by the emphasis on the ethos of providing quality service provision and treating society at large equitably, it is clear that these aspects remain a top priority in the developmental agendas of the City of Ekurhuleni. Also, in the City's long-term planning framework, namely, the Growth and Development Strategy (GDS 2055), the IDP has continued to feature. In this case, it is all about establishing a high performing metropolitan government, that is practical in character and stance, to improve the pledge towards building a socially inclusive, locally integrated, competitive, and inclusive metro in the province (Ekurhuleni Budget Review IDP, 2022).

As discussed earlier, the city has prioritised the following:

1. Electrification of all informal settlements;
2. Re-blocking of informal settlements to make them more liveable;
3. Construction of housing units and serviced stands;

4. Development of the aerotropolis project;
5. Implementation of the 10 economic revival plans;
6. Increasing the number of public clinics;
7. Making land available for strategic development;
8. Rolling out Wi-Fi;
9. Implementation of township economies and LED initiatives;
10. Building a university (Ekurhuleni Budget Review IDP, 2022).

The city has packaged the implementation of the IDP programmes through the five strategic imperatives of the GDS policy document. The IDP is playing a vital role in aligning the financial and human resources of the municipality with its implementation of strategies, which are contributing to the long-term vision for the development of the metro. The success of an IDP seriously relies on proper implementation, efficiency, accountability and proper governance. It is worthy of note that failure to coordinate and implement the strategic vision of the IDP would have multiple implications, such as wasteful expenditure and, importantly, failure to provide efficient service delivery. The recurring phenomena impacting on the IDP is the absence of an urban core, along with the extensive areas of land largely supporting mining, agriculture, logistics, industrial economic activities and elevated population concentration.

The vision of the city, post amalgamation, has been towards one city and one identity, even though the spatial configuration of the city is unique and does not have a core business area. In response to mitigating the lack of a business area, the vision of the city has been to build mixed-use development projects that will help the city to establish integrated development areas to cater for economic and social growth. The IDP is assisting with the acceleration of service delivery programmes by offering an

instrument, namely a developmental framework, to pinpoint those areas where development should be prioritised and to monitor the ensuing developments. Thus, the IDP is enabling municipalities to progressively accomplish their vision over a period of time (Gueli, Liebenberg and Van Huyssteen, 2007; Dlamini and Reddy, 2018).

#### **4.6.2 Urban development and service delivery through the IDP mechanism**

The impacts of the exponential population growth in the municipal area have made it difficult for the city of Ekurhuleni to adequately meet the growing needs and demands of the populace. Stren (2014) observes that for the last several decades, cities in sub-Saharan Africa have been expanding at significant rates; most of these cities are very poor as they have not been able to keep up with the need to provide the most basic services to most of their communities. Furthermore, there has been an improvement in the general life expectancy of the population which has been augmented by improved access to healthcare, education and technological innovations which have enhanced the quality of life.

Turok (2012) is of the opinion that the concentrations of the population in the different cities in South Africa are extremely uneven. This uneven density serves as the foundation for inadequacy and inequality because it hinders the functioning of the labour and housing markets, makes it challenging to equitably deliver public services, such as education, via schools and libraries, and other amenities (e.g. recreational amenities) across the city. Furthermore, the uneven population concentrations undermine the effectiveness of public transport systems. The IDP of the city of Ekurhuleni is anchored in strategic planning, which ensures that its programmes are aligned with the national planning and policy directives of the country. Thus, the IDP development programmes are linked to the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals, which seek to encourage policy priorities in local government to reflect on the

United Nations' international planning framework that ensures that there is alignment in development from local to national and to international standards. The achievement of the SDG targets requires efficient partnerships within a country; across all sectors, disciplines and spheres of government as well as global partnerships across nations. This is because the establishment of partnerships is not only a principle that underpins all DGs but is also recognised as a crucial mechanism for their implementation (UN, 2015). There are 17 SDGs, the objectives of which are targeted at attaining a universal and all-inclusive way to fund sustainable development by tackling the three dimensions of economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability (Ekurhuleni Budget Review IDP, 2022). The City of Ekurhuleni consists of communities with mixed fortunes since some are well off, while others are afflicted by social exclusion and inequality.

This makes the SDGs crucial and closely linked to the development agendas of the city. Another policy imperative linked and aligned to the city development is the African Union Agenda, 2063, which was intended to replicate the desire for a diverse, better and dynamic Africa. The African Union Agenda, 2063, is the continent's strategic framework that seeks to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development and a concrete demonstration of the pan-African desire for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress, and collective prosperity (African Union, 2015).

#### **4.6.3 Aligning with the African development agenda**

The City of Ekurhuleni has ambitions of being a leading African city that promotes growth and inclusivity. It aims to serve as an economic hub, spearheaded by its future role as an aerotropolis. The strategic location of the O.R. Tambo International Airport is advantageous to economic development, and the city has fully exploited this favourable situation by building industrial and manufacturing hubs to fully benefit from

the traffic of people transiting locally and internationally. Significantly, these developments reflect the vision of the African Union to fast-track development and technological advancement to ensure that cities and governments build a unified, prosperous and peaceful Africa, determined and overseen by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena (African Union, 2015). Figure 4.10 presents a detailed scheme of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 vision plan for developing Africa.

**Figure 4.10 Agenda 2063 Framework Document**



**Source: (African Union, 2015)**

As shown in the diagram, the African Union’s agenda is people-driven. It places much emphasis on the wellbeing of the people which significantly proves that the IDP and any other developmental framework should place people first, and only then, development imperatives to ensure that the respective plans are in sync. with the needs of people and are sustainable.

#### **4.6.4 Aligning the IDP with The National Development Plan**

At the national level, development is driven by the National Development Plan (NDP), which has been used as a blueprint to inform the development programme of the country from the national to the local government level. The vision of the NDP is to ensure that through the eradication of poverty and the mitigation of inequality, all South Africans attain a respectable standard of living (National Planning Commission, 2012). Similarly, the NDP is also a people-driven strategic imperative which seeks to enhance the standard of living for people, with the essential focus being on economic and social development. The core components of a decent life encompass basic services (housing, electricity, water, and sanitation), quality education, reliable public transport, quality healthcare, employment, and safety and security (Ekurhuleni Budget Review IDP, 2022).

Thus, the City of Ekurhuleni is tasked with the responsibility of rolling out these services and ensuring that these deliverables are met. Through the IDP, the city plans and rolls out development programmes, which are meticulously planned through an extensive consultative process with stakeholders and communities, and by exploiting public participation. Furthermore, there is also an annual review process in place that tracks the progress of the IDP and the budget which helps appraise the success of the programme and provides mechanisms to work on improving weak areas and where the municipality is failing to deliver. As a strategic plan, the IDP should integrate both short and medium-term objectives and is expected to serve as a model for municipal budgeting, management, and service delivery. Therefore, the municipal IDP should reflect the major deliverables for the upcoming five years, which should be reinforced by a quantifiable budget that can be translated into an implementation plan for the service delivery budget, as a signal as to how the IDP and budget will be efficaciously

implemented (Dlulisa, 2013). The IDP is linked and aligned to the Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) as a tool to safeguard that the objectives and deliverables of the five-year programme are met. The Municipal Finance Management Act 56 (MFMA) (of the Republic of South Africa, 2003) defines the SDBIP as a detailed plan approved by the mayor of a municipality in terms of Section 53(1)(c)(ii) for implementing the municipality's delivery of municipal services and its annual budget, and which must indicate service delivery targets and performance indicators for each quarter.

#### **4.6.5 Requirements for the successful implementation of the IDP**

The success of an IDP relies heavily on proper implementation, efficiency, accountability, and proper governance. Failure to coordinate and implement the strategic vision of the IDP has multiple implications, such as wasteful expenditure and, importantly, failure to provide efficient service delivery. The lack of governance and financial accountability are major obstacles to efficient service provision and there is an undisputable connection between the IDP and service delivery since the objectives are interconnected. The SDBIP is an annually approved document that comprises projections for each month of the revenue to be collected and the operational and capital expenses to be incurred.

Furthermore, it is a quarterly exercise that entails the evaluation of service delivery targets and performance indicators (de Visser, 2007). The SDBIP also plays a vital role in performance management and can be used to hold government accountable in terms of the attainment of the service delivery objectives presented in the IDP. The MFMA stipulates that the SDBIP must be linked to the annual performance agreements concluded with the municipal manager and the managers reporting to him/her. This is essential since the relationship between the SDBIPs, and the



performance agreements is important: – it advances the municipality’s capability to monitor the execution of the IDP and to act on any difficulties in implementation (de Visser, 2007). Importantly, after performing their roles in monitoring and evaluation, municipalities are required by legislation to provide a report for each financial year that presents an appraisal of the municipality against the measurable performance goals. Organizations need to assess their policies on a continuous basis so that remedial action can be taken to eradicate the problems that hamper the achievement of their goals (King'ola, 2001; David, 2011; and Tunji, 2013).

The IDP embraces a continuous development process that is designed to improve the infrastructure and the social and economic needs of communities, and also allows for communities to be involved in the process since they also provide input regarding their developmental needs. Development is a continual process that is frequently informed by the needs of the growing population and further influenced by the prevailing technology. It is dictated by modernity and is an enhancement way of doing things. Consequently, the IDP practice is obligated to be flexible to ensure that the development objectives of the city and the communities are met.

Ogolo (2019) argues that development interventions undoubtedly remain one of the practical options available to developing countries and the rest of the international community for tackling the challenges of the socio-economic deficit, inequalities, the generation of wealth, a reduction in poverty, the stimulation of rapid growth, and of development. Successful implementation is significantly crucial to attaining the required development, especially in developing countries that are plagued by challenges such as poverty, inequality, unemployment and poor service provision. The IDP is an important tool for service provision as it provides an inclusive framework for development by coordinating projects between the local government and the other

organs of government. The IDP helps coordinate service provision to ensure a comprehensible and logical approach, with the overarching goal being to enhance the quality of life of the people in that municipality. The Integrated Development Plan has become an essential tool in post-apartheid South Africa and remains the primary strategic planning mechanism which monitors and informs all planning and development, and all outcomes with regard to planning, management and development in a municipality. The IDP offers a framework for development and is envisioned to align the input of local, as well as the other fields of government, in a logical approach that improves the general quality of life for local communities.

Importantly, the IDP objectives should be planned in such way that they address developmental needs that encompass spatial inequality, social inequality, infrastructural development and improved service delivery. However, when assessing communities, there is still a prominent need for development since owing to the stubborn legacy of apartheid, exponential population growth, maladministration, poor governance and political interferences, all of which infringe on government performance, inequalities are rampant. The implementation of the IDP has also varied from municipality to municipality with some being more successful than others, which have lagged behind. A successful implementation of the IDP is essential as it ensures that the development objectives are met and that the implementation of the IDP process brings positive change to the quality of life in the local communities.

#### **4.6.6 Critique of the IDP and the South African planning system**

The IDP process has had some stern criticism on a range of issues – from the consultation process to its implementation and governance. The IDP has been criticized as a tool for advocating for bureaucratic and political control (Dlamini and Reddy, 2018). South African policy interventions have been heavily laden with

complicated bureaucratic requirements, which have ultimately led to adverse impacts on the successful implementation thereof. Poor service delivery at the local government level has been attributed to the politicization of the administrative components in municipalities, which have in turn resulted in poor governance. As such, there have been a number of enduring service delivery challenges (Masuku and Jili, 2019). When the IDP was launched, it was presented as a mechanism that would radically transform the way in which development and the provision of services was delivered. The integrated way was advocated and supported as a way of systematically responding to the developmental needs of the communities and assisting in their being structured in their delivery of services.

Harrison (2006) observed a pertinent conundrum in respect of the IDP. The question posed was: “Was the obligation to produce an IDP one of the burdens placed on municipalities that weakened them in terms of their aptitude to deliver basic services, or would the situation without the IDPs have been worse? In response, Harrison (2006) criticized the government for over-reliance on its restructuring measures and the common failure to anticipate unintended outcomes. A case in point as regards the amalgamation process in Ekurhuleni: – the government focused only on the prospective benefits and advantages, while paid less attention to the disadvantages of governing a larger municipality, which would, of necessity, increase the demand for services. The South African government's slowness to deliver basic services and their unfulfilled promises have caused dissatisfaction in various communities and subsequent service delivery protests, mainly because the sluggish process of providing services to the people is habitually instigated through the meddling of politicians in the responsibilities of the public administrators (Masuku and Jili, 2019). This has inevitably set the IDP process up for failure: – during public participation

consultations, for instance, members of the community keep raising the same issues that were planned for in the previous IDP. This means that over an extended period of time, there will be little progress in terms of development, especially in the deprived communities. De Visser (2009) argued that the reprehensible political interference in administration has caused South African municipalities to encounter challenges that are difficult to deal with. This has been evidenced in the irregular service provision meted out to some areas, while others have been the recipients of nothing but quality services, despite the fact that both areas are served by the same municipality.

Rolland (2018) observed that because of the different philosophies held by the political and administrative blocs, and the resultant confusion in terms of their roles and responsibilities, service delivery difficulties are commonly experienced at local government level. The recent trend of coalition governments is a testament of conflicting philosophies, which have manifested at the expense of communities, who are currently suffering inconsistent service provision. With the instability of coalition governance, it is a stark impossibility for the objectives of the IDP and its long-term plans to be successfully implemented and achieved.

Furthermore, long-term planning has not worked to address the South African development challenges, and this is mainly due to regular changes in the local government at executive level. The local government development framework has mainly been anchored in 'Blueprint and Master planning'. Alexander (1994) defined blueprint plans (which equally apply to 'master' plans) as futuristic in that they present long-term planning for spatial development and provide the anticipated desired outcomes at the conclusion of that programme. Todes *et al.* (2010) provide a strong critique for master planning by arguing that, master plans are inflexible and static, take years to be generated and quickly become outdated. Since they are too rigid, master

plans are not capable of efficiently responding to the practical challenges, such as rapid population growth, the increased demand for services and for human settlements. Significantly, the master planning method has not addressed the real social circumstances and dynamics of exponentially growing cities in the developing countries, and the magnitude of poverty, inequality and of informal settlements (Todes, 2011).

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter concentrated on reviewing the literature on the spatial legacy of apartheid which has offset spatial inequality and unequal development. This chapter also focused on the developmental initiatives that have been implemented by the City of Ekurhuleni and the national policy imperatives that have been implemented in the past to mitigate fragmented development and to address spatial inequalities. The spatial legacy of apartheid has had far-reaching consequences for South Africa, as the legacy still dominates the spatial patterns and has an influence on how and where development occurs. While the planners have been grappling with the challenge of addressing the historical spatial legacy, the most recent modern challenges (including urbanization and globalization) have come to the fore. The apartheid spatial legacy has proved to be tenacious and difficult to redress.

Mbembe (2004) observes that apartheid in South Africa tried to create a particular moral order through the prescribed arrangement of space, with the physical distance between races being fundamentally understood to consecrate moral distance. This has resulted in constant social tensions as frustrations and contentions still persist as a result of struggles to access quality services and a fair delivery system to distribute them and that will enhance the livelihoods of the communities thus affected. The enforced geographies of separation have led to developmental inequalities and denied

people who were relocated to townships on the peripheries of cities, far from civilisation and development, access to quality services Seekings and Natrass (2005) argue that post-apartheid economic and social policies deracialized but preserved the class divisions of the late apartheid government. They succeeded in spreading the class divisions beyond the White historical base by incorporating small, developing African middle-class in townships and the categorized working class into new developments that are sprouting in the periphery of the cities. This is demonstrated by the deep inequalities that exist in urban areas today and that were preceded by poverty and unemployment.

Since the class divisions and inequalities have persisted, the democratic government has not been able to adequately respond to the prevailing inequalities and, as such, their respective policy interventions have also not been successful. Over the decades, the South African government has implemented different policies (e.g. RDP, GEAR, NDP) to mitigate these inequalities. At local government level, the City of Ekurhuleni undertook the amalgamation process to address inequalities and has used different instruments, such as the IDP, which is a legislated process specifically designed to be used by all municipalities. These different policy interventions reflect the developmental state approach that has been adopted by government to accelerate development and improve the livelihoods of its citizens.

The data presented in this chapter have demonstrated that the policy interventions are well thought out and strategic; however, the lack of good governance has proved to be a stumbling block. Political interference has also been highlighted as one of the major causes for the lack of implementation of policy directives and the rolling out of efficient and quality service provision. The results of this investigation show an emerging pattern: that good governance is a challenge for local and national

government in South Africa, but that, regrettably, it is negatively affecting development, the efficient provision of services, and the successful implementation of developmental policies.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Data analysis, Interpretation and Discussion**

#### **5. Introduction**

The overall aim of the study was to investigate the spatial, economic, and political transformation of amalgamated municipalities and spatial planning in the post-apartheid era, with the focus on Ekurhuleni as the study area. Amalgamation in Ekurhuleni was a decision taken as a political strategy to address the spatial inequalities and developmental deficit and to accelerate socio-economic development, especially in the previously disadvantaged communities. As such, the first objective of the study entailed exploring the spatial impact of amalgamation on communities and individuals. This chapter therefore provides a detailed analysis of spatial planning in Ekurhuleni, post democracy, and evaluates the impact of the amalgamation of various small municipalities into one large metropolitan municipality.

The second research objective of the study required an investigation into the past and current spatial patterns and their impact on communities. With the different interventions from government, spatial inequalities have persisted, and development has been fragmented. This has adversely affected the quality of life for people residing in the metro. The third objective of the study aimed to assess the value of amalgamation as a planning and political tool and its impact on local economic development. Political challenges have had an impact on the governance of the municipality which has in its turn had a negative effect on the quality of service provision. Spatial planning in South Africa today is still faced with an immense responsibility to integrate the previously fragmented townships by promoting the development of an economic infrastructure in close proximity to the settlements where the communities in question reside. The spatial legacy of apartheid has had far



reaching consequences for South Africa as the legacy still dominates the spatial patterns and has an influence on how and where development occurs. While the planners have been grappling with addressing the historical spatial legacy, the more recent modern challenges, including urbanization and globalization, have come to the fore. As a result, deep inequalities exist in the urban areas, which were previously and are still characterized by poverty and unemployment.

A major difficulty facing South African municipalities is to generate enough income to safeguard the needs of the growing population, taking also into account the high rates of unemployment and poverty. The amalgamation process in Ekurhuleni has not been perfect or comprehensive and while it has covered some ground in terms of development, there have also been some negative trade-offs which have affected the well-being of communities in the metro. Amalgamation in Ekurhuleni has generated both advantages and disadvantages. Notably, the findings indicate that implementation has been poor and that, as a result, the impact of amalgamation has not been meaningful enough to effectively change the quality of life for people in the city.

### **5.1 Exploring the spatial impact of amalgamation on communities and individuals**

The culmination of apartheid in 1994 saw a sharp reduction in the number of municipalities in South Africa, with the country's 1,262 local government bodies amalgamated into 843 local authorities in 1996. This was because the municipal boundary reclassifications post 1994 were addressing the legacy of spatial planning from the apartheid era (Dube, 2021). In the City of Ekurhuleni, the amalgamation process did not result in the re-drawing of boundaries; it merely disestablished different small-town municipalities to form one metropolitan area. Even though the City of

Ekurhuleni has undergone the amalgamation process in a different way, the challenges are the same as those facing other municipalities which must also contend with the scourge of the spatial legacy of apartheid and the resultant spatial inequalities. Throughout the apartheid era, there was a clear discrepancy between the functional white local authorities, that typically had a solid economic base and exercised fiscal independence, and the poorly resourced black local authorities, that were not financially viable (Dube and Radikonyana, 2020). Amalgamation has been used as a planning tool to balance the scale. As such, programmes for the redistribution of resources and the further development of the previously disadvantaged areas were implemented to achieve some equity. Amalgamation in the city of Ekurhuleni has been rolled out in a manner intended to improve the lives of the disadvantaged and to simplify their access to services through the development of the infrastructure and economic development through industrial development and job creation.

The first research objective of this study aimed to explore the spatial impact of amalgamation on communities and individuals. The main issues that the city needed to address were spatial inequalities and unequal development throughout the region. One of the reasons for amalgamation was to streamline development and to have a positive impact in uplifting the previously disadvantaged communities. While amalgamation has provided some type of a lifeline and improvement in service provision, it is regrettable that spatial inequalities persist and are undermining the city's plans of developing and improving the quality of life for the communities. The City of Ekurhuleni's journey to instituting an efficient and effective local government began with the colossal mission of having to merge the different administrative systems responsible for governance and service delivery in the nine towns and 17 townships (Ekurhuleni IDP, 2021). This was because of the developmental deficit, service

delivery backlogs and dysfunctional governance by the small municipalities in the region. Amalgamation is a political strategy that is decided upon and implemented by local government as a policy to address different challenges, such as the fiscus, failing municipalities, spatial inequalities, and spatial restructuring. The Municipal Demarcation Board (2017) maintains that municipalities are amalgamated for the following reasons:

1. To develop financial viability for municipalities through savings and economies of scale;
2. To reduce administrative operating costs;
3. To eradicate redundancies in municipal services;
4. To improve municipal self-competence;
5. As a solution to urban sprawl.

