

# EXPLORING CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP AND DECOLONISATION AS A FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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## **DECLARATION**

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## ABSTRACT

In 2020 the globe is in turmoil. When this study commenced in 2018 the call to action for the citizen designer was premised on the #Feesmustfall campaign and the #Rhodesmustfall student protests, the July 2021 social unrest in South Africa that resulted in unprecedented violence and looting, rampant corruption in public and private sectors in South Africa and growing nationalism seen from BREXIT and the Trump administration in the USA. The 2020 Covid-19 pandemic brought even more attention to the role of the citizenry and how citizens can be capacitated to navigate uncertain and difficult times. Within the field of design, the concept of citizen designer is established. It was considered that the notion of educating a 'citizen designer' could be further developed in the South African design education context. The study therefore focused on how critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives can contribute to a design pedagogy framework for citizen designer education in the context of South African universities of technology.

Theoretical perspectives from critical citizenship and decolonisation provided the theoretical base for the study. A qualitative research approach was taken that involved case study research methodology. The data in the study was collected from a survey of and interviews with South African design educators as well as interviews with South African design students.

From the data, South African citizen designer can be described as designers that have a deep understanding of self, ethics and critical thinking; they operate in transdisciplinary settings with a focus on the tangible betterment of sustainable quality of all life through a caring conscience.

The study determined that the themes in critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives that can contribute to design pedagogy for educating a South African citizen designer can be broadly categorised into concepts related to context, African focus, personal development and curriculum development. The category of context determines the relevance and approach to be taken when engaging with the African focus, personal development, and curriculum development categories. The study concludes with a list of suggested themes in these categories that could be considered for implementation by design educators in their specific field working towards the development of a South African citizen designer.

## OPSOMMING

Die wêreld is in beroering in 2020. Met die aanvang van hierdie studie in 2018 was die wekroep vir die gemeenskapsontwerper (citizen designer) se uitgangspunt die #Feesmustfall-veldtog, die #Rhodesmustfall-studenteprotes, die groeiende nasionalisme wat in BREXIT en die Trump-administrasie in die VSA gesien is, die Julie 2021 onrus in Suid Afrika wat in ongekende stropery en geweld ontaard het en buitensporige korrupsie in die openbare- en privaatsektors in Suid-Afrika. Die Covid-19 pandemie in 2020 het selfs meer aandag gevestig op die rol van die burgers en hoe burgers in staat gestel kan word om onseker en moeilike tye te trotseer. Die begrip van gemeenskapsontwerper is in die veld van ontwerp gevestig. Daar is oorweeg dat die idee om 'n "gemeenskapsontwerper" op te lei verder in die konteks van Suid-Afrikaanse ontwerpers-opleiding ontwikkel kan word. Die studie het dus gefokus op hoe kritiese burgerskap en dekolonisasie-perspektiewe kan bydra tot 'n ontwerpsepedagogiese raamwerk vir gemeenskaps-ontwerpopleiding binne die konteks van Suid-Afrikaanse universiteite van tegnologie.

Die teoretiese perspektiewe van kritiese burgerskap en dekolonisasie het die teoretiese fondasie vir hierdie studie gelê. 'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering is gebruik wat gevallestudie-metodologie ingesluit het. Die studie se data is versamel uit 'n opname en onderhoude met Suid-Afrikaanse ontwerpvoeders en onderhoude met Suid-Afrikaanse ontwerpstudente.

Vanuit die data is dit bepaal dat Suid Afrikaanse "gemeenskapsontwerpers" beskryf kan word as ontwerpers met hoogs ontwikkelde self-kennis, etiek en kritiese denke; hulle werk in transdisciplinêre omgewings met die fokus om tasbare verbetering van volhoubare lewens kwaliteit van alle lewe deur 'n gewete van omgee.

Die studie het vasgestel dat die temas wat kritiese burgerskapspektiewe en dekolonisasieperspektiewe kan bydra tot die ontwikkeling van 'n ontwerpsepedagogiek vir die opleiding van "gemeenskapsontwerper" geklassifiseer kan word as volg: konteks, Afrika fokus, persoonlike ontwikkeling, en kurrikulum ontwikkeling kategorieë. Die studie sluit af met 'n lys van voorgestelde temas wat deur ontwerpvoeders gebruik kan word om binne hul eie ontwerp dissipline vir hulself 'n ontwerpsepedagogiek te ontwikkel wat kan lei tot die ontwikkeling van 'n Suid Afrikaanse "gemeenskapsontwerper".

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I dedicate this work to my parents who selflessly devoted their lives to their children.



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# CHAPTER 1

## ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction to the research

Internationally, events such as the rise of nationalism with the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States in 2016 and the Brexit referendum that resulted in the United Kingdom leaving the European Union serve as examples of the prominent role of citizenry in shaping the world (Giroux & Bhattacharya, 2017). The Covid-19 worldwide pandemic exposed the tense relationship between citizens and governments caused by increasing socio-economic inequalities (Recio, Lata & Chatterjee, 2021).

This thesis commenced within the South African higher education environment during increasing socio-political turmoil. In 2018 university lecturers were still grappling with the impact of the 2016 #FeesmustFall and #Rodesmustfall student protests. These 2016 # student campaigns were significant as universities can be seen as barometers of society and "make visible the dynamics and tensions within society" (Walwyn, 2020: 20). The dynamics and tensions in South African society were subsequently foregrounded in 2020 with the onset of the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic and the July 2021 social unrest that resulted in unprecedented violence and looting<sup>1</sup> (Hazvinei, 2021). The importance of active citizenship in South Africa is even more significant as the country's future prosperity could be determined by the level of participation of citizens in government (Buccus, 2021). At universities in South Africa, the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic exposed the growing socio-economic inequality of students. Affluent students at some universities could seamlessly migrate to online teaching and learning during the pandemic, while students at the historically, under-resourced universities had to navigate the challenges of the lack of mobile data and access to devices (Olawale, Mutongoza, Adu, & Omodan, 2021).

### 1.2 Background

I identify as a designer, educator and academic, in that order. I am a white Afrikaner male writing about decolonisation and critical citizenship – a complex triad. As a design practitioner, I feel confident about my industry knowledge. As an educator, I have the privilege and possibility to impact the future of designers in our country. As an educator/academic, I identify with the 'imposter syndrome' (Carrillo & Baguley, 2011) quietly experienced by many peers. The white Afrikaner ethnic group is what I was born into; I am intensely aware of how precariously that situates me within this field of research. My discomfort/regret/shame are, to an extent, captured by Dernikos, Ferguson and Siegel when they state:

*"What are the ethical responsibilities of doing and teaching qualitative inquiry at a time when Black and Brown bodies are under assault, an expression of White supremacy that has become ever more visible in the wake of the election of Donald Trump?" (2019: 1).*

I was introduced to critical citizenship perspectives through the Master of Arts in Visual Arts: Arts Education (MAVA) programme at Stellenbosch University ("MAVA (Art Education)", n.d.). In the research conducted for my MAVA thesis, I identified that design students and

<sup>1</sup> The July 2021 South African protests in the KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces were politically motivated but gained momentum due to the socio-economic challenges facing frustrated citizens that resulted in billions of rand in economic losses.

educators need to develop a critical consciousness that will better prepare them for their role as critical citizens within the neoliberal communication design industry. The tension between profit and the greater good of society is ever-present in the communication design industry (Boehnert, 2014); navigating this tension in a country like South Africa with growing inequality will require skills beyond the current design curriculum. The diploma in public relations that I completed also shaped my understanding of the importance of critical citizenship as a public relations practitioner, where I was exposed to questionable practices best illustrated by the divisive 'White Monopoly Capital' campaign launched in South Africa by the now liquidated London based, Bell Pottinger Public Relations Agency (Aboobaker, 2019).

My interest in critical citizenship perspectives was further expanded by my experience with the edited volume *Educating Citizen Designers in South Africa*, which I co-edited with Elmarie Costandius (Costandius & Botes, 2018). This book involved 15 design educators throughout South Africa. In the chapter that I contributed, I applied a framework for critical citizenship education developed by Johnson and Morris (Johnson & Morris, 2010) to the Graphic Design Diploma curriculum offered by former technikons<sup>2</sup>. I determined that the curriculum lacked the capacity to "politicise notions of culture, knowledge and power" (Botes, 2018). An example of the political failure of design is captured in the conclusion reached by Nkula-Wenz when reflecting on the World Design Capital (WDC) status of Cape Town in 2014:

*"Rather, what ultimately stifled the claim that design could truly 'transform lives' (as promised by the official WDC slogan) was the failure on both the side of local government and design practitioners to properly engage with the political dimension of design, i.e. to recognize it as a social practice that is shaped by different and often competing interests, cultural registers and power dynamics"*

(Nkula-Wenz, 2018: 182).

Apple (2004) describes education as a political act and therefore suggests that educators develop an awareness of power and privilege as it relates to education. Education is a political project that requires engagement with the politics of the day (Schultz, Abdulla, Ansari, Canli, Keshavarz, Kiem, Martins & J.S. Vieira de Oliveira, 2018). The Design Educators Forum of Southern Africa (DEFSA) 2017 national conference on decolonisation made me even more aware of the potential relationships between decolonisation and critical citizenship perspectives. The experience further awakened my interest in positioning critical citizenship and decolonisation theories in design education. Fataar (2018: 2) argues that "the call for decolonising education is nothing less than the full incorporation of humanity's knowledge systems into the knowledge selection systems of universities." By virtue of their role in the higher education system, design educators are knowledge gatekeepers. They will, therefore, be instrumental in ensuring the inclusion of pluriversal knowledge systems in the curriculums they develop. Academics are also much more comfortable approaching the politics of decolonisation through the lenses of abstract theory, frameworks and philosophy (Tuck & Yang, 2012). This approach negates the inevitable unsettling emotions caused when truly engaging with decolonisation in education. Since 2018 when this research commenced, there has been a proliferation

<sup>2</sup> Technikons – as they were formerly known in South Africa – are now referred to as universities of technology.

of publications addressing decolonisation to the extent that concern could be raised for its depletion as a useful matrix. Moghli and Kadiwal describe this problem as follows "We fear that decolonisation within academia is becoming an empty term, diluted and depoliticised, allowing for superficial representations" (2021: 1).

Critical citizenship education is grounded within critical pedagogy. Zembylas (2018) identifies that terminology within critical pedagogy and decolonisation theories is often used interchangeably. His observations highlight several issues but he concludes that "there is a productive conversation that can be developed – a conversation that creates new theoretical as well as pedagogical openings for reinventing critical pedagogy as decolonising pedagogy" (Zembylas, 2018: 417). This view is also contested, however, where it is seen that social justice pedagogy and concepts such as conscientisation are used by settlers to "move to innocence" in the decolonial project (Tuck & Yang, 2012). This contestation further supports the investigation in this research.

This background – together with the findings in my Master's degree research, where I identified that phenomenological and epistemological lenses could be developed to describe the ontological position of a conscientised designer (Botes, Costandius & Perold, 2015) – made me question how South African design educators could access critical citizenship and decolonisation theories in their teaching practice to develop citizen designers. This research was motivated by the difficulties I encountered in activating the citizen designer within myself and design students with whom I facilitate learning. My development as a design 'teacher' when I completed the MAVA: Arts Education fundamentally changed the views I held of the role I play in the education of design students. Previously I steadfastly believed that it was my role to prepare students for the design industry; this view was founded on the 'apprentice-master' education I received in my own technikon education. With my new insights, I questioned my practice of mainly focusing on industry needs and instead I contemplated the holistic development of students that could face adversity in the context of growing socio-political tensions in South Africa. The catalytic role of the design educator in developing/activating the citizen designer is central to this research.

### **1.2.1 Design citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa**

The 2016 #FeesmustFall and #Rodesmustfall campaigns of South African students had a global impact (Griffiths, 2019). The political, academic and social lives of students are intertwined. In South Africa, the student movements are "about the politics of the social, economic and political redress" (Maringira & Gukurume, 2021: 502). Educators in the South African higher education sector are observers and sometimes participants in the politics unfolding in students' lives. After experiencing the impact of populism (Southall, Pillay, Naidoo, & Khadiagala, 2018: 5) in the fifth democratic election in post-apartheid South Africa, it became apparent to me that design educators need to do more to educate citizen designers with a critical consciousness that can critically engage political rhetoric.

The role of citizen designers has been described in various contexts and disciplines within the design field (Heller & Vienne, 2018). Citizen designers have been called upon to solve problems created by humanity and are even expected to save the planet (Bennett & Rarig, 2011). I am conscious of the many ways in which citizen designers can affect change in a broken world; as a design educator, my focus is on attempting to develop critically

conscious citizen designers. In my experience as a design educator, I have observed how design students would surrender their rights and responsibilities in society, whether it is so that they can conform to the masses or in pursuit of often only pleasure-seeking urges. I lecture a module on critical citizenship to final-year design students. In this module, I challenge myself to activate the critical citizen within us all because I believe that the future of South Africa is dependent on active citizen designers who will be able to use their individual spheres of influence to counter the growing inequality in our society. Students are also sensitised about their responsibility to give back to the society and country that has given them the opportunity to receive higher education. When asked to identify design 'issues' within their communities, students are often comfortable focusing on clean-up campaigns, showing limited interest in deep-rooted socio-political issues prevalent in South African communities. South Africa is at a crossroads where critical citizens will be required to question politicians and government officials in order to demand accountability. These moments of change cannot be solely reliant on protest action, as seen in the 2016 #FeesmustFall and #Rodesmustfall student protests, but must be supported by critical insight as citizens into their networks of power and influence.

As the country with the largest wealth gap globally, South Africa will require citizen designers who can interrogate the socio-political issues that will emanate from this untenable inequality. In Figure 1.1, the inequality of the South African society is captured on the 13 May 2019 TIME magazine front cover (Pomerantz, 2019). Inequality is identified as one of the greatest threats to the socio-political stability of South Africa and the world (Abdi, 2005; Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2006). A World Bank report confirmed the prevalence and growth of inequality in South Africa, again proving South Africa is the most unequal society in the world despite twenty-seven years of majority rule (The World Bank Group, 2022). Papanek already in 1971 from a design perspective pointed to the global disparities and the division these are creating in the world.

*"On a global scale the disparities between the haves and have-nots have become even more terrifyingly vast. Since 1960 this chasm has widened, with the declining birthrate in both North America and Western Europe and the fantastic population explosion in the rest of the world. The oil crises of 1973, 1976, and 1979, combined with irresponsible loan policies to developing countries, have further divided the world" (Papanek, 1984: 36).*

Papanek also in 1971 pointed to the harm designers were bringing to society.

*"There are professions more harmful than industrial design, but only a very few of them. And possibly only one profession is phonier. Advertising design, in persuading people to buy things they don't need, with money they don't have, in order to impress others who don't care, is probably the phoniest field in existence today" (1984: ix).*

Although Papanek's reference was aimed at industrial design and mass production, his insights can be transposed to current global issues. Papanek also argued for the importance of elevating the social context of design.

*"Design can and must become a way in which young people can participate in changing society. As socially and morally involved designers, we must address ourselves to the needs of a world with its back to the wall, while the hands on the clock point perpetually to one minute before twelve" (1984: xiv).*

After 1994, the segregated society, as the legacy of the Apartheid-era South Africa, was evident. It was apparent that design education could significantly contribute to engaging with the complexities of post-apartheid South African society (Sauthoff, 2004).



**Figure 1.1: Time Magazine Cover from 13 May 2019: Photograph by J Miller**

Immediately after 1994, design projects focused on 'development' (Campbell, 2008) and 'social justice' (Bellugi, 2014) became more prominent. However, facing the stark reality depicted on the TIME cover of 13 May 2019, it is clear that the message of design for 'development' and 'social justice' did not reach all the citizens of South Africa. An example



of the inequality relevant to this study is the infrastructure of historically black<sup>3</sup> universities that are still lagging despite massive investment (Badat, 2015). The stark reality is that 27 years into the democratic era, South Africa is still the most unequal society globally (The World Bank Group: 2022).

Curriculum transformation in South African universities is still lagging, despite the 2016 #FeesmustFall and #Rodesmustfall campaigns (Chantiluke, Kwoba & Nkopo, n.d.; Nyamnjoh, 2016; Booysen, 2018). Lange (2017: 32) identifies the systemic problems in the South African higher education landscape that call for the careful interrogation of the relationships between "curriculum, knowledge and identity". Interrogating these relationships calls for critical consciousness that requires abandoning comfort zones and not expecting 'others' to solve problems. South African design educators have a crucial role to play in society. The view of Buccus (2021) that citizen participation in government will be essential to South Africa's success could be extended to state that South Africa will not maintain its peace and security if its citizens do not become actively involved in closing the inequality gap.

### 1.2.2 Problem statement

In previous research (Botes, 2018), I identified a gap in the curriculum of the National Diploma: Graphic Design offered at former South African technikons. This gap is related to the lack of "skills of critical and structural social analysis; capacity to politicise notions of culture, knowledge and power [and] capacity to investigate deeper causalities" (Johnson & Morris, 2010: 90). The absence of these critical skills in the Graphic Design Diploma offered by some former technikons indicates some of the failings of apartheid-era design education. Design educators in a democratic South Africa are vocal about how design education could be transformed to address the challenges faced by South Africa (de Villiers, 2017; de Wet, 2017; Kruger, 2017; Muir, 2017). I contend that the idea of educating a citizen designer is not fully developed in the South African design education context. The education of design educators lacks the appropriate skills and knowledge to develop citizen designers. Decolonisation of education requires a pluriversal approach that is as inclusive as possible (Fataar, 2018: 2). Design educators are, by their role in the higher education system, the 'knowledge selectors' and will, therefore, be instrumental in ensuring the inclusion of 'humanity's knowledge systems in the curriculums they develop. The argument put forward by Botman is relevant here (cited in Leibowitz, 2013: xiii) that the university in itself is a highly politicised environment; as such, it has to serve the interests of society, and must be relevant. The statement made by Giroux captures on many levels the essence of what critical citizenship and decolonisation theories could achieve in design education:

*"Educators inspired by Freire take on the responsibility of witnessing and addressing the most pressing problems of public education and civic life and engage culture as a crucial site and strategic force for productive social change"* (cited in Mayo, 2004: x).

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<sup>3</sup> The South African government defines black people as "a generic term which means Africans, Coloureds and Indians" (Employment Equity Act, 1998: 3). In this thesis, I define black people as those disadvantaged by the apartheid system and white people as those advantaged by the apartheid system, on the same premise I also differentiate between black Africans and white Africans.

