CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

Introduction:

After examining the literature, empirical research and the subsequent case study (TLM) some conclusions can be made regarding sustainability, sustainable development and sustainable community planning. These conclusions and ensuing recommendations are discussed in this Chapter.

Figure 8.1 provides a graphical representation of the organization and structure of the entire research document.

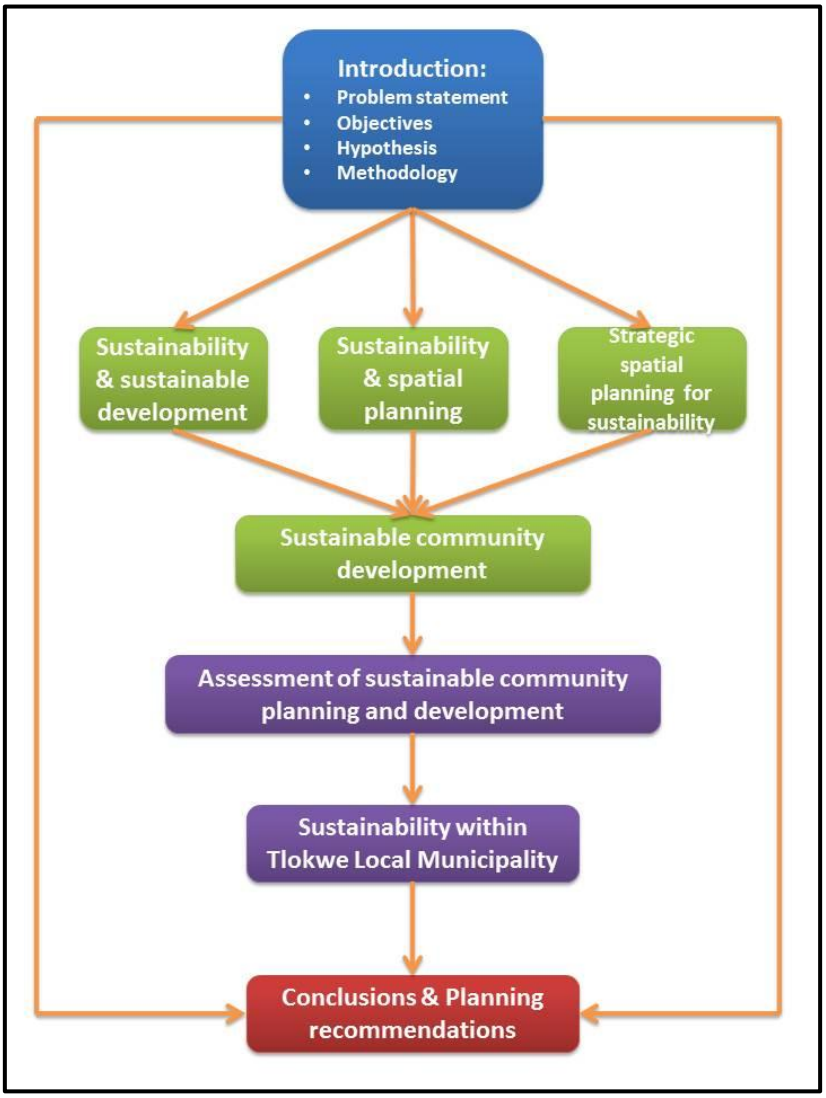

Figure 8.1: A concept map of the research document

Source: Own construction

8.1 Sustainability on the African continent.

As discussed in section 2.5 and section 5.2.5 of this document many models of sustainability and sustainable development don't take African culture and conditions into consideration. What the western, developed world might consider as sustainable could be unsustainable to Africa. For most African people sustainability is the ability to provide for your family through whatever means possible and meeting their basic needs. A sense of community is an important aspect of African sustainability with many migrants to urban areas and other African countries still remaining closely connected to their rural roots and often returning to their place of origin.

When planning for sustainable communities in any context, not just African communities, the community's vision of sustainability must first be determined. As argued in section 4.1.5 and 4.1.6 a sense of community, character and identity are crucial functional elements of sustainable communities and can only be achieved if the community's participation in planning and development is ensured. Not all of the needs of a community can be determined by examining statistics, it is imperative that the residents actively participate in planning. Despite these facts guiding sectoral plans of municipalities often don't take a community's individual view on sustainability into concern.

8.2 The Integrated Development Plan as an instrument of sustainable development and sustainable community development

Section 7.2.3 of this document states that the IDP is a crucial instrument in the achievement of sustainable development and sustainable community development, as it directs expenditure and development within a municipality. IDPs provide an opportunity for public participation which enables a community to give their opinion on how development should be implemented. Public participation is crucial for the implementation of sustainable community development as it allows community planning by the community for the community. The IDP process also allows for interaction between municipalities and departments to deliberate on issues of local development.

Sustainable development is currently an objective of the IDP and other sector plans (SDF, EMF, ITP). While this is the ideal, the reality often falls short of the dream. Through the application of the GAM (section 7.5) it was deduced that not all plans and strategies contained in the IDP are formulated to result in sustainability. The current statutory planning approach is based on need and desirability. It is imperative that sustainability also be incorporated into the decision making process.

8.3 Data limitations

This study was severely hampered by a lack of available data. Out of 48 indicators of sustainability, data was only easily available for 23 (refer to ***Table 6.9*** and ***Table 7.1***). The data that was available was in some cases out-dated due to the fact that the results from the 2011 census had not yet been published resulting in the use of the 2007 census data. This impeded on the accurate measurement of sustainability.

8.4 Prioritising projects and strategies

A local authority apply planning instruments such as MCA andt he GAM approach to prioritise projects and strategies as discussed in ***Chapter 6*** and demonstrated in ***Chapter 7***. It is to a municipality's own advantage to assess and prioritise the projects and strategies contained in their sectoral plans as this indicates which projects will contribute the most to achieving goals set forth by the municipality. For the purpose of this study the goal was sustainable community development and a GAM was created according to this objective (***Table 6.10***), but a municipality can determine their own goals and compile their own GAM. Since every sphere of government's and every area's view and objectives regarding sustainability and sustainable community development isn't identical, it is advantageous for each province/municipality to compile their own GAM with which to assess projects.

It was determined by the application of a GAM (section 7.5) on the case study (TLM) that the projects set forth by the various sectoral plans are unaligned and appear to have been devised in seclusion from other sectors and departments.

8.5 No perfect strategy for sustainability

No perfect strategy for sustainability and sustainable development exists, but rather a series of best practice guidelines. No plan/strategy for sustainability can be a blueprint that is valid in all scenarios. A strategy for each situation must be tailored to its unique characteristics to be truly successful. The assessment matrix approach as discussed in ***Chapter 6*** is a valuable tool in planning for sustainable community development. It can be used to identify areas in which intervention is needed to improve sustainability within a region and to ensure that expenditure is directed accordingly.

In order to prioritise projects for sustainability or sustainable development, a GAM approach may be used (as discussed and seen in ***Chapter 6*** and ***7***). The prioritisation of projects is seen as a best practice guideline to sustainability and sustainable community development.

8.6 Research Hypothesis

As can be concluded from section 7.4- 7.6 of this document the research hypothesis has been proven correct. TLM has been found to have a low sustainable-community-planning-and-development-presence in their sectoral plans as well as projects and strategies as well as a lack of alignment between sectoral plans. Although TLM achieved a percentage of 55.07% for its sustainability assessment there are still certain areas in which intervention is needed (refer to section 7.4.4).

The application of MCA and GAM has succeeded in substantiating the research hypothesis.