With the vision of the Gauteng City region in mind, the City of Ekurhuleni, post amalgamation was challenged with having to create a single uniform identity and to create and improve linkages between towns, townships, and economic centres. The city also required the advancement of access to services and facilities and the protection and maintenance of open spaces and lakes (Ekurhuleni IDP, 2021). Since the amalgamation process is a long-term strategy, the success to be gained takes time, the city was faced with numerous challenges during the early stages. These included getting buy-in from the citizens, having to deal with the anger of citizens who had been denied adequate service delivery for years, and the fact that Ekurhuleni did not have an urban core, which is the central point of reference for many cities globally. The service delivery backlogs and developmental deficit in terms of infrastructure have also been contentious issues between the citizens and the city and have been

exacerbated by service delivery protests and the non-payment of services. Currently, the spatial impacts of amalgamation have not been comprehensive as the city has been trying for years to improve linkages between towns, service delivery and the housing backlog. However, these challenges have stubbornly persisted. Critically speaking, the attainment of uniformity in service delivery has proven to be calamitous with persistent inequalities being reproduced post democracy.

### **5.2.1 Uniform identity and service delivery**

The amalgamation of the nine towns and 17 townships into one metropolitan municipality necessitated that a turnaround from a dysfunctional governance structure into a functional and stable governance structure. To attain efficient governance, the city needed to consolidate the respective administrations into one administration and have one voice, as well as a uniform identity. Melewar (2003) asserts that brand identity is a valuable strategic tool and an essential resource with which to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage, and which would, in turn, provide multiple benefits to organizations.

Le Roux (2012) argues that when a corporate identity is constantly presented, it creates a constructive and lasting impression on the organization. For the City of Ekurhuleni to gain the trust of the new electorate, it had to create and maintain a municipality with a positive identity that would be implemented uniformly across all the administrations that had been merged. This meant that the mission, vision, and principles of the city had to be clearly articulated so that the citizens could understand the direction the municipality was taking. Figure 5.1 presents a template to formulate a brand design and the principles that guide a brand identity. The culture and the language used by an organization are crucial as they ensure that the organization is receptive to and accommodative of the needs of all the people regardless of their

economic and social status. These are very significant issues that needed to be considered by the city, since the merger incorporated two different sets of the electorate, namely, those who were exposed to world-class service delivery and those who were grappling with substandard service delivery.

**Figure 5.1 Principles that guide brand identity**



**Source: (Gent lyus, 2020).**

Significantly, the city has the huge responsibility of ensuring that the provision of services is uniform and equitable in respect of all the places that fall under its jurisdiction. The accessibility of basic services is meticulously related to social inclusion and social capital, and the failure of municipalities to deliver services can have a damaging impact on social and economic development (IDASA, 2010). Basic services are the essential building blocks of improved quality of life, and sufficient supplies of safe water and adequate sanitation are necessary for life, well-being, and human dignity (Statistics South Africa, 2016). The lack of proper and efficient service provision contributes to social inequalities, which further perpetuate poverty in communities. The change in government structures, as in the case of amalgamation,

can affect the level of efficiency of service delivery. The most noticeable consequence of amalgamation is an expansion in jurisdiction size, as amalgamations are often inspired by the hope that an increase in size will improve productivity and efficiency (Allers and Geertsema, 2016). The larger municipalities come with new challenges, advantages and disadvantages, and as in a new business venture, the first few years can be difficult. One of the threats to attaining successful amalgamation is that citizens reject it and are against it – which has happened in a number of municipalities. Protests against demarcation have been on the upsurge in South Africa and date back to 1999; a case in point is Durban’s EtheKwini Municipality, where the demarcation process was deeply disputed by the traditional authority, which thought that demarcation was nothing but a political strategy to dispossess the AmaZulu of their powers (Goodenough, 2004).

The residents of Matatiele were strongly against demarcation and contended that their interests would be more efficiently served by Kwa-Zulu Natal than by the Eastern Cape Province. They argued that since the latter had already failed to service their communities, they were refusing to be associated with the province (Ntombana and Khowa, 2020). Furthermore, the people of Khutsong refused to be part of North West because they argued that the province had in the past failed to serve the needs of its people; therefore, they rejected the option to be placed in the same situation (Mail and Guardian, 2008). These examples demonstrate an important point, namely, that service delivery is linked to quality of life and that amalgamations need to ensure that the quality of life is preserved and enhanced if people are to consent to them. Service provision in Ekurhuleni has shown moderate improvements over the years, post amalgamation. This has been a process that has been driven through the IDP and the GDS 2055, strategic framework. Through the re-blocking of settlements, the city has

been able to provide electricity, water, and sanitation services to people in both formal and informal settlements.

Participant A, who is the Head of Department of Institutional Strategy, Monitoring and Evaluation in the City of Ekurhuleni alludes to the fact

*“that post-amalgamation service provision has improved and become efficient in the city; [it] has also included increased access to housing, electrification, water, and road infrastructure”.*

Participant D, a Proportional Representative (PR) Councillor in the city indicated

*“that service delivery has improved in the city as the previously disadvantaged areas have seen development take place..... like the provision of tarred roads in townships... and this was made possible through the resource sharing as a result of a consolidated metropolitan area”.*

Ntombana and Khowa (2020) argue that amalgamations appear to be affected by municipal performance and service delivery. The two are interconnected and share a reciprocal causal relationship. This is due to the fact that, with the merger, demarcation brings with it an increase or decrease in the size of the municipality, which then impacts on municipal performance.

Participant E a Divisional Head in the Department of City Planning, notes that,

*“since amalgamation, service delivery has improved as the municipality has improved the roll out of roads; electricity; technology... through the roll out of Wi-Fi and fibre connectivity; health services, through the building of additional clinics; education, through the increase in the number of schools built; and the increase in the provision*

*of centralized Customer Care Centres (CCC) closer to people, to enable efficiency and accessibility to services”.*

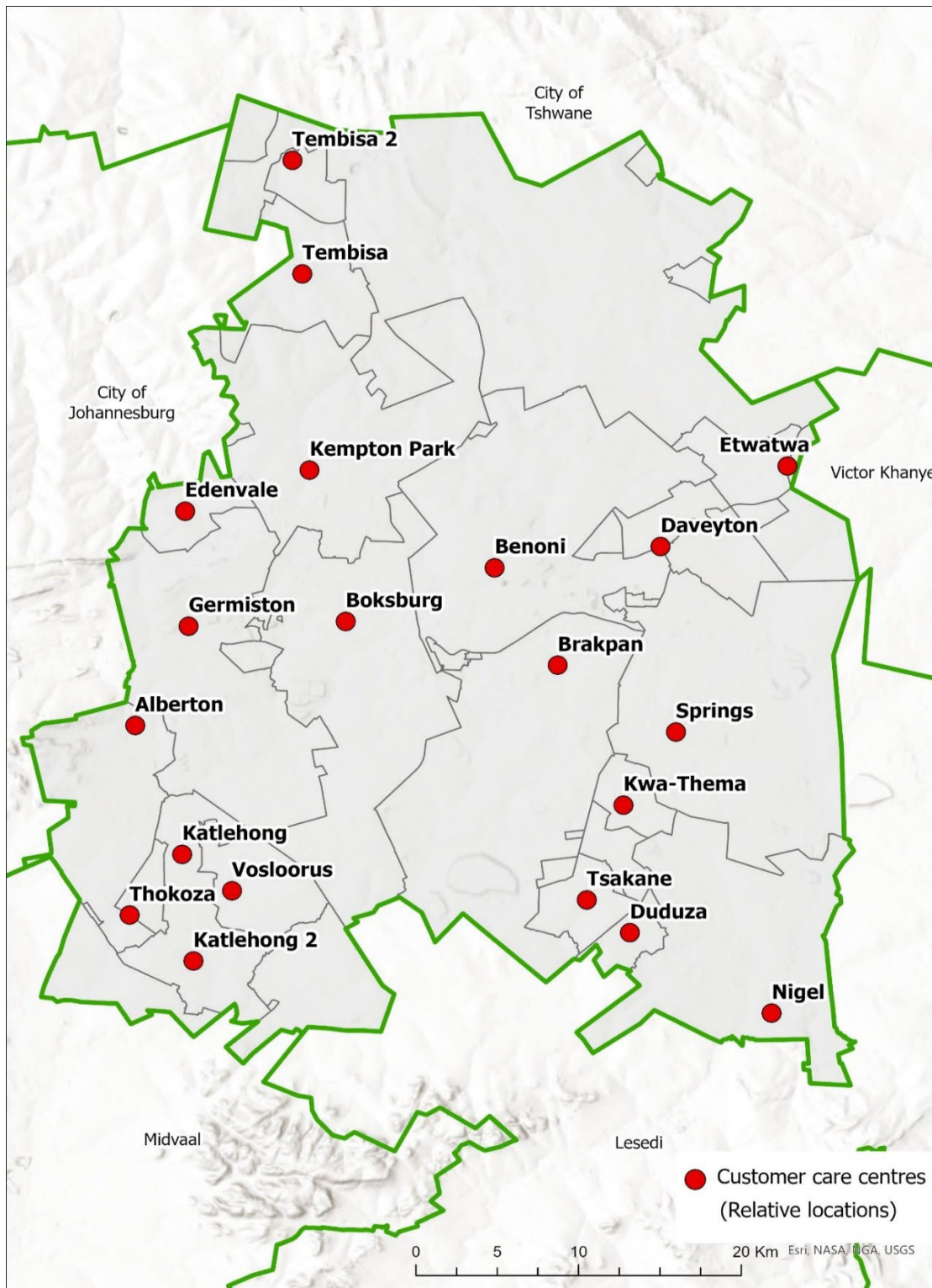
Customer Care Areas (CCC) are designed to be accessible to citizens and act as the one-stop service-delivery point that provides integrated access to services and information. The following customer services are provided at all customer care centres:

1. Payment and account-related services;
2. Lodging and following up on all complaints;
3. Provision of information related to all services in the metro;
4. Liaison with and referral to line departments, where necessary;
5. Booking of facilities and services;
6. Provision of a multi-purpose community care front desk;
7. Provision of a one-stop metro-wide customer care service to all the customers of Ekurhuleni; and
8. Switchboard and call centre-related services (Ekurhuleni, 2021).

The CCCs are walk-in facilities which are located both in townships and towns. They are there to help the communities with service-related queries and are driven by Batho-Pele principles, which are a blueprint for South African municipalities. Figure 5.2 shows the locations of the various CCCs across the metro.



**Figure 5.2 Customer Care Centres**



Source: (Ekurhuleni, 2009; Map Library, Department of Geography, Unisa. Compiled using Data in a Box, ESRI, South Africa, 2022).

Smit and Govender (2015) advocate that local authorities play the vital role of being effective and responsive drivers of the local demands and should work towards improving the well-being and the living conditions of their residents. The amalgamation process was aimed at bridging the gap between accessing services and taking service delivery to the people. While services have improved, more still needs to be done to ensure that quality of life in the city is improved, especially amid the rapid population growth and the high levels of unemployment. One of the areas that still requires improved service provision in the city is that of primary health care.

While the city has increased its number of clinics, the service that patients receive is still not up to the high standards that patients expect as they are still expressing their dissatisfaction in respect of the longer waiting periods that they experience in accessing medical help, and also the ill-treatment meted out to them by the nurses. Organizational challenges countrywide within the Public Health Care (PHC) system have contributed to the deduction that the quality of service delivery is poor. A shortage of staff, bad attitudes, extended waiting periods, low standards of cleanliness, a lack of security in respect of both staff and patients, and the unavailability of an integrated patient-level health information system for data collection and reporting are some of their complaints (National Department of Health, 2015).

Proper primary healthcare is one of the indicators of a good quality of life which is used to measure the Human Development Index (HDI). The global pandemic (COVID 19) has compounded the health challenges in developing countries, such that access to healthcare has been compromised. Mkhize *et al.* (2021) revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted unrelenting inequalities and gaps in Gauteng's healthcare system. Already struggling with capacity limitations and rather high levels of user discontent, the public healthcare system has borne much of the added burden of

healthcare needs imposed on the population by the COVID-19 pandemic. Health challenges in South Africa are aggravated by the unequal distribution of healthcare professionals between the private and public sectors and the unequal distribution of public sector healthcare professionals among the provinces (Barron and Padarath, 2017). Primary healthcare is a critical aspect of service delivery as it plays a significant role in maintaining quality of life for its citizens and a generally healthy population. Ruzevicius (2007) argued that quality of life is motivated by an individual's physical and mental health, the person's degree of independence, his/her social relationship with the environment and level of satisfaction with his/her life facets as opposed to his/her vision of an ideal life.

### **5.2.3 Quality of life and citizens' level of satisfaction with local government**

Municipalities are the most fundamental units of government and are tasked with supplying basic services and cultivating development in the regions they control (Statistics South Africa, 2022). Access to basic services ensures that communities have met one of the components necessary for attaining Quality of Life (QoL). Local government departments have an obligation to ensure that service delivery is informed by the needs and expectations of their communities, and that they are seen by customers and stakeholders to be delivering quality services. To guarantee that they are in sync with the needs of communities, municipalities need to have appraisal systems, such as customer satisfaction surveys, which are important for gauging the needs and wants of communities in key performance areas. Service delivery needs to be assessed in terms of the quality of the infrastructure in question, the efficient implementation of the service, and accessibility. These aspects have a significant impact on the level of satisfaction of customers who use the municipal services (Statistics South Africa, 2022). In conjunction with the advancing technologies and

increased communication skills, the expectations that the citizens hold of their municipalities have also increased. In fact, one of the most meaningful measurements of the citizen satisfaction level is the quality of the provided service (Akgul, 2012). The Gauteng City Region Observatory (GCRO) research foundation conducted two studies through community surveys to investigate consumer satisfaction and quality of life in the city of Ekurhuleni. The customer satisfaction survey conducted by GCRO established that according to the 2020 survey, the City of Ekurhuleni is the most stable coalition government in South Africa and that it is the best metro in Gauteng in terms of service delivery and provision (GCRO, 2021).

Coalition governments are not easy as they are mergers of different political parties and ideologies, which can manifest in conflict and problematic terms of office. Ekurhuleni has managed to provide a stable coalition government from 2016-2021, while over the same period, the coalition governments in the cities of Johannesburg and Tshwane have broken down. Olver (2021) argues that coalitions in local government have managed to highlight problems on the political-administrative frontier, even though there have been some remarkably stable coalitions which have been able to shield the administration from political infighting and to build performing administrations. Others have had a more harmful impact than the pre-existing single-party systems.

Participant A, the Head of the Department of Institutional Strategy, Monitoring and Evaluation stated that

*“coalition government is challenging as it requires more consultation with the state and maintaining the balance of aligning plans with the different political parties, which is more time consuming. However, coalition government has also been advantageous in*

*Ekurhuleni as it has brought improvement in service provision and accountability in government”.*

Concurring with these sentiments, a study conducted by Good Governance Africa found that of the 20 best performing municipalities in the country, five were governed by multiparty coalitions. The success of those administrations could be attributed to their high levels of supervision (Good Governance Africa, 2019). The Separation of Powers (SoP) doctrine comes in very handy in establishing coalition governments as it ensures that responsibilities are differentiated between the political and administrative sections, respectively. The mechanism that is adopted through the separation of powers doctrine is to divide and distribute the power of government to thwart totalitarianism and arbitrary rule. The fundamental nature of the doctrine is therefore one of constitutionalism (Sekhukhuni, 2016; and Lekalakala, 2022). Theoretically, coalition partners have a mutual interest in preventing the abuse of office by other associates, and their increased supervisory powers, combined with the consequences of the coalition potentially slipping up, have helped to restrict abuse and improve government performance (Good Governance Africa, 2019).

Participant C, the Head of the Department of the Legislature emphasized

*“doctrine as an important governance tool which helps separate the responsibilities of the executive against those of the legislature, and, significantly, it allows both parties to hold each other accountable”.*

The fundamental obligations of the legislature are scrutiny and supervision, bylaw-making and reviews, and ensuring significant public participation, while the mandate of the executive includes service delivery, planning and implementation (Lekalakala, 2022). The two arms of governance are ultimately responsible for ensuring that service

provision is efficiently implemented, and that the electorate is reasonably satisfied with the services provided. Furthermore, to ensure the smooth provision of quality services, the two arms of governance need to be synchronized and to work hand-in-hand to ensure that the needs of the community are met. As discussed above, quality of life is improved when service provision is consistent and the basic services are provided, especially to the poor communities. Municipal services which include the delivery of electricity, water, sanitation services, and waste removal are envisioned to serve as a tool to reduce poverty and inequality, improve livelihood standards and assist in providing economic opportunities (PARI, 2021).

The provision of basic services is a foundation for building developing communities as they bridge poverty and inequality. This is especially true in the case of South Africa, which is a country plagued by extreme inequalities. Access to basic services (water, sanitation, and energy) for the poor is both a local and global concern pronounced in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Basic services are well-defined as services that ensure a decent and suitable standard of living in communities and allow for the creation of environments in which public health and safety can be promoted (Mutymbizi *et al.*, 2020). Basic services do not only provide dignity and elevate the standard of living; they also help advance and enhance the quality of life. While quality of life is rather difficult to measure, there are different aspects that can be used to gauge the standard of living, especially in developing countries, and which include access to basic services and amenities. According to KPMG (2016), tangible factors such as improved air quality, better access to quality water sources for most populations, fewer greenhouse gas emissions and well-protected indigenous habitats will lead to a better overall quality of life in developing countries. The quality of life (QoL) surveys used to assess the perspectives of residents in Gauteng, are intended

to provide a common understanding of the quality of life, as epitomized by socioeconomic circumstances, the level of satisfaction of the public in respect of service delivery, positive psycho-social attitudes, adherence to a good set of values, and other qualities, (GCRO, 2019). A quality-of-life survey study conducted in 2017/18 by GCRO focused on the index of different services provided by government as a baseline to measure the level of satisfaction in respect of, amongst others, housing, water, sanitation, waste removal, energy, roads, public healthcare, and government safety and security services, the cost of municipal services and billing for services.

In terms of general satisfaction with the local government, Ekurhuleni (43% satisfied) led, followed by Johannesburg (38%) and Tshwane (34%) (Ekurhuleni Budget Review IDP, 2022). These percentages demonstrate the perceived quality of life of the residents of these three metros, based on the type of service delivery they receive. The satisfaction surveys recorded very low levels of satisfaction as they did not even reach the 50% mark. This is an indication of the underlying challenges that are faced by municipalities and their communities. Political bickering and related conflicts between the political and management components of local government in South Africa have unfavourably impacted municipalities. It is in fact a given that the public sector in an African context has always been politically oriented – and South Africa is no exception (Booyesen, 2012; Cameron, 2003; 2010; De Visser, 2010).

Furthermore, service provision is also difficult to measure as it is based on perceptions and is, therefore, subjective. For example, a person at the receiving end of consistent and effective service delivery might be unhappy about a separate municipal issue and could use that particular issue to award the municipality a low score, even if that issue might not necessarily have been linked to service delivery. Ndudula (2016) argued that municipal services are categorised into tangible and intangible services, with

tangible denoting the provision of municipal services that are interpreted as being visible to the local communities (e.g. public housing, roads, water and sanitation systems, public transport), whilst the intangible services (e.g. public drainage, sewage systems and public safety standards) are those that are considered vital, but not essentially visible. Local government/municipalities play a substantial role in community development in that they ensure that basic services are provided to the communities. These are often met with challenges, such as limited budgets, growing communities, the non-payment of services, service delivery protests and vandalism of the public infrastructure. Municipalities are expected to be built on the strong foundation of stimulating local development through the provision of quality services to the local electorate (Murimoga and Musingafi, 2014).

Smit and Govender (2015) proposed that local authorities should play a robust role in taking on the role of efficacious and responsive drivers of the local demand and should of necessity work towards advancing the well-being and good living conditions of their residents. Since, as demonstrated in the discussion above, service delivery is directly linked to improved quality of life it is crucial that municipalities such as Ekurhuleni should prioritise and conduct annual satisfaction surveys to ensure that they improve the standard of their services.