Several authors have identified gaps in design education. Norman (2014) points to the dichotomy between what is taught in design education and what is applicable in the world of work. Norman (2014) indicates that because design can deliver on the basic needs of humanity, there could be a greater focus on how design students can be educated to deal with socio-economic, political and ecological issues. Vodeb argues for design students and educators to become emancipated by being exposed to mediated risk-taking practices that will allow them to counter the neo-liberal capitalism in the design industry. Vodeb (2019) added dimension when he highlighted the role of neoliberal university establishments in resisting this kind of risk-taking. Buchanan (2001) argues that within a context of human dignity, designers should be self-supporting, socially responsible and actively engaged. McCoy (in Heller, 2006: 3) identifies that democracies have realised what is already more prevalent in more socialist countries, i.e., design has a more significant role in society. Çakır (2012) argues for design education to emancipate society and states that design literacies be applied to create a better future for all and not only serve the needs of the neoliberal design industry.

### **1.3 Research question, study aim and objectives**

Given the increasing need for citizens designers with the ability to navigate socio-political tensions and the possibility that the concepts of critical citizenship and decolonisation could contribute to the education of a South African citizen designer with socio-political astuteness, the main research question I pose in this study is formulated as: What themes in critical citizenship and decolonisation theoretical perspectives could contribute to a pedagogical framework for citizen designer education in South Africa?

The study aims to identify themes in critical citizenship and decolonisation theoretical perspectives that could contribute to a design pedagogy framework for citizen designer education within a South African context.

From this aim, the following objectives have been singled out:

- a) To identify themes in critical citizenship perspectives.
- b) To identify themes in decolonisation perspectives.
- c) To synthesise themes in critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives that could contribute to a pedagogical framework for citizen designer education.

### **1.4 Overview of research methodology**

In this qualitative study, an interpretative approach was taken with the intention to counter the aspiration of developing a 'universal theory' resulting from normative research (Cohen & Morrison, 2007: 22). From an interpretive perspective, multifaceted human experiences and understanding are interpreted out of which theory is constructed (Cohen & Morrison, 2007: 22). A case study research design was selected as this study involves the lived experiences of design educators and students, where I aim to explore possible contributions of critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives to support the development of South African citizen designers. Yin (2016: 9) describes the essence of case study research as a study representing the lived experiences of study participants within the contexts of their everyday lives, reporting through multiple sources of evidence, while the researcher contributes new insights by introducing new or existing concepts. The combination of critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives in the development of

a pedagogical framework opens the possibility of introducing new contextually relevant concepts to South African citizen designer education. As a South African design educator, I am intrinsically involved in the context described in the research question. My location, therefore, requires an intrinsic case study approach to be taken. Stake (1995: 4) states that when a researcher is intrinsically involved in a case, the researcher's curiosities and special interests need to be restrained. In an attempt to address my intrinsic involvement in the case, a contextual chapter is included in the study. It is noted that personal goals and preferences can become sources of bias (Bazeley, 2013: 7). I purposefully focussed on minimising the impact of personal bias as far as possible.

A survey of design educators and interviews with design students and design educators were undertaken and used as the primary data sources. A total of 31 design educators and 23 design students participated in the study. The Covid-19 pandemic severely impacted conventional data collection methods. Planned face to face interviews or in-person focus groups could not be conducted. Therefore, data was collected through an online survey, individual interviews with lecturers using videoconference software, and personal telephonic interviews with students to avoid them incurring financial costs. Inductive content analysis was used to develop codes into themes. Ethical clearance for this research project was obtained from the Research Ethics Committees of Stellenbosch University and the Tshwane University of Technology. Chapter four gives a detailed description of the research design.

### **1.5 Limitations of the study**

The focus of this study is not restricted to any specific design discipline but is instead directed at the broad field of design education. As indicated in paragraph 1.3, the study is aimed at South African design educators. However, the proposed themes could also have value to individual design educators beyond the borders of South Africa, depending on their own context. The higher education sector in South Africa is complex, with varying types of institutions. The majority of participants in the study are from South African universities of technology; the results of the study is therefore best seen within this context.

The socio-political theme in the research is especially time-sensitive. When the research proposal commenced in January 2018, the #Feesmustfall, #Rhodesmustfall campaigns from 2016 and growing worldwide nationalism as demonstrated by Brexit and the election of Trump as American president were some of the main drivers for the research. When the study concluded in 2022, the world had changed. The Covid-19 pandemic, the unprecedented June 2021 looting and violence in South Africa and the 2022 military invasion of Ukraine by Russia have inevitably impacted the socio-political aspects of society. The impact of these events is still being processed, and the extent to which it could affect the result of the study is unknown.

## **1.6 Structure of the thesis**

### **CHAPTER 1**

#### **ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

In the first chapter, an orientation to the study is presented. The research question, aim and objectives of the study are discussed, and the chapter concludes with an overview of the research methodology and limitations of the study.

### **CHAPTER 2**

#### **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

The second chapter reports on the literature review conducted for critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives. The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework synthesised from the study's key elements.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

In chapter three, the study is contextualised. The chapter commences by describing the context of design education in the world; following this, the South African design education context is discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the context of the design studio environment.

### **CHAPTER 4**

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In chapter four, the methodology used in the study is described. A qualitative/interpretative research approach is described in the chapter. The research approach is described, and aspects of the research methodology, including the research design, sampling, demographics, data analysis, validity and trustworthiness of the study are also discussed.

### **CHAPTER 5:**

#### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter draws attention to the themes that emerged from the inductive content analyses of the empirical data.

### **CHAPTER 6**

#### **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

In the final chapter, the thesis concludes with factual and conceptual deductions. The implications of the findings are framed within the study's research question, aim, and objectives, which generated discussion of the identified themes. The chapter concludes with a critique and recommendations for further studies.

# CHAPTER 2

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

### 2.1 Introduction

The main research question posed in this thesis requires exploring themes in critical citizenship and decolonisation theoretical perspectives that could contribute to design pedagogy for developing South African citizen designers. Within the discussion of each perspective, an explication of the relevant perspective is followed by the identification of seminal authors involved in each field and a conclusion that identifies themes within each perspective. In this chapter, the concept of citizenship is defined and explicated, followed by a discussion of critical citizenship perspectives and the framework for critical citizenship education developed by Johnson and Morris (Johnson & Morris, 2010: 90). This section concludes with a discussion on critical pedagogy as an integral part of the Johnson and Morris framework.

A discussion of decolonisation perspectives follows the section on critical citizenship perspectives. A Stellenbosch University task team has stated that decolonisation does not exist as a singular theory or framework (Recommendations of the Task Team for the Decolonisation of the Stellenbosch University Curriculum, 2017), but rather as a "family of diverse positions that share a view of coloniality as the fundamental problem in the modern age" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 492). The concept of decoloniality is introduced and related to decolonisation perspectives, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015), who combines insights from various authors to focus on three key areas – the coloniality of power, knowledge and being; Mbembe's (2016) model of the dominant eurocentric framework and its replacement; and Dei's (2006: 3) description of the aim of decoloniality. Decoloniality is also shown to be a critique modernity and the negative impact thereof; decoloniality thus advocates pluriversality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 409).

The next section of the chapter provides a synthesis of the key elements identified in critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives. The synthesis of these two perspectives facilitates the development of a conceptual framework for citizen designer education that is framed within Cogan's definition of citizenship education. Johnson and Morris previously identified Cogan's definition of citizenship education as helpful in combining the concepts in critical pedagogy with elements of citizenship education. Cogan describes citizenship education as the formation of "the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions of citizens" (2002:4). The elements within design pedagogy and decoloniality perspectives are synthesised with critical pedagogy and Cogan's identified elements of citizenship education. In conclusion, this chapter presents the conceptual framework that will be implemented for the analysis of the empirical data of the research.

### 2.2 Critical citizenship theoretical perspectives

This section introduces conceptions of citizenship, discusses critical citizenship and the Johnson and Morris framework for critical citizenship education and concludes with a discussion of critical pedagogy.

### 2.2.1 Conceptions of citizenship

The pioneering work of Max Weber is the main source of current conceptions of citizenship where this is seen as a political issue related to nations (Barbalet, 2010). Leydet (2011) identifies the political, legal and identity dimensions of citizenship that are conceptualised within the liberal and republican political models. According to Leydet, the concept of citizenship can be challenged as being reliant on physical territory in a globalised world and because of the increasing plurality in the world. The issue of social and cultural pluralism also has other consequences for the idea of citizenship in that it must be decided to what extent, if at all, citizenship embraces individuality and how plurality could be approached within the context of social coherence for it to be able to acknowledge difference. Social coherence implies a sense of belonging, as Mahar, Cobigo & Stuart, propose in their definition of belonging:

*"We define a sense of belonging as a subjective feeling of value and respect derived from a reciprocal relationship to an external referent that is built on a foundation of shared experiences, beliefs or personal characteristics. These feelings of external connectedness are grounded to the context or referent group, to whom one chooses, wants and feels permission to belong. This dynamic phenomenon may be either hindered or promoted by complex interactions between environmental and personal factors"* (2013: 1026).

Feminist practices and debates are also used to describe and analyse citizenship. The character and content of feminist debates are focused on themes dealing with struggle, inequities, different voices and critiques of the public/private dichotomy. These themes are ideally suited to address the challenges faced in the citizenship debate (Lombardo & Verloo, 2009). The delicate balance between the collective 'community' and individual rights in a democracy also shapes the understanding of citizenship. Throughout history, this balancing act between community and individual has been a central theme (Gross, 1998).

In a study on the effects of citizenship education in the United States of America, Abowitz and Harnish (2006) find that there are conceptual conflicts in citizenship education that were compounded by the impact of September 11 terrorist attacks and the "War on Terror". They identify that although the "feminist, cultural, reconstructionist, queer, and trans nationalist discourses" (2006: 680) have made an impact on citizenship education in schools, it is only shallow and, to a large extent, not meaningful enough. The possibility of post-citizenship is also mooted. This might occur when supra-state agencies, such as the UN and the EU, overtake governments in delivering and protecting the rights of humans (Turner & Walters in Pakulski, 1997). The range of factors identified above gives an indication that the meaning and values attached to the concept of citizenship are contested and in constant flux. This flux is also observed in the concept of belonging, described by Girard & Grayson as follows:

*"We live in a world in which the weakening and widening of relationships of belonging goes hand-in-hand with the globalization of all aspects of life—economic, financial, political, and even cultural. However, as such relationships become more and more all-encompassing and less and less restrictive, they also become less and less protective and less able to provide a sense of security"* (2016: 3).

### 2.2.2 Conceptions of critical citizenship

As a relatively young democracy, South Africa finds itself in a critical period where profound conceptions of citizenship are formed in the 'first generation' citizenry (Schoeman, 2006: 130). A workable and just balance between the individual and the state/the individual and society is critical for the South African democracy to succeed (Ramphele, 2001: 6). The impact and fragility of these relationships were evident during the Covid-19, stage 5 lockdown imposed by the South African government on the citizens of the country. The possibility of a "politically passive mass integrated into the nation state" (Barbalet, 2010: 215) is a severe threat to democracy. For South Africa, this will be especially important and difficult to avoid due to our "ambitious constitutional goals" (Enslin, 2003: 82) that have to be inculcated to new generations of citizens through a weak education system. In the concept of critical citizenship, developing the voice and action of citizens is fundamental. To be able to deploy this power, however, there needs to be a 'contract' of respect (Hammett & Staeheli, 2011: 275) for citizenship to flourish; if the accounts of Vice-Chancellors (Habib, 2019) of the #protest movements at universities are considered, the social contract of respect is not adhered to (by both students and university management). Corruption, patronage and nepotism in the South African government and private sector have also become a possible barrier for critical citizenship to fully develop in our young democracy as the impact of the example set by people in power on young people is becoming more apparent (Hammett & Staeheli, 2009: 10). The importance of critical citizenship education that prepares citizens "for life" (Waghid, 2009: 408), enables them to work and think independently, and accept responsibility is also acknowledged.

Critical citizenship education facilitates understanding of identity and develops the skills needed to promote social justice wherever one may find oneself (Banks, 2008). Critical citizenship is seen as a vehicle for "transformation of perceptions and attitudes" (Costandius, 2014: 116), something that is especially pertinent in a society with inequalities such as South Africa. Through sensitive structuring of critical citizenship education, it is also feasible to be "addressing some of the avoidance and difficulties" (Costandius & Bitzer, 2014) experienced by participants in critical citizenship education. It was also, however, identified that, for critical citizenship education to be meaningful and create change, educators need to be "critically literate" (Andreotti, 2006: 49), or they face the possibility of creating more harm than good. The professional "competencies and the confidence" needed to effectuate meaningful and accountable change are thus also at play (Bitzer & Costandius, 2018: 7).

The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted our interconnectedness as well as our exposure to what is happening in the world as nation-states and global citizens. This consequently brought a global perspective on critical citizenship into sharp focus. There is a concern that conceptions of citizenship within a worldview are dominated by 'Western' concepts require a re-examination to de-centre the Western conceptualisation of critical citizenship (Jorgenson, 2016: 20). The conception of the global citizen is seen as having an understanding of the community that is multifaceted and devoid of any attempt at homogeneity (McDougall, 2005: 27). There are also arguments for "the ability to think as a citizen of the whole world, not just some local region or group" (Nussbaum, 2002: 289) while retaining local sensibilities.

### 2.2.3 Johnson and Morris's framework for critical citizenship education

The framework developed by Johnson and Morris has proven to be helpful in exploring the concepts that constitute critical citizenship (2010). I previously described the Johnson and Morris framework as follows:

*"In simplistic terms, Johnson and Morris developed the critical citizenship education framework by combining theories in critical thinking, critical pedagogy and the notion of an 'ideal citizen'. The critical citizenship education framework, as depicted in [Table 2.1], correlates (on the horizontal axis) different conceptions of critical citizenship with (on the vertical axis) four primary purposes of critical citizenship education"* (Botes, 2018: 24).

**Table 2.1: "A framework for critical citizenship education"**

(Johnson & Morris, 2010: 90).

	POLITICS/ ideology	SOCIAL/ collective	SELF/ subjectivity	PRAXIS/ engagement
KNOWLEDGE	Knowledge and understanding of histories, societies, systems, oppressions and injustices, power structures and macrostructural relationships	Knowledge of interconnections between culture, power and transformation; non-mainstream writings and ideas in addition to dominant discourses	Knowledge of own position, cultures and context; sense of identity	Knowledge of how to collectively effect systematic change; how knowledge itself is power; how behaviour influences society and injustice
SKILLS	Skills of critical and structural social analysis; capacity to politicise notions of culture, knowledge and power; capacity to investigate deeper causalities	Skills in dialogue, cooperation and interaction; skills in critical interpretation of others' viewpoints; capacity to think holistically	Capacity to reflect critically on one's 'status' within communities and society; independent critical thinking; speaking with one's own voice	Skills of critical thinking and active participation; skills in acting collectively to challenge the status quo; ability to imagine a better world
VALUES	Commitment to values against injustice and oppression	Inclusive dialogical relationship with others' identities and values	Concern for social justice and consideration of self-worth	Informed, responsible and ethical action and reflection
DISPOSITIONS	Actively questioning; critical interest in society and public affairs; seeking out and acting against injustice and oppression	Socially aware; cooperative; responsible towards self and others; willing to learn with others	Critical perspective; autonomous; responsible in thought, emotion and action; forward-thinking; in touch with reality	Commitment and motivation to change society; civic courage; responsibility for decisions and actions

In the previous section, the concept of citizenship and critical citizenship was explicated. To give insight into the relevance of the Johnson and Morris framework in the area of design, critical pedagogy will now be discussed, linking it to design education.



### 2.2.4 Critical pedagogy

Paulo Freire is widely recognised as the 'father' of critical pedagogy (Kirylo, 2013; Kumashiro, 2000a; Serrano, O'Brien, Roberts & Whyte, 2018). Freire describes the fundamental underpinning of critical pedagogy as a dialogue through which individuals can develop a critical view of the world around them (Freire, 2005). Design educators in various design disciplines have engaged with critical pedagogy to address design activism through design pedagogy (Cintio Di, 2014) and curriculum transformation on a wide scale (Saidi, 2005). This dialogical aspect of critical pedagogy is a central link to design pedagogy. Shreeve identifies dialogue as a 'signature' design pedagogy. Design fundamentally comprises dialogue that aims to create linkages between people and people and things. Critical pedagogy proposes new ways for students to act and think independently so that education is not seen as a prescription for political indoctrination (Bennett & Rarig, 2011: 118).

The praxis aspect of critical pedagogy is captured in design education through both reflection and action. Reflection is found in the essentially participatory 'dialogical' nature of pedagogy, together with shared elements such as "reflective practicum" (Schön, 1988) in design education as well as "design thinking" (Cross, 2011), all of which can nurture critical pedagogy. Action and activism are found in the critical pedagogy premise that learning is a social event and, therefore, can be linked to social theories of learning, such as the communities of practice described by Lave and Wenger (1991). John Dewey's concern that modern democracy could lose its moral compass and that critical pedagogy would be needed for society to maintain the relevance of democracy is, furthermore, as relevant today as when first proposed (Palmer, Bresler & Cooper, 2005: 195).

Critical pedagogy aims to create conditions where design students can reflect on their position in the "ongoing project of an unfinished democracy" (Giroux, 2006: 32). The inclusion of critical theory in design pedagogy is supported by Callahan, who argues for critical pedagogy as "a method to empower designers" (2015: 740). Giroux (2017) argues against any single recipe to facilitate critical pedagogy and explains that each situation calls for its own unique approach. He also warns against university missions that blindly pursue 'market forces' instead of nurturing students who are able to engage critically in society.

Fry (2011) contributes to critical pedagogy within the design discipline when he critiques the hope created by designers that humanity will be saved through technology, liberal democracy and human anthropocentrism. In writing about sustainability, Fry uses Heidegger's description of the "superman" to define what humanity has to become if humans are to survive their unsustainable way of life: "The superman is poorer, simpler, tenderer and tougher, quieter and more self-sacrificing and slow of decision and more economical of speech" (Fry, 2011: 2). Fry presents two propositions, firstly that a worthwhile future will imply the complete transformation of current socio-economic structures where praxis could lead the change. The second proposition is that the current political apparatus cannot deliver the change needed – a new agency based on transformation is needed that will lead to sustainment (as the opposite of unsustainability). Fry also laments democracy as a failed project that harmed the idea of a common good and social ethic. According to him, critical pedagogy and design education are compatible because both promote problem-based education that requires students to bring their own lived experiences into the process of finding solutions. In design education, the historical model of 'master and

apprentice' has given way to a relationship that strives to eliminate the power imbalance between student and teacher, where it is accepted that both the student and teacher are equal participants in the educational process. Critical pedagogy further advances curiosity on an epistemological level that relates closely to the critical thinking skills required in design thinking (Torres, 2002; Kirylo, 2013). Freire's idea of authenticity is another central aspect of critical pedagogy. It is emphasised that only authentic education can lead to emancipation (Serrano et al., 2018). This concept of authenticity could also be applied to design education that is built on the premise of authentic work being delivered as an essential requirement.

Badat, however, highlight concerns regarding the full implementation of critical pedagogy as it can be seen to challenge the notions of academic freedom and standards and it demands a too radical or substantial rethinking of the status quo (2010). Critical pedagogy also creates tension within design education as a discipline. Fenn and Hobbs argue that "critical theory perpetuates the very cultural value system that it seeks to dismantle and at best it represents a very selective cultural viewpoint" (2018: 146). It is, however, also argued that inter-and transdisciplinary spaces should be developed to incubate critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2005: 69). Critical pedagogy, ultimately, cannot be prescriptive as one ought not to replace one hegemonic system with another (Kumashiro, 2014).

The critical consciousness and pedagogy of educators are affected by their identity politics (Rodriguez & Huemmer, 2019). Design educators can also be seen as public intellectuals. Giroux describes this concept as follows: "public intellectuals must combine the interdependent roles of critical educator and active citizen. They must find ways to connect the practice of classroom teaching to the operation of power in the larger society" (1997: 265). The language of critical pedagogy could be associated with the need in design education to move beyond the tactile and to "grasp the wider symbolic processes that frame design practice" (Gray, 2014). Lessons could be learned from the past, things that worked and things that did not; within critical pedagogy, educators with the ability to construct new understanding by learning through past experiences (Kincheloe, 2008). Brown also highlights the comprehensive manner in which the notion of "participation and engaged citizenship" in critical pedagogy is contributing to design education (2012: 154). Within critical pedagogy, it is argued that the purpose of educators is to show the pathway to a world that is socially just, with freedom of speech and thought, a world that values equality and reason (Giroux, 2010).

According to Freire, conscientisation is the process in which people act "not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, [to] achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality" (1998: 519). He describes conscientised individuals as "knowing subjects [who] achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality" (1972: 51). Armitage describes conscientisation as a process where "the individual becomes engaged with transformative, democratic, and humanistic pedagogical practices, and are not mere receptacles of reality" (2013: 3).

Lloyd describes the centrality of praxis in conscientisation,

*"Conscientization is a social process, taking place among men as they unite in common reflection and action upon their world. This occurs not through intellectual effort alone but through "praxis", the unity of reflection and action. Conscientization, then, does not stop at an awakening of perception but proceeds to action, which in turn provides the basis for new perception, new reflection" (1972: 5).*

Freire goes on to define three stages of awareness in the process of conscientisation, the first stage is being magical, the second stage is being naïve, and the third stage is critical awareness (1972: 51). Cammarota succinctly captures the essence of each of these stages.

*"The first or lowest stage is termed magical consciousness in which people believe God predetermines their fate. They assume they have no control over circumstances and therefore accept that their lot in life is given and immutable" (2012: 7).*

*"The second stage of development, according to Freire, is naive consciousness in which people assume that their situation in life is the result of family upbringing and culture. Thus, an individual's success or failure is perceived as directly related to how they have been raised and the kinds of cultural beliefs they have been exposed to while growing up" (2012: 8).*

*"The final stage of development is critical consciousness and thus represents the attainment of conscientization. Those adhering to this type of consciousness will understand that living conditions derive from social and economic systems, structures, and institutions. God, family, and culture have little to do with the circumstances of one's environment. Rather, it is individual and collective agency, along with the structures that result from that agency, that have the most significant influence over peoples' living situations. God, family, and culture do not directly engender wealth or poverty; structures of privilege, oppression and exploitation do" (2012: 8).*

The Freirian philosophy of dialogue through which individuals can develop a critical view of the world around them is also interrogated by Giroux. Writing on the topic of cultural workers, he links with design education through his argument that the youth are connected to their world through the products of design (Giroux, 2000). He expands on the idea of dialogue to include "pedagogical practices that provide the conditions for a culture of questioning in which teachers and students engage in critical dialogue and unrestricted discussion in order to affirm their role as social agents, inspect their own past, and engage the consequences of their own actions in shaping the future" (Giroux & Giroux, 2004: 229). He believes that the role of the educational institution is to impart "knowledge, character, and moral vision that build civic courage" (Giroux, 1988: 101). Giroux identifies three traits in what he calls "radical education": it is interdisciplinary, it must make society more democratic, and it "takes ideas and [applies] them" (1988: 92).

Giroux critiques the Trump administration and the threats it posed to the US democracy. He states that the "discourses of hate, racism, rabid self-interest, and greed are in full bloom" (Giroux, 2017: 206). Giroux describes the relationship between pedagogy and power/politics as inseparable and intimate. He argues that because educators have become the proletariat, they have become dependent and powerless. This argument is also applicable to the South African context. He juxtaposes universities that educate for 'the economy' with universities that create "formative cultures" (Giroux, 2017: 204) and which will enable students to act against the forces threatening justice and democracy. Giroux (2017) calls for "a transformative pedagogy – rooted in what might be called a project of resurgent and insurrectional democracy – one that relentlessly questions the kinds of labour, practices, and forms of production that are enacted in public and higher education" (2017: 204).

Johnson and Morris identify the problem of critical pedagogy when the masses need to be freed from oppression (Johnson & Morris, 2010). Dominant modes of education in society are threatened by critical pedagogy because it builds capacities in students and educators to challenge the status quo. Critical pedagogy must resist the modern tendency to organise universities according to "market-related forces" (Giroux, 2017: 205). This 'anti-establishment' approach is likely to be greeted with resistance in design education, where the expectation is that students will be 'groomed' for an industry that is fundamentally built on neoliberal premises. Kirylo describes the central idea of Freire's critical pedagogy as being in the world with the promise of "equal opportunity to participate in its movement" (2013: xx).

Critical pedagogy is continually informed by various discourses as required by circumstances. It requires individuals not to take a neutral position on forces that impact humanity (Kincheloe, 2008). Theories in cultural studies are employed by Giroux to build on critical pedagogy to introduce new tools and practices (2001: 124). Ellsworth describes critical pedagogy as "the teaching of analytic and critical skills for judging the truth and merit of propositions, and the interrogation and selective appropriation of potentially transformative moments in the dominant culture" (1989: 303). Giroux also critiques the culture of positivism that "undermined the role of educators as engaged and critical public intellectuals" (2011: 43).

By working with empathy within critical pedagogy, there is a danger that the 'Other' will only be empathised with, and no real systemic changes will happen. The 'normal' will only feel good about having empathy and therefore denigrate the true intent of critical pedagogy. Educators cannot just teach; they also need to act through education that is critical of privileging and othering. Critical pedagogy must also take into account the stiltedness of oppression and act against it (Kumashiro, 2000). Ellsworth expresses concern that the term "critical pedagogy" can be used to hide political agendas instead of proclaiming the political stance taken by the educator (1989: 300). Macedo writes that,

*"educators who misinterpret Freire's notion of dialogical teaching also refuse to link experiences to the politics of culture and critical democracy, thus reducing their pedagogy to a form of middle-class narcissism"* (Macedo in Freire, 2005: 18).

Callahan also questions how design educators are perpetuating neoliberalism in the design industry. She cites Giroux, and discusses the negative impact of consumerism on society and the need for children to be equipped with critical pedagogy to be able to decode adequately and appropriately the onslaught of the mass media (2015: 737). The 2011 Design Education Manifesto calls for the inclusion of "regional design history, ethnography, sociology, economics, philosophy and politics" in critical design pedagogy and suggests that these ought furthermore to form "critical focus areas in future design education" (Lange, 2011: 94).

As a criticism of critical pedagogy, decoloniality critiques empathy in the way it is envisaged in critical pedagogy as "imaginatively feeling the emotional state of another" (Zembylas, 2018: 414). A decolonial pedagogy of empathy is succinctly described by Zembylas, who states that "critical pedagogy as decolonizing pedagogy of empathy would emphasize action-oriented empathy and solidarity relationships that seriously engage the demand posed by decolonization without falling into the traps of naïve multiculturalism or liberal cosmopolitanism" (Zembylas, 2018: 415).

### 2.3 Decolonisation theoretical perspectives

Decolonisation perspectives include diverse views based on who is speaking. Often these views are contested or in conflict as they address deep-seated fears and privileges established over centuries (Andreotti, Stein, Ahenakew, & Hunt, 2015: 22). Bhambra Gebrial and Nişancioğlu captures it succinctly when stating:

*"...some decolonising approaches seek a plurality of perspectives, worldviews, ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies in which scholarly enquiry and political praxis might take place. And yet there also remain approaches situated squarely within the anti-colonial tradition that seek to eschew the particularity of Eurocentrism through the construction of a new universality"* (Bhambra, Gebrial & Nişancioğlu, 2019: 2).

The term decolonisation became commonly used after World War II to describe the process of 'handing over' power by imperial powers to 'natives' to establish their own nation-states (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018: 123). The Non-Aligned Movement formed in 1955 gave further impetus to the term decolonisation. However, this 'handing over' referred to earlier is still problematic. The core of the difficulty lies in "disentangling the ideas of liberation from those of emancipation" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: 32). Kohn and McBride also describe this troubling disentanglement by investigating foundational narratives of decolonisation. They juxtapose the foundational narrative of the French, American and Russian revolutions as triumphant in contrast to the foundational narratives that arrive at the moment of decolonisation and which "seem to look backward, not forward" (Kohn & McBride, 2011). This troubled disentanglement is captured in the question asked by Kohn and McBride, "...on a template of oppression and subordination, how does one draw an image of freedom and self-determination?" (Kohn & McBride, 2011: 18). Authors of early decolonial texts such as Nyere, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Fanon and Biko focus on anti-colonial political stances. Ndlovu-Gatsheni describes this as a project driven by the new emerging political elite to replace the colonising political elite at the table of colonialism.

Emancipation and a 'new humanity', as described by Fanon, did not come to pass (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Cooper reminds us that decolonisation and citizenship are intertwined and that citizenship was used effectively to counter colonisation; the lessons learned there still remain as possibilities in future (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2012: 40).

### 2.3.1 Decoloniality

Colonialism did not end when majority rule was instituted in the former colonies. Even though decolonised, coloniality endured, "hence the distinction between decolonisation, a political and territorial project, and decoloniality, an ideological and epistemological one" (Morreira et al., 2020: 4). Decoloniality has been built on by a group of Latin American authors which includes Quijano, Mignolo and Maldonado-Torres, who are now focusing on the notion of decoloniality (Morreira, Lockett, Kumalo, & Ramgotra, 2020: 4). Mignolo and Walsh (2018: 17) capture the essence of decoloniality in defining the term as follows:

*"Decoloniality, in this sense, is not a static condition, an individual attribute, or a lineal point of arrival or enlightenment. Instead, decoloniality seeks to make visible, open up, and advance radically distinct perspectives and positionalities that displace Western rationality as the only framework and possibility of existence, analysis and thought" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018: 17).*

To give further clarity on the meaning of decoloniality, Maldonado-Torres defines the term as follows:

*"By decoloniality it is meant here the dismantling of relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geo-political hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world" (in Mignolo & Walsh, 2018: 17).*

Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015: 489) indicates that "decoloniality materialised at the very moment in which imperialism and colonialism arrived in Africa" and continues by drawing attention to Maldonado-Torres's definition of decoloniality:

*"[decoloniality] struggles to bring into intervening existence another interpretation that bring forward, on the one hand, a silenced view of the event and, on the other, shows the limits of imperial ideology disguised as the true (total) interpretation of the events' in the making of the modern world" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 489).*

Continuing from the previous section on critical citizenship, it is important to note that authors broaching decoloniality tend to contest critical pedagogy because it is seen as a vehicle for neo-colonialism (Zembylas, 2018: 27). In essence, decoloniality exists within diverse ideas that have in common the problematisation of coloniality in modern times (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). Ndlovu-Gatsheni describes decoloniality using three concepts. Firstly, decoloniality relates to investigations into coloniality of power, focusing on the formation of current political power relations. Secondly, decoloniality involves the

coloniality of knowledge that engages the who and how of knowledge formation from an epistemological and power perspective. Thirdly, decoloniality requires coloniality of being, "making of modern subjectivities and into issues of human ontology" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 409). These valuable categories are outlined and explored in more detail below. Mbembe identifies two sides to decoloniality; on the one hand, there is the academic model that is structured within a dominant eurocentric framework. On the other hand, there is an attempt to imagine what could replace the current model and what it ought to look like (Mbembe, 2016: 36). Dei describes the aim of decoloniality to "subvert dominant thinking that re-inscribes colonial and colonising relations" (2006: 3). Decoloniality is also a critique of modernity and its negative impact; this colonial legacy is contrasted with decolonial pluriversality (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 409). The notion of the "cultural bomb" (Ngugi, 1981: 3) is also advanced as it foregrounds the continual colonial onslaught on indigenous culture, knowledge and sense of self-worth. Several currents can be identified within decoloniality theory, which include modeling the modernity/coloniality/colonial matrix of power; coloniality of genderdelinking; epistemic disobedience; the decolonial option; colonial wound; decolonial healing; and decolonial aesthesis; white innocence; pluriversality (Jivraj, Bakshi & Posocco, 2020: 452).

### 2.3.2 Coloniality of power

The essence of the coloniality of power relates to what is described as the Colonial Matrix of Power (CMP) and 'modernity/coloniality'. Quijano (2007: 168) defines a "global power" that, through violent means, has concentrated the world's resources and wealth for the benefit of an 'elite ruling' few located in western Europe and North America. The reference to violence is made to capture the ever-continuing impact of discrimination, racism, domination and exploitation of those races that today have no resources or power to adequately determine their own destiny (Quijano, 2007: 168). Ndlovu-Gatsheni describes the CMP by identifying the four elements constituted it, i.e. Western control and domination of economies; the decimation of African kingdoms and their powers; influencing conceptions of gender, family structures and education; and a Western epistemology superiority illusion (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: 7). There is, however concern related to the duality of the territorial/ideological concepts present in decolonisation/ decolonial perspectives that will make it 'sticky' to implement in curriculums or pedagogical practice (Morreireira et al., 2020: 7).

In response to the coloniality of power, Quijano calls for "social liberation from all power organised as inequality, discrimination, exploitation, and as domination" (2007: 178). Ndlovu-Gatsheni states that the victims of the dark side of modernity in the global south "aspired for a new humanity in which species of the human race would coexist as equal and free beings" (2013: ix). Ndlovu-Gatsheni, however, also makes reference to the "postcolonial neocolonized world" that has made the African Renaissance an unfinished objective which does not allow for Africans to take control of their destinies (2013: xi). He further describes South Africa as a "semi-peripheral" case of success to legitimise the world capitalist system because it is receiving disproportioned levels of support from the enablers in the colonial matrix of power (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: xi).

Modernity is a concept within decoloniality that has attracted attention from scholars in the field of design (Fry, 2011). The inability of the politics of the day to address issues such as sustainability questions whether democracy is able to address the unsustainability of

modernity (Fry, 2011). From Africa, there is a call to be circumspect about modernity, demanding "a careful rethinking of political and social engagements with local subjects in resisting global/Western domination" (Dei, 2006: 14). The implosion of the Wall Street financial system in 2008 heralded a turning point of Western domination of the world, opening up possibilities for other world views to be heard and to contribute (Mignolo, 2011: xiv). In reaction to the failures of modernity, there is a "desire to find ways of life beyond capitalism and its magic of modernity and development that keep consumers caught in the promises of dreamworlds" (Mignolo, 2011: xiv). Employing the metaphor "the house that modernity built", four questions are posed around decoloniality that could be useful as the 'right' questions to ask in dialogue on decoloniality.

*"How does what happened in the past relate to and inform what is happening in the present? Specifically, what lessons have we yet to learn from the past that may be useful for making sense of the challenges we face in the present?"*

*How does what has happened in the past differ from what is happening in the present? Specifically, how might we need to rethink our inherited strategies for both conceptual analysis (diagnosis) and practical response (propositions)?"*

*What might we learn by suspending our desire for universal or prescriptive solutions and by instead attending soberly to what is currently working, and what is not, and based on this analysis, determine what different responses are needed in the short-, medium-, and long-term? How can we do this work of responding while maintaining an ongoing commitment to continuously assess these plans rather than remain attached to an orthodoxy that is not working?"*

*How can we mobilise 'alternative ways to engage with alternatives', that is, how can we move together differently toward a future that is undefined, without arrogance, self-righteousness, dogmatism, and perfectionism?" (Stein, Andreotti, Suša, Amsler, Hunt, Ahenakew, Jimmy, Cajkova, Valley, Cardoso, Siwek, Pitaguary, D'Emilia, Pataxó, Calhoun, & Okano, 2020: 62).*

The call for a return to 'tradition' is also made to 'slow down' the untenable pace of modern life; once life is slowed down "modernity gets stripped, and the logic of coloniality is unveiled" (Mignolo, 2011: xiv). The pressure and pace of the design industry might resonate with this call for 'slowing down'. There is also a warning of the danger that designers and especially academics in design, could make token gestures in the field of decoloniality without actually making any difference or going the route of "sustainability" in design that was co-opted by neoliberal agendas (Schultz et al., 2018). These token contributions could be easily attained as there is limited work written about design and the problem of modernity, especially in regard to the artificial world that is created through design. Ansari, rightly claim that "to think beyond modernity from within modernity is not an easy task" (cited in Schultz et al., 2018: 84). Design is in the position to work against plurality due to the nature of our methods and tools. In design, there must be an urgency not to only view from Western thought; design educators have to take the "epistemic traditions of the Global South seriously" (Abdulla in Schultz et al., 2018: 89). Decolonial design should aim to point out Western binary (either/or) positions and open up spaces such as "in-between or on the borderlands" (Canli in Schultz et al., 2018: 97).



### 2.3.3 Coloniality of knowledge

In relation to higher education, decoloniality theory aims to expose the colonial underbelly of universities as places and systems that perpetuate colonial thought where research methodologies are seen as gatekeeping instruments. Ndlovu-Gatsheni states that there are universities in Africa but no African universities (2015: 489). He also (2020) argues for a deeper understanding of the different models of universities. Table 2.2 lists the seven models of universities as identified by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020: 891). The decolonised model of the university is described as "Aspired for indigenous, activist institution, accessible, multilingual, polyphonic, relevant, responsible and culturally anchored", and notably, the university of technology is described by Ndlovu-Gatsheni as a "Neo-liberal-Bureaucratic-Corporate-Managerial Model" (2020: 891).