Masiya *et al.* (2019) argues that research on the drivers of satisfaction is limited in Africa and that there is, therefore, an increasing need for scholars to contribute towards understanding the service delivery satisfaction drivers, as well as the nature of dissatisfaction in South Africa. Customer satisfaction surveys are important because they can be used to understand the customer base, to identify gaps in service delivery, and identify the shortcomings of government. In essence, the satisfaction level can be determined by comparing the actual quality of service delivery and how the electorate



perceive the performance of the government its delivery of municipal services (Mangai, 2017). Municipalities also need to have instruments in place to analyse satisfaction surveys and put a form of performance management in place which will enable them to manage their own performance objectives. By putting a performance management system in place, municipalities are able to efficiently pick up areas of performance deficit that require attention to avoid backlogs on deliverables.

Armstrong and Baron (1998) and Medlin (2013) describe performance management as a strategic and integrated approach to delivering sustained success to the organization by improving the performance of employees and by developing the capabilities of teams and individual contributors. Grobler *et al.* (2011) perfectly captures performance management as a process which meaningfully promotes organizational success by getting managers and employees to work collectively to set expectations, review results and ultimately reward excellent performance. Local government structures need to have a performance management system in place and to use it efficiently to maximize the effort of achieving integrated and world-class service provision to its citizens. The City of Ekurhuleni has managed to improve on its service provision by attaining some of the most impressive milestones, which include the following:

1. It has received unqualified and clean audits for three successive years.
2. In the 2019/2020 financial year, the City of Ekurhuleni achieved a clean audit opinion from the Auditor General of South Africa. No other metropolitan municipality received a clean audit during the financial year under review.
3. The collection rate for Q2, beginning in October 2020, was 90.46%, which is an improvement from the 89.14% during Q1.

4. In 2018, the City of Ekurhuleni was voted the best metro in Gauteng in terms of service delivery and also the most stable coalition government in South Africa.
5. Ninety-nine percent (99%) of households complied with the RDP standard of a water access point within 200 metres of a yard (Ekurhuleni Budget Review IDP, 2022).

A large number of South Africans live in abject poverty and depend on service delivery for survival, which is what makes public perceptions on service delivery critical. Public perceptions on the level of satisfaction with municipal services can help municipalities improve their functioning on key performance areas. Understanding the insights of citizens and their experience of municipal services can be used to access valuable feedback on the efficiency of service delivery (Masiya *et al.*, 2019).

To achieve a well-coordinated service provision system, municipalities need to have a well-planned system in place that will respond to the needs of people and address the bottlenecks of service delivery. A solution to this problem could be to adopt the systems thinking approach which is grounded in thinking broadly and articulating challenges in new and different ways.

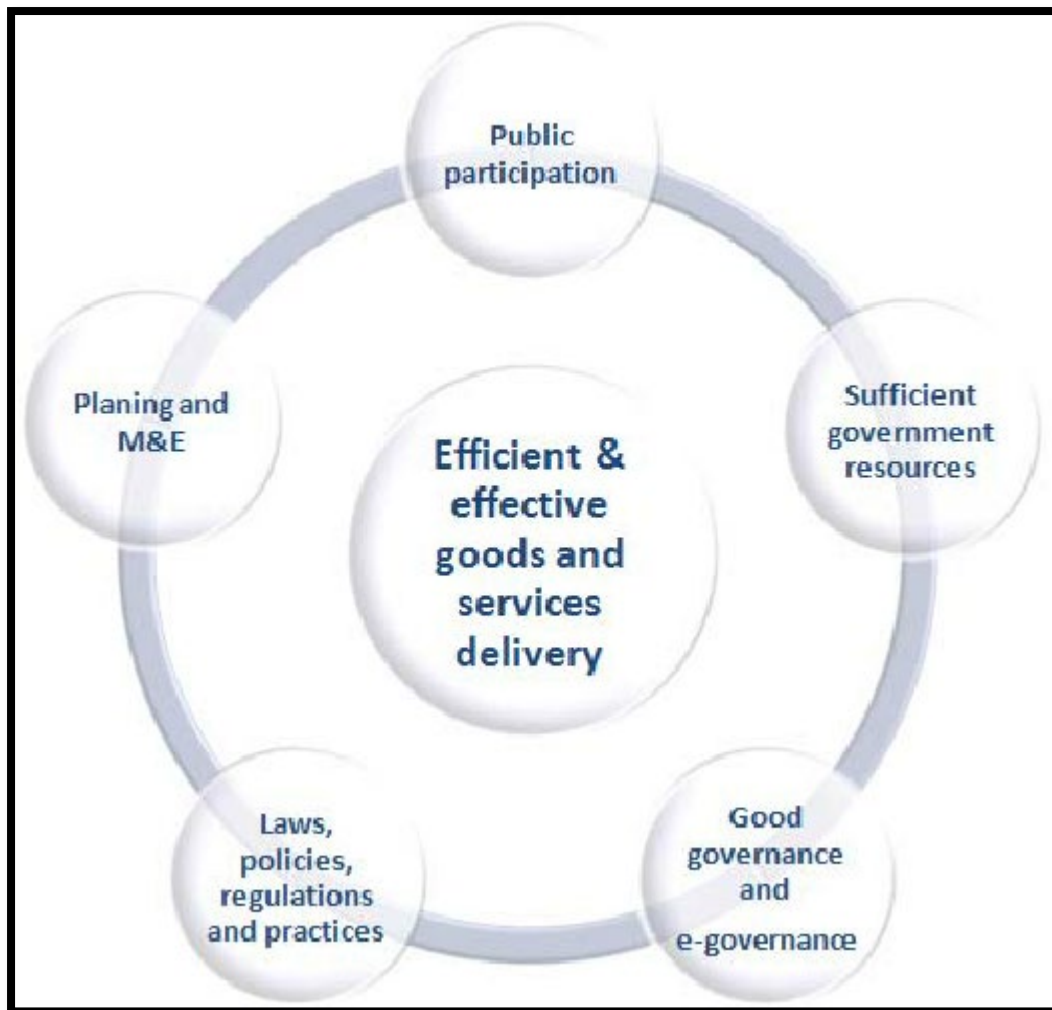
Squires *et al.* (2011) describe systems thinking as the ability to incorporate multiple viewpoints, to comprehend the various operational contexts of the system, to identify inter and intrarelations and dependencies, to understand multi-faceted systems behaviour, and most important of all, to develop the ability to consistently predict the impact of change on the system. This approach follows a diagnostic method to identify challenges, and then applies a systemic approach to solve them. Systems thinking is crucial for solving chronic problems and service delivery has been a thorn in the flesh

to local governments in South Africa. Although the systems thinking approach is not perfect, it has some great attributes that can assist in dealing with the bottlenecks of service delivery and help in improving the quality of life of the citizens and the general well-being of the disadvantaged communities. Mbecke (2014) proposed another option which was coined as the Cohesive Service Delivery Theory, which was developed using the Bayesian Networks System, an artificial intelligence instrument that facilitates the definition, quantification and sequence of different factors contributing to service delivery. A Bayesian Network (BN) is a probabilistic graphical model for demonstrating knowledge about an unclear domain, where each node relates to a random variable and each frame represents the conditional probability for the corresponding random variables (Xin-She, 2019).

The Cohesive Service Delivery Theory is grounded in the analysis of cause-effect relationships, focusing specifically on the respective associations between the determined factors and the lack of or effective provision of service delivery (the influence of the former on the latter). Mbecke (2014) identified six factors to analyse when applying the theory. They include good governance through the Batho Pele principles, public participation, e-governance, laws, policies, regulations, and practices, the planning for monitoring and evaluation; and government resources.

Figure 5.3 presents the Cohesive Service Delivery Theory in diagrammatic form.

**Figure 5.3 The Cohesive Service Delivery Theory (CSDT)**



**Source: (Mbecke, 2014)**

These factors are crucial in carrying out service delivery and have already been incorporated into local government programmes. Using artificial intelligence, local government can identify problematic areas that lead to service delivery bottlenecks and be able to respond and address the issues there before crisis proportions are reached. The use of artificial intelligence is beneficial as it encourages and promotes collaboration between government and the private sector to help municipalities provide efficient and world-class services to their communities. Government cannot, on its own, plan and implement efficient service delivery; it requires different stakeholders to

come together and collaborate to be successful in providing services. Naidoo (2005) cautions that the ability to grasp policy and to translate it into a strategy for implementation necessitates a certain level of intelligence, competence and commitment on the part of the public servants in question. The efficacy of municipalities to deliver on their obligations is largely dependent on their ability to plan and allocate public resources in a developmental and sustainable manner. Therefore, it is essential for municipalities to prudently integrate community needs in their development plans and when apportioning money (IDASA, 2010).

The amalgamation process in Ekurhuleni has brought changes in the configuration of the municipality and in the way that service delivery is implemented as the city has different policies and strategic visions which are aimed at nurturing the well-being of the citizens of the city. While the city has strived to improve service delivery, it has been met with challenges which stem from it being a transitional city, in that it is to most people the first point of call when they migrate to Gauteng. This in-migration influences the population of the city and leads to a greater demand for services from the city. The developmental programmes of the City of Ekurhuleni and the service needs of the community are informed by the IDP (Ekurhuleni Budget Review IDP, 2022).

In response to the post-amalgamation process, the city has managed to carry out most of its programmes and to meet most of its objectives. However, the exponential growth of the population and the impacts of the global COVID-19 pandemic have put a major strain on the budgeted allocations of the IDP. It is crucial to note that the IDP is informed by those resources that can be afforded and earmarked through the budget process. As such, the budget must be aligned with the IDP and its objectives and strategies (IDASA, 2010). Therefore, it is prudent to conclude that the amalgamation

process has, to a certain degree, had a positive impact on the communities of Ekurhuleni. Importantly, this has been a long-term process, driven by the Growth and Development Strategy 2055 plan, and is being reviewed at regular intervals. While the long-term plan has been successful in some areas, it has also been met with challenges which require that the city go back to the drawing board to re-strategize. Some challenges, such as the global pandemic, were unexpected and came with devastating impacts to the economy and affected everyone (Ekurhuleni Budget Review IDP, 2022).

The downside of long-term planning has been that the spatial inequalities have not been adequately addressed and as a result, it has bred new challenges, such as urban sprawl, an increased demand for services, and high unemployment rates due to the growth of the population in the region. Furthermore, as spatial inequalities are being intensified, these new challenges are constantly weakening the effectiveness of the long-term plans. Thus, the objectives of the amalgamation process in Ekurhuleni have been undermined.

### **5.3 Past and current spatial patterns and their impact on communities**

These days, it has become an accepted norm that all the cities of the developed and developing countries are feeling the need to provide public services in a most effective and competent way. This has influenced cities in the developed countries to become the epicentre of creative thinking — the focal point from which modern technologies are invented and the entrepreneurial spirit emanates, and where environmentally sustainable transformation and investigations into socio-economic development are occurring (Chatterjee and Kar, 2015). The South African context provides a unique developmental framework which has largely been influenced by the apartheid spatial legacy that was systematically implemented to promote unequal and fragmented

development. The apartheid government had numerous small municipalities which dedicated service delivery to the white minority population, while the townships were strategically located on the peripheries of towns, which meant they were disadvantaged in terms of service delivery and economic opportunities (Todes *et al.*, 2010). As a result, the post-democratic government has been working towards eradicating the development deficit in the previously disadvantaged areas and addressing spatial inequalities stemming from the apartheid spatial legacy.

### **5.3.1 Fragmented infrastructural development – a legacy of apartheid**

The birth of democracy in South Africa incited hope for better living conditions and the improved provision of services for its citizens. This was the situation that transpired after years of fear for survival during the apartheid era and continued even after years following on the dawn of democracy in South Africa. The country has been beleaguered by systemic ineptitude that has caused backlogs in the delivery of a modernized and up-to-date infrastructure (Malete and Khatleli, 2019). The legacy of apartheid dismantled the sense of belonging for scores of people and the system ensured that people of colour were trapped and forced to live miserable lives of poverty under poor conditions in terms of infrastructural development and limited service delivery.

The main contributing factor to this dire situation was that people were moved to barren land far away from the city – to what were termed, Bantustans, so that those providing migrant labour to the city were accommodated in the peripheral areas of the city, in townships. Hänel (2019) painfully articulates that the black populace were given fewer opportunities to enhance their lives and were confined through legislation, administration and coercion. Generally, it was the Africans (blacks) who were worst off. They were allowed to live on only 13 percent of the country's land, with the

respective ethnic groups or 'nations' living in the so-called "homelands". As a result, the apartheid regime gave the emancipated better access to assets such as well-located land with resources compared to those that were marginalized (Western Cape Government, 2014).

Through different legislative mechanisms, such as the Group Areas Act, racial segregation policies prohibited non-white people from gaining access to places which were strictly reserved for whites only. Under the apartheid regime, white people were emancipated and enjoyed the privilege of staying in whites-only, plush suburbs, that had access to service delivery, social amenities, schools and adequate human settlements that had functioning water and sanitation systems.

Participant C, the Head of the Department of Legislature, and Participant E, the Divisional Head of City Planning, both concur

*"that one of the purposes of amalgamation in Ekurhuleni was to address apartheid spatial planning, uniformity in development, and to enhance equal service provision for everyone".*

Apartheid has had a long-lasting impact on the spatial configuration of the country and has entrenched the inequalities that it generated. The apartheid era did not only engender inequality when it came to work and living patterns; it was also an uneconomical system in the way big parcels of land were used and the amount of energy that was consumed (Western Cape Government, 2014). Renowned scholars, such as Soja (2010), have done extensive work on spatial injustice and have captured the essence of spatial inequalities. Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos (2010) defines the concept of spatial justice in the context of the apartheid ideology as the yearning of an individual or cooperative body to occupy the same space at the same time as another



body. The apartheid regime was vehemently against this sharing of space between people of different races and creeds, and thus enforced systemic segregation.

Soja (2010) abstractly articulated the point that “*the geographies in which we live can intensify and sustain our exploitation as workers, support oppressive forms of cultural and political domination based on race, gender, and nationality, and aggravate all forms of discrimination and injustice*”.

As a result of the current spatial inequalities, the citizens of Ekurhuleni who are now residing in the former apartheid townships and squatter camps do not enjoy full and free access to the city and its services. The townships and homelands of the apartheid era were strategically located a considerable distance from white-occupied towns and had limited access to the city. While the laws of apartheid have been abolished, the *status quo* has remained the same as people of colour have remained where they were in the townships and are still marginalised, as they still have restricted access to the established white towns. The current restrictions are not the consequences of the rule of law but because the previously disadvantaged people still lack the means to easily access the city.

Thus, it can be argued that the lack of integration in developments and in successfully coordinating services is infringing on the rights of the township citizens to the city in the metro. The results of this study show that the spatial legacy patterns of the apartheid era continue to dominate the current spatial patterns and the post-democratic initiatives have not been able to redress the spatial inequalities. Marcuse (2009) provided a Lefebvrian (1991) definition of the right to access the city; it argued that this entailed access to information, services, use of the city centre, and for users, the freedom to propose ideas on how space and time can be exploited in the urban

space. Lefebvre argued for equal access to and inclusion in the city, even for people located on the outskirts of the city. The lack of access to the city did not only marginalize people; it also further obstructed social justice and strengthened inequality. In fact, the gap between the poor and the rich over the years has kept widening as a result of one group having unlimited access to the city, services, resources, and opportunities, while the other group has had limited access to the same comforts.

People participate in a city by performing the geographies in which they live, or those with power create them for those with less. These geographies can be changed to become more positive, but this depends largely on factors such as the presence of those who want change, and those who want the *status quo* to remain (Soja, 2010). Access to resources and services is a fundamental right that is presented in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, post the democratic dispensation. However, the spatial legacy of apartheid has proved to be extremely difficult to dismantle. Harvey (2008) provides a political perspective on the lack of access to the city by arguing that it is the works of the capitalistic system that ensure that not all people have access to the city. Harvey (2008) argues that for capitalists to earn maximum profits, they must limit the rights to gain access to the city. This amplifies poverty and inequality in a society as the rich get richer while the poor get poorer.

Participant B, a Divisional Head in City Intelligence and Long-term Planning argues *“that apartheid spatial patterns and inequalities are being reinforced in Ekurhuleni as human settlements still continue to be allocated land in the periphery of the city, with examples like the John Dube, Palm Ridge, Mayfield, and Sky City development areas,*

*whereby development is growing outward; this has financial implications in terms of access to services and transport”.*

The challenge is that there is a huge demand for human settlements and that planners build where they find land. The land issue in Ekurhuleni is compounded by dolomite beds which limit the construction of human settlements. The other issue is the prevalence of huge pockets of privately owned land. Spatial discrimination is most evident in the form of distributive inequalities, and many different agents participate in creating them through their decisions. Thus, governments need to consider pursuing spatial justice as an imperative political goal. It will, however, be a difficult task to realize considering how some of the privileged benefit from the current geographies and consistently attempt to work against change (Soja, 2010). The most obvious finding to emerge from the data analysis is that there has been no substantial change in past and current spatial patterns.

The second research objective of this study sought to investigate past and current spatial patterns and their impacts on communities. From the data observed and analysed, no comprehensive and significant differences were found. Instead, the data strongly indicate that the spatial inequalities in metropolitan areas are being intensified. It is worth noting that the future sustainability of metropolitan areas in South Africa will be influenced by decisions that are taken in preparation of growth and development. These decisions must be taken within the context of the legacy of apartheid planning, where the fact that in the past, poor communities were assigned to housing on the peripheries of urban areas should be acknowledged (Mtantato, 2013). Post-apartheid urban growth and service delivery programmes have not been able to keep up with the demand for services, particularly within the transportation and human settlement sectors (Mtantato, 2013). The current restrictions have not

emanated from the rule of law but are due to a deficiency in the means to easily access the city. Consequently, it can be argued that the lack of integration in developments and in successfully coordinating services are infringing on the rights of the township citizens to the city in the metro. Mkhize (2018) posits that South African spatial planning is still currently being confronted with the huge responsibility of integrating the previously fragmented townships by developing an economic infrastructure that would be set in place where most of the people live.

The spatial legacy of apartheid has produced spatial challenges such as the poor linkages between human settlements and transport networks. Public transport is a key economic sector in the growth, development, and prosperity of any city (Potgieter *et al.*, 2006). A transport network can lead to improved efficiency of movement, linking peripheral regions to employment opportunities and services in the core area. An effective public transport network can increase the productivity of a city in that commuters have access to modes of transport linking them to multiple areas in the city. Public transport also plays a fundamental role in the functioning of society, and importantly, it is a multifaceted system that comprises various societal components, such as the economy, the environment and the infrastructure.

Todes (2008) argues that South Africa has neglected to pay attention to the socio-spatial dynamics of cities. While the focus is centred around spatial concepts, such as nodes, corridors, densification and infill, attention to detail regarding an understanding of how different people locate and move within the city, what influences their choices, and the consequences of these patterns for their survival and livelihood, is disregarded. One of the reasons for amalgamation in Ekurhuleni was to centralise service provision and the synchronization of services. Cities are now moving in a more pragmatic direction by designing and developing smart cities. These cities are driven

by sustainable principles such as co-ordinated services, proper housing, financial accountability, and an efficient transport system. Municipalities should also promote social cohesion and social justice so that cities can be productive spaces for everyone. A productive public space, where people can share ideas, collaborations, recreation and empower one another, whilst building smart sustainable cities, is what is required.

Participant N, a City Planning Area Manager in Germiston, and Participant P, a Spatial Planner in the City Planning Department, agree

*“that spatial patterns in Ekurhuleni have not changed and that townships still epitomise spatial inequalities, and that, somehow, the apartheid spatial legacy is still being reproduced”.*

They further argue that addressing spatial inequalities is a long-term project that will require long-term planning because apartheid was engineered to last a lifetime.

Participant G, a Senior Researcher in the Department of Strategy and Corporate Planning, offers a,

*“view that spatial patterns have not changed in the city, but there has been great improvement; however, the prevalence of the dolomite leads to spatial disconnection being inadvertently reproduced and leading to other unintended consequences like the mushrooming of informal settlements and land invasions”.*

Buttrick (1986) defines dolomite<sup>6</sup> as a carboniferous rock below or, in some cases, above the surface of the earth, which breaks down when it comes in contact with any

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<sup>6</sup> Dolomite originates from a natural process. Insignificant quantities of acid found in natural rainwater, as well as acid drainage from human-induced activities (e.g. the acid water issuing from mining and tailing dams) react chemically with carbon dioxide and water to break down the dolomite. When the dolomitic rock is dissolved and carried away in this form by water, it leaves behind a hole or a cave below the surface of the earth (Trollip, 2007).

form of acid. Dolomite is a sedimentary type of rock. The dolomitic rock in the Gauteng region was formed about 300 million years ago (DWA, 2009). The dolomitic region in Ekurhuleni was exacerbated by human-induced activities (e.g. mining) which resulted in the disintegration of the dolomite in the mining belt that extends from Johannesburg North to Johannesburg East, where Ekurhuleni is located.