**Table 2.2: Ndlovu-Gatsheni's seven models of the University (2020: 891)**

Alexandria Model Timbuktu Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University of Qarawlyine/Karawiyyin in Fes in Morocco (859 CE) University of Al Azhar in Cairo in Egypt (972 CE)</li> <li>• Sankore University/University of Timbuktu (982 CE)</li> </ul>
The Western Model Kantian Humboldtian Newmanian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bologna (1088)</li> <li>• Oxford (1096)</li> <li>• Sorbonne (1150)</li> <li>• Salamanca (1218)</li> <li>• Coimbra (1290)</li> <li>• Paris Napoleonic University (1808)</li> <li>• Humboldt University (1811)</li> </ul>
The Colonial Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colleges of the metropolitan universities.</li> <li>• For example, University of London's overseas Colleges: Makerere University, University College of Rhodesia and others.</li> </ul>
African Developmental University/Yusuf Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inherited 'universities in Africa' that were subjected to 'deracialisation,' 'Africanisation', and 'indigenisation.'</li> </ul>
Popular Model of the university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Popular education, non-elitist, people's university that privileged the interests of the workers/proletariat.</li> <li>• The Popular University of Turin (1900)</li> <li>• Universidad Popular Gonzales Prada (1921)</li> </ul>
Neo-liberal-Bureaucrat- ic-Corporate- Managerial Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities of Technology</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial Universities</li> </ul>
Decolonised Model of the University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aspired for indigenous, activist institution, accessible, multilingual, polyphonic, relevant, responsible and culturally anchored.</li> </ul>

Mbembe also raises the issue that it may be too late for the reform of universities on the African continent. Is it still possible to transform 'universities in Africa' to become 'African universities'? (Mbembe, 2016: 36). The argument is put forward that the African university could be a place where plurality and the total knowledge of humanity are received and that different cosmologies and world views of our entire humanity ought to be on equal footing (Fataar & Subreenduth, 2015; Fataar, 2018: 2).

One of the fundamental questions in decoloniality is around the issue of who will decide which African epistemology is to be followed/re-discovered (Ngugi, 1981: 101). Must a new African-ness be described, and who ought to do it? (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: ix). This already problematic issue is further complicated by the question of authenticity, i.e. who decides what culture is authentic and how does one recognise that cultures evolve, develop and change? (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1998). It is argued that whoever is responsible for the renewal of knowledge ought to do it from an informed position and that educators in this sphere have to understand African culture, knowledge formation and development (Akena, 2012: 617). There is, however, a growing concern over the lack of impact made by indigenous knowledge emanating from Africa; the argument is made that indigenous knowledge hinges on ways of knowing rather than practice (Briggs, 2013: 231).

In relation to decolonial pedagogical practices, the 'neoliberal' claims against critical pedagogy need explication. Zembylas argues that empathy alone cannot solve complex problems related to colonial problems; he argues for "pedagogies of decolonisation" that could strengthen critical pedagogies (2018: 27). Postma describes decolonial pedagogical practices as a quest for educators to develop the ability of students to exercise intelligence and not 'develop' intelligence (Postma, 2019: 17). Postma describes decolonial pedagogy as "contra the Critical Pedagogue" because critical pedagogy does not face the realities of the "true causes" of oppression (2019: 17).

Ndlovu-Gatsheni brings renewed attention to the "resurgence and insurgence of decolonisation" (2020: 895). In discussing the #Feesmustfall and #Rhodesmusfall movements, he succinctly captures their key demands as an example of the need for "addressing the long-standing question of subjectivity, cognitive justice and epistemic freedom" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020: 895). In a summary of key demands of the Rhodes Must Fall movements, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020: 895) describes the demands of the movement on knowledge, curriculum and pedagogy as follows:

- *"Africa-centred education that is globally competitive*
- *Banish Eurocentrism*
- *Relevance of education*
- *Changing of demographics of teachers (gender and race wise)*
- *Use of African languages*
- *Privileging of African indigenous knowledges*
- *Democratised pedagogies"*

### 2.3.4 Coloniality of being

The worldwide Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement encapsulates the essence of coloniality of being. The constant dehumanisation and degradation of black people on a global scale are acknowledged and brought to the fore. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013: xi) describes coloniality of being as a denial by the world of a cultural contribution that could be made by Africa and summarises African intellectual production as an example of the contributions made by African intellectuals as follows (2020: 893):

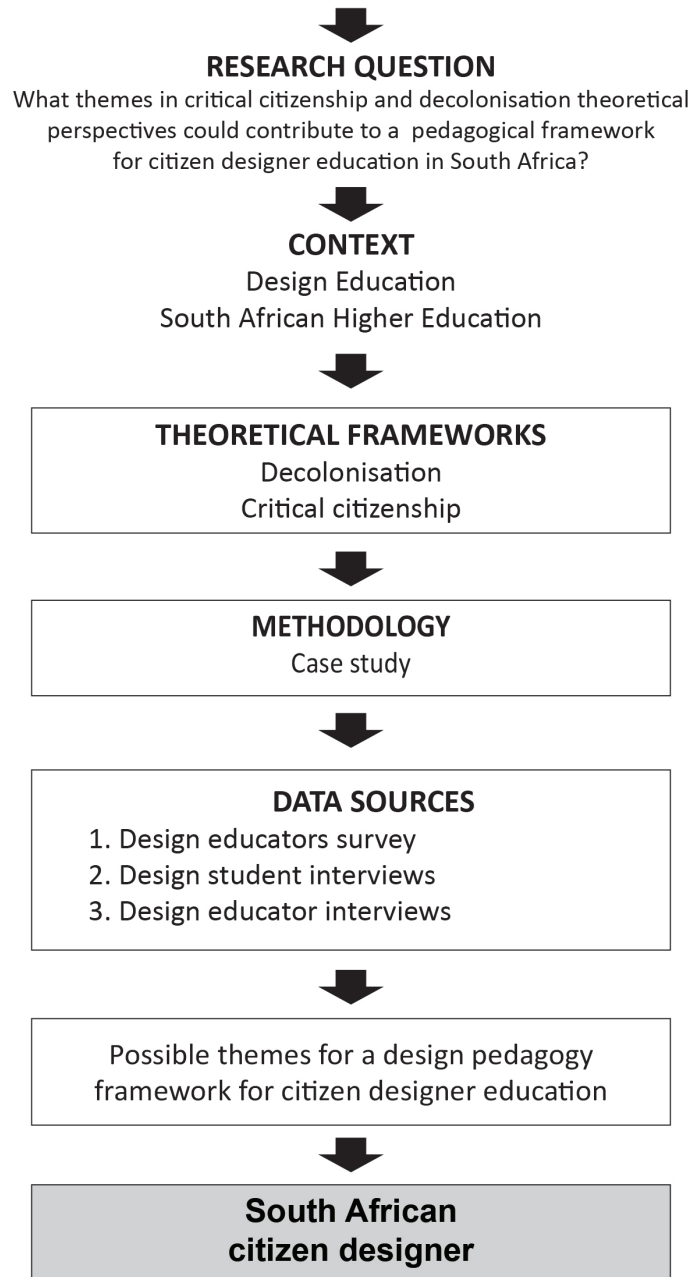
- *"Africa's long history predating colonialism*
- *How Africa grappled with African, Islamic and Western cultures and interventions*
- *How Europe underdeveloped Africa and maintained its grip over the continent*
- *How Europe invaded the mental universe of Africa/colonisation of African minds*
- *How Europe ruled Africa and its implications for postcolonial reform*
- *How Africa governed itself after dismantlement of direct Colonialism*
- *Conceptions of African social formations, especially gender relations and womanhood*
- *African struggles for development and African national Projects*
- *African transcendental identity*
- *Changing higher education landscape and crisis".*

These are all explicitly or implicitly ontological issues. Dei highlights "western cultural and capital overkill" and calls for an end to the insult that only western knowledge carries weight, a lie developed over centuries of indoctrination and identified coloniality of being as "eurocentric knowledge masquerades as universal knowings" (2006: 4). Ndlovu-Gatsheni describes the impact of the "global economy of knowledge"(2020: 887), which is fundamentally fuelled by Eurocentrism, as detrimental to the struggle for epistemic freedom sought by victims of colonialism. "The emergence of the concept 'coloniality of being' responded to the need to thematize the question of the effects of coloniality in lived experience and not only in the mind" (Maldonado-Torres, 2007: 242)

## 2.4 Synthesis and conceptual framework

The conclusion of the chapter presents critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives within a conceptual framework for the study. The purpose of the conceptual framework is to explain the main topics of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The synthesis of the two theoretical perspectives through a literature review and case study research will facilitate the development of a framework for educating citizen designers. Figure 2.1 provides a conceptual framework of the theoretical perspectives, methodology and data sources found in this study.

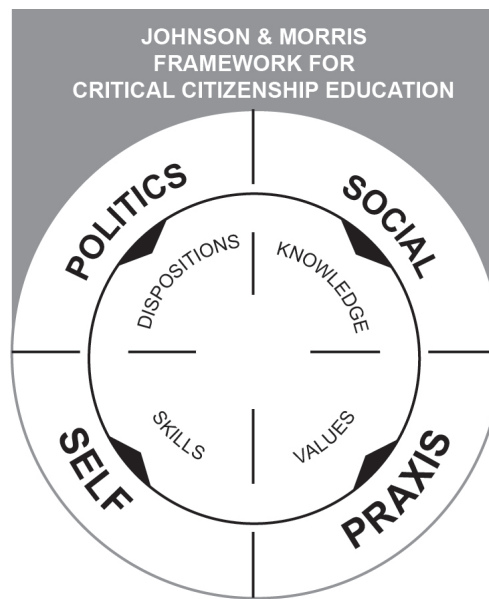
**EXPLORING CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP  
AND DECOLONISATION  
AS A FRAMEWORK FOR  
DESIGN EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.**



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework of theoretical perspectives, methodology and data sources in the study.**

The conceptual framework for this study is contextualised within the South African higher education landscape; this context is described in chapter four. The concepts of citizen designer and design pedagogy are central in the study. Critical citizenship and decolonisation theoretical perspectives are synthesised with the themes that emerged from the inductive content analysis of the empirical data. The results of this synthesis are then explored to propose themes for a design pedagogy framework that could contribute to the education of South African citizen designers.

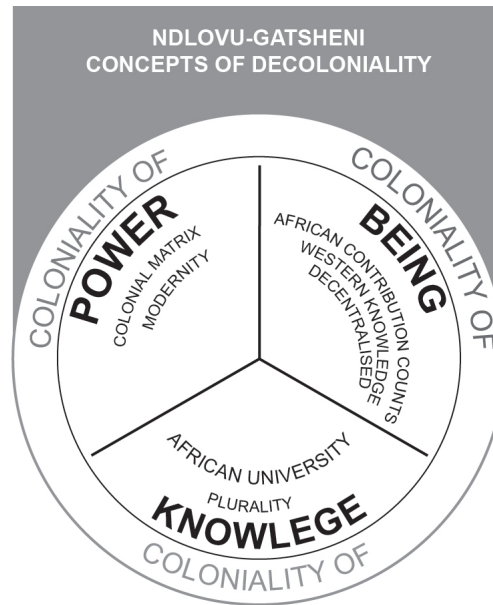
### 2.4.1 Own visualisation of critical citizenship theoretical perspective



**Figure 2.2: Johnson and Morris Framework for critical citizenship education**

The Johnson and Morris Framework for critical citizenship education is identified as a succinct framework that captures the main concepts within critical citizenship theoretical perspectives. This framework captures concepts such as citizenry and critical theories while taking into account different views on critical citizenship and the different purposes of critical citizenship education.

## 2.4.2 Own visualisation of decolonisation theoretical perspective



**Figure 2.3: Ndlovu-Gatsheni's concepts of decoloniality**

In this chapter, the concept of decoloniality was clarified as being a political and territorial project. The concepts of coloniality of power, knowledge and being described by Ndlovu-Gatsheni capture the essence of decoloniality that is described as an ideological and epistemological project. The concept of decoloniality as an ideological and epistemological project aligned with the aim of this research and was therefore selected to represent the broader decolonial theoretical perspective.

In the next chapter the context of the case study will be discussed. The global and South African (macro level) design education environment will be discussed whereafter the specific micro environment encapsulated in six key design pedagogies will be discussed.

# CHAPTER 3

## CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

### 3.1 Introduction

The context of the case study is described in this chapter. Design education in the world and South Africa is briefly discussed. Design education is then discussed as it relates to South African universities of technology. This context chapter is concluded with a discussion of the design studio environment and its related pedagogical practices.

### 3.2 Design education in the world

Research on design education reached new levels of engagement from the 1980s onward. Cross identifies five aspects of "designerly knowing" (1982: 226) that significantly contributed to discussions on design scholarship. Tovey, for example, (2015) argues for the need to apply academic rigour to tacit knowledge that will require a deeper understanding of "designerly way of knowing". Fast-paced technological and social developments have become the norm in the field of design today, so much so that the 'apprentice' now often knows more than the 'master' (Dubberly, 2011). Design educators have a pivotal role in preparing design students for unpredictability and uncertainty (Malouf, 2011). The Covid-19 pandemic foregrounded unpredictability and uncertainty in the world, where design educators had to adapt abruptly to virtual learning spaces (Robertson, Thomas & Bailey, 2022). In addition to this flux of unpredictability and uncertainty, the complexity of the world and the systems therein (Buchanan, 1992) add to the pressures on design educators to be better prepared to assist students (Frascara, 2019: 118). Evolving demands continually place new pressures on design educators as they navigate complex design education contexts (Moreira, 2019).

### 3.3 South African design education

The arrival of colonialism in Africa signalled the end of the pre-colonial African way of life, an end to the African way of knowing, learning and doing (Abdi, 2006). From the outset, colonial education was used to promote an inferior view of African "epistemes and epistemologies" (Abdi, 2006: 15), "educational systems were more pragmatic and more attached to the life of the African people" (Abdi, 2006: 14). Instead of contributing to the development of Africa, education became the platform on which the enslavement of a continent was institutionalised. The unique character of the pre-colonial African educational systems was destroyed by colonisation. Since the advent of the democratic era in 1994, South African education has been subject to many systemic changes focused on policies and strategies to reverse the legacy of apartheid education. The success of these attempts has been far less than anticipated (Cloete, 2006). Somehow, while dealing with the legacy of the apartheid system, policymakers have missed the solutions offered by the African academia in the post-colonial debate (Cloete, 2006).

The 2020 context of South African higher education has changed substantially since the dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994. Previous disparate qualification frameworks have been replaced by a single amalgamated National Qualification Framework (NQF) and Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework (HEQSF) (Department of Education, 1997). The post-apartheid government also instituted a large-scale programme of mergers of higher education institutions to replace the segregated system imposed by the apartheid regime and prepare these institutions for a globalised future (Sehoole, 2005). In August 2020, there were 22 public universities and 61 private higher education institutions in South Africa presenting programmes in the field of design (SAQA, n.d.). Collectively these institutions offer 28 certificate programmes on level five, 54 diplomas on NQF level six, 57 advanced diplomas and BA degrees on NQF level seven, 21 honours and postgraduate diplomas on NQF level eight, 17 master's programmes on NQF level nine and four doctoral programmes on NQF level ten.

Design education in South Africa is burdened by the legacy of an educational system imposed by colonial rulers and the apartheid regime. One prominent example of innovative responses to meet this challenge is the Design Education Forum of Southern Africa (DEFSA) 2017 national conference, which provided insights into the rich conceptions of decolonisation held by South African design educators. The theme of the conference was "#Decolonise! Design educators reflecting on the call for the Decolonisation of education". The conference aimed to challenge "design academics and postgraduate students to scrutinise their educational practice in relation to calls for the decolonisation of higher education" (Giloi & Botes, 2017: iii). The conference papers are available in the DEFSA 2017 conference proceedings. Seven papers are centred around the student's role in their education. De Wet makes a case for students to have an active voice in their education, allowing the individual culture and personality to be the root of their design work (2017: 39). The level of confidence attained by a student during their education is shown to be important by Yiannakaris, who believes that a human-centred approach of Design Thinking deployed by educators will humanise the educational experiences of students within a safe space affirming diversity (2017: 288). Collet & Economou also describe the use of a humanising pedagogy that recognises students as rich sources of social, cultural and linguistic knowledge; they call this the "Funds of knowledge" within students that creates the space for dialogue about the curriculum (2017: 71). Harvey & Lucking link fashion design with performing arts in an investigation of the use of the play *Boesman and Lena* (by Athol Fugard) to develop African fashion literature. Through this process, they discern cultural links between students, research methodologies and design (2017: 132). In the context of interaction design, Myers argues for a "more humanistic account" where the interactive narrative is presented as a solution for depicting technology in a more humanistic light (2017: 202). The value of interactive narratives for decolonising design education is that these can bring to the fore their own agency that designers should explore in the field of interaction design. Carey addresses decolonising the curriculum with two possible strategies: "the use of history for identity, and student agency in designing their own studies" (2017: 1). Khan and Botes investigate the impact of diverse educational backgrounds present in the studio through projects to develop the "value of individuality and identity" through the use of each student's background (2017: 104).



Six of the conference papers focus on the importance of advancing African knowledge in the decolonial perspective. Mchunu introduces Zulu proverbs as a 'vehicle' in fashion design projects to develop students' social responsibility, making the argument that the African oral literature tradition is a rich source of material for socially-engaged student projects (2017: 169). Mastamet-Mason, Müller and Van der Merwe argue that the inclusion of African cultures in the history of costumes studied in fashion design was raised as a critical factor in decolonising fashion design education (2017: 143). Osman and Musonda call for centring African knowledge in architectural endeavours through "theoretical frameworks that are better suited to diverse contexts, specifically Africa, and we need to elevate local knowledge systems, thinking that originates from the African continent" (2017: 224). Di Monte-Milner highlights the approach of holistic teaching that allows for the discussion and use of more African examples of design work (2017: 48). Newport describes various approaches to facilitate engagement with decolonisation; these include phenomenological and ontological approaches, social justice, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and African methodologies, innovation as development and activity theory (2017: 213). Giloi argues for "a decolonised gaze" that allows for "working with multiple sources of knowledge and ways of knowing, doing and being", thereby linking to the idea of pluriversality (2017: 83).