Any development initiated on dolomitic land represents a challenge because of the possibility of sinkholes and the collapse of the development, which could lead to large-scale calamities and to the loss of life (Stoltz, 2015). Already the city has had to deal with sinkholes, and the case in point is the widely reported incident that occurred in Snake Road, Benoni, in 2019 as a result of a broken stormwater pipe, as shown in Figure 5.4. Fortunately, there were no casualties, but the impacts were considerable as the road was closed for almost a year. A total of 5 – to 10% of South Africa, and roughly 25% of Gauteng, and parts of Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Northern Cape, and North West Province, are underlain by dolomite. Although opportunities do indeed exist for the development of such land, the opposing viewpoint looks at the consequences resulting from the development of sinkholes and the subsidence of the land, whether naturally, or as a result of development, and they cannot be ignored (Pretorius, 2012; Potgieter, 2012).

**Figure 5.4 Sinkhole in Snake Road, Benoni.**



**Source: (News24, 2023)**

Oosthuizen and Richardson (2011) argue that sinkholes may occur suddenly with no warning. They may develop as a result of regular influences (e.g. through irrigation, the extraction of groundwater and the construction of impervious concrete structures, such as pavements, closely-spaced buildings, and gutters that pour out their contents close to buildings. All of these quoted examples change the way in which water naturally infiltrates the ground. The huge demand for human settlements has offset multiple challenges, which include the actual finding of suitable land for development and the mushrooming of informal settlements, which have altered the sustainability of the ecology and the ability of the environment to rehabilitate itself. The overwhelming growth in the human population has resulted in rapid urban expansion and a burgeoning demand for land for occupation, as well as an increase in the

anthropogenic impacts on the earth's natural system (e.g. land degradation, the triggering of geo-hazards and heavy carbon footprints) (Hibbs and Sharp, 2012). In a progressively urbanised world, and with the rapid population growth in cities, it is important to comprehend the critical need for sustainable human settlements (Lebea, 2018).

As discussed earlier, and also confirmed by Participant G, a Senior Researcher in the Strategy and Corporate Planning Department,

*“Ekurhuleni is a first point of entry of migrants from other provinces and countries which creates a huge demand for human settlements. Unfortunately, not everyone can have access, which creates room for the infiltration of informal settlements”.*

Ultimately, the illegal occupation of land becomes a barrier for sustainable spatial development, which leads to densification. As a result, the densification of informal residential developments contributes much to altering the manner in which water naturally soaks into dolomitic systems, resulting in subsidence (Heath *et al.*, 2007). The Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality is one of the fastest growing areas in South Africa and experiences a huge, unrelenting demand for housing.

As a result, in the post-1990 period, the densification of urban areas led Ekurhuleni to become a densely settled urban complex accommodating the largest number of informal settlements in Gauteng (IDP and SDBIP, 2014). Informal settlements have become an alternative to housing scores of people who cannot access adequate housing. Furthermore, there has been a huge backlog of recipients for RDP houses from the government programme. Between 2000 and 2019, the city of Ekurhuleni's population practically doubled from 2.5 million to 3.8 million people, primarily as a result of in-migration (CoE, 2020). The rapid population growth and migration further



aggravated the housing challenges in Ekurhuleni and most of the South African cities. In-migration has moulded the configuration of the population in a similar manner. Most people are young (median age is 30 years), predominately of working age (66%), with a secondary education (33% with some form of secondary education and 41% with matric) and only four percent (4%) of the population has no education. Only eight percent (8%) has either an undergraduate or a postgraduate qualification (COGTA, 2020). The city's response to this challenge has been through the long-term strategic plan of the Growth and Development Strategy 2055, framework.

The specific strategic imperative that focuses on informal settlements and on urban development is the Re-urbanise principle. It aims to achieve sustainable urban integration. In an endeavour to improve the intolerable living conditions of the people residing in informal settlements, Ekurhuleni has introduced a re-blocking programme, which aims to create an enabling environment for informal settlements and the municipality to plan and implement community development projects. The re-blocking programme is characterized by a multi-layered approach to the decongestion of informal settlements through the reorganization of dwellings and the provision of basic infrastructures, in order to create a safe, serviceable and liveable environment (Ekurhuleni Budget Review IDP, 2022).

These settlements are often located on inappropriate sites, are overcrowded, and lack a basic infrastructure and access to services, resulting in health, fire, security, and socioeconomic risks (CoE, 2021). Through the re-blocking programme, the city has managed to provide basic services, including electricity, waste removal, water and sanitation, to a number of informal settlements — such a situation was virtually impossible before. Re-blocking is a vital urban planning tool that maximises service provision while managing the effects of urban sprawl. Significantly, it is a tool for

disaster management. The expansion of informal settlements has caused intricate environmental consequences, which have led to challenges, such as people settling in uninhabitable areas, environmental degradation, pollution, flooding, and fires (Tsebe, 2020). Furthermore, intensive urban development projects, which incorporate upgraded informal settlements, can be accomplished through infill projects on vacant, land with a better location. Such land might also incorporate incremental housing schemes and higher density redevelopments of existing buildings aligned to an overarching plan of urban regeneration (Tramontin and Qwabe, 2017).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development highlights the necessity of creating cities and human settlements that are inclusive, safe, resilient, and viable as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2015). In fact, the city has already started implementing and practising sustainable principles through the re-blocking programme. This entails the reorganization and alignment of shacks into organized clusters that create more space to ensure that the municipality can build essential infrastructure (e.g. electricity lines) and install water and sanitation pipelines to enhance the livelihoods of the people living in the informal settlements.

Achieving a sustainable city in Ekurhuleni commences with attempts to address the housing backlog and reduce the number of informal settlements. Tramontin and Qwabe (2017) argue that access to adequate housing is considered crucial to raising the living standards of low-income groups and allowing them to advance socially and economically. This also considers the need to access basic services and a proper energy infrastructure to accomplish the requirements of adequate living conditions. The city, through the IDP and the GDS 2055, has long-term plans and projects which it seeks to drive development and part of which is to mitigate the challenges around housing. The IDP, as an official planning instrument of government, plays a crucial

role in that it ensures a synergies and collaborations between the various spheres of government and the different stakeholders to guarantee that projects and programmes are efficiently implemented. To effectively respond to the needs of the communities, Integrated Development Planning incorporates consultative municipal planning to involve the community, the municipal functionaries, civil society, business stakeholders, and the community's faith-based and non-governmental organizations (Dlamini and Reddy, 2018). Therefore, the importance of addressing the backlog of human settlements should be driven by the IDP, which involves public participation, stakeholder participation, and regularly reviews of the processes involved.

Furthermore, public participation is crucial in the re-blocking process since the people living in informal settlements should be treated with courtesy and sensitivity. Instead of merely dictating to them as to their being informed of what should be done, they should be consulted during the process since it directly impacts on them. The process to achieve these ends is long term and will not be an overnight success. Unfortunately, retrospectively, it has taken too long to address spatial inequalities and over the years more damage has ensued because of the sluggish response from government as to the plight of the people.

While the spatial patterns have remained the same in Ekurhuleni, there have been vast improvements in spatial and infrastructural development and people's lives have definitely improved to a certain degree. The City of Ekurhuleni has tried to bridge the gap between the townships and the suburbs by investing more resources to upgrade and improve the infrastructure and local economic development in the townships. It is working towards bringing economic activities closer to the townships and by using mixed-use developments to ensure easy access to economic activities. The spatial patterns have not changed; furthermore, the city has tried to address the inequalities

and the amalgamation process has in itself proved to be a tool for mending “broken-down fences”. Through the amalgamation process, the city has tried to address the inequalities within it by applying the integrated development framework, with the objective of providing uniform development and service provision to all areas of the city.

Post-amalgamation townships have benefited in this respect, with even more infrastructural development, namely, additional customer care centres and reservoirs, more houses being electrified, more households having access to water and sanitation, and a larger number of recreational parks. The spatial patterns may not necessarily change physically. However, they can be extended to make it an easier adaptation for the communities through infrastructural development, the provision of services and economic development. For too long, townships have been subjected to substandard developments and service delivery, which have intensified the scourge of poverty.

Therefore, the upgrading of the infrastructure and economy of the township, and improvements to service delivery will go a long way towards addressing the prevailing spatial, social and economic inequalities. The main aspect that stands out from these data is that the past and the current spatial patterns have not changed to such an extent that they could positively impact on the communities. Furthermore, a recurring perspective is that while the amalgamation process has long been overdue as an impetus for development, it has not been exhaustive and thorough enough to conclusively eradicate spatial inequalities in previously disadvantaged areas.

#### **5.4 Amalgamation as a planning and political tool and its impact on local economic development**

At the culmination of the apartheid era in 1994, it was clear that the spatial distribution of people in South Africa was skewed, and that a paradigm shift was needed by the new democratic government to reshape the spatial landscape of the country. This shift was needed in respect of spatial planning, of reconciling development in the marginalized areas, and of promoting social justice and cohesion. Madzivhandila (2013) argues that the fundamental objective of the apartheid system was to promote racially prejudiced policies, whereby service delivery provision was inclined mainly towards the white minority over the black communities, the latter being in the majority.

Thus, the aim of amalgamation in Ekurhuleni was to link the previously wealthy white municipalities that were developed and had a high tax base with the previously underdeveloped black African areas that had a low tax base to facilitate development. The municipality had projected that this cross subsidization could lead to a fairer distribution and redistribution of services, resources, and wealth. The idea of amalgamation can be hypothesized as a system where all the resources are placed in one basket and distributed equitably amongst everyone, and according to their need. Should there be a surplus, those resources would then be redistributed to where they were needed most.

Slack and Bird (2013) argue that service provision is maximized in amalgamated municipalities because funds are distributed evenly and on a wider scale because of the increased tax base, which assists in respect of the costs of services that benefit taxpayers. Municipal amalgamations have been used as a restructuring option to assist local governments to cope with rapid growth. Municipalities prefer to undertake amalgamation to improve on local planning and the coordination of the service delivery

components (Vojnovic, 2000). Significantly, amalgamation is a political strategy that is implemented by the ruling government or council as a type of policy to address different challenges such as the fiscus, failing municipalities, spatial inequalities and spatial restructuring. Amalgamations are driven by the need to improve the efficiency and capacity of municipalities to provide services, good governance, and a sustainable fiscus. A small municipality may not have the capacity to appoint specialists because there is not enough work to keep them busy.

However, larger territories may be able to attract better administrators, and consequently improve service levels or take on responsibilities previously avoided (Allers and Geertsema, 2015). In South Africa, the municipalities are differentiated into categories, and depending on the category, certain responsibilities, as also the authority to discharge executive decisions, are allocated. Local government manages cities and smaller regions which are known as municipalities. Ekurhuleni is a Category A municipality, which is a metropolitan municipality that has exclusive municipal executive, and legislative authority in the area.

A metropolitan municipality is expected to provide appropriate service delivery and good governance; hence, the initiative to amalgamate municipalities as a way of improving service delivery. Ncube and Monnakgotla (2016) indicate that the main reasons for municipal amalgamations in South Africa are to deracialise the local government, to achieve impartiality, to create competencies and economies of scale, to promote the integration of rural and urban municipalities, to improve the financial and managerial capacity of smaller municipalities by merging the existing capacities, and finally, to improve the quality of service delivery and extend the revenue bases of municipalities.

#### **5.4.1 Reasons for amalgamation in Ekurhuleni and the formation of a metropolitan area**

Ekurhuleni was formed when all the small municipalities in the region were merged to form one metropolitan area. Ekurhuleni amalgamated nine towns that had developed independently and in competition with one another to form one metro. The launch of the metropolitan meant the disestablishment of nine local government administrations (Benoni, Boksburg, Springs, Brakpan, Nigel, Edenvale, Kempton Park, Germiston, and Alberton), which were absorbed into this new mega administrative structure (Ekurhuleni, 2012).

The amalgamation process was embarked on to address the spatial, economic, and social inequalities that were brought about by the apartheid policies. Slack and Bird (2013) acknowledge that amalgamation in Ekurhuleni is aimed at improving service delivery, efficiency, and financial stability. The product of amalgamation, the mmunicipal merger, is regarded as a means to ensure that municipalities are large enough to be financially and technically competent to provide an extensive range of services to their communities. Service delivery has been a thorny issue for South African municipalities and communities have been up in arms because of the lack of an efficient service delivery system.

According to Section 73(2) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act 32 of 2000), municipal services must be equitable and accessible; be offered in a way that is conducive to the practical, economic, efficient, and effective use of available resources; be financially and environmentally sustainable; and be frequently appraised, with assessments of advancement, extension, and enhancement being advised. Before democracy, none of these aspects was ever a consideration, and service delivery was one-sided, inequitable, and not financially sustainable. The

apartheid government propagated segregated development and service provision which resulted in fragmented development, contributing to uneven development and poverty amongst the communities in the previously disadvantaged townships. Municipal amalgamation improvements have been encouraged as ways to enhance efficiency, lower costs and enhance capacity in local government service provision (Tavarez, 2018).

Participant J, the Chief Whip of the ANC in Ekurhuleni, stated

*“that amalgamation in Ekurhuleni was meant to transform the metro in terms of service delivery and the economy, provide uniform development and accelerate infrastructure development, especially in townships”.*

Participant O, a senior researcher in Spatial Development in the City Planning Department, stressed

*“that amalgamation was undertaken in order to address spatial and socio-economic inequality in the city, provide well-coordinated service delivery and uniformity in the city”.*

Post 1994, subsequent to the democratic elections, South African cities were dominated by calamitous housing and service backlogs, inequalities in municipal expenditure, certain spatial incompatibilities associated with the apartheid city, deep struggles against the local government structures previously established by the apartheid regime, extreme unemployment, and innumerable poverty-stricken households (Pillay *et al.*, 2006). The approach of the City of Ekurhuleni to addressing these historical challenges was to amalgamate the respective small municipalities in the region to form one large metropolitan municipality. Through the continuous process of implementing long-term policies, the city has tried rigorously to address the



spatial and socio-economic challenges. Significantly, as the City of Ekurhuleni attempts to progressively develop and dismantle the apartheid legacy, other challenges manifest as a direct consequence of the development initiatives, while others manifest as indirect consequences. The widening inequality gap in developing countries is clearly reflected in the rapid urbanisation and industrial development, currently so prevalent, and, as a result, urban planners are now faced with the challenge of balancing the development required in the modern cities with equitably meeting the needs of the poor (Stiglitz, 2012; Fainstein, 2000; Watson, 2009b).

Participant P, a researcher in Spatial Development in the City Planning Department, raised a few crucial reasons behind the amalgamation of smaller municipalities in the Ekurhuleni metro, namely,

*“that it was undertaken to achieve integration and to address fragmentation, unify town planning schemes and to unify administrative processes”.*

The most significant aspect is the integration and unifying of town planning schemes, which would ensure that, as the first big step in addressing inequality, uniform development would transpire in all communities in Ekurhuleni. This would guarantee that basic services, such as electricity, water and sanitation, clinics, roads, and schools could be provided to all communities.

Hastings (2009) raised the point that poor urban areas are often compromised because of planning tensions at the municipal level. As such, households in these constituencies are incapable of funding any sustainable alternatives themselves. Hence, it was necessary to unify the planning schemes to ensure that there would be equal opportunities for development for all communities, whether poor or affluent. Todes and Turok (2017) proposed three approaches, namely, spatial rebalancing,

spatial neutrality, and place-based approaches that could be used as guidelines to spatial policy. The spatial rebalancing objective focuses on the prosperity gap between wards to promote economic convergence. In this case, the main objective is to direct productive investment from the prosperous to the poorer regions, to create jobs in the poorer regions, and to attract foreign direct investment. The spatial-neutrality approach aims to augment aggregate growth through increased efficiency.

It is presumed that a developing economy will restrict spatial disparities by distributing income and investment from the resilient core to the surrounding localities. Lastly, the place-based approach is concerned with enhancing the conditions in a wider group of constituencies by assisting them in the realization of their potential through growth from within rather than through transfers from elsewhere (Todes and Turok, 2017). Spatial inequalities are prevalent in developing countries and are accompanied by poverty and socio-economic inequities which widen the gap between the wealthy and the poor.

Participant K, a specialist planner in the City Planning Department, opined that

*“amalgamation was undertaken as a political decision for economic reasons in order to combine and pool in resources to improve service delivery”.*

Participant E, Divisional Head of City Planning, and Participant G, a senior researcher in the Strategy and Corporate Planning Department, concurred that

*“it makes financial sense to have common resources as this would enable efficient planning and evaluation of service provision, financial sustainability and for the city to be able to attract investments since Ekurhuleni is a business hub of the Gauteng province”.*

Participant G, further detailed that

*“the administrative reasons for amalgamation were to integrate development, improve service delivery, sharing financial resources and the evaluation and appraisal of the development initiatives”.*

Slack and Bird (2013) assert that municipal amalgamations are frequently understood as one way to ensure that municipalities are large enough to be financially and technically proficient in delivering an extensive range of services. The idea is ostensibly that municipalities are able not only to gain economies of scale, but also to coordinate service delivery over an extended territory, as well as share costs equitably and reduce spill-overs of service delivery costs across local borders.

Participant I, the Chief Whip in the Council, is of the view that

*“amalgamation was undertaken to achieve economies of scale and the redistribution of resources and services in the city in order to restore parity in the underdeveloped communities”.*

However, Tavaréz (2018) notes that for labour-intensive services, economies of scale gains are non-existent. The provision of a greater number of services requires more workers to be employed to respond to this demand and the scale of economies concept is then less likely to be applicable. Local governments provide a diverse set of services, varying from capital-intensive services, such as waste collection, to more labour-intensive services, such as healthcare services. Thus, different goods or services may be categorised in terms of different cost structures and may vary in terms of economies of scale (Blank and Niaounakis, 2021). However, a deeper analysis shows that economies of scale cannot simply be achieved merely because the municipality is large. Like municipal amalgamations, economies of scale are not “one size fits all”. To achieve economies of scale, certain conditions should be in place (e.g.

a functional municipality, good governance, sustainable practices, and accountability). A municipality can have all these attributes and still not achieve economies of scale, merely because local government is a complex phenomenon and much depends on how the local and international markets perform. Blank and Niaounakis (2021) are of the view that in pursuing efficiency gains in the delivery of local public services, many countries have followed a long-term policy of amalgamating local governments and consider economies of scale the underlying core concept driving such amalgamations. A more recent tendency is that of local governments seeking economies of scale in specific services through co-operative production, where inter-municipal collaboration has been the key factor in realizing this objective

Local governments wanting to accomplish economies of scale can enter into flexible trade agreements with adjacent municipalities which could include resource sharing with other municipalities and the procurement of services from private service providers or other local governments. This could help the first-mentioned escape from an inflexible form of governance (Dollery and Flemming, 2006; Tavarez, 2015). Economies of scale are difficult to achieve as their success depends on various external conditions being met. Thus, they could be a long-term means to successfully master those conditions. The realization of economies of scale in amalgamated municipalities provides another dynamic challenge because, prior to considering the possibility of wanting to attain economies of scale, the amalgamation process must first be accomplished through efficient governance and service provision, financial accountability, and sustainability.

The third objective of this study sought to assess the value of amalgamation as a planning and political tool and its impact on local economic development. As the study unpacks the amalgamation concept, it becomes clear that it is a multi-faceted and

complex process. This observation is supported mainly by the fact that the Ekurhuleni metro has taken on the momentous task in the amalgamation process of driving short- and long-term planning in the city in respect of spatial development, governance – in terms of shaping and improving service provision – and of working towards and attaining strict financial discipline. According to these facts, it can be inferred that great expectations have been forecast for the success of the amalgamation process, post implementation. An implication of this finding is the possibility of the amalgamation process being plagued by challenges that would eventually slow down its success, or, in the worst-case scenario, impede the realization of the objectives of amalgamation.

#### **5.4.2 The challenges that came with amalgamation in Ekurhuleni**

Transition and transformation periods are prone to bring about challenges because they involve the dismantling of the *status quo* and the chartering into new beginnings which would bring with them various uncertainties. Likewise, the Ekurhuleni amalgamation did bring some teething challenges, especially in the early years, as the nine administrations were consolidated into one metro in an attempt to integrate and synchronize the “bloated” team, while still maintaining its mandate and its task to function efficiently – not an easy task.