The remaining eight papers in the conference proceedings offer diverse views of the intersection of design education and decolonisation perspectives. Kruger questions the possibility that design as a discipline can be decolonised due to its structural relationship with neoliberalism (2017: 118). Sidogi & Rasedile contest the decolonisation debate by arguing for the need to "detraditionalis[e], recontextualis[e] and ultimately 21st-centuryis[e]" (2017: 256). Gray describes the decolonisation discourse as "fundamentally and paradigmatically disruptive and decentering of Western rationality" within this context, and argues that social justice and disciplinarity are challenged in the decolonisation debate where tensions and contradictions abound (2017a: 94). Smal & Harvey believe that the impact of trends and celebrity culture in fashion design can be countered. Design with intent requires students to change their traditional views of empirical and systematic research (2017: 277). Mbatha finds that the shortage of PhD-level academics in the fashion design departments of South African higher education institutions impacts the discipline's ability to address the issues raised by the decolonisation debate (2017: 159). Coetzee, Van Staden & Oldewage-Theron show that the cultural background of end-users with low literacy levels may impact their comprehension. The researchers address this problem through a pictographic approach supported by concrete thinking (2017: 14). Pretorius uses the stages of the life of objects to develop sensitivity to gender identity. Writing the biography of a mass-produced product is investigated as a possible method to decolonise design education (2017: 234). Shangase & de Klerk examine the use of digital imaging technology in a museum setting to enhance the visitor experience. They suggest that technology can facilitate different interpretations of museum exhibits to promote inclusivity (2017: 267). The papers published in the "#Decolonise! DEFSA conference proceedings accentuate the central role of students in their learning and the importance of African knowledge.

Another recent example of innovative responses to the historical educational challenges in South Africa is the 2018 book dealing with educating citizen designers in South Africa (Costandius & Botes, 2018). This publication gives direct insight into the conceptions of critical citizenship held by South African design educators. Thirteen design educators involved in citizen designer education in South Africa reflect on their experiences. Costandius and Alexander (2018) discuss their practice by exploring barriers and strategies for critical citizenship education. Botes (2018) applies the framework for critical citizenship developed by Johnson and Morris (2010) to the curriculum of the National Diploma in Graphic Design offered by universities of technology and determines that the curriculum lacks the capacity to address socio-political issues. Perold and Delpont (2018) explore live and design-build projects as educational spaces to foster critical citizenship. Osman (2018) investigates community engagement as a catalyst in the built environment and reflected on teaching architecture with a focus on housing design. Campbell and Brown (2018) discuss a potential difference model for educating critical citizen designers through a case study of a beekeeping project. Gray (2018) engages with the 'evils' of the entrepreneurship ideology in citizenship education. Cassim (2018) advocates for the creation of citizen designers by nurturing design-thinking skills through experiential learning. In their work, Fenn and Hobbs (2018) apply strategic models for reflective practice to nurture critical citizen designers. Van den Berg (2018) reflects on the process of developing a critical citizenship module for undergraduate design and branding students in a private higher education institution in South Africa. Ambole (2018) contributes lessons on critical citizenship from a 'Non-citizen' and Perold-Bull (2018) outlines a way forward for design education in a 'post' South African society.

### **3.4 Design education at South African universities of technology**

South African universities of technology were formed out of what were known as technikons; these were higher education institutions focused on vocational training (du Pré, 2010). Design curriculums presented at technikons were governed by a convenor system where all institutions would collaboratively develop a programme and then collectively offer it throughout the country. This system was especially beneficial to institutions that employed highly skilled industry professionals with relatively little teacher/education training. This system was changed when the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Council on Higher Education (CHE) were promulgated in the National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008. SAQA and CHE are now responsible for quality assurance of higher education programmes that individual institutions develop.

#### **3.4.1 Student protest and Covid-19**

Design educators are fortunate to engage in relatively small classes that allow them to connect with students on a level that is not possible in programmes that often have thousands of students. It allows me to be aware of the daily struggles of students. The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on students, to a certain extent, overshadowed the impact of the 2016 #Rhodesmustfall and subsequent #Feesmustfall movements. The circumstances of the 2020 lockdown brought to the fore the fractures in South African society that were underlying the #Rhodesmustfall and #Feesmusfall movements. In 2021 while we were waiting for the official decision to allow students to return to campus tensions mounted in an institution that could not effectively deliver online learning to

its students, primarily due to the deep inequalities in the South African society reflected in the student body. Most students studying at the institution where I am employed are NSFAS<sup>4</sup> funded. Some of the students also reside in rural and informal residential areas where digital connectivity is intermittent. These communities also struggle to obtain basic services such as drinking water and reliable electricity supply. Although the students in our department were fortunate to have received devices and data from the institution so that they could continue with online learning, the home situation for some was such that e-learning was unviable. This unsustainable inequality in student experience is bound to fuel tensions. On a daily basis, students have to reflect on how they express their anger and frustration when faced with such disparity. Davids and Waghid have called for an "upheaval of thought" (Davids & Waghid, 2018: 8) to show dissonance in the place of destructive, violent protestations. It is also necessary to consider whether such a call for restraint from academics is justified when coming from the comfort of employment.

### 3.4.2 Regulatory environment

The accreditation and quality assurance of higher education in South Africa has fundamentally changed since the promulgation of the CHE through an act of parliament. By law, all new programmes in the higher education sector have to be accredited by CHE and SAQA and need to be endorsed by the Department of Higher Education (DHET). This highly regulated environment undoubtedly results in increased managerialism in order to assure compliance with legal standards. The move to managerialism has been further supported by the funding formulas used to finance public universities. Corporate governance methods from the private sector have subsequently been imported to support the 'bottom line' (Styger & Heymans, 2016).

For a discipline such as design with high levels of ambiguity intrinsic in the pedagogies used, the highly structured, evidence-based outcomes demanded by quality assurance bodies are unreasonable. Spontaneity and innovation cannot be documented and measured, and this is perceived as problematic (Shreeve, Sims & Trowler, 2010: 125). Design educators are under pressure to meet performance indicators in teaching, community service and research. This pressure will undoubtedly increase as the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic impacts university budgets.

### 3.5 Design studio environment

Design pedagogy has its roots in the first master artisans who mentored apprentices through the transfer of tacit knowledge in design studio environments (Dubberly, 2011). These master craftsmen and apprentices are not only a heritage of the Renaissance but also point to the earliest stages of human development where there was a master 'artisan' who created the first flints and stones to light a fire and hunted for survival. The master-apprentice relationship was contextual to the histories of cultures and nations worldwide within various stages of their history and growth. Design pedagogy developed from the emphasis on mastering a craft (William Morris) to merging art with technique (Walter Gropius) to incorporating science and philosophy (Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm) (Frascara, 2019: 116). The academic grounding of design by alumni and staff from the Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm, such as Tomás Maldonado, Gui Bonsiepe and Klaus Krippendorff, marked a turning point in the development of the field (Michel, 2007: 15).

<sup>4</sup> Refer to the state funded National Student Financial Aid Scheme

From the master-apprentice tradition design, pedagogy has inherited many attributes that have withstood the test of time. Design pedagogy, however, has come under scrutiny. The difficulty for practising designers to "externalise their knowledge" impacted their ability to become effective pedagogues because of the heavy reliance on tacit knowledge intrinsic to apprenticeships (Cross, 1982: 224). Design educators have historically debated the value, merit and weight of 'ideas-based' curriculums versus practical skills-based curriculums in design curriculums (Adams, Hyde & Murray, 2013). During the various industrial revolutions that fundamentally changed the design industry, the rapid evolution of technological developments has reinforced the argument supporting a more 'ideas-based' curriculum (Fleischmann, 2013: 13). The 'democratisation' of technical design skills through technological advancement, in especially the field of artificial intelligence (Buchanan, 2019), has lowered the requirements for highly specialised practical 'craft' skills. Buchanan makes the call for a move toward "design thinking, not merely changes in style and surface treatment" as far back as 1998 (1998: 20). Buchanan's paper titled "Wicked Problems in Design Thinking" (Buchanan, 1992) has propelled the theory of design into its next phase of development. Malouf, however, argues for the strengthening of the apprenticeship as part of the paradigm of life-long learning of the designer (2011).

In the last thirty years, design as a discipline was increasingly demarcated from epistemologies in humanities and natural sciences through the work of theorists such as Barry Lawson, Nigel Cross and Kees Dorst and others (Ghajargar & Bardzell, 2019: 293). The key point is that design as a discipline is constantly evolving and developing. The design studio as a pedagogical and social environment is also evolving. The massification of higher education and the abrupt move to virtual studio environments during the Covid-19 pandemic have further impacted the design studio.

The concept of 'signature pedagogies' is useful when analysing the pedagogies associated with the design studio. Design educators must grasp the pressures placed on the design studio and its associated 'signature pedagogies' through massification and managerialism in higher education (Shreeve, Sims & Trowler, 2010). Shreeve (2016) employs the signature pedagogy theory developed by Shulman to identify six signature pedagogies most commonly used in disciplines within the field of design, namely the studio, projects and the brief, materiality, dialogue, the crit and research. These important and valuable analytical categories are examined now in greater detail.

### **3.5.1 Studio pedagogy**

Shreeve describes studio pedagogy within the framework of Schon's reflective practice (Schon, 1983) within communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). She touches on the challenges that financial pressures and the massification of higher education are currently placing on studio pedagogy. Shreeve posits that these pressures could be mediated by implementing technological strategies (Shreeve, 2016). Studio pedagogy is as old as design itself; the origins of the studio can be traced back to the master-apprentice relationship or even to the guilds that were established in the Middle Ages. John Dewey's *Laboratory School*, established in the late 1800s in Chicago, was one of the first spaces identified with practising studio pedagogy (Lackney, 1999). Dewey was inspired to implement studio pedagogy by Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel, who contended that children learn through play:

"children acquire knowledge of physical nature by acting on it, using it" (Palmer, Bresler & Cooper, 2005: 107). Froebel is also credited with coining the term *kindergarten* (Palmer, Bresler & Cooper, 2005), which is insightful if one considers the similarities between studio space and kindergartens.

Studio pedagogy as a space where experience is acquired and learning takes place can be framed within several theories of, especially adult learning. Merriam and Bierema create a succinct list of theoretical perspectives within education that deals with "life experience and learning" (Merriam & Bierema, 2014: 53).

- Dewey's Experience and Education (1938)
- Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984)
- Schön's reflective practice (1983)
- Fenwick's communities of practice (2003) based on Lave and Wenger's theories (Davis, 2016).

Orr and Shreeve capture the transformative nature of studio pedagogy when they state that "Studio education is not delivered. Studio education is forged" (Orr & Shreeve, 2017). The studio is also seen as an induction into the professional community (Salama & Wilkison, 2007: 43). Growth identifies three types of learning that take place in the studio: firstly, the development of knowledge or "learning about design", secondly development and application of skills or "learning to design", and, thirdly, transformative pedagogy or "learning to become" a designer (2013: 19). He further identifies that deep learning occurs in the studio, based on deep and shallow learning theories described by Marton and Säljö (Crowther, 2013). Literature indicates that studio pedagogy aims to integrate theory, practice and research (Muratovski, 2016: 79).

Oxman defines studio pedagogy as "a venue for making designs under the sporadic guidance of the design tutor who intervenes in the student's designing, generally in reaction to the student's explicit design" (1999: 2016). Walter Gropius used the situatedness of studio pedagogy when he placed leading 'masters' in the studios and workshops of the Bauhaus. He declared that by doing this, he created an 'atmosphere' that would never be replicable (Yeomans, 1988: 209). Creating this 'atmosphere' within a design education space has been the signature pedagogy for design schools and institutions worldwide. In South Africa, the same applies to the various design schools where 'celebrity' designers and personalities in the design industry lead an educational institution. The ability to create this 'atmosphere' has significantly been hampered by the promulgation of the HEQSF and CHE that set strict accreditation criteria. Learning outcomes defined in these criteria deny the complexity of education and diminish educators' trust that are inherent in the 'master-apprentice' relationship (Addison, 2014: 322). The qualification requirements of the accreditation authorities that educators must have a qualification one level higher than the course they teach, together with the 'requirement' for degree-level studies by the 'market' create a new reality where the 'traditional' master or celebrity designer is no longer deemed fit for the position of an educator.

Malouf highlights that the effectiveness of the studio is impeded by being more focused on evaluation rather than criticism. He posits that "learning in the studio is not facilitated through pedagogical demonstration but rather through student observation and enquiry"

(2011: 102). He argues that the current master-apprentice relationship is hampered because the 'master' these days is not practising their craft but is instead in a management position; the symbiosis of creating 'together' is lost. Boling and Smith identify several further 'weak' aspects of studio pedagogy. They argue that there is a tendency to focus on the designed objects and avoid "social and political issues", producing an inward-focused culture that ignores clients' needs, high-stress levels and low adoption of new technology. This is within a context of reduced funding and higher costs, impacting the available space for design studios. The inability of educators to maintain the high levels of expertise required by the studio is also problematic (2016: 38). Due to the bureaucratic red tape of accreditation audits and systemic reviews (Dineen & Collins, 2005: 43), educators have much less time to spend with students in one-to-one consultations in the studio. Creative academic staff's stress and lack of self-fulfilment are stifling the studio (Swann, 2002: 60).

Wilson and Zamberlan indicated that relatively new developments in the field of design, such as design thinking, creativity theory, organisational design, innovation, service design, entrepreneurship, strategic design, design for social innovation and interaction design are impacting studio pedagogy (2017). The situative perspective of learning (as defined by Fenwick) requires the possibility of meaningful interaction in the studio but this is impeded by the move from interactive studio space to computer laboratories (Costandius, 2006). Understanding educational theory and how this can assist in unlocking the full potential of studio pedagogy is vital. Design educators need to involve themselves in "teaching and learning training" (Kusumowidagdo, 2019: 78).

### **3.5.2 The project and brief**

Shreeve identifies projects and briefs as the most commonly used pedagogical approach taken by most design programmes (2016). It is, however, recognised that literature on the "project method" is underdeveloped (Lee, 2009: 541). Shreeve describes the function of the project as giving focus through a brief that is industry-directed with a fair amount of ambiguity that must be contended with (2016). Lee describes the project as Problem Based Learning (PBL) (developed by Dewey) which allows for the connection of the project with educational theory in PBL (2009).

The design brief is instrumental in structuring the planned teaching and learning that takes place in the studio. However, the structure defined in design briefs might also limit the possible solutions that could be found outside of the discipline (Jenson, 2007). Heller identifies three traits of seminal student design projects. Design projects must challenge, inform and elevate the student through the way a project is structured; the information it communicates must provide enough ambiguity to allow for surprise outcomes. He further notes that seminal projects rarely become dated but rather become legendary and 'talked about'. The project ought also to develop a sense of community among students while highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of participants. Finally, Heller underscores the importance of real-life settings for any project; without being grounded in the lived experience of students, projects become meaningless, predictable and superfluous (Heller & Talarico, 2009). Davis states that design projects aim to "immerse students in a complex universe of questions, shifting constraints, and competing values" (cited in Frascara, 2019: 110).

There are various kinds of projects. Group-based design projects can be used to develop group dynamics and interpersonal skills and assist in developing the ability to "solve unstructured problems" (Donald, 2008: 40). Live projects involve real live clients and come up as the opportunity arises. Brown identifies several issues with live projects, including the problem of being unplanned and, therefore, difficult to plan into the curriculum and the expectations of the client and the universities in this relationship. However, the benefit of linking staff and students to industry outweighs the negative aspects (Brown, 2012: 266). Baynes also describes the pedagogical value of design projects. He identifies the project as a developmental paradigm for designerly thinking and skills making. Projects also allow for "progression, development and differentiation" (Baynes, 2010: 16). The project furthermore contextualises theory in learning and highlights the process. Baynes nonetheless points to the concern that students focus on the end product instead of the process. This happens because evaluation is focused on the end product. Lastly, the mismatch between the technical skill and the student's vision can lead to disillusionment that must be dealt with in the teaching process.

### **3.5.3 Materiality**

Shreeve defines materiality in relation to the tacit experience fundamental to making something (2016). She focuses on the importance of knowledge of the material used in the design process, such as paper and ink, arguing that "evidence exists in a material form which can be subject to scrutiny", pointing to the tangible end product of the design process (2016: 87). Shreeve does not engage the philosophical inference of materiality as envisaged by Deleuze (Marenko, 2015), although it could have application. Shreeve's understanding of materiality aligns with Bestley and Noble (2018), who see materiality as the relationship between the physical properties of created objects, their intended audience and how these are presented. Bestley and Noble also define materiality in terms of digital works that cannot be touched but still maintain materiality in their content. Malouf also defines materiality in design as the knowledge of various mediums, "whether it is plastic, wood and fabric or inks, papers and pixels" (Malouf, 2011).

Polaine (2011) describes materiality as central to the design discipline. The physical objects that materialise through the process become the object of discussion, dissection and scrutiny, thereby removing the student from the focal point and enabling discussion. The created artefacts become evidence of learning. There is, however, a tension between those who argue that designers' work is fundamentally concerned with materiality versus those who argue that designers' "work is abstract; their job is to create a desired state of affairs" (Kimbell, 2012). In design, it is recognised that materials have significance in their meaning, whether it is historical, social or technological; choices of materials communicate and, therefore, can elicit required responses if used purposefully (Nimkulrat, Seitamaa-hakkarainen, Pantouvaki & Freitas, 2016).

The materiality embodied in design rests in the artefact that is traditionally the outcome of the design activity. Schön even suggests that materials "talk back" to the creator to allow for "reinterpretation of results and a reframing of the vision" (Schön, 1985: 94). The production of an artefact has often captured design educators in the process, distracting them from

the thinking and theory behind the making of the artefact. Students especially can be mesmerised by 'flashy', good-looking design products, rushing to put the final project on the table while neglecting to reflect on the process they go through to develop the artefact. The connection of materiality and design is further seen as negative in that it represents the face of unbridled consumerism driven by the marketing and advertising worlds. Students' access to and affordability of materials is a critical aspect in an educational space where students face the reality of starvation and not knowing whether they may suddenly find themselves without a roof. The materiality of designed artefacts and their subsequent impact on the world is a central concern for design, whether designers consider their work as fundamentally concerned with materiality or whether they argue that their "work is abstract; their job is to create a desired state of affairs" (Kimbell, 2012: 291).

### 3.5.4 Dialogue

Shreeve describes dialogue in the context of the fundamental nature of education being a dialogue. She shows that dialogue makes visible and tangible the tacit aspects of design education which intrinsically is student-centred. For Shreeve, dialogue enables students to "practice arguments, explain thinking processes and learn the languages of design, whether verbal, visual, critical, historical or contemporary (2016: 88). This kind of dialogue teaches students the language of the discipline. Dialogue should not be equated with the 'crit', although the two might coincide. Volakos argues that students need less "fault-finding" (which could be a central feature of a critique session) and a more explorative dialogue in a "professional and social environment" (Volakos, 2016: 215).

In using dialogue as pedagogy, Shor and Freire formulate the concept of liberatory education, stating that dialogue "is a means to transform social relations in the classroom and to raise awareness about relations in society at large" (1987: 11). They also argue that dialogue is a collaborative and political process shaped by the teacher's education (Shor & Freire, 1987). Dialogue in design pedagogy will primarily be focused on discussing designed artefacts that enable dialogue (Swann, 2002; Polaine, 2011). The value of dialogue in Design pedagogy is determined by the quality of questions asked by the parties involved; new approaches and solutions can only be achieved through probing with the "right questions" (VandeZande, Bohemia & Digranes, 2015). Students can often perceive dialogue as digressing from the 'task at hand' to make or create something and they may show a lack of enthusiasm for theorising rather than doing (Swanson, 1994; Heller, 2006).

Dialogue as a design pedagogy is also under threat due to the commercialisation and massification of higher education. Regrettably, the financial impact of one-on-one teaching is not sustainable in the current worsening global economic situation (Swann, 2002; Polaine, 2011; Subramanian, 2019; Muratovski, 2020).

### 3.5.5 The crit

Shreeve describes the crit in relation to its function as a response to a project brief. The aim is to evaluate and achieve appropriate levels of design thinking and standards. The aim of the crit is to allow for the development of critical analysis skills together with the necessary language to induct the student into the discipline. Shreeve also shows that a signature pedagogy is not necessarily best practice and emphasises that the crit is not



implemented as a tool in the design industry per se (Shreeve, 2016). Issues around the transparency, consistency and efficacy of the crit are also raised (Boling & Smith, 2016).

Despite the possible negative impact that the crit can have on students due to the power relations in studios, the prevalence of "low-level procedural questions" instead of critical reflection remains a popular method of teaching and evaluation in studio-based programmes (Healy, 2016: 2). The value of the crit in evaluation and education has been questioned to the point where investigations were undertaken to identify "alternative formats for the design project review [crit]" (Brindley, Doidge & Willmott, 2000: 91). The lack of "pedagogical training" in design educators has also been identified as a barrier to the efficacy of the crit (Doloswala, Thompson & Toner, 2011: 419). It is critical that design educators understand how the learning process works together with how the minds of their students understand the fundamental conceptual problems posed in the discipline. This approach is preferred over a rote learning approach that lists the latest developments in a discipline (Northedge & McArthur, 2009: 108).

In a 'good' crit, students are allowed to reflect on their work while learning from their peers. Ideas are clarified and presentation skills honed in this process. Students develop critical awareness while receiving feedback in a supportive environment that protects them from the harsh realities of the world of work (Blythman, Orr & Blair, 2007). The perceived trustworthiness of the design educators by their students has also proven to be instrumental in the success of a crit (Karlsen, 2017). Healy warns that the value of the crit would be undermined if it does not adapt to "modern learning and teaching approaches as well as evolving technology" (Healy, 2016: 15). Healy describes the components of a crit by identifying the formal components and linking the function to these; his valuable insights are given in overview in Table 2.2. Healy also identifies external factors that may impact the success of a crit (summarised in Table 3.2). The composite crit paradigm arising from Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 indicates that the design educator cannot just 'arrive' in the studio and give a crit. Proper preparation, reflection and insight in line with these formal components, functions and external factors are necessary to activate a rich crit.

**Table 3.1: Summary of components of a crit** (Healy, 2016: 12)

<b>Timing</b>	<i>Interim crit-</i> Allows a student to develop and improve within a project cycle.	<i>Final crit-</i> Opportunity to gather feedback on a completed work.	
<b>Participants</b>	<i>Individual-</i> More opportunities for personal feedback.	<i>Group-</i> Shared feedback with less individual anxiety.	
<b>Formality</b>	<i>Formal-</i> Increased anxiety and difficulty remembering feedback.	<i>Informal-</i> Improved student engagement with the critique and feedback	
<b>Audience</b>	<i>Peers-</i> Opportunity to reflect on their own work and the work of their peers.	<i>Tutors-</i> Opportunity to pass on tacit knowledge in a master-apprentice model.	<i>Guests-</i> Can bring a new perspective and insight to students. Should be briefed prior to the crit.
<b>Purpose</b>	<i>Formative-</i> Provides regular opportunity to give student feedback.	<i>Summative-</i> Can be difficult for students to understand how assessment works in the crit context.	
<b>Feedback</b>	<i>Process-focused-</i> Allows students to develop improved work habits.	<i>Product-focused-</i> Can be narrow and related to the current proposed design only.	
<b>Duration</b>	<i>5 mins-</i> May be too short to allow meaningful feedback.	<i>10-20 mins-</i> Allows meaningful feedback within a reasonable timeframe.	<i>50 mins-</i> May be too long to maintain focus.
<b>Location</b>	<i>Desk crit-</i> Student feels most comfortable receiving feedback.	<i>Pin-up-</i> Can cause layout issues with distance to speaker.	<i>Review/Jury-</i> More formal feeling among students. Sometimes others have difficulty hearing.

**Table 3.2: External factors affecting a successful crit** (Healy, 2016: 14)

<b>Scaffolding</b>	<i>None-</i> Students expected to learn as they go.	<i>Presentation Skills-</i> Classes on presentation skills can help students communicate their design intent.	<i>Argument-</i> Students receive training on argument, especially as it relates to professional practice in order to position and defend their work.
<b>Ego</b>	<i>Student Ego-</i> Some confidence required when defending the work while not becoming offended by critique.	<i>Tutor/Guest Ego-</i> Egos to be held in-check in order to support the learner through relevant feedback.	
<b>Tutors</b>	<i>Inducted into process-</i> Tutors all agree on what is being assessed and key criteria prior to a crit.	<i>No induction-</i> Tutors attend crit without first discussing what should be expect at a given stage.	
<b>Technology</b>	<i>Traditional crit-</i> None or minimal technology is used as part of the crit.	<i>Blended crit-</i> Use of online resources and VLE"s as part of the crit process can encourage student participation and feedback.	

### 3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the context of the case study was described, starting from the global and South African (macro level) design education environment and moving to the specific micro environment encapsulated in six key design pedagogies. The following chapter will discuss the research methodology of the study.

# CHAPTER 4

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

Through an inductive approach, this qualitative research study has interpreted the lived experiences of design educators and design students within the South African higher education context as reported in the literature, survey, and interviews. An inductive qualitative content analysis was conducted of the empirical data collected, and the themes that emerged from the content analysis were synthesised with critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives. This process concluded with the identification of themes from critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives that can be used to contribute to a design pedagogy framework for citizen designer education in the South African context. This chapter describes the research paradigm, research design, sample selection and data collection, data capturing and ethical considerations, data analysis, synthesis, validity and trustworthiness.

#### 4.1.1 Research paradigm

From a social constructivist worldview/paradigm, I aimed to understand better the world I work and live in while also acknowledging the complexities of this environment and positioning myself within the study to recognise the impact of my lived experiences on the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Within a social constructivist worldview, Merriam (2009: 26) describes how reality is assumed to be socially constructed and therefore, reality cannot be situated within a singular observation. Hickman (2008: 16) notes that the social constructivist worldview is prevalent in the field of art education because of the common understanding in the creative industries that reality is socially constructed. In addition to the social constructivist worldview, the use of critical citizenship and decolonisation theoretical frameworks in this study calls for a critical research approach. Merriam and Tisdell describe critical research as "not a 'type' of qualitative research" (2016: 59) but as a worldview where the researcher in their findings aims "to critique and challenge, to transform, and to analyse power relations" (2016: 59). They (2016: 63) go on to state that within the context of critical research and its focus on power relations, it is vital that the power relations in the study itself are foregrounded on the level of the relationships the researcher has with the participants, including issues related to the concepts of being an insider/outsider, positionality and the reflexivity of the researcher.

#### 4.1.2 Research design

The case study research design developed for this study was informed by the research questions posed. The main research question was: What themes in critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives could contribute to a pedagogical framework for citizen designer education in South Africa? The study aimed to identify themes in critical citizenship and decolonisation theoretical perspectives that could contribute to a design pedagogy framework for citizen designer education within the South African context. As I am intrinsically involved in the context described in the research question, an intrinsic case study approach was taken. Stake states that an intrinsic case study will impact the methods that will be used: "The more the intrinsic interest in the case, the more we will restrain our curiosities and special interests and the more we will try to discern and pursue issues critical to the case" (1995: 4).

An interpretative research approach guides this study's case study research design. Yin (2016: 9) describes the essence of qualitative research as a study representing the lived experiences of study participants within the contexts of their everyday lives, reporting through multiple sources of evidence. The researcher contributes new insights through introducing new or existing concepts. Current literature on case study research is shaped mainly by the ideas of Stake (1995), Yin (2014) and Merriam & Tisdell (2016). The development of case study research to its current level of sophistication is attributed to a division in the philosophical stance in research that clusters positivism with quantitative research approaches and constructivist and interpretative worldviews with qualitative methods (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). The contestation around the issue that case study research can be described as either a methodology or method is noted. Creswell and Poth classify case study research as methodological (2018: 153), while Hickman describes case study research as follows: "Research terms are rather like colour theory, with interchangeable and overlapping concepts" (2008: 16). The confusion created by the terms method and methodology used interchangeably by authors in the field is notable. However, there seem to be agreement that an overarching methodology shapes a case study design that can use several data sources (Harrison et al., 2017).

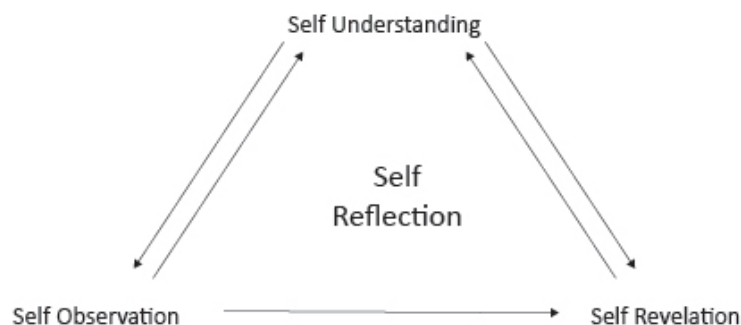
The philosophical variations within the various approaches to case study research need also to be considered. Coherence between the researcher's worldview and the philosophical stance of the case study approach is necessary (Harrison et al., 2017). The case study approach of Yin is classified as a realist and postpositivist conceptualisation of case studies, while Merriam's approach is a pragmatic constructivist style, and Stake's approach is described as relativist-constructivist/interpretive (Harrison et al., 2017). Within a constructivist paradigm, the roles of interpreter and "gatherer of interpretations" (Stake, 1995: 99) are pivotal. For this study, the case study approach as represented by Stake was selected as it aligns closely with the qualitative/interpretative research approach and social constructivist worldview adopted in the research.

The following key factors characterise Stake's (1995) approach to case study research:

- The researcher is motivated to find significant insight into contextual experiences through an interpretive role that recognises multiple realities.
- The researcher participates interactively in the study that generates meaning bound by the context and time of the study.
- The researcher is required to experience the case 'in situ'.
- The selection of cases is determined by what they can reveal about the topic under investigation.
- Interviews and observations dominate data collection.
- The researcher and the participants in the case study are aligned as 'partners' in knowledge creation.
- The findings can be grouped as both categorical and thematic.
- Episodes of storytelling and vignettes are used for thick descriptions of the findings.
- 

In research approaches, the act of reflection is also referred to as reflexivity; this is where the researcher's background and personal experiences impact the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Reflection has also been described as a process of critical self-determination (Habermas, 1972). The work of Donald Schön on reflection-in-action has theorised the concept to show that practitioners have inherent 'tacit' knowledge which they tap when facing uncertainty (Schon, 1983). Reflection as a tool for the professional development of educators is also well documented (Mezirow, 1998; Moon, 1999; Urzúa & Vásquez, 2008; Cho, 2009; Tracey & Hutchinson, 2018).

Within the context of this intrinsic case study, it is insightful to consider that self-reflection can also be seen as the beginning of emancipation (Shalin, 1992: 230). Yip (2007), as shown in Figure 3.1 below, has illustrated the process of self-reflection based on his reading of the work of Karl Jaspers to suggest three main elements in the reflection process, namely self-observation, self-understanding and self-revelation.



**Figure 4.1: The structure of self-reflection (Yip, 2007: 291)**

The technique of self-observation is characterised by viewing oneself as a distant object while recalling feelings and memories. Self-understanding interrogates the meaningfulness of this 'object' that is being considered. This construction of meaning is facilitated through a process of interpretation and re-interpretation. Self-understanding means understanding oneself and what one can learn from seeing oneself from the 'outside'. The reflexive accounts I include in the study follow these three conceptual techniques: self-observation, self-understanding, and self-revelation.

#### 4.1.3 Describing the case

This case is delimited within the field of design education at higher education institutions in South Africa. The participants involved in the case included design lecturers<sup>5</sup> and design students.

## 4.2 Data collection and sampling

Three sets of data were collected: an online survey of design educators; telephonic interviews with design students; and online interviews with design educators. The aim of the survey and interviews was to explore participants' perceptions of critical citizenship and decolonisation theoretical perspectives within the context of South African design education. Purposive sampling is employed in the study. Through purposive sampling the aim is to align the sample group to the aims and objectives of the research, thereby improving the trustworthiness of the data (Campbell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young, Bywaters & Walker, 2020: 653). Participants were purposefully selected for their involvement in aspects of either critical citizenship or decolonisation theoretical perspectives in the context of South African design education. The three data sources are relevant due to their intrinsic role in the stated aim of the research. The study aims to identify themes in critical citizenship and decolonisation theoretical perspectives that could contribute to a design pedagogy framework for citizen designer education within a South African context. South African design educators at higher education institutions are intrinsically involved in design pedagogy and South African design students are the future citizen designers the study is focussed on.

<sup>5</sup> The meaning of the term lecturer includes a range of formal educator roles and positions in the South African higher education context; its usage is synonymous with the term educator in this study.

### 4.2.1 Design educator survey

Design educators who participated in the DEFSA 2017 #Decolonise! Conference and authors who contributed to the 2018 Educating Citizen Designers book were identified as potential participants in the design educators survey. As South African design educators who are already engaged in academic discourse on decolonisation or critical citizenship, they were a likely sample group to provide informed responses on the topics in the survey. From a total of 54 possible participants, 19 of the DEFSA #Decolonise! Conference participants responded to the survey, while 2 of a possible 13 authors (excluding the researcher and supervisor) from the Educating Citizen Designers book responded. All members of the sample group were emailed individually to request their voluntary participation. The email included the information brochure, a link to the consent form and an online survey created in Google Forms. Responses to the survey were received between March and May 2020. The survey was conducted online, with participants having the option to complete the survey online or participate in an interview. Three of the nineteen participants elected the interview option instead of completing the survey.

The questions posed to participants in the lecturer survey emerged from the literature review conducted on critical citizenship and decolonisation theoretical perspectives.

#### **The following questions were posed to design educator survey participants.**

- How would you define the term ‘citizen designer’?
- Can you describe any projects, assignments, or theoretical work that you are or were involved with that you think could contribute to the development of a ‘citizen designer’?
- In your opinion, what theoretical or practical knowledge should a ‘citizen designer’ possess to have an impact?
- Do you encourage your students to place issues of social justice before corporate or personal financial gain?
- How can design educators decolonise design education? Do you have examples of where you have done it?
- What do you think will be the greatest challenge for design educators in the next 20 years?

### 4.2.2 Design student interviews

The sample of student participants was taken from the third-year class of design diploma students at TUT. These students completed a learning unit on critical citizenship as part of their studies, which gave them a foundation to articulate meaningful insights into the topics of this research. The sample group consisted of 35 students; 23 of these students accepted the invitation to participate in the research. Students were informed of the project by myself during a formal lecture facilitated by the lecturer responsible for this group. After the presentation, I emailed students individually and requested their voluntary participation. The email included the a link to the online consent form (See Appendix A). Students provided a preferred date and time for the interview via the tool that was used to contact the students and arrange for the interviews. The data collection method was initially planned to be focus group discussions but this was changed to individual telephonic interviews in order to comply with SU and TUT Covid Protocol requirements (See Appendix F). Telephonic interviews were preferred over online virtual meeting tools due to the lack of access to data and connectivity challenges experienced by the student participants. Table 4.1 records the data collection techniques, participants, timeframe and coding used to anonymise participants while still communicating demographic information.

The questions posed to participants in the student interviews were developed from the initial analysis of the responses received from the design educator survey. Questions were focussed on the design studio environment, issues of social justice, issues related to culture and socio-political issues.

**The following questions were posed to student interview participants.**

Studio based questions

- Did you experience your studio on campus as a safe space where you can express yourself for who you are? Give a reason/example for your answer.
- What would make you feel welcome in your studio on the Arts Campus?
- Do you think some students in your class have more power than other students to influence debates or decisions in your class? Please elaborate on your answer.
- Do your fellow design students have respect for each other even when they have different views? Please elaborate on your answer.
- Do you believe lecturers and students stereotype each other? Give examples if you agree with this statement.

Social justice questions

- What does social justice mean to you?
- Explain in what way a designer can contribute to social justice in the world?
- As a designer, how would you be able to contribute to create a better future for our country?

Culture based questions

- Did you think that your culture was represented in the things you were taught? Please elaborate on your answer.
- As a designer how would you describe your own culture or cultures if you identify with more than one culture?
- What is your view on using African cultural symbols on products such as clothing, sneakers etc.?

Socio-political questions

- How can discussions on oppression and injustices of the past in South Africa and the world help us to be better designers?
- Do you think it is necessary to discuss political issues in class linked to design such as democracy and capitalism?

### **4.2.3 Design educators interviews**

The lecturer interviews were conducted to explore further insights gained from the lecturer survey and student interviews. The initial disproportionate (71%) participation and response rate by white lecturers in the lecturer survey, made it necessary to facilitate an increase in the participation of black, coloured and Indian design educators in the study. In the context of decoloniality and the possibility of 'moves to innocence' (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 21) that could be attributed to white design educators, it was imperative to receive responses from black, coloured and Indian design educators. Therefore the focus of this final interview stage of the research was on interviewing South African black, coloured and Indian design educators. There were 18 requests (purposively sampled) for interviews to black, coloured and Indian design educators at South African public higher education institutions; 10 lecturers agreed to participate. Lecturers were emailed individually and requested their voluntary participation. The email included the information brochure and a link to the consent form. Individual interviews were recorded on MS Teams on a date and time identified by the participant. The interviews with lecturers were conducted between September and November 2021 on the MS Teams platform. The video recordings of the interviews were transcribed by myself. For each interview, the recording and transcript were made available to participants for verification.



The questions posed to participants in the design educator interviews were developed from the analysis of the responses received from the design educator survey and student interviews.