The amalgamation process is informed by Sections 24 and 25 of the Municipal Demarcation Act. It is projected that amalgamations would result in municipalities that are effective in gratifying the constitutional and developmental directives for service delivery (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2019). The challenges that have been recorded after the amalgamation of the respective municipalities include the struggle with huge service delivery backlogs, political interference, corruption, fraud, poor management, and lack of public participation (COGTA, 2017). Often, the process of

amalgamation has been met with challenges such as community protests, leadership conflicts and a lack of administrative capacity (Municipal Demarcation Board, 2019).

Participant P, a spatial planner, expressed that *“post amalgamation, the City of Ekurhuleni had challenges in integrating the different service centres, unifying the town planning schemes, [and in the] implementation and harmonisation of policies and services”*.

Participant B, the Divisional Head of City Intelligence and Long-term Planning identified

*“the contrasting salary scales, standardization of tools of trade, and the vast spatial inequalities as the challenges the city had to address post amalgamation”*.

From the analyzed data, research indicates that some implications stemming from the amalgamations include unresolved human resource management problems, that have led to increased intra-municipal labour upheavals, which, in their turn tend to weaken the organizational cultures in most municipalities (National Development Planning Report, 2011; Tshamano *et al.*, 2021). Research further indicates that if employees were timeously prepared and consulted, resistance and difficulties in the post mergers, as documented in municipalities across South Africa, would not have surfaced (COGTA, 2009; Municipal IQ, 2018; Ndlela *et al.*, 2019; NDP, 2011; Tshamano *et al.*, 2021).

Municipal size plays a vital role in governance and a larger size may raise assistance and information costs since larger municipalities require greater inputs in terms of planning, monitoring, and reporting than small ones (Lassen and Serritzlew, 2011). Managing a large municipality requires more effort than a smaller one and, importantly, it also requires the support of the employees to adopt the vision to ensure that all new

processes are implemented effortlessly. Maubane and Mothapo (2020) observed that communication is an imperative factor in ensuring success in resolving post-amalgamation problems and managing issues. The effects of amalgamation further include the cost factor, the cost of rearranging the different sectors/departments of the municipal organizations (e.g. new office buildings may be required, IT systems need to be integrated, regulations must be standardised) (Allers and Geertsema, 2016). As a result, the discourse and dialogue around amalgamation is shifting, and even more arguments against it, are coming to the fore.

This has given rise to the argument that having several smaller municipalities as opposed to large ones is more effective and more receptive to the fluctuations in community needs. Furthermore, accountability channels are in greater evidence in smaller municipalities. They tend to stimulate competition — a great factor in improving and providing quality service delivery (MDB, 2019). Furthermore, and unfortunately, it appears that the Ekurhuleni amalgamation has affected the quality of the services provided by the metro and that the city cannot keep up with the growing demand for services, amplified by the need to provide services to a larger vicinity.

Participant C, the HoD of Legislature, raised considerable arguments on the challenges emanating from the amalgamation process

*“which encompass the deterioration of service delivery in other areas as a result of spreading resources across the board to serve everyone; the depreciation of the infrastructure and the issue of non-payment of rates which affected the budget of the city”.*

Enwereji and Uwizeyimana (2020) acknowledge that the failure of municipalities to collect payments from both owing and non-paying residents has intensified the

consumer debt of municipalities and has contributed to diminishing the quality of the services provided. The global pandemic, COVID19, has also aggravated the lack of payment of rates and taxes which can be squarely attributed to the closing down of industries and businesses which also led to job losses in South Africa. While some residents attribute their non-payment defiance towards the incapacity of municipalities to provide equitable services, municipalities generally credit their failures in service delivery to the inability of residents to pay for the services consumed (Enwereji, 2018).

Participant E, the Divisional Head of City Planning, observed that integrating

*“the nine councils to build one metro provided a political challenge from the opposition parties. Management disputes and revenue collection [were] problematic due to the different billing systems that needed to be reconciled”.*

Participant D, a PR councillor, and Participant J, the ANC Chief Whip, lamented at the *“stretched financial resources which were required to meet the growing demand for services linked to the high migration rate, which made it burdensome to maintain and sustain service delivery”.*

A major difficulty facing South African municipalities is to generate an adequate income to ensure that the needs of a growing population are met, also considering the high rates of unemployment and poverty. Sub-Saharan Africa is confronted with the rapid growth of its urban population and does not have the required urban governance plans in place that can meet municipal responsibilities and manage the change, which has created large deficits in infrastructure and service delivery, both of which expose much of the urban population to high levels of risk (Satterthwaite, 2017).

Participant N, the City Planning Area Manager, argued that



*“amalgamation influenced overcrowding through rapid urbanization, which led to unplanned growth and the infrastructure rapidly deteriorated as it was not coping with the demand”.*

As a ripple effect, the city is also grappling with slow economic growth, which has effectively increased backlogs in service delivery. A case in point is the clinics which are overcrowded, to the extent that more clinics need to be built to serve the burgeoning communities.

Participant L, a spatial planner in the Department of City Planning, identified that

*“the biggest challenge, post amalgamation, is the identity crisis that the city encountered because of a lack of a central node/CBD, which required a change in mindset in city planning and the move to urban regeneration”.*

Todes *et al.* (2010) presents an argument that there is a common opinion among planners and politicians that the municipality lacks a specific identity as an entity, as the nine towns still have stronger identities than the metro municipality in its entirety. It might, however, be contested that such a single identity is essential for the effective management of the region. In fact, the current established structures, which are still based in the nine towns, appear to be impeding planning coordination between the various sectors within the municipality.

This critically necessitates the implementation of urban regeneration which will help address the spatial challenges in the metro. The aim of urban regeneration is to improve the general outlook of public spaces, the quality of life, and to adapt buildings and housing to the needs of the people. Urban regeneration involves rehabilitating distressed urban areas by restoring their older, historically significant areas, enhancing living conditions in the residential areas, revamping public spaces and modernizing

the urban infrastructure (Alpopi and Manole, 2013). Ekurhuleni, post amalgamation, had the responsibility to reconcile and redevelop the city by rebranding and crafting a new democratic identity, which would dismantle the patterns set through the spatial legacy of apartheid as they were oppressive and disjointed. This could be achieved through urban regeneration and master planning which would respond to the contemporary development period. Roberts (2000) meticulously captures the purpose of urban regeneration in cities by positing that it is a systematic and integrated vision and act which advance to resolve urban problems and seek to bring about a long-term improvement in the economic, physical, social, and environmental conditions of an area that has been subject to change.

In a follow up to this discussion, Participant O, a senior researcher in City Planning, argued

*“that amalgamation has resulted in the municipality having a bigger area to service in terms of service provision, infrastructure development and urban regeneration.”*

Furthermore, the City of Ekurhuleni is facing challenges in meeting its development objectives due to the challenge of the questionable suitability of the land which emanates from the prevalence of dolomite, sinkholes, wetlands, and the need to rehabilitate mining land. The struggle to acquire housing in human settlements has intensified the challenges faced by the city, which is also afflicted by land invasions and the mushrooming of informal settlements. The City of Ekurhuleni is also facing challenges, ranging from political, administrative and economic to social problems, which emerged after the implementation of the amalgamation programme. Amalgamation is a new process and is epitomized by a sense of uncertainty for the future and the sustainability of the project. Amalgamation has provided improvements

and development in the city. While the process has not been perfect and one of smooth sailing, the structures have been set in place. However, much work still needs to be done to attain the status of a world-class city – to access the expertise and resources and to be efficient enough to eradicate the persisting spatial and economic inequalities. Ekurhuleni should be seen as a developing city that has put in place a multi-pronged long-term approach to respond to the complicated and multi-faceted development challenges that keep engulfing the region.

#### **5.4.3 The divergent views of amalgamation in Ekurhuleni**

The amalgamation process is complex and there are no guarantees that the set goals will be achieved, municipal amalgamations are not favoured by everyone. In fact, this is due to the various structures/components in place which include the different stakeholders, the community, and the service providers buying into the vision to merge local institutions. The focus group interviews demonstrated that the ordinary community members are not in favour of amalgamation and that they feel strongly that the smaller municipalities are better equipped to provide more efficient service delivery systems.

Participant 1 from Focus Group A stated,

*“that amalgamation has only benefited government and not residents and that from their perspective, nothing much has changed since the amalgamation of small municipalities”.*

The common sentiment garnered from the focus groups is that the municipality is too large to equitably provide quality services across the metro. Changes in municipal size require a balance between two opposite spheres: – the economy and democracy.

This provides for complicated challenges to the functioning of a local democracy (Kjaer and Mouritzen, 2003).

Table 1 demonstrates the internal (municipality) *versus* the external (residents) viewpoints on the success of amalgamation in Ekurhuleni.

**Table 1. Perceptions of amalgamation in Ekurhuleni**

Internal opinion (Ekurhuleni Municipality)	External opinion (residents of Ekurhuleni)
1. Amalgamation has enhanced the development of the infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amalgamation has benefited only the government and not the residents. From their perspectives, nothing much has changed since the amalgamation of the small municipalities.</li> </ul>
2. Amalgamation has improved the provision of quality services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While service provision has improved, the key infrastructure is deteriorating. This is undermining new development.</li> <li>• Ratepayers in the suburban areas feel that they are charged more for services to cover for the non-payment culture in the townships.</li> </ul>
3. Equitable service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of service delivery is not the same across the municipality (e.g. the suburban</li> </ul>

	areas vs the townships). Refuse collection and sewerage issues are the greatest challenges faced by the townships.
4. Accountable and stable government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased corruption and financial mismanagement in local government.</li> </ul>
5. Sound development programmes that have improved the quality of life and continue to fast-track development in the metro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As opposed to the living conditions when the smaller municipalities were still operating as independent entities, the quality of life has improved. However, the standard of service provision has declined.</li> </ul>
6. Long-term plans that will make the metro a world-class city that is smart and sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The amalgamation process has benefited local government only and not the residents.</li> </ul>

**Source: (Own survey)**

Unlike the city’s perception of the success of amalgamation, the residents of Ekurhuleni experienced amalgamation and the on-going plans for its future differently.

Participant 1, from Focus Group B, argued

*“that amalgamation only benefited the municipality as a result of being able to collect revenue from an increased pool, while the quality of service provision has not improved”.*

Participant 2, also from Focus Group B, observed

*“that amalgamation was a good strategy; unfortunately, implementation of it has been bad which has resulted in the long-term dilapidation [deterioration] of the infrastructure”.*

Participant 2, from Focus Group A, argued that

*“the municipality is too big and, as a result, the municipality is struggling to efficiently respond and deal with challenges faced by residents timeously”.*

Participants 2 and 3, from Focus Group C, complained about

*“the poor maintenance of the key infrastructure, poor quality of services and the high cost of these services” and is of the view that “if the municipality was smaller, these challenges would have been resolved quicker and there would be more accountability”.*

Participant 1, from Focus Group C, ardently argued that

*“amalgamation has not been successful in Ekurhuleni as it has witnessed the dereliction of towns, like Alberton, [which] had high standards of service provision and cleanliness”.*

Participant 1, from Focus Group A, further indicated that

*“because the municipality is big, it is failing in adequately providing basic services, as there are always challenges with electricity, water, and potholes,” and strongly feels that “smaller towns [are] able and capable of dealing with challenges more efficiently”.*

Participant 3, from Focus Group C, concurred

*“that [the]sewage problem in Katlehong has gotten out of hand. As a result, residents and the business community are negatively impacted, with a case in point, Kwesine Hostel, that shares the same pipeline with Sam Ntuli Mall, suffering from constant blockages”.*

While the city of Ekurhuleni has made good strides to enhance development within it, unfortunately the amalgamation process has not achieved the desired outcomes. In fact, the residents feel the quality of services and the general maintenance of the infrastructure and services has not been satisfactory. The residents are not against the process of amalgamation, but strongly feel that the intervention has over-promised but under-delivered at great cost to the residents. While amalgamation has made great strides and fast-tracked development on the one hand, on the other, it has had devastating impacts: – the quality of services has declined, and the key infrastructure has not been properly preserved and maintained. The residents are quite happy with having access to piped water, electricity, Wi-Fi, clinics that operate 24 hours and tarred roads. However, they have been left disappointed by the inconsistent system for refuse removal, sewage leaks, potholes and the significant increase in pollution, which has left some parts of the city aesthetically unpleasant.

The third objective of this study was pursued to assess the value of amalgamation as a planning and political tool and its impact on local economic development. The results from the study show that in their concern for the afore-mentioned challenges, some residents feel strongly that amalgamation has not brought any change and that, as opposed to the large Ekurhuleni metro, the smaller municipalities are much more effective in coordinating quality service provision and could easily be held accountable. The residents also feel that the quality of the services provided by the metro is not up to standard and they are concerned about the deterioration in the key infrastructure.

According to this data, it can be hypothesized that over the years, the objectives of the amalgamation process have started to break down, and that the political paradigm has shifted and focused on other objectives. Amalgamation was planned as a long-term project which would work towards addressing spatial inequalities, uniform service delivery and infrastructural development. However, since the amalgamation process was implemented in the year 2000, different executive councils have served in Ekurhuleni. Each has had a different vision and ideas, and it is highly possible that at some point, the vision of amalgamation was lost.

Furthermore, the South African political landscape in the context of local government is currently being run by coalitions and the ruling party has lost influence and is no longer in power in Ekurhuleni. Ultimately, these changes have impacted to a limited extent on the overall provision of services and development in the city. The other part of the third objective focuses on local economic development. The City of Ekurhuleni is afflicted with socio-economic challenges stemming from the apartheid regime, with poverty, unemployment, and marginalization coming under the spotlight. These are historically pertinent challenges that persist, and which require interventions from the local government, irrespective of which political party is in power.

#### **5.4.4 Post amalgamation economic development in Ekurhuleni**

Economic development plays an essential role in driving economic emancipation, especially for those communities and their members trapped in abject poverty and unemployment. The association between economic development and the mitigation of poverty is not the only link of any consequence. There is also a significant link between economic growth and human development. As discussed above, the third objective of this study sought to assess the value of amalgamation as a planning and political tool and its impact on local economic development. This section examined the



various economic development initiatives that have been implemented by the city of Ekurhuleni to address socio-economic inequalities. It is the local municipalities of South Africa in particular that are characterised by and faced with the immense challenges of extreme poverty and unemployment, a lack of services, stagnant local economies, the shortage of skills required to drive local economic development, a lack of administrative capability, and the unsuccessful implementation of policies (Mashimate and Lethoko, 2018). Economic development and LED initiatives have been put in place to stimulate and accelerate development in communities through entrepreneurship, skills development through vocational training, and the financial investments to drive these projects. The City of Ekurhuleni has focused its economic development programme around the Aerotropolis Master Plan, which it seeks to use as an instrument for socio-economic and infrastructural development. This socio-economic development master plan is expected to be enhanced by the socio-economic activities intrinsic to the airport city and which are strategically accommodated within the logistics, agricultural and manufacturing corridors in the surrounding city region (CoE, 2021).

The plan significantly seeks to influence the economic benefits which are tied to the advantage of having the busiest airport in the African continent by planning economic development around it which would ensure convenience and ease of access to both national and international consumers. Since 2017, the city has managed to commence with the Riverfields Development Project (a mixed-use development), Plumbago Industrial Park (a business park), Green Reef Mega Projects (residential apartments), the OR Tambo Special Development Zone (business), the Gibela Rail Manufacturing Plant, The Tambo Springs Inland Port (logistics), and the Denel Kempton Park Campus (Aeronautics Aerostructure Manufacturing) which are all projects that have

contributed immensely to job creation and economic development (CoE, 2021). The city is on a massive drive for infrastructural and economic development that would include reviving and repositioning itself as the manufacturing hub in Gauteng province. The city's economic development goal is to accelerate investment by articulating an attractive enticements framework, which will provide support to small businesses for sustainability, the generation of income-earning opportunities through the development of a business-oriented infrastructure, the stimulation and revitalization of township economies, the development of industry-related skills, and job creation (Ekurhuleni IDP, 2022).

Participant J, the ANC Chief Whip, raised the point that

*“the intervention of the Ten-point Economic Plan of the city, [with]the crucial elements being the revitalization of the township economy, the land release programme and the Vuk’uphile programme, which is a skills development initiative of the metro”.*

The revitalization of the township economy strategy aims to remove structural barriers and focus on the revitalization of the township economy, to establish the social and economic value of the township economy and to ensure that the township businesses become vital participants in the Gauteng economy (Gauteng Economic Development, 2014). The City of Ekurhuleni has implemented projects such as the Automotive Centre in Geluksdal, the Thokoza Tourism Node in Khumalo Street, and the Etwatwa Industrial Hub, all of which have played an important role in job creation and stimulating the township economy (CoE, 2021).

Participant F, a divisional head of Economic Development, advanced that

*“the intervention of the Vuk’uphile construction project was envisioned to develop young contractors into fully-fledged contractors that will be able to perform labour-*

*intensive projects, with the significance of the programme being the goal to develop the administrative, practical, contractual, managerial and business skills of the apprentices”.*

Vuk’uphile is a programme presented by the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) of the South African Government. It is a national programme embracing all sectors of the government and state-owned enterprises. Its objective is to attract a substantial number of unemployed people into productive jobs, which would also involve training, so that they can increase their ability to earn an income (Kubayi, 2014).

Participant F, Divisional Head of Economic Development, further stated

*“that the last intake of the Vuk’uphile programme in Ekurhuleni produced 102 learners and 102 supervisors, who through the programme improved their construction and entrepreneurial skills, with the city spending 119 million on the project over three years”.*

After completion of the programme, learner contractors are expected to have fulfilled all the requirements to be certified as NQF Level 4 graduates, qualified in the supervision of construction processes, and to have advanced to a Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) grading (CoE, 2021).

Participant J, the ANC Chief Whip, emphasized,

*“the point of the core objective of the Vuk’uphile programme was to stimulate and accelerate skills development for young people through training and incubation to ensure that they become qualified contractors”.*

Kubayi (2014) argues that EPWP has created an opportunity for small business in construction. In essence, a good and inclusive strategy to expand and bring small-scale contractors into the industry is required.

Participant F, Divisional Head of Economic Development, alluded to another

*“programme established by the city which was coined the Ekurhuleni Community Enterprise Development Fund (ECEDF) – to assist with the development of community initiatives in the form of individual entrepreneurs, small, micro and medium enterprises, cooperatives, informal traders and formal businesses”.*

This is an intervention aimed at enhancing and developing the informal economy and is supported by the Ten-point Economic Plan of the city which focuses on the township economy. Importantly, the city needs to make more of an effort to ensure that there is infrastructural support and bundled enterprise development for small and emerging businesses. This will certify the success of the programme (Ekurhuleni Budget Review IDP, 2022).

The Ten-point Economic Plan of the city is anchored by a Local Economic Development (LED) initiative, which provides the “building blocks” for the informal economy. Local governments, through LED, are assigned developmental responsibilities to provide local communities within their areas of authority with basic services to alleviate poverty, enhance economic growth, and create employment prospects —, all contributing to improving the quality of life for all (Mashaimate, 2018). Masuku *et al.* (2016) stresses the fact that LED is about local individuals taking control and also responsibility for job growth and the economic welfare of their community to mitigate poverty. In the light of the country’s current battle with high unemployment rates and a struggling economy, LED is a vital tool for alleviating poverty and

eradicating inequality in post-apartheid South Africa. LED is crucial to the growth and development of the township economy since it is designed for and interconnected with co-operative enterprises and the implementation strategies based on the competitive use of local resources. LED brings about definite solutions when it comes to the alleviation of poverty and other developmental challenges, which include the creation of employment opportunities, economic welfare, income generation, food security and raising the standard of living for the local people (Marais, 2010). LED should be viewed as a community-building instrument which empowers communities, especially the youth, to be self-reliant and to create opportunities for themselves and others, rather than to be dependent on government for everything. The Constitution (1994) has assigned to local government in South Africa the fundamental responsibility of reforming local communities and environments as a foundation for an equitable, multi-ethnic, prosperous and genuinely non-racial society (SALGA, 2017).

Participant J, the ANC Chief Whip, further enunciates

*“that the municipality, in an effort to address inequalities and accelerate service provision, has embarked on a Rapid Land Release Programme, which is twofold, focusing on making land available for agricultural and residential purposes”.*

Additional to other vast economic donations/benefits, the city has released 56 farms, at a cost of R120 million, to local smallholder and subsistence farmers, together with over 1000 hectares of land, to be distributed to the beneficiaries through a medium-term lease (CoE, 2021). For residential purposes, the city is providing serviced sites through the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements and is also expected to make serviced stands available to eligible Gauteng families not capable of meeting their own housing needs without government support (CoE, 2021). With the serviced sites,

families can build their own houses gradually over a period ranging between 18 and 60 months. Land is a great asset for development, especially for previously disadvantaged communities, who, under the apartheid regime, and owing to its discriminatory policies and its support of prejudiced land tenure, suffered dereliction and neglect for years. The democratic government of South Africa now finds itself in the arduous position of having to address the subsequent impacts emanating from systemic discrimination, which has resulted in the spatial, social, and economic inequalities prevailing in the country. It is vitally important that government should address issues such as the unequal distribution of income and assets, the ownership of assets, as well as the role of property rights, food security, and the agricultural sector in the country's economy (National Treasury, 2019).