**The following questions were posed to design educator interview participants.**

- In your opinion, what is the difference between a University of Technology and a traditional University in South Africa?
- What would you say should be the characteristics of an African University?
- In your experience, do you think your students 'see' their own cultures in what they are taught?
- Would you feel comfortable discussing political issues linked to design, such as democracy and capitalism, with your students?
- As a design educator, in what way can you contribute to social justice in the world?
- Do you purposefully use Dialogue as a pedagogy in your lectures? If yes, please describe what you do?
- Do you think discussions with your students about oppression and injustices of the past will help to educate better designers?
- How do you experience power relations in your lectures? (between the students and then between students and yourself.)

**Table 4.1: Coding key**

CODE	DESCRIPTION
LS	Lecturer Survey
LI	Lecturer Interview
SI	Student Interview
F	Female
M	Male
B	Black
C	Coloured
I	Indian
W	White
C	Comprehensive university <sup>6</sup>
P	Private design education institution
T	Traditional university
U	University of technology

**EXAMPLE**

LSFW8U (Lecturer Survey/Female/White/8th white female/University of Technology)

<sup>6</sup> In South Africa a comprehensive university refers to previous Technikons and traditional universities that merged.

**Table 4.2: Data collection techniques, participants, time and participant coding.**

Technique	Participants	Number of participants	ID Coding
<b>LECTURER SURVEY</b> Lecturer survey accepted responses from March to May 2020.	<b>DESIGN EDUCATORS</b>	21	LS
	<b>SEX</b>		
	Female	12	F
	Male	9	M
	<b>RACE<sup>7</sup></b>		
	Black	5	B
	Indian	1	I
	White	15	W
	<b>UNIVERSITY TYPE AFFILIATION</b>		
	Comprehensive university	7	C
	Private design education institution	2	P
	Traditional university	3	T
University of technology	9	U	
<b>LECTURER INTERVIEWS</b> Lecturer Interviews conducted between Sept and Oct 2021. The average duration of interviews: were 30 min.	<b>DESIGN EDUCATORS</b>	10	LI
	<b>SEX</b>		
	Female	3	F
	Male	7	M
	<b>RACE</b>		
	Black	6	B
	Coloured	1	C
	Indian	3	I
	<b>UNIVERSITY TYPE AFFILIATION</b>		
	Traditional university	1	T
	University of technology	9	U
	<b>STUDENT INTERVIEWS</b> Student Interviews were conducted during Sept 2021. The average duration of interviews: were 20 min.	<b>DESIGN STUDENTS</b>	23
<b>SEX</b>			
Female		5	F
Male		18	M
<b>RACE</b>			
Black		22	B
Coloured		1	C
<b>UNIVERSITY TYPE AFFILIATION</b>			
University of technology		9	U

<sup>7</sup> Race and the racial categories used in this research are adopted from the broad South African discourse on transformation, representivity and redress of past inequality.

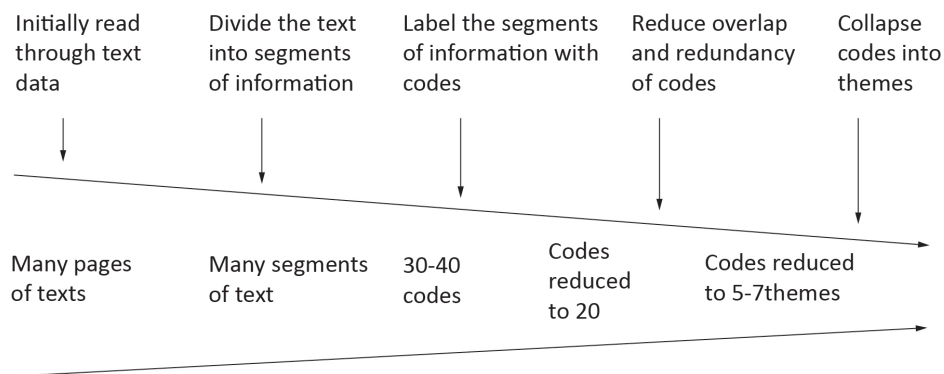
### 4.3 Capturing data and ethical considerations

The interview data collected for the study was captured via MS Teams and Skype Voice Calls. The MS Teams video files, Skype Voice Call recordings and Google Form survey data were downloaded to my computer, and a backup was made to an external hard drive that is locked in a safe in my office. All interviews were conducted online or telephonically due to Covid-19 protocols at the time. As per Tshwane University of Technology Research Ethics Committee guidelines, I will delete the backup raw data after three years. The participants in the research were able to request access to their voice recordings, notes, and transcripts. The interviews and transcriptions were done by myself. Interview transcripts and recordings were also made available to participants for verification and they were given the opportunity to add any information they deemed relevant.

The ethical considerations within this study relate to the potential impact on the participants in the study. To guard against any personal impact on the participants, their names were coded to ensure anonymity. Potentially harmful statements made by individuals were kept confidential. The survey and interviews were conducted with the full consent of all parties with whom ethical considerations and confidentiality issues were shared beforehand. Ethical clearance for this research project was obtained from the Research Ethics Committees of Stellenbosch University and the Tshwane University of Technology.

### 4.4 Data analysis

An inductive qualitative content analysis was conducted to analyse the data. Creswell describes five steps in content analysis. This starts with a first reading of the text, followed by a division of the text into segments of information, followed by coding the information, then reducing overlap in codes and finally developing the codes into themes (Creswell, 2015: 243).



**Figure 4.2: A visual model of the coding process in qualitative research** (Creswell, 2015: 243).

The data collected from the design educator survey was coded and synthesised with the theoretical perspectives in June 2019. The emerging themes were used to guide the lines of enquiry that were followed in the 2021 student and educator interviews. After the interviews were transcribed, the entire data set, including lecturer surveys, student interviews and lecturer interviews were read repeatedly, coded and categorised; following this, categories were developed, and the themes that emerged were synthesised with the theoretical

frameworks and context of the study. The primary guideline used for the analysis of data was to identify themes that could possibly answer the research question posed (Creswell, 2015: 246).

#### 4.5 Validity and reliability

Contentions around the validity of qualitative data and case study research is well documented (Hickman, 2008: 16). Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduce criteria which assist in establishing a "language for qualitative rigour" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018: 1379). Denzin and Lincoln describe the development of the debate around the validity of qualitative data from 1990 to 2018 and conclude that two central questions remain: "What is quality? ...how is it recognized?" (2018: 1384). Guided by these two questions, I structure this section around the four criteria impacting the validity of qualitative data, as identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

Data triangulation (Mills, Eurepos & Wiebe, 2010: 945) was used to increase the study's credibility. Data was collected from design lecturers through a survey, and a further set of data was obtained from design lecturers through interviews; another set of data was obtained from design students through interviews. These three sets of data were collected over a period of two years. These three data sets support the study's credibility as the validity of the data collected is supported by the parameters set in the purposive sample that was used. Along with the considerations already indicated: all participants were informed of the purpose of the research, and informed consent was obtained to undertake and record interviews; interviews and transcriptions were done by myself, and transcripts were made available to participants to verify; collected data is stored on my password-protected computer and an external hard drive locked in my office in a secure safe; raw data will be destroyed after three years as per the TUT ethics guidelines.

The transferability of the study was strengthened by collecting data from what can be described as a community of practice in teaching (Wenger: 1998). Based on Wenger's theory, it can be argued that the participants reflect a range of "more widely held, though not unanimous, views on teaching" (Shreeve, Sims & Trowler, 2010: 127). Thick descriptions (Lincoln & Guba: 1985) were obtained through verbatim transcriptions of interviews, extensive qualitative survey responses and reflexive writing of my own experiences before and during the research. The intention was not to use an autoethnographic technique in reflexive writing but rather to consider the concept of phronesis within a community of practice. As defined by Aristotle, the term phronesis can be described as "practical reasoning, craft knowledge, or tacit knowing: the ability to see the right thing to do in the circumstances" (Thomas, 2011: 3). Thomas cites Hirsch (1976: 18) who describes phronesis as "... making calculations of probability based on an insider's knowledge" (2011: 10). Thomas further argues that a "case study thus offers an example from which one's experience, one's phronesis, enables one to gather insight or understand a problem" (2011: 12). Thomas states that "to argue that to seek generalisable knowledge, in whatever form—everyday or special—is to miss the point about what may be offered by certain kinds of inquiry, which is exemplary knowledge. The articulation and exegesis of that exemplary knowledge rests in the phronesis of the researcher—and its understanding in the phronesis of the reader" (2011: 1). The transferability of the study is, therefore, not proposed on the basis of generalisability

but rather around the meanings that design educators, as a community of practice, can draw from the research in their individual circumstances. The transferability of the study contribute to the reliability of findings in that the community of practice referred to also form the basis of the purposive sampling employed in the study that identified participants that were most likely to meaningfully contribute to the stated aims of the study.

The use of multiple data sources increased the dependability of the study. Data was sourced from South African design educators in a range of higher education institutional settings, including comprehensive, private, traditional and universities of technology, through surveys and interviews. In addition to lecturer responses, student views were obtained because they are key role players central to the study aims. Readers of the study can trace the data collection process from the information provided in Table 4.1.

Conformity was established by recording interviews and capturing transcriptions that accurately reflect participant responses and views. To address power relations between myself and students, the student participants were safeguarded by the appointment of a gatekeeper outside of the department, and another lecturer mediated the recruitment process. In an attempt to share knowledge with participants in cross-cultural research (Liamputtong, 2012: 224), I have also committed to making the results of this research available to the students who participated in the interviews. Special attention was given to prevent any negative impact on participants and to ensure that the research results will be beneficial to the participants.

As a white male, my positionality of doing research in the context of critical and decolonial studies placed an additional burden on me that called for a "settler harm reduction" (Tuck & Yang, 2012: 21) approach in the study. Through settled harm reduction, the study focuses on avoiding "moves to innocence" (*ibid.*) and on harm reduction while acknowledging that this approach can never claim to be 'a solution' but rather an open debate based on the phronesis of the reader. The study is also situated within cross-cultural research, as a white male researcher engages with participants from mostly black African cultural backgrounds. To further establish conformity in this context, I requested a black female design educator to conduct an independent peer review of my data and my subsequent analysis. The anonymised and redacted interview and survey data are also accessible through this [LINK](#) to enable readers to make their own judgements related to the validity of the analysis conducted.

#### **4.6 Delimitation**

The study is delimited to identify the themes in critical citizenship and decolonisation that could contribute to a design pedagogy framework for South African citizen designer education. The identified themes could guide design educators to develop their own design discipline-specific frameworks.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This chapter described the research methodology used for this study. A case study research design framed this qualitative study to obtain empirical data. As part of the discussion in the next chapter, I present in greater detail the empirical data obtained through the 2020 survey and 2021 student and lecturer interviews. Inductive content analysis was used to identify emergent themes in the data.

# CHAPTER 5

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

The theoretical perspectives elaborated in Chapter 3 on decoloniality as described by Ndlovu Gatsheni (2015) and critical citizenship education related by Johnson and Morris (2010) are used as a theoretical lens in this study. To recap these theoretical frameworks briefly, Ndlovu Gatsheni describes the three concepts of coloniality of power, coloniality of being and coloniality of knowledge. Johnson and Morris present critical citizenship education from four different views/conceptions within the four primary purposes of critical citizenship education. According to Johnson and Morris, the four views on critical citizenship education are the political/ideological view, the social collective view, the self/subjective view and the praxis/engagement view. The four purposes of critical citizenship education are developing the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions associated with a critical citizen.

With this theory in mind, in this chapter I present and discuss the data collected from the online lecturer survey, student interviews and lecturer interviews to answer the question: What themes in critical citizenship and decolonisation theoretical perspectives could contribute to a pedagogical framework for citizen designer education in South Africa? The three objectives of the study were: to identify themes in critical citizenship theoretical perspectives; to identify themes in decolonisation theoretical perspectives; and to synthesise themes in critical citizenship and decolonisation theoretical perspectives into a pedagogical framework for South African citizen designer education.

The themes were identified through inductive qualitative content analysis. Some sub-themes are relevant to students and design educators, while others may only apply to one of the participant groups. I interpret the identified themes from a social constructivist worldview/paradigm to align with the study's research methodology.

Data collection in the online survey of design educators commenced in March 2020, just as the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown unfolded, and the interviews concluded in November 2021. When I started data collection in 2020, the aftermath of the 2016 Fees must fall student movement was my primary motivation for embarking on this study. When the final data analysis commenced in 2022, this objective had been amended to a certain extent. The glaring social injustices of the Covid-19 pandemic and the July 2021 violence and looting in South Africa further crystalised my constructivist worldview. More than ever, I realise that my lived experience as a design educator and Afrikaans white male South African citizen influences how I analyse data. I hope that the argument I construct from this data continues to be emancipatory for me and potentially for other South African design educators.

## 5.2 Presentation and discussion of findings

The questions posed to the survey and interview participants in the study aimed to explore critical citizenship and decolonisation theoretical perspectives. After reading and re-reading the data several times, I coded the data, reduced overlap in codes and finally developed the codes into themes (Creswell, 2015: 243). Aligned to the research question, the themes are grouped into two main sections: critical citizenship in design education and decolonisation in design education in South Africa. The discussion in the first section on critical citizenship covers the themes of the learning environment and safe space, power relations, dialogue, discomfort, social justice and the citizen designer. The second section discusses issues of decoloniality related to belonging, cultural representation and indigenous/local knowledge. Each theme is introduced and then the evidence<sup>8</sup> related to the theme is presented. For each theme, the discussion concludes with a process of integration by showing what the data revealed about related themes from the critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives. The participant coding system described in Table 4.1 indicates the participant grouping, sex and race; these indicators are crucial to any discussion of decoloniality and critical citizenship/pedagogy. University-type affiliation is also indicated for each respondent to facilitate contextualisation.

## 5.3 Critical citizenship in South African design education

Johnson and Morris employ the definition of citizenship education formulated by Cogan to categorise the skills that critical citizenship education should develop. Cogan defines these skills as "...formation through the process of schooling of the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions of citizens" (2002: 4). Banks similarly describes the skills that critical citizenship education should develop as facilitating an understanding of identity and cultivating the skills to foster social justice within any context (2008). This is expanded by Costandius, who defines the aim of critical citizenship education as the transformation of attitudes and perceptions of citizens (2014: 116). It should also be noted that from a decolonial perspective, the idea of citizenship is dictated by 'western' concepts that require reconceptualisation (Jorgenson, 2016: 20).

South Africa is in a critical period of its historical development where the first generation of citizenry in our democratic society is now being shaped. The conceptions of citizenship developed during this time will shape how South African citizenship is conceived in the future. The relationships between the individual, the state and society are critical for a democracy's success. During the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2020 July riots, South Africans experienced how fragile the relationship between the South African government and its citizenry is in reality. The fragility of this relationship is traceable to massive social disparity and a weak primary education system that produces a politically discouraged citizenry. Inequality is a serious threat to the socio-political stability of South Africa (Abdi, 2005; Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2006). I argue that South African universities, and specifically design education, are strategically placed to address these weaknesses.

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<sup>8</sup> It is important to note that very few of the respondents are native speakers of English, and that the command of English varies considerably across the sample groups. The survey and interviews were conducted in English because it is the official and accepted language of communication in the education environment. This complexity was implicitly and explicitly acknowledged as a meta-parameter in the data gathering process. Giving due regard to the complex language situation, quotations from the transcribed responses used in the discussion below have been very lightly edited in places and amended (indicated in square brackets) to improve comprehension. Silent corrections have been made to remove obvious errors, repetitions and certain expressions (e.g. "um") that are redundant and unconnected to the speaker's meaning or intention.

The concept of critical citizenship is connected to design education through the idea of a 'citizen designer' which is put forward in various contexts and disciplines in the field of design (Heller & Vienne, 2018). Citizen designers take on various societal roles (Bennett & Rarig, 2011). The role of the citizen designer is contextualised in a neoliberal design industry with a history of harmful and exploitative practices (Papanek, 1984). The role of the citizen designer is further contextualised in the complexities and possibilities of post-apartheid South African society (Sauthoff, 2004).

### 5.3.1 Learning environment and safe space

The concept of safe spaces is used in education as a metaphor to describe the importance of a learning environment that is safe and respectful (Flensner & Von der Lippe, 2019: 275). Harless, in support of safe spaces, states that "students learn how to responsibly enter into difficult engagements and discussions" and that opposing views on safe spaces view the approach as to "coddle students, thwart free expression, and diminish rigorous critical thinking" (2018: 330). The idea of a safe space also requires critical questions; "Being safe from what? –and safe for whom? ... what possibly can make the classroom an unsafe place" (Flensner & Von der Lippe, *ibid.*). Flensner & Von der Lippe state that "a classroom of disagreement may be a useful metaphor since it makes it explicitly clear that disagreements exist and are part of life" (*ibid.*). First I present what lecturers thought about safe space and then I move on to student perceptions. Various recurrent issues emerge in the student experience of safe space, and these are grouped under the following subheadings: Self-awareness, Interaction with fellow students, Physical comfort, Access to equipment, Arrangement of the physical working environment and Inspiration in the environment.

#### 5.3.1.1 Lecturer views on safe spaces

Lecturer LIMC1U contests the idea of a safe space, especially in design education which requires students to push boundaries.

*To study is not the safe space in which all is hunky-dory and fine. That is not how you push design, for example, in my case, forward. It's about how one instils a personal desire to see where social change can happen through small actions of design. You now have students who go out and see; ok, I am in a position as someone who needs chronic medication. They are currently doing campaigns on how to make 'chronic Iconic', for example. One then sees that personal struggle of what is, for example, discrimination not only politically but on other types of social aspects because it is not that we as designers tend to be problem-focused, we are problem-orientated, but the idea is that we should ask better questions. Those types of questions should not just be about what is the product we make for the client. It questions ourselves. It questions our culture and our place, and what we would like to be. So I ask these questions, and I encourage them if it opens the dialogue between people who are polar opposites, even better because then, in the middle, everyone navigates around that conversation.*

Lecturer LSMW4C reflects on the responsibility of the design educator to create a safe space when difficult topics are discussed as part of the curriculum.

*...suppose it's about integrating sticky or prickly subjects into the curriculum, which are prickly both for the lecturer and for the student.*



*So, it's again a conscious undertaking. And it is then creating a safe enough space for the students to start to discuss and engage. And it's already been very-- it's been fascinating for me as the lecturer, and I think for the students as well.*

Lecturer LIFB1U describes how she 'declares' her class a safe space at the beginning of the year and then continuously reinforces the notion of a safe space throughout the year. She also stated that she experiences difficult topics as being tricky and that she is learning to navigate such situations.