The persistent inequalities in South Africa are due to the lack of access to land for human settlement and for economic opportunities (e.g. farming) as the land is still mainly owned by the minority. Kepe and Hall (2016) argue that in the quest for social justice, land reform should be pursued rather than disengagement from racial discrimination, as the former would be pro-poor, would endorse gender equality, and transform agriculture by blurring the lines between the commercial and traditional (communal) farming areas of the country.

Residential land is also crucial for human development as it speaks to basic service provision, which is heavily tied up with basic human rights that are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic. The White Paper published by the Department of Land Affairs in 1997, affording poor families access to municipal communal land, is another way in which access to land has been re-allocated, and the statutory requirement of equitable access supported. Furthermore, the redistribution of communal land to poor citizens who wish to enhance their incomes could contribute considerably to local

economic development and provide an economical land transformation alternative (DLA, 1997). The City of Ekurhuleni, in conjunction with the Gauteng province, is advancing development and addressing inequalities by making land available to people and thus enabling them to improve their livelihoods, either socially or economically. The land release programme is a vital component of social development in Ekurhuleni. It takes into consideration the huge backlog in the provision of adequate human settlements, while the city is concurrently battling to curb the development of additional informal settlements, which would put a strain on the available resources. Ortiz and Cummins (2011) advocate that inequality causes health and social challenges, sluggish economic growth, and the possibility to instil in people political uncertainty. Since inequality on the local and national governmental levels leading to dysfunctionality, justice must of necessity be prioritized in the development plan of the state.

Participant F, the Divisional Head of Economic Development, identified that

*“the indigent programme was playing a fundamental role in bridging social and economic inequalities that are prevalent in the city”.*

The municipal indigent programme is envisioned to improve the lives of those who cannot pay for municipal services and to give them access to free basic services. The programme was established as an intervention to lessen the impact of poverty and to help citizens escape the cycle of poverty (City of Tshwane, 2022).

Participant F, the Divisional Head of Economic Development, cited that

*“the ANC government, which [was] in power in the city until 2021, had a developmental agenda to respond to poverty and unemployment, which is evident in its programmes that it put in place while in government”.*

The indigent programme allows for the provision of free basic electricity and water to unemployed people, child-headed families and pensioners. Social welfare programmes have resulted in a better quality of life for the indigent population, as social grants have progressively turned out to be a source of livelihood in South Africa, in that they contribute substantially to lowering the poverty levels (Meyer, 2014). Municipalities in South Africa are mandated by legislation to have an indigent policy in place to ensure that they can respond to the needs of those classified as indigents.

Leburu (2017) infers that the implementation of indigent policies is an arrangement by municipalities through their provision of subsidised services and frequently described as free basic services (FBS). Thus, the arrangements with indigents cannot be uniform, but differ from municipality to municipality. In fact, each municipality uses its own discretion to determine which criteria would apply in determining which recipients would qualify for free basic services. The post-apartheid South African government inherited a backlog of basic services (e.g. water and sanitation, housing, electricity), and although municipalities are accorded autonomous power, they have a responsibility to provide effective, adequate, and impartial services to communities to eradicate the inequalities and shortcomings resulting from the apartheid policies (Moatshe and Mbecke, 2013).

These developmental interventions are carefully planned and have been designed by the IDP tool, which is intended to coordinate, integrate and drive development programmes over a five-year period. While these interventions have changed the lives of poor people in the city, many remain destitute and in need of economic emancipation. This is due to the large population size, which also influences the high rate of unemployment in the city. Additionally, the developmental deficit, which emanated from the apartheid regime, has never been comprehensively addressed, to



the extent that some people have been left marginalized in informal settlements, with the housing backlog and the lack of basic services still persisting. Therefore, assessing the value of amalgamation as a planning and political tool and its impact on local economic development has laid bare some shortcomings in the City of Ekurhuleni. Whereas there has been economic transformation and development in the city, it has not been rapid and extensive enough to match the burgeoning demands of the indigent population. This finding suggests that there are governance issues that are impeding the city from meeting its obligations, either at implementation level or in its monitoring and evaluation processes.

### **5.5 Governance and governmentality**

South Africa has over the decades designed numerous developmental policies which have never really achieved their potential because of poor governance and the inappropriate implementation of development interventions. Post democracy, the state needed to rigorously apply itself in the arduous struggle to build a stronger democratic state that would be responsive to the developmental needs of its citizens, who had been previously disadvantaged by the apartheid regime. Furthermore, and importantly, the government needed to foster social cohesion and integration among the different racial groups.

However, instead of pursuing the afore-mentioned options, the state took the route of progressively moving towards contracting out and outsourcing state functions. With the government departments now lacking the necessary experience, expertise, and skills, including the basic administrative skills, the consequence was a weakened state (Tapscott, 2017). For example, the City of Ekurhuleni has been outsourcing refuse removal services in some areas and between 2020 and early 2023, the city has encountered challenges with refuse collection. Several areas in the city were not

serviced regularly as per their schedule which caused a huge backlog in the waste removal system, resulting in increased pollution levels and a serious health hazard to the residents. This service outage was caused by breakdowns in the city's waste removal trucks. In the past, the city had leased trucks that were not in a satisfactory condition. This made it even more difficult to keep up with waste collection across Ekurhuleni (Kheswa, 2023). Another outsourced service was that of water meter readers, which helped the city record accurate readings for billing purposes. The contract ended in 2021 and the city struggled to find another service provider in time to continue with this service.

This was serious as billing is a very sensitive issue, which can lead to serious disputes between the residents and the municipality. The advantage of outsourcing these two services (refuse removal and meter reading) is that it assists the municipality enormously in its timeous provision of an efficient service. Since post amalgamation, and the fact that the size of the municipality has increased, and brought with it service delivery problems, outsourcing to others that could do a better, faster, cheaper job, and thus render a quality service, proved to be advantageous.

The outsourcing corporation would then also be able to focus on its speciality (Somjai, 2017). The downside to outsourcing is when service provision is negatively affected<sup>7</sup>, and it leads to the breakdown of trust between the municipality and the residents. The breakdown of trust has fatal consequences as it leads to non-payment of services from the residents, and this has financial implications for the municipality. One of the disadvantages of outsourcing is the failure to coordinate deliveries which can lead to over-extended delivery time frames, inferior quality of output, and deficiencies in the

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<sup>7</sup> In this case, these two (refuse removal and meter reading) are essential services.

job carried out (Somjai, 2017). With the documented lack of skills in government departments, the state has failed to effectively service the citizens and, as a result, service delivery and the services provided by the state have been in disarray. Tapscott (2017) argues that the immense dependence on tendering and outsourcing to deliver public goods has evidently not improved the service delivery system. The reason given is that the delivery system has created opportunities for fraud and corruption, which did not previously exist. Government is now faced with the task of rebuilding and strengthening its institutions to effect efficient governance and to provide services to communities.

Niiranen *et al.* (2019) observed that implementing new organizational reforms in public administration requires the acceptance of new steering models, the involvement of different decision-making parties, and the adoption of new approaches and techniques at the national level. There is also a need for a paradigm shift in the way government operates and functions as the current model has not been effective and efficient. Change is not simplistic, and it is often met with resistance. Thus, it is very important that leadership should share the vision and the need for reforms with government employees and, importantly, the electorate. Institutional reform is crucial in government because its implementation is connected to specific policies which are in place to respond to specific reforms or to solve some problems in society (Niiranen *et al.*, 2019).

In this context, reforms and a paradigm shift are required to help the municipality realize sound governance, which will be accountable and within the precepts of the rule of law. Good governance has repeatedly been recognized as crucial to achieving sustainable development and inclusive growth, to ensuring that governments are accountable to their citizens and to effectively confront corruption-related challenges

(Schoeberlein, 2020). Consecutive reports from the Auditor General's Office and the Public Service Commission disclosed that much of the fraudulent activity in the public sector is in supply chain management and in the awarding of state tenders (Auditor-General, 2011; Public Service Commission, 2015). This has caused great instability and failure to adequately provide services to poor communities and has resulted in their being further disadvantaged. Van Wyk (2020) argues that since the inception period of the NDP, there seems to have been little progress made. The South African Reserve Bank (2018) observed that the real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita has been declining and productivity growth is slow and appears to be slowing down even further.

Furthermore, unemployment is intensifying from the already high levels experienced throughout the previous years, and most of the priorities in the NDP are not about new policies or programmes but about improving the quality of implementation of the existing ones (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Harvey (2012) the biographer of Kgalema Motlanthe, quotes the former president of South Africa as conceding that the ANC in 1994 was not ready to govern as it had a significant shortage of the technical, managerial, political skills, and experience to run government. Furthermore, most members deployed to government were not prepared for the intricate workings of governance as they had not been trained as public servants to prepare to deal with detailed political, technical, and administrative issues.

The formative years of the ANC in government should have been used for building a strong governance system, but because a poor foundation had been laid, the current leaders are still struggling with attaining good governance that is accountable and within the prescripts of the law. The governing party (ANC) has failed to govern the country adequately; its internal challenges, which have been dominated by power

struggles and corruption, bear testimony to this. Consequently, the party has been struggling with its Organizational Renewal Ideology since its 2007 elective conference, while the theme for the 2022 conference was again renewal. Harvey (2012) further argues that the ANC's policy discussion documents over the years have not been inspirational, primarily because they are expressed in the same language and in vague themes (social transformation, organizational renewal, developmental state, capable state, etc.) that hardly address societal issues, such as poverty, unemployment, and development.

Unfortunately, these documents all emanated from their national conferences or strategic policy discussions which were supposed to drive the policy direction of the state. The fundamental shortcomings of these conferences is that the policy imperatives that were inadvertently discussed at the time became state objectives and, as such, dictated the policy direction. The majority in the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC is also part of the cabinet, which essentially ensures that no matter how flawed the policies adopted by the ruling party are, they will be implemented. Owing to these challenges, government has provided a lack-lustre performance on the implementation of policies which has inhibited the Republic of South Africa from reaching its full potential as a developed country.

According to the OECD (2018), good governance is not a goal in itself but rather a means to an end; therefore, it represents the rules, processes and institutions that are put in place to achieve more comprehensive and participatory societies, accountable governments, and stable and affluent nations/countries. Poor governance in South Africa has systematically managed to infiltrate from the national to the provincial and finally to the local government level. This has greatly affected the potential of government institutions to implement policy interventions. The implementation of

developmental interventions is linked to good governance and without efficient governance structures in place, such appropriate implementation measures are impossible. This results in a stunted pace of development and minimal overall growth. Unfortunately, this has been a constant feature in developing countries in the Global South.

### **5.6 Economic development of the state: South Africa**

Economic development is essential in promoting and sustaining the common welfare of citizens as it focuses on the key components promoting quality of life, namely, the provision of quality healthcare, the growth of the economy, and the creation of knowledge through research and technological developments, all of which are necessary for survival. Coccia (2018) argues that economic development is nurtured where there are appropriate social systems in place, with superior democracy and culture, good economic governance, a structured higher education system, and high-level inventive outputs.

Investments in the key services (e.g. healthcare, education, and technological innovation) play a critical role in accelerating economic development and the generation of wealth for countries. Post-democratic South Africa has been battling to eradicate poverty, unemployment and a slow growing economy which have impeded the country in achieving satisfactory development. While the economic outlook improved in 2018 and saw advancement from the slow growth of the previous decades, the recent upward economic growth trend indicates that the country is recuperating from a challenging 2015 and 2016, which marked the end of the super-commodity cycle<sup>8</sup> and severe drought (World Bank, 2018).

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<sup>8</sup> A period of constant and sustained price increases, typically driven by the sturdy demand for raw materials, manufactured materials, and sources of energy, lasting more than five years.

Economic growth in South Africa has been slow and is always accompanied by turbulent periods which are influenced by political instability and corruption. These events have been evident throughout the proceedings of the State Capture Commission, which unearthed the systemic corruption that bled the state dry. The Schools of Classical and Neoclassical Economics have analysed development in terms of the effectual allocation of scarce productive resources to provide for optimum growth, productivity, and expansion in the range of goods and services (Coccia, 2019). For these ends to be achieved, the state must execute efficient governance and place measures of accountability in place.

This has, however, proved to be a stumbling block to the South African government. As a result, South Africa remains inhibited by its low growth potential, its slow growth in private investments, and the weak integration of its economy into the global value chains. These aforementioned factors have prevented the country from realizing the new economic opportunities emerging across the globe, and from catching up with the living standards in comparable economies (World Bank, 2018). South Africa has the potential to become an economic powerhouse. This is because of its manufacturing prowess and its reserves of natural resources, which will require good management and good governance to, ensure, amongst others, state accountability and economic foresight.

The World Bank (2018) recommends that South Africa should build on its proportionate advantages, namely, those pertaining to an industrially proficient economy, to create new domestic and international markets. The requirements would be advanced productivity levels, innovation, and, importantly, a reduction in its extraordinary dependency on commodity price fluctuations, which do not currently look favourable for the Republic in the medium term. The state needs to put measures in

place to stimulate economic growth, to contribute to economic development and to improve on the outlook and welfare of its population, especially of the youth, who are plagued by the high unemployment rate and who, as a consequence of this threat to their survival, turn to crime and drugs. Going forward, the developmental policies being implemented by the state need to be aligned to the objectives of economic development and have measurable outcomes.

### **5.7 The impact of neoliberal policies in developing countries**

Neoliberal policies are defined as actions or inactions that promote free-market competition and regulated government intervention in the economy as in the case of free trade, deregulation, the removal of subsidies and privatization (Stiglitz, 2002). Neoliberals argue that the role of the state in the economy should be restricted to establishing and protecting free markets, and that all other functions are better executed by private enterprise.

However, practically all of today's powerful countries have supported the principle of state intervention in the building of their economies — contrary to what the neoliberal policy would traditionally want to convince everyone (Friedman, 1970; World Bank, 1994; Gumisiriza, 2019). For development to be efficient and worthwhile, the state needs to play an active role to ensure that all the developmental objectives are meticulously met. This is because the state is bound by the Constitution to ensure that basic services and human rights are met.

Private enterprises are largely driven by profits and the end goal is to procure large profits at a lower cost. Owing to myriads of challenges, the South African Government, post 1994, has not been able to adequately meet its development objectives. In this respect, as a result of privatization and the outsourcing of key state functions,



corruption and financial misconduct are the specific areas that have come under the spotlight. This situation stands in sharp contrast to that of the olden days, where public resources were traditionally in the hands of communities which distributed them equitably in the society without the dominant drive and push for maximized profits. Privatisation has created multiple and profitable opportunities for a market that is dominated by huge corporations, especially in the agricultural, manufacturing, and industrial sectors.

Neoliberals have advanced an argument that privatized amenities are more cost-effective than those managed by the state, and they are of the view that market competition and commercial efficiency can drive prices down for consumers (Gumisiriza, 2019). However, these presumptions have proved to be inaccurate and impractical when the core functions of the state, which are to provide essential services and to ensure that the welfare of its citizens are prioritised, are borne in mind. Developed countries have become successful through their protection of their national assets, such as state-owned enterprises. A case in point is Singapore, which ensures that the state owned-enterprises and industries are protected.

However, while the government promotes the principle of free trade, state intervention allow the country to aggressively attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into areas of the economy that would create employment, stimulate its growth potential and technical development, and constantly play a proactive role in supporting the competitiveness of its manufacturing sector (Gumisiriza, 2019). In contrast, the South African government has failed to purposefully protect and build strong economic institutions to stimulate growth and create sustainable employment and economic opportunities. Harvey (2012) observed that since 1994, the ANC and the government have implemented neoliberal and social policies that have exacerbated poverty and

the inequalities that were shaped by the apartheid legacy. Mohan *et al.* (2000) argued that after nearly four decades of economic neoliberalism in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), there was still an unresolved deliberation on whether this change in policy orientation had benefited the continent or prohibited African nations from accomplishing greater prosperity. The major critics emphasize the inflexible nature of neoliberalism in that it does not tolerate the country-specific situations that are required to address the deeper roots of the challenges faced by African economies.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

Since the legacy of apartheid still dominates spatial patterns and has an influence on how and where development occurs, it has had far-reaching consequences for South Africa. While modern-day planners have been grappling with addressing the issues around the historical spatial legacy, new, modern challenges, namely, urbanization and globalization, have come to the fore. The spatial legacy of apartheid has, however, proved to be tenacious and very difficult to redress. Unfortunately, as an instrument of oppression, somehow it has been reinvented involuntarily.

Mbembe (2004) observed that apartheid in South Africa attempted to create a particular moral order through the spatial arrangements that it prescribed, the physical distance between the races being fundamentally understood to consecrate the desired moral distance between them. This has resulted in constant social tensions as contentions persist because of struggles to access quality and just services that will enhance the livelihoods of those who still suffer under the apartheid legacy. The enforced geographies of separation have led to developmental inequalities and have denied people who were relocated to townships on the peripheries of cities, far from civilization and development, access to quality services.

Seekings and Natrass (2005) argued that post-apartheid economic and social policies deracialized, and also preserved the class divisions of the late apartheid government. This they did by spreading them beyond its white historical base to incorporate small, developing African middle-class people and the classified working class. This is demonstrated by the deep inequalities that currently exist in the urban areas and that have their roots in poverty and unemployment. Scholars have argued that the South African urban structure is characterised by a number of inadequacies (e.g. unequal access to economic and social opportunities, poorly located lower income settlements, unsatisfactory public transport systems and spatial structural elements resulting from apartheid-era policies and legislation (Drakakis-Smith, 1992; Maylam, 1995; Boraine *et al.*, 2006; du Toit, 2007).

The class divisions and inequalities persist, and the democratic government has not been able to adequately respond to the prevailing inequalities. Furthermore, their respective policy interventions have also not been successful. The National Planning Commission diagnosed spatial inequality as a challenge which continues to marginalise the poor, and as one of the significant cross-cutting issues that will continue to influence South Africa's long-term development (National Planning Commission, 2012).

One of the objectives of this study was to investigate past and current spatial patterns and their impact on communities. This study has found that, generally, past and current spatial patterns have not significantly changed and that specific spatial patterns continue to marginalize the previously disadvantaged communities. While some measure of development and renewal has been accomplished in the marginalized communities, there has been little progress in reversing the apartheid spatial legacy. The democratic government, post 1994, introduced and implemented

different policy interventions to address poverty, unemployment, the upgrading of the infrastructure, and to provide quality service delivery. At local government level, the City of Ekurhuleni underwent municipal amalgamation, with the goal of addressing spatial inequalities and of fast-tracking development in the metro. Amalgamation was favoured as a political decision that was aligned with the pro-development agenda of the ruling party. It was used to pool resources and to then distribute them equitably across all the areas under the jurisdiction of the city. With amalgamation, the city has striven to achieve uniformity in terms of development and service provision and to plug the gaps in the development trajectory which were caused mainly by the spatial legacy of apartheid.

Municipal amalgamations have been endorsed as ways of improving competencies, cutting costs and improving capacity in local government's delivery of services (Tavares, 2018). The officials of the city contend that their amalgamation strategy is a long-term development project which seeks to unify service delivery, improve the service provision, speed up infrastructural development, and ultimately achieve economies of scale. Fox and Gurley (2006) posited that from observing the international experience and best practice, the core objective of most amalgamations is to take advantage of economies of scale as it is perceived that when they prevail, the larger municipalities will incur fewer costs per resident, while the revenue per resident won't necessarily have to change.

However, amalgamations are context-driven, and a one-size-fits-all approach does not work. A case in point is that an amalgamation in a developing country will yield different results compared to an amalgamation in a developed country. Another research objective of this study was to explore the spatial impact of amalgamation on communities and individuals in Ekurhuleni. The results of this investigation have

shown that amalgamation in Ekurhuleni has not produced the envisaged outcomes, which encompass uniform development, addressing spatial inequalities, and accomplishing economies of scale. While amalgamation in Ekurhuleni has improved service provision and infrastructural development, it has not been able to address its spatial inequalities.

The government's unclear and indecisive approach to spatial divides means that the scars of history largely remain – an unhealthy, unjust, and undermining situation. This is due to the fact that every city is characterized by exclusive business precincts and high-class suburbs, with premium amenities that are adjacent to overcrowded townships and unsavoury informal settlements (Turok, 2018). A report by UN-Habitat (2020) also established that the cities in sub-Saharan Africa accommodate the worst housing conditions in the world, with 60 percent of the total population in the region living in shanty towns and informal settlements. Furthermore, the existence of economies of scale in municipalities has been a contentious issue, and over the years, there is still no conclusive evidence to prove that they really exist – especially when one analyses local government budgets in South Africa and how they are struggling to achieve satisfactory and quality service provision.

The South African government has introduced and implemented a variety of developmental policies, which theoretically promised numerous interventions. However, owing to poor governance and the mismanagement of funds stemming from corruption, poor financial accountability, and lack of transparency, unfortunately underdelivered. A developmental state's vision should be to promote development and empower its people to be self-sufficient and to be active participants to ensure that they stimulate growth and attract investors. A developmental state is not one that creates a population that is dependent on the state for survival and welfare.

Lamentably, South Africa has become more of a welfare state than a developmental state. This has inadvertently affected economic growth and the general economic outlook of the country. This sad situation has compromised the state and seen government being forced to turn to the IMF for bailouts, which of themselves come with certain conditions, which are unfavourable to the growth of the country. South Africa, as a country, is in dire need of good governance, which will help ensure that the needs of the people are met and that development is sustainable – financially, socially, and environmentally.

It is universally acknowledged that good governance is essential at all levels, for fostering stability, endorsing progress, and establishing sustainable communities. Good local governance involves various combinations (e.g. participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective, and competent, equitable, comprehensive, and following the rule of law (Sutcliffe, 2020). The strongest indicator of a country with good governance in place is reflected in the municipality's ability to plan and implement its Integrated Development Plan. Municipalities plan their programmes and budget for service delivery through the IDP, which is a legislative requirement that has a five-year term and is reviewed annually.

Dlamini and Reddy (2018) acknowledge that the IDP is a crucial tool in enticing other funding besides that obtained from the provincial departments of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. Investors typically feel secure and confident in investing their money with municipalities that have clear-cut objectives and development plans. The IDP is a critical instrument for planning developments and is largely influenced by the needs of the community. Critically, these needs can be fulfilled only by government institutions that are driven by a lofty ethos of accountability, efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness to the needs of those

requiring services. Turok *et al.* (2017) stresses that by maintaining controls and procedures that are more consistent, less bureaucratic and more receptive to socio-economic realities, government institutions can be more effective in their governance and also be more development oriented. This is very important because, post democracy, there are still large numbers of people who, because of poor governance, are still afflicted by poverty, unemployment, and a lack of basic services.

More and more people are in dire need of the positive effects of socio-economic development because the population, more especially that of the city of Ekurhuleni, has increased exponentially. The global pandemic, COVID19, further exacerbated the plight of the poor as substantial jobs were lost and companies closed down, and as a result, more people have been dependent on the government's social relief programmes. Post-democratic South Africa has been battling to eradicate poverty and unemployment, and to manage the slow-growing economy. This has delayed satisfactory development. Economic development is essential in promoting and sustaining the common welfare of citizens as it focuses on the key qualities of life, which include the provision of quality healthcare, the growth of the economy, and the creation of knowledge, through research and technological developments, which are necessary for survival.

The third objective of this study intended to assess the value of amalgamation as a planning and political tool and its impact on local economic development. Evidence from the available data strongly indicates that the city has put in place interventions to drive economic development. They were informed by applying the amalgamation mechanism as a political instrument for development to respond to the fragmented development in the region. Amalgamation was favoured because of the purported benefits of pooling resources to service larger areas and of providing uniform service

provision and equal development. However, the economic reforms have not been rapid and comprehensive enough to respond to the backlogs in respect of human settlements and the provision of basic services, and to the high population growth rate, the high levels of unemployment and fragile economic growth. Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that amalgamation in Ekurhuleni has not significantly achieved its objectives, which were to address spatial inequalities, uniform development, and improved service delivery. Overall, this study strengthens the idea that amalgamation is a complex process which has no guarantee for successful implementation.

Furthermore, it is a sophisticated phenomenon for implementation in developing countries and cities, such as Ekurhuleni, which tenaciously hold on to the colonial spatial design, but which is exacerbated by modern challenges, such as rapid population growth, urbanization, and globalization. The goal of amalgamation to pool resources for the enhancement of service provision and to maximize economies of scale is hindered because of the growing demand for services which inversely leads to diseconomies of scale. This is because the population struggles to pay for rates and services because of the slow growth of the economy and unemployment, two factors that have further been aggravated by the global pandemic, COVID19.

In conclusion, spatial planning challenges, compounded by economic inequalities, continue to afflict the city. Spatial gaps have persisted despite the granting of many constitutional right, including freedom of movement within the country, to all citizens. This demonstrates that spatial inequalities are multi-dimensional and wide-ranging — economic, social, environmental, institutional, and psychosocial — and that all of these components have thwarted the modest solutions implemented by government (Turok *et al.*, 2017). Pieterse and Owens (2018) argue that spatial inequality has prevented



sections of the population in the city from accessing jobs, social opportunities, and high-quality education. Furthermore, the process of amalgamation in Ekurhuleni has not conclusively addressed the apartheid-induced spatial inequalities, which have unfortunately become the breeding ground for social and economic injustices. The City of Ekurhuleni is afflicted by poverty, which stands at 31%, while the Gini Coefficient is 0,633 – alarming inequality measures, with the unemployment rate in the city standing at 31,6%, which, as opposed to the provincial and national average, is excessive (Ekurhuleni, 2022). The biggest impediment to South Africa's policy and regulatory framework is that people with low incomes are forced to live at sites where it is cheap and easy to build, rather than at locations with stronger economies and more jobs (Turok, 2018). This ultimately reproduces and enforces the sustained marginalization of the poor which leads to the uncontrollable increase in informal settlements.

The adoption of Eurocentric policies, such as amalgamation, is problematic because of the lack of empirical evidence regarding their feasibility in the local context. Literature has proved the complexity of amalgamations and that they are not light work to successfully implement, even in developed countries and economies. This research project has identified an empirical gap in the feasibility of amalgamation. While amalgamations are very attractive theoretically, in respect of the benefits that they provide, practically, they are tough and laborious to accomplish. Khettab (2020) defines empirical research as a type of research that can be tested and replicated in different contexts.

An empirical gap in any thesis is the type that deals with gaps in the previous research on the same subject, while the disputed gap deals with the research findings or implications which need to be assessed or empirically proven (Miles, 2017). In this case, amalgamation is a concept that has been largely researched and implemented

in developed countries across Europe, Asia, and North America. Consequently, there have been limited feasibility studies of amalgamation in the Global South. Therefore, there is little context and scope available for referencing in the African and local context on the effectiveness of amalgamation, with due consideration being given to the level of development, population size, economic conditions, and the requirements for an environment that is conducive to a successful amalgamation.

Previous research studies on amalgamations has not replicated or tested their findings in the African context, and this has been a great limitation. However, this very limitation creates an opportunity for future research projects, whereby African researchers can add their voice and provide a perspective on amalgamations that is defined by local perspectives and needs. The City of Ekurhuleni has provided a starting point for future research to gauge the implications, benefits, and shortcomings of amalgamations. The insights gained from this study may be of assistance in future research on municipal amalgamations and the developmental needs of the marginalized population emanating from the spatial legacy of apartheid. The city has shown that it has great potential to develop and become a world-class smart city.

This achievement can be attained only through good governance, sound policies, the forging of vibrant partnerships with the private sector, and fruitful relations with the public (which is the electorate). Governance is what the government and its partners do; it is the application of leadership, management, power, and policy. Significantly, good governance refers to the capacity of city councils and their partners to articulate and implement sound policies and systems that reproduce the interests of local citizens in a way that is transparent to and inclusive of those with the least authority and resources (SACN, 2019). This chapter thoroughly discussed the spatial planning challenges that are significantly afflicting the city. It further challenges the City of

Ekurhuleni to continue with its overall development project, which still has a long way to go. In fact, there are still a number of developmental objectives and goals to be attained if the city is to achieve its mission of “*providing sustainable and people-centred services, which are affordable, appropriate and of high quality*”, and the vision of being a “*smart, creative and developmental city*” (Ekurhuleni, 2022).

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This study has achieved its research aim through an extensive scientific investigation. It set out to investigate the spatial, economic and political transformation of amalgamated municipalities and spatial planning in the post-apartheid period. The study was centred around the phenomenon of municipal amalgamations as a tool of governance and of improving service provision in local government. Municipal amalgamations have over the years been influenced by the need to improve the efficiency and capacity of municipalities to provide services, good governance, and sustainable budgets. The overarching goal of amalgamation in the City of Ekurhuleni was to address spatial inequalities, fragmented development and to improve the standard of service delivery.

The study established that amalgamations are complex processes and that spatially, they work out differently, depending on the context in which they are undertaken. Importantly, the study further determined that amalgamations come with advantages and disadvantages, which can significantly influence the success or failure of the policy intervention in question. This research project identified an empirical gap in the feasibility of amalgamations. While amalgamations are theoretically very attractive on the benefits that they provide, practically, they are tough and laborious to accomplish.

#### **6.2 Spatial legacy of apartheid and its consequences**

The spatial legacy of apartheid has had far-reaching impacts and has proved to be impossible to dismantle and redress. The spatial and socio-economic inequalities that it brought have persisted. Massey (2005) concurs with Lefebvre that space is a social

product because it develops through interaction, and that “space is neither a ‘subject’ nor an ‘object’, but rather, a social reality. The discourse being presented here describes space as a social product which has an impact on the daily interactions of people. As such, the quality of space has a bearing on the quality of life. The colonial and apartheid governments forced people of colour to be removed from economic opportunities, which came at great cost to individuals, families, and communities (Turok, 2018).

These spatial inequalities, which have persisted over the decades, post-apartheid, have produced unfavourable spatial interactions, which have in turn caused life to be unbearable for people residing in the townships. These are the areas to which people of colour were forcibly relegated with the implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950. While executing inferior or unsuitable town planning practices, municipal officials sternly regulated housing developments in the separate residential localities especially designated for them.

In contrast, areas where white persons dwelled were increasingly categorized by low-density layouts, public spaces, green belts, and access to a superior infrastructure and municipal services (Strauss, 2019). More than two decades subsequent to the abolition of apartheid, the gap between the locations where most of the people are now living and those where the jobs and resources are concentrated continues to dominate the local municipal scene (Turok, 2018). Space is an active part of how social identity is shaped and is meaningful in terms of the human interactions that take place since place is particularly significant to people: — it resonates with symbolic and emotional importance (Foster, 2005). Ireland (2015) observed that a person’s experience of space determines the way in which he/she views the world. In fact, one’s perception of space has a significant influence on the perception of the built

environment, and the quality of daily life. While the City of Ekurhuleni has tried to improve the quality of life of its residents, by providing quality services to them, it has not managed to effectively eradicate the spatial imbalances which have bred a multi-faceted challenge for the city (e.g. poverty, unemployment, and overcrowding). Since the demise of the apartheid rule, the *status quo* has remained: — people of colour have remained where they were in the townships and are still marginalised as they still have restricted access to towns. Currently, restrictions are not because of the rule of law but because of a lack of means to access the city.

The lack of access to the city has not only marginalized people, but it has also further impeded social justice and strengthened inequality. This has had serious socio-economic repercussions in that human settlements are separated from social and economic amenities. An efficient and effective spatial arrangement of the economy and society are crucial because dense settlements that are well-connected with others, and amenities, can enhance prosperity and social cohesion.

Dispersed settlements are inclined to exclude people from opportunities, which strengthen social divisions (Turok, 2018). Significantly though, it is imperative to note that according to Lefebvre, “*urban space is not a simple empty container in which social actors move; but a creative social force in which to express tensions and contradictions, urban memories, symbols and meanings that the community attributes to the built environment*” (Lefebvre, 1991). Therefore, when deciding on the way in which settlements are to be built, the human aspect needs to be considered. Unfortunately, this is what the apartheid regime failed to respect in black communities.

### **6.3 Analysis of research findings in relation to research objectives**

This study has demonstrated that post-apartheid urban growth and service delivery programmes have not been able to keep up with the demand for services, particularly basic services, housing and public transportation. The hypothesis of the researcher was based on the assertion that spatial inequalities and fragmented development have a negative impact on service provision and the quality of life in the communities of Ekurhuleni. As determined in the hypothesis, the research findings have revealed that as a product of spatial planning, amalgamation has been used as a planning tool and implemented to accelerate development and to mitigate the spatial inequalities in the area that were produced by the apartheid legacy of separate development. The section below provides a link between the findings and the research objectives.

#### **6.3.1 Evaluating the role of the municipal amalgamation policy in addressing the spatial legacy of apartheid**

Amalgamation was undertaken as a political strategy in Ekurhuleni to address, amongst others, the challenges relating to the fiscus, failing municipalities, spatial inequalities, and spatial restructuring. The need for amalgamation emanated from the need to address the spatial inequalities that were systematically produced through spatial planning during the apartheid era, and that have since persisted. One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that amalgamations are intricate and there is no guarantee that they will work out or yield success in their set objectives. The numerous service delivery protests in Ekurhuleni annually indicate that “bigger” is not always “better”. The debate around amalgamation has two contrasting sides: – one side views large municipalities as better able to manage equitable and reliable service delivery at economies of scale. It is presumed that smaller municipalities are

more responsive to local concerns (Kabale, 2020)<sup>9</sup> than to economies of scale. Two decades, post amalgamation, the apartheid legacy persists, and development in the City of Ekurhuleni has remained fragmented. The provision of quality and non-discriminatory services remains a challenge. In fact, depending on their location (as during the apartheid era), residents falling under the same municipality continue to experience quality *versus* inadequacy differently. In essence the process of amalgamation has not been able to deconstruct the apartheid spatial patterns and the inequalities thus transpiring.

### **6.3.2 The spatial impact of amalgamation on communities and individuals**

The results from this study show that the amalgamation process in Ekurhuleni has unified service provision and sped up development in the previously disadvantaged areas. It has also afforded the residents the much-needed infrastructure, such as schools and clinics, which has brought positive outcomes to their quality of life. Amalgamation has failed to exert a meaningful impact on the lives of the ordinary people as it has not really changed the landscape of apartheid's spatial legacy.

This can be mainly attributed to the post-amalgamation Ekurhuleni facts that the quality of service provision and the key infrastructure have deteriorated. Furthermore, while amalgamation has sought to unify the city and to work towards its having one identity, the identities of the respective disestablished former East Rand cities are still very strong and prevalent, especially when compared with the City of Ekurhuleni that is currently still being developed. On the question of the spatial impacts of amalgamation, this study found that there is a need to balance development, to ensure that the city moves in one direction, that all parts of it are taken care of and that there

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<sup>9</sup> and are more competitive with other municipalities



is no developmental deficit in any of the areas. Unfortunately, the spatial and socio-economic inequalities have persisted because the developmental process has remained fragmentary. Furthermore, as the population grows, more people are marginalized. The city endeavours to become a world-class, smart and sustainable city. This can only be achieved through holistic and comprehensive development across all areas in the region.

### **6.3.3 Past and current spatial patterns and their impact on communities**

The investigation found that the prevailing spatial patterns in Ekurhuleni remain the greatest challenge since they inhibit inclusive development and the effective delivery of quality services. Spatial transformation has not been achieved as some populations are still marginalized and have limited access to the services, social amenities, and the city itself because of their location and the prevailing settlement patterns. A disheartening observation is the fact that the democratic government has failed to effectively address and deal with the aftermath of the spatial legacy of apartheid and the subsequent developmental deficit. Efficient and competent service delivery depends on municipal capacity. This is because municipalities are central to providing efficient basic services to local communities (Masiya *et al.*, 2021).

Lack of capacity has a detrimental effect on a government's ability to govern efficiently as this can impede the implementation of development policies, the planning and management of development projects, and the provision of quality services. Local government plays a vital role in developing communities since, as mandated by national legislation and the Constitution of the Republic, it is the custodian of service provision. A municipality such as Ekurhuleni is a sphere of government that is closest to the citizens. As a result, it is at the forefront of public service delivery and is the first

point of contact between an individual and a government institution (Ndevu and Muller, 2018; Masiya *et al.*, 2021).

#### **6.3.4 The value of amalgamation as a planning and political tool and its impact on local economic development**

The finding that emerged from this analysis is that the city has not been able to transform politically in terms of the social equality and inclusive development perspectives. These challenges further inhibit economic development and undermine social welfare programmes and LED initiatives. Instead, they create a welfare state, where, instead of being self-sufficient, people depend on the state for survival.

This study, therefore, seeks to emphasize that the City of Ekurhuleni needs to promote spatial development that will prioritise spatial integration and inclusiveness and which will then allow the process to offset social equality, equity, and economic emancipation. Todes (2008) critiqued the South African spatial planning trends of focusing on the siting of economy-based structures, such as shopping malls, alongside freeways to appease the needs of the booming property market. However, current spatial planning in the country is steadily evolving to respond to the needs of the previously disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

Importantly, spatial planning should consider the economic infrastructure and transportation networks as a means to increase connectivity and accessibility while enhancing economic activity in the area (Mkhize, 2018). All this can be achieved only through strong leadership that will put prudent governance in place. This signifies that governance is an essential component for accelerating development and improving the quality of life for communities, especially those that were previously disadvantaged. Good governance stimulates better decision making, efficient resource management and accountability (Ali, 2017). The City of Ekurhuleni is still

faced with the immense task of addressing spatial, social, and economic inequalities which were produced by the apartheid government and further reinforced by lack of governance during the period of democracy. A functioning and well-governed society pursues the expansion of its developmental potential and the welfare of its citizens through the provision of efficient public services (Masiya *et al.*, 2021). Furthermore, local governance should play a significant role in diversifying services and eradicating inequalities, both of which can serve to demonstrate to people that their community can be efficiently and successfully developed (Kroukamp and Cloete, 2018).

There is a need for a paradigm shift, where municipalities such as Ekurhuleni prioritize development and service provision without hassles, which will help enhance the quality of life for the communities in the region. This can be achieved only through transparency and accountability and by eliminating corruption, all of which reflect the basic principles of good governance. In essence, the findings of this study demonstrate and prove that the city of Ekurhuleni has not been able to achieve spatial, economic, and political transformation post-apartheid, and political interventions, such as the amalgamation process, have not yielded the desired and required relief.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

Municipal amalgamation is a critical concept. It should be noted that it is highly context-driven — in the sense that it functions well in some regions and fails in others. Therefore, it is not a “one-size-fits-all approach, and as such, when implemented, it should be with caution. Political jurisdictions or regions contemplating municipal amalgamation should weigh up the advantages and disadvantages prudently and be certain that if they decide to merge, the decision will be for the greater good of the community. Municipal amalgamation can yield either positive or negative fiscal consequences for municipalities (Ncube and Vacu, 2015). Efficiency and reduced

costs are not automatically guaranteed when municipalities undergo amalgamation. The amalgamation process has risks and one of the biggest challenges for recently merged municipalities is the management of public expenditure, service delivery, and fragmented development. Unaccountable expenditure affects service delivery and the smooth running of the municipality. The next section presents a synopsis of proposed recommendations which the city of Ekurhuleni can implement to build on the work they have already done to enhance development, to build a capable and world-class city, and to improve the quality of service provision. Emphasis is placed on the importance of good governance and governmentality, the latter being the foundation of democratic and successful sovereign states.

#### **6.4.1 Sustainable policies**

There is a need for a continuous process to plan and design sustainable policies that will drive development in the City of Ekurhuleni. Policies that will integrate city planning to ensure that development is guided by a smart city design, spatial inclusiveness and sustainable development are required. Governance researchers observe that the public sector's incapacity to deal competently and efficiently with social challenges stems from the fact that the political decision-makers and other public authorities know too little about the problems they set out to resolve and the real impact of the respective governance initiatives (Kooiman, 1993; Klijn and Koppenjan, 2004; Torfing *et al.*, 2012).

Sustainable policies can only be designed when there are proper consultations and collaborations with different stakeholders, that include communities, researchers and the business community. Todaro and Smith (2011) argue that development must therefore be conceived of as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the

acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of poverty. Development, in its essence, must represent the whole gamut of change by which an entire social system, tuned to the diverse basic needs and evolving aspirations of individuals and social groups within the system, moves away from a condition of life regarded as materially and spiritually better. Currently, the City of Ekurhuleni is being overwhelmed by spatial inequalities and fragmented development which together reinforce marginalization and separate development. There is a need for a comprehensive spatial development policy that will address the inequalities clearly evident in the spatial setting of the city.

To achieve such development, collaboration will need to play a vital role in ensuring that all aspects of the process are covered. Collaborations between academics, researchers, engineers, and town planners are in fact essential for addressing the prevailing spatial challenges that are affecting development in the city. Furthermore, the localization of SDGs is crucial. They provide a valuable foundation for the incorporation of existing and scheduled local processes and priorities in line with the local government obligations, which are captured in the SDG targets and indicators (SDG Symposium, 2019).

South Africa has an important role in ensuring that it aligns its development objectives with those of the SDGs, which must be filtered through the NDP to accelerate development and respond to the needs of communities. Sustainable development can only be successful if the SDGs are accompanied by sustainable policies that are grounded on ensuring that current development programmes meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

#### **6.4.2 The realization of the National Development Plan**

NDP is a people-driven strategic framework which seeks to enhance the standard of living for people, with the essential focus on economic and social development. The NDP has a vision of reducing poverty through the fast-tracking of economic growth. As previously discussed, the South African government has struggled with the proper implementation of development policies, and this has stunted economic and social development. Allio (2005) argues that policy implementation is the stage where the real activity in an institution is executed through the strategic management system.

It is the critical part where the set of activities of the policy plan are changed into performance and deliverance. Brinkschröder (2014) observes that organizations devote a great deal of time and resources to the planning of a strategy, but very little of it will be successfully implemented. Policy implementation in a democratic state such as South Africa is beset with red tape, that is heavily inclined to the political and administrative wings of government. Consequently, it becomes a long-winded process before it can be successfully implemented.

The NDP framework advocates to have a South Africa that is poverty-free and where all forms of inequality are diminished. Concurrently, the NDP also seeks to achieve rapid economic growth and, importantly, to equip the youth with better educational and vocational training opportunities. If the NDP can be successfully implemented, the quality of life for many South Africans will be greatly improved and the country will have reached a huge developmental milestone.

#### **6.4.3 Reducing state bureaucracy and improved regulation of policies**

Spatial inequalities have persisted in South Africa and have been further compounded by housing shortages. Owing to the tedium of pedantic red tape and bureaucracy, the South African government is facing the challenge of timeously implementing

development policies and interventions. Government regulations complicate the process of managing urban growth and transformation instead of adding value to and supporting the government's objectives of development (Turok *et al.*, 2017). The delays in rolling out development programmes has a negative impact on the disadvantaged communities as they prolong their state of destitution and unwittingly breed new challenges, which include population growth, increased demand for services and housing and the rampant growth informal settlements. Regrettably, by the time that the development plans are approved, they are instantly outdated, become inadequate and are not in line with the needs of the communities. This is because life is fluid, and new challenges are bred daily.

The complexity of government regulation adds substantial uncertainties to the development process, which further promotes insecurity and discourages private investment. Significantly, the arduous regulation measures also weaken creativity and diversity in the development process (Turok *et al.*, 2017). For cities such as Ekurhuleni to be able to fast-track development, they need to be proactive and adopt a people-centred approach. This means that they need to put communities at the centre of their programmes and require that they play a more active role in the planning and implementation of projects.

People-centred and people-driven systems for governance and development have, however, been influenced by reactions to corruption and poor service delivery, as well as conversations around good governance (Levin, 2018). The failure by government to accelerate development has been mainly due to the lack of involving communities inclusively in their processes and development initiatives. There is a great need for new relationships between the public service and broader society that it should be represented by a social contract that will prioritise the interests of people and be at the

centre of policy implementation (Levin, 2018). Sachs (2010) significantly argued that development is much more than just a socio-economic endeavour; it is a perception which models reality, a myth which comforts societies, and a fantasy which unleashes passions. The people of Ekurhuleni have a tangible need for development as they have been marginalized by the previous apartheid regime, which promoted separate development and segregation. It was in fact the removal of the disadvantaged majority to the periphery of the city that was to their detriment and contributed further to their disadvantaged status.

The historical development initiatives have proved that a state-centred as opposed to a people-centred discernment of development is guaranteed to focus on specific programmes and interventions that are continuously in the interests of the state rather than in the public interest (Levin, 2018). Therefore, there is a need for a paradigm shift in spatial planning, as also for community participation, if spatial planning is to be transformative and inclusive of the human element. Furthermore, community participation is required in the planning and implementation of development programmes which would ensure that they are responsive to the needs of the community. In their turn, they would in essence also help improve the quality of the services provided.

Lastly, good governance is a critical requirement to ensure high standards of development and that developmental initiatives make a meaningful impact on the lives of those who are in dire need of escaping poverty. Sound governance involves taking bold decisions to ensure that bureaucracy is reduced, regulations are improved and stringently adhered to. Thus, communities can be served with diligence and corporate relationships and collaborations can be maintained to ensure a healthy and happy society.



#### **6.4.4 The need for good governance in state institutions**

Local government is obligated with the responsibility of ensuring quality provision of services to its communities in a sustainable manner, promoting social and economic development and a safe and healthy environment. For government to be effective, there needs to be a governance structure in place that will assist in effectively running government, to have good systems in place will ensure that the government institutions can operate smoothly and efficiently. Prinsloo (2013) endorses the fact that good governance commences with the political will to govern well, and, importantly, good governance entails just legal frameworks that are implemented fairly.

A stable government results from good and clean governance that operates within the prescripts of the law, financial management, transparency, and accountability. Political squabbles have a negative bearing on good governance at local government level – an observation made with the advent of the coalition government. The City of Ekurhuleni has not managed to efficiently address spatial inequalities, fragmented development and the challenges emanating from the provision of services. This proves that there have been shortcomings in the city in terms of its governance.

There is, therefore, a definite need to build strong institutions in government that will be building blocks for strong and effective governance and that will be responsive to the needs of the people. Governance is built on the foundations of collaboration with different public and private stakeholders. Good governance is not one-sided but requires a strong civil society and business community to make it work, and importantly, for government to be critiqued and held accountable when it is not performing as required. A key policy priority should therefore be to plan for long-term governance systems that will be fluid and flexible and therefore able to respond quickly

and efficiently to existing service delivery demands and challenges that occur spontaneously. Greater efforts are needed to ensure that the developmental deficit and the vast service delivery backlogs, which can be attributed to bureaucracy, are efficiently addressed in Ekurhuleni. A reasonable approach to tackling these issues could rest in adopting a network model, where formal and informal relationships with different stakeholders can be established and which can then be called upon in times of crisis. Gulati *et al.* (2018) argues that a strategic network can provide an organizational structure that provides access to data, capital, markets, and technologies.

Such a structure would also accrue benefits from learning, scale, and scope economies, by permitting them to accomplish strategic objectives (e.g. sharing risks and outsourcing value-chain stages and organizational functions). Networks can play a vital role in strengthening governance and ensuring a quick turn-around time, especially on issues of service delivery. The City of Ekurhuleni could benefit from this type of governance, thereby accelerating development and addressing service delivery backlogs, which would include the provision of basic services, waste removal and sewage services, and housing.

#### **6.4.5 The smart, digital and sustainable city**

To be recognized as smart and sustainable, cities and communities are advised to take a human-centric approach to urban development – one that takes human principles into consideration when implementing digital and scientific solutions (ITU, 2021). Globally, most cities are faced with the challenges of urbanisation and poverty since half of the world's population lives in urban areas. This necessitates a design for smart cities which, while being sustainable, will integrate and coordinate services. Each city has definite attributes in terms of its size, built environment, fiscal resources,

and many other features. Such variations affect the capacity of cities to manage smart technologies and attract smart city investments (OECD, 2020). Sustainable development is a challenge facing both developed and developing cities. It is further exacerbated by rapid population growth and urbanisation. Cities need to be sustainable to provide healthy and good living conditions for their citizens. They play a key role in the pursuit of achieving global sustainability as they host huge populations and a wide range of economic activities. The research findings of this study show that the amalgamation process in Ekurhuleni has not been perfect or comprehensive and that while it has covered some ground in terms of development, there have also been some negative trade-offs, which have affected the well-being of the communities in the metro. There is some dissatisfaction with the quality of service delivery and the dilapidated infrastructure, which has not been maintained for a while.

Through the Re-urbanise and Re-generate principles, the city can bridge the gap of poor quality service delivery and ensure that the old infrastructure is upgraded and maintained. This will rely heavily on the proper implementation of these programmes. Ekurhuleni has the vision of becoming a smart digital city, which will complement the smart sustainable city, which is currently a work in progress. A smart city is one that accelerates the pace at which it delivers social, economic, and environmental sustainability outcomes and acknowledges challenges such as climate change, rapid population growth and political and economic instability (COGTA, 2021). Unless the City of Ekurhuleni addresses the spatial inequalities and fragmented development that currently characterize it, it will fail in attaining its vision of creating a smart digital city.

### **6.5 Limitations of the study**

The global pandemic, COVID 19, has disrupted the way of life, especially the way in which Social Science research is conducted. The South African government, the

spread of the virus and to avoid human deaths, placed the country in a lockdown situation, with various risk-adjusted levels. The lockdown also put in place mandatory restrictions on public meetings and interactions among people, especially among those of age 50 and above who have comorbidities rendering them as “high risk”. The University of South Africa, in response to the government’s regulations, put in place a policy to protect researchers and participants from the risk of infection from the virus and possible death. Therefore, face-to-face interviews were prohibited.

This prompted an amendment to the methodology design and for interviews to be conducted online. The challenge with online interviews is that not all participants are technologically “savvy”; furthermore, not everyone can afford data to connect online, and some people do not own smart phones or laptops. Furthermore, those who have access to smart phones and laptops do not always have uncapped data which means that some interviews need to be rushed and do not allow the researcher to probe deeper to attain rich and in-depth information during the interviews.

Another limitation of the study was the unavailability of the IDP documents from the year 2000-2008, when the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality was formed from the merger of small towns on the East Rand. The researcher tried, without success, to attain these documents from the different departments, including the strategy and planning and archives departments. Thus, the unavailability of these documents limited the analysis of the municipality’s spatial and development plans from the formative years of the metro. The availability of these documents could have provided a full and clear picture of the vision of the metro and would have made it easier to appraise the metro on having reached its milestones against its strategic plans and frameworks.

## 6.6 Conclusion

*“In matters of truth and justice, there is no difference between large and small problems; for issues concerning the treatment of people are all the same.”* Albert Einstein.

The spatial legacy of apartheid has proved to be a thorn in the flesh to planners and municipalities as it has persisted, and in some instances, as experienced in Ekurhuleni, it has been replicated, with the inequalities having remained prevalent at the expense of the poor. Apartheid brought forth a racial spatial divide in both rural and urban settings. Significantly, the products of urban planning during the apartheid era led to the construction of townships on the peripheries of towns and cities. These were often close to trading centres but remote from white neighbourhoods and the central business districts of such urban settlements (Charman *et al.*, 2017).

Post-democracy development remains fragmented, and most townships are still poorly developed. This has been further compounded by an increase in informal settlements, while the former white suburbs have remained areas of affluence. Turok (2018) argues that spatial inequalities have diverse consequences which are challenging to face. A case in point is the fact that housing policies have failed to accommodate the needy and have excluded poor communities by dispersing them to the peripheries of cities, far from the source of economic opportunities, good schools, and other facilities. The City of Ekurhuleni has retained its strong identity – a reflection of the former set-up of the old apartheid towns with the township extensions that they were linked to in terms of services and social amenities. While townships have been exposed to significant development over the years, such developments have not been consistent and of a high standard. This has led to constant tensions as communities have been struggling to improve their livelihoods and living conditions.

Practically, most of the townships throughout South Africa have remained as isolated settlements and detached from the commercial heartland, which continues to reinforce inequality (Charman *et al.*, 2017). In 2015, the Gauteng province proposed the creation of large new settlements, primarily on the spatial periphery of the city region. This proposal was envisioned to address the inadequacies of the dispersed small-scale developments outside the urban core and to respond to the phenomenon of economic decline there (Harrison and Todes, 2017). The mega development projects in Ekurhuleni (e.g. John Dube village, Daggafontein, mega city and Leeuwpoot mega city, bear testimony to this vision. These development projects have been planned on the periphery of the city, far from most amenities.

While they have been planned as a form of mixed land use, they are immensely constrained and do not, as opposed to the benefits experienced by the city dwellers, offer a variety of options in this respect. Harrison and Todes (2017) observed that there are cases of success, with the planned peripheral developments. However, there are many more instances of failure or of preliminary success which have been followed by subsequent decline. These authors further argued that a common ramification of a well-intentioned satellite development, locally and internationally, is the substantial issue of commuting. South Africa has a well-documented history of a dysfunctional public transportation system, which is another burden for people living in the periphery of the city as it is accompanied by inconvenience and cost implications. Amalgamation was an intervention which was aimed at addressing spatial inequalities in Ekurhuleni, while also improving service delivery and fast-tracking development in the metro. The City of Ekurhuleni underwent the process of amalgamation to redress the spatial legacy of apartheid, which had resulted in spatial

inequality and social divisions. Amalgamation in Ekurhuleni has generated both advantages and disadvantages.

Notably, as emphasized previously, the implementation of such programmes has been mediocre, and as a result, the impact of amalgamation has not been meaningful enough to effectively improve the quality of life for the people in the city. Eliminating the harm caused during the apartheid era and normalizing the inappropriate spatial forms that still persist will require much foresight, expertise and sustained dedication across government lines because trade-offs are needed that will require decision-makers to make more measured and informed choices than what has been the case up to the present time (Harrison and Todes, 2017). South Africa is compromised by the incapacity of her governance structures to provide an environment that is conducive to transparency and accountability. Without proper governance, the state cannot efficiently provide successful developmental interventions that will accelerate growth and respond satisfactorily to the needs of the people.

The future of good governance lies in collaboration, and the way to effectively govern involves collaborating with different stakeholders which would also then guarantee accountability and transparency. Ansell (2008) meticulously defines collaborative governance as a governing arrangement where one or more public institutions openly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is official, consent-oriented, purposeful, and aims to implement public policy or manage public programmes or assets. The City of Ekurhuleni has the responsibility of maintaining and ensuring that current and future development plans are well managed, and successfully implemented, and that they meet the developmental objectives as per their strategic plans and frameworks.

Thus, the researcher concludes that good governance will be the key for the City of Ekurhuleni to achieve success in spatial planning, economic development and political transformation. However, it is worthy of note that the concept of proper governance has somehow become an impediment in the context of democratic South Africa: — Although developmental policies and interventions have been carefully crafted, most of them have failed because of the lack of good governance that is guided by accountability, transparency, and adherence to the rule of law.

The words of Li Yuanchao, Vice President of China, “*To maintain sustainable economic development, we need to shift our focus from speed to quality*” ring true in this respect.



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## **Annexure 1**

### **Interview questions**

1. What plans and programmes has the municipality put in place/implemented to address spatial inequalities?
2. What have been the impacts of amalgamation on individuals and communities?
3. Have the current spatial patterns changed from the apartheid legacy of spatial inequalities?
4. Which areas are priority areas for spatial development?
5. What was the plan of the Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (MSDF)?
6. Have the objectives of the MSDF been achieved?
7. What was/were the reason(s) for amalgamating the small towns into one metropolitan area?
8. Has the municipality's decision to undertake the process of amalgamation been successful?
9. What are some of the highlights/milestones of the amalgamation process?
10. Have the objectives of amalgamation been achieved?
11. Have the quality and provision of services improved since amalgamation?
12. What highlights/milestones of service delivery have been achieved/reached?
13. What challenges has the municipality faced since amalgamation?
14. Is the municipality meeting its development objectives?
15. What are some of the development objectives that have been achieved?
16. Is the municipality meeting the objectives of the IDPs?
17. What are some of the IDP objectives that have been achieved?

18. Are stakeholders (employees and communities) aware of the IDP plans?
19. Which key performance areas in the IDP is the municipality prioritizing?
20. What Local Economic Development (LED) initiatives are in place to address economic inequalities?
21. What are some of the highlights/milestones of LED initiatives?
22. What are the plans to accelerate economic development in the metro?
23. How is the municipality incorporating the National Development Plan (NDP) in its strategic plans?

## **Annexure 2**

### **Focus group interview questions**

1. What are your thoughts on municipal amalgamations? Are you aware that Ekurhuleni is an amalgamated metropolitan municipality?
2. What are the differences between the older smaller municipalities compared to the metropolitan?
3. Has service delivery improved since the amalgamation of the municipalities?
4. Do you have any good stories to tell about the municipal services?
5. In which areas is the municipality succeeding in terms of service delivery?
6. In which areas is the municipality failing in terms of service delivery?
7. Has your quality of life changed in any way since amalgamation?

## **Annexure 3**

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

Ethics clearance reference number: 2020/CAES\_HREC/012

Research permission reference number:

**Title: Amalgamated municipalities: An investigation into the spatial, economic, and political transformation of amalgamated municipalities, focusing on Ekurhuleni**

#### **Dear Prospective Participant**

My name is Sabelo Tshabalala, and I am doing research with Ashley Gunter, a professor in the Department of Geography, towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled *Amalgamated municipalities: an investigation into the spatial, economic, and political transformation of amalgamated municipalities, focusing on Ekurhuleni*.

#### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

To explore the spatial, economic, and political transformation of amalgamated municipalities and spatial planning in the post-apartheid period.

#### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You have been chosen to participate in this study because you work with the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, and you are familiar with their policies and programmes.

#### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

The study involves semi-structured interviews. You will be required to attend an interview either physically or virtually. The discussion will take approximately one hour to allow the researcher to grasp as much knowledge as he can and to allow interviewees time to express their thoughts on the subject.



**CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

**WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

As a participant, you will provide fundamental knowledge regarding the impacts of the amalgamation policy in Ekurhuleni. You will give the researcher a picture of how the amalgamation process has influenced policy and development in Ekurhuleni.

**ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

There are no negative impacts or consequences projected for this research project as it is low risk. However, to ensure that participants are protected, participants will be given the option to remain anonymous if they wish to.

**WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

For interviews, participants will be given an option to remain anonymous or TO use an alias. All the information provided during the interview will be treated with high confidentiality and will not be shared with anyone outside the study.

**HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at the Unisa Science campus for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to a further Research Ethics Review and approval, if applicable. Information will be destroyed, and if necessary, hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic

copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer by means of a relevant software programme.

**WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

Participation in this study is voluntary and there are no financial incentives or rewards for the participants.

**HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?**

This study has received written approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

**HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Sabelo Tshabalala on 011 471 3136 or email [tshabas1@unisa.ac.za](mailto:tshabas1@unisa.ac.za). The findings are accessible for a period of five years after the completion of the research project.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact him at 011 471 3136 or email [tshabas1@unisa.ac.za](mailto:tshabas1@unisa.ac.za)

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Ashley Gunter at 011 471 3390 or [gunteaw@unisa.ac.za](mailto:gunteaw@unisa.ac.za). Please contact the research ethics chairperson of the CAES Health Research Ethics Committee, Prof MA Antwi, on 011-670-9391 or [antwima@unisa.ac.za](mailto:antwima@unisa.ac.za) if you have any ethical concerns.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Sabelo Tshabalala

# Annexure 4

## Publications

The screenshot shows a web browser window with a document viewer. The browser's address bar shows a URL starting with '126-1755-1-SM (1) (002).p...'. The document title is 'Municipal amalgamations and the feasibility of economies of scale in local government'. The authors listed are Sabelo Tshabalala and Ashley W. Gunter. The article includes sections for Affiliations, Corresponding author, Dates, and How to cite this article. The main body of the article contains sections for Background, Aim, Methods, Results, Conclusion, and Contribution.

### Municipal amalgamations and the feasibility of economies of scale in local government

**Authors:**  
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Ashley W. Gunter<sup>1</sup>

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amalgamations and the  
feasibility of economies of  
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Research and Innovation* 4(0),  
a126. [https://doi.org/  
10.4102/jlgr.v4i0.126](https://doi.org/10.4102/jlgr.v4i0.126)

**Background:** Municipal amalgamation has become a prevalent trend in many modern nations, driven by a desire to enhance the size and scope of local government units. This expansion is primarily motivated by the prospects of economies of scale. Municipal mergers are seen as a method to guarantee that municipalities possess the necessary financial and technical proficiency to provide a wide range of services to their residents.

**Aim:** To ascertain the feasibility of economies of scale in local government and conditions that should be met in order to successfully achieve economies of scale.

**Methods:** This study utilised a qualitative research approach, which involved a content analysis of strategic documents from the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality, including the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and the Growth and Development Strategy 2055 document.

**Results:** Economies of scale have not consistently served as an effective foundation for municipal reforms, as the merging of municipalities does not always result in improved service delivery or economies of scale.

**Conclusion:** Although municipal amalgamations are anticipated to enhance economic, social, administrative, and financial sustainability, thereby creating financially viable municipalities, they often prioritise sound financial management, institutional capacity building, good governance, and basic service delivery. However, this study discovered that these outcomes are not always realised.

**Contribution:** Municipal amalgamation is a relatively new concept in Africa and South Africa and, as a result, there is limited literature. This study aimed to provide a local context and

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