*So I'm exploring and experimenting with different tactics on how to take into consideration politics. You don't want one student to feel out of place. There was one project that we did recently, which is gender-based violence. It cut deep, in the sense that some students were like, no, we can't do this because we don't associate. I'm like, no, but you need to think of students as human beings before you start stereotyping, so I'm learning to navigate that. It's still a bit tricky for me. But with regard to politics, you might find that some students are very open-minded about how I start the class at the beginning of the year. I call it a safe space, so I continuously try and tell them that we're in a safe space.*

Lecturer LIFI1U makes a statement that can be linked to the idea of a safe space where she reflects on a class environment where students feel free and can speak about taboo matters.

*The discussions are quite free-flowing in our circumstances. It's the way students feel that they need to be taught in a very free environment where they are able to speak about matters that are taboo. So issues of politics, even if it is political government politics, are discussed, and how these impact what they design or make as art is very prominent.*

### **5.3.1.2 Student views on safe spaces**

Student participants were asked the following question: Did you experience your studio on campus as a safe space where you can express yourself for who you are? The responses reflected on issues such as self-awareness, interaction with fellow students, physical comfort, access to equipment, arrangement of the physical working environment and inspiration in the environment.

#### **5.3.1.3 Self-awareness**

Student participants demonstrated self-awareness in their responses. Student SIMB17U reflects on feeling safe because he was not exposed to situations where his aptitudes or shortcomings were publicly discussed.

*Yes, I would say that we had a safe space, and I could be comfortable because, in as much as they still allow us to find a path for ourselves, that prevents that pressure by being in a safe space. We never have to show that we can't do this or we can't do that.*

Student SIMB7U reflected on feeling safe because he can be himself on campus.

*Yes, ... when I get to school, I don't usually act like someone else; I am always myself, and I don't pretend, so that is why school for me is a safe space because I have never got there and had to be someone that I am not, I am always myself. I am the life of the party. I really enjoy it.*

Student SIMB8U described the differences in experiences between the first year and second year. He articulates his need to express his creativity and not 'what he was taught'.

*I would say yes prior to if I am a first-year, so basically, my reasoning would be if I was in the first year, I would say yes because at that time I felt I had to be exposed to everything in design [and] I would like to contribute to what is given on the table so I would say yes. But if I look to the second year, I would say yes, but I did not feel I was given the time to express how I feel about design. I was doing what I was taught and not how I felt I should design. There was less freedom in the second year than in the first year.*

#### 5.3.1.4 Interaction with fellow students

Several students considered their interactions with fellow students as an important aspect of them feeling 'safe' in their studio environments. They reflected on being spontaneous and experiencing freedom of expression. Student SIMB16U: "*I have not felt uncomfortable or anything like that. I always feel free about the people I work with in class.*" Student SIFB2U: "*Yes, I felt like it was a safe space due to that everyone was airing their own opinion, and we were all comfortable and listening to what they were saying*"

Student SIMB14U reflects on how working in class made him feel insecure because there always seemed to be someone else with a similar idea. During the Covid pandemic, he found he was more comfortable working at home but he also expresses the need to be on campus.

*For me, it was a safe space in terms of interacting with others when we were all together. It felt as if like it no longer became a private space like right now as I am working from home, so then most of my design it feels like similarity to something somewhere else in the class, and that would make me feel more insecure in my designs, so I feel a bit more comfortable working at home but thought I would say I would like to pop back to campus maybe like for a few days and then come back home.*

Student SIMB2U reflects on being able to express himself because he was surrounded by "like-minded people".

*I do [think it was a safe space] because the campus is very creative, and I'm a creative person, so I feel that I can express myself in many ways. Especially in my classroom because I'm surrounded by like-minded people.*

Student SIMB1U speaks about the impact he might have on other students and says that he was focused on not intimidating or harming others.

*In terms of expressing myself, I can say I can express myself freely. But how I express myself must not intimidate or have a bad impact on other students.*

Student SIFB1U indicates how the small group size of classes made her feel safe.

*Yes, it really was a safe space because it was not a lot of people in the class, so my classmates were my classmates that had been my classmates from first year. We are really like comfortable with each other, and even the lecturers allow us to express ourselves in whatever way we wish to, so ja [i.e. yes] I did find it a safe space.*

Student SIMB12U says he felt comfortable because everybody was treated equally in the class. He also spoke about the abilities of lecturers that instilled confidence.

*Yes, I do feel comfortable in class. The reason I say this is because the lecturers are trained well, and they treat us equally. No one is treated special. So I feel we are in an inclusive class where everyone is treated accordingly. No matter how you act, it doesn't concern them.*

### 5.3.1.5 Physical comfort

Student participants attributed feelings of safety to physical comfort and security. Student SIFC1U: *"Yes, I have because the studios do manage and were set up to be a comfortable environment, I think."* Student SIMB3U: *"Yes, I feel comfortable and secure. It is very comfortable there. I could work there the whole day."* Student SIFB3U: *"I was comfortable in the studio. It was very well no disturbance there."*

### 5.3.1.6 Access to equipment

Student participants described how the availability of the necessary tools and equipment impacted their perception of being in a 'safe space'. These comments are significant in the context of the inequality in South African society where the availability of resources relates to social justice. Student SIFB4U: *"Yes, I did; I feel like it is a safe space. There are a lot of computers to work on, so I also get to pick any computer."*

Student SIMB11U:

*Yes, for sure there is [a safe space]. As long as I have the right equipment where I can do my best, I feel like that is where the expression is at. I do not have a problem with resources then.*

Student SIMB4U:

*I did feel comfortable. It was [a safe space]. It's a very, very, very nice place to be as a graphic designer and I feel like the provision of iMacs was the best thing ever because it's so simple to work using the iMacs and the iMacs are not slow. So I feel like that's really comfortable for me, I will be able to work every time and even the fact that you guys used to open for us sometimes and also for after hours, especially during evaluation. I feel like that used to help me a lot, especially for me to be able to complete my assignments and to make submissions and stuff like that. It was a very nice place.*

### 5.3.1.7 Arrangement of the physical working environment

Once again, it is important to consider that these comments reflect the context of disparity and inequality in South African society, where the environments students find themselves are often violent and unsafe. Students reflected on aspects such as the size of their studio, accessibility of the studios, the hours that the facilities are open to them, cleanliness and the disadvantages of staying in the same venue all day. Student SIFB4U: *"Could make it a bit more working space like more space to work like in-studio one it was big and you could sit anywhere and work anywhere."* Student SIMB18U: *"Yes, because I find it easy to work as everything is accessible."* Student SIMB11U: *"...I would not change much from what is currently there. ... I would appreciate longer hours in the lab."*

Student SIMB13U:

*For me, it is a great experience because everything is there and the space is nice because it is not crowded and packed with many people so you can work properly and be creative more because of the space and the cleanliness and everything is perfect.*

Student SIMB8U:

*As design students, we learn visually; I feel like the first year was a bit better because we had different classes and venues we could go to. That thing of moving to contribute because staying in one space sometimes does hinder our creativity. Moving a lot also helps. I would say the strategies applied, especially in the first year, were better. In the second year, we had to do all the modules in one class. That was something that was, at times, not nice.*

### 5.3.1.8 Inspiration in the environment

The possibility of meaningful interaction in the design studio is impeded by the move from interactive studio space to computer laboratories (Costandius, 2006). Meaningful interaction is required for critical pedagogy as it is obliged to create conditions where design students can reflect on their position in society (Giroux, 2006: 32). The student participants use studios on campus that fall into the category of being computer laboratories, so the impact of this context was explored. Student participants responded to the question of what would make them feel welcome in a studio on the campus, and they offered the following range of comments. Student SIFB2U states that more art should be displayed on the campus. *"It is definitely seeing more art. I feel like the campus can get more art because it doesn't explain or say much about the faculty on its own, so I felt like it needs more art."*

Student SIMB16U reflected on how he was inspired by a building wrap that covered the building on campus in which his studio is located. Graffiti was mentioned, and could indicate the need from students to participate in making the campus environment their 'own'. It is noteworthy that student SIMB16U later in his interview states:

*I believe that I can use my craft to show people a different perspective of life instead of focusing on where we come from. ...I encourage people to stop looking at where we come from and focus more on the future...I have never actually thought about that because I never actually felt unwelcome, but if I added, I would say a lot of art around the school will make me feel more at home. A lot of graffiti; I love graffiti, especially what I would love was artwork that was done by Brent and his team [fellow students] that is on the front of Building Eight that inspired me quite a lot.*

Student SIMB9U reflects on how the design displays in his studio impact his creativity:

*Yes, like in the class [where] we are right now, the third year studio, if like since we are graphic designers, if we can have like some inspiration[al] work around even if like these people are dealing with one, two and three like a display on the walls of the classrooms, so I think that can be much better, actually those things they can evoke our emotions, raising our work standard because you can see how other people do their own thing instead of just plain walls.*

Student SIMB4U reflects on the inspiration he feels from social awareness posters displayed in his studio:

*I can say, you know, me being there and you know especially the first year studio and, like you know, like these posters are powerful, I feel like whatever you guys put on the walls makes me inspired, you understand, and you know to make me feel like I can do something better than that and not like to achieve my graphic design skills by just watching this space and everything. And you know, just being in front of the iMac and the Wi-Fi, you know everything there. I feel that is the only thing I can say that is one of the things that makes me feel welcome in the studio.*

### 5.3.1.9 Discussion

The idea of a safe space involves design educators and students in aspects of consciousness/awareness and dialogue. The Johnson and Morris framework for critical citizenship education combines critical citizenship educational theory and critical pedagogy, in which the concepts of consciousness/awareness and dialogue together with critical reflection and action (praxis) are central. The signature pedagogies in design education, as discussed in section 3.5, also engage the concepts of consciousness/awareness and dialogue.

Consciousness/awareness was mentioned by lecturer LSMW4C, who reflects on the process of including 'sticky', i.e. controversial, subjects in the curriculum and as a lecturer then being able to create a safe space where these subjects can be discussed and analysed; he states: "*So, it's again a conscious undertaking*". For design educators to facilitate a safe space meaningfully without harm will require them to be "critically literate" (Andreotti, 2006: 49) and empowered with "competencies and the confidence to educate for critical citizenship" (Bitzer & Costandius, 2018: 7). The response from lecturer LIFB1U illuminates her experience of creating a safe space in her class by "*learning to navigate*" and she says that she experiences it as "*tricky for me*". When implementing critical pedagogy design, educators need to be comfortable and prepared to move away from the power imbalances of the 'traditional' master-apprentice relationship into a collaborative space. The importance of a lecturer's critical literacy and being empowered with competencies and confidence to skillfully execute critical pedagogy can be seen in a comment from student SIMB12U that shows how the abilities of his lecturers inspires confidence in him. The self-awareness of student participants was evident in their responses. Student SIMB17U speaks about feeling safe because he was not exposed to situations where his aptitudes and shortcomings were publicly discussed. This comment reflects a student-centred pedagogical approach taken with this group of students. This response may also indicate a 'safe space' that coddles students, and which could impede rigorous critical thinking. Student SIMB6U talks about how he gave himself the freedom to express himself "*in the way he wanted to*" in the open time between lectures. The student describes his need to express his creativity and not 'what he was taught'. These comments by SIMB6U and SIMB8U indicate that they experience their education as sometimes limiting their creativity. There are multiple avenues of interrogating these two statements; however, the sentiments highlight the complexity that design educators have to deal with in a typical design curriculum. It is therefore imperative that design educators are well equipped to facilitate critical pedagogy when it is practised in a design education environment.

Student SIMB7U links his awareness of being in a safe space to the idea that he can be himself and not feel pressured to pretend to be something he is not. For me, this statement by SIMB7U is a comment on how South African society generally views creativity in a diminished light; our students often only find their creative identity while on campus. Later (in section 5.4.1) I reflect on student SIMB8U's statement that design is not seen as a career option in rural communities. It is not surprising, therefore, that several students were conscious of the physical role of the campus in nurturing and unlocking their creativity. The TUT Arts Campus is perceived as a well-resourced space. It engenders feelings of safety that allow creativity to flourish. The campus stands in contrast to the township and rural environments where students live; these areas are often under-resourced and plagued by crime. Student SIFB2U would like to see more art on campus. Student SIMB16U is inspired by graffiti art displayed on the campus. Student SIMB9U is inspired by the displays in the studio that stimulate emotions and encourage him to perform better. Student SIMB4U reflects on the inspiration he found from social awareness posters displayed in the studio. The insight shown by students into their own identities and the awareness of the impact of their environment on their creative work demonstrates the importance of the physical environment for fostering creativity.

The student responses reflect how dialogue and interaction with others students impacted their perception of a safe space. Student SIMB16U comments on being in an environment where he feels spontaneous: *"everyone was airing their own opinion"*. Student SIMB2U says that he can express himself because he is surrounded by *"like-minded people"*. It is important here to consider that design as a discipline is often seen as a closed specialist group, and it is suggested that such closed groups of 'like-minded people' may have difficulty fully realising the aims of critical pedagogy (Giroux & Giroux, 2009). Through signature pedagogies, a design specialist is 'groomed', which leads to a hegemonic 'specialist' who ends up countering the plurality advocated by critical pedagogy. It can be argued, therefore, that the idea of a safe space in design education could perpetuate 'comfort' in a closed specialist group. This feeling of comfort is further supported by student SIMB1U, who speaks about an environment which was focused on not intimidating or harming others, similar to student SIFB1U who felt safe in the small class group. However, the statement by student SIMB14U shows how working in the class and studio made him feel insecure because there always seemed to be someone else with a similar idea. His response illustrated again the diversity and complexity of views that design educators have to be prepared to meet.

A critical reflection by lecturer LIMC1U contested the idea of a safe space in design education. He argues that design training requires that students push the boundaries and move out of their comfort zones, and he sees the 'safe space' concept as counterproductive: *"we should ask better questions"*; doing that *"opens the dialogue between people who are polar opposites"*. This statement by LIMC1U illustrates how critical pedagogy and design education can be described as compatible on a level where critical pedagogy also requires students to bring their personal experiences into their learning process. Lecturer LIF11U also reflected critically on the idea of a 'safe space' in the context where students feel *"very, very far away from established ideas of who they are and what they feel"*, which is a contextual factor that further complicates the goal of a 'safe space'.

Action (praxis) is evident in the references made by students about the safe physical environment. It can be argued that because the campus is safe, it facilitates their practice and allows for a creative space for reflection on their design work. Students SIFC1U, SIMB3U and SIFB3U attributed feelings of safety to their work environment's physical comfort and security. Students SIFB4U, *SIMB11U* and SIMB4U described how access to well-equipped studios facilitates their perception of being in a 'safe space'. Students SIFB4U, SIMB18U, SIMB11U, SIMB13U and SIMB8U reflected on aspects that influenced their sense of safety, such as the size and accessibility of their studio, cleanliness and the disadvantages of staying in the same venue all day. The idea of authentic learning is impacted by the physical environment where design education takes place. Authentic learning is an aspect of critical pedagogy that is a requirement for emancipatory education (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1998). It may be argued that design education can facilitate authentic learning through praxis, which has the potential to be emancipatory. The experience that the students described about being in their physical campus environment reflects to some degree the policy of massification in higher education. This can be seen in the impact on the authenticity of their learning where they are now based in studios that effectively can be described as computer laboratories without the necessary space to ideate and conceptualise in a physical form before moving on to digital platforms. It is also insightful to see how many students connected their sense of safety to their physical environment. This is indicative of the high levels of violence in society that South Africans are now exposed to, primarily due to the ever-increasing inequality experienced daily. The daily commute to campus requires navigating crime hotspots in a dysfunctional/non-existing public transport system. It has become normalised for South Africans to be on alert constantly for possible criminal activity.

The safe space theme emerged in data obtained from two questions to students regarding their conceptions of safety. The theme revealed nuances that can be considered when considering the term 'safe space' in a design education setting. Although the fundamental concept of a safe space is accommodated in design education through studio pedagogy, it should be cautioned that being too safe can impede the development of critical thinking skills necessary to solve complex societal problems which cannot be resolved from a position of comfort. How to achieve a safe space though in the South African context is a challenge for the design educator that will require specific skills. These will take time to master. This highlights the question of the education of design educators and how to prepare for facilitating a general safe space in the physical sense while balancing it with the possibility of making the classroom an unsafe place in the creative sense where design boundaries can be pushed. The questions raised by Flensner regarding "Being safe from what?—and safe for whom? ... what possibly can make the classroom an unsafe place" (2019: 275) could be helpful when asked in the context of South African decolonial design education. The importance of the physical environment for student perceptions of safety and the impact of safety on authentic learning are factors also to be considered. The concept of a 'safe space' is influenced by power relations which will be discussed in the next theme.

### **5.3.2 Power relations**

The hesitancy of South African designers to engage with the power dynamics in politically charged environments was highlighted (Nkula-Wenz, 2018: 182) in the introduction of the thesis. Education is a political act that requires educators to be aware of power and privilege

(Apple, 2004). Giroux, however, argues that educators have become the proletariat and, therefore, dependent and powerless (2017: 206). The Johnson and Morris framework for critical citizenship education engages with knowledge, interconnections and skills related to power relations (2010). In discussing the crit as one of the signature pedagogies and the possible negative impact of the crit on students due to the power relations in studios, it is concerning that "low-level procedural questions" instead of critical reflection is foregrounded in studio-based programmes (Healy, 2016: 2). In 1.2.1 I discussed my experiences of students being more inclined to choose 'clean up' campaigns rather than socio-political topics when addressing issues in their communities. I also discussed in the 'learning environment and safe space' theme how, in design education, the historical idea of 'master and apprentice' has given way to a relationship that strives to eliminate the power imbalance between student and teacher, where it is recognised that both student and teacher are both participants in the learning process. The analysis of the research data identifies three sub-themes: transitioning to higher education; personality traits and power relations; and background and power relations. These are now discussed in detail.

### 5.3.2.1 Transitioning to higher education and power relations

Lecturers and students reflected on the time when students just enter higher education. Lecturer LIM1U states that,

*...initial interactions tend to be on the part of the students that [they] are pretty guarded in that, they see this line between you as a facilitator and them as learners. But as we start to have conversations, my view is that those barriers start to break down and then it becomes bidirectional. But it requires time.*

Student SIMB8U expresses how power relations changed over time: "*when I started at [redacted], things had been sort of bad, but we became equal.*"

Lecturer LIFB1U describes how, over time and as studio demographics changed, she experienced shifts in power relations.

*I'm going to be very blunt now. We had a ratio of white to black, almost even at that point, and I could gauge that they looked at me with that, particularly the white students with whom she thinks she is. Why is she here? What am I going to learn from her? And then, as the years went by and the ratio changed with the white students dropping, black students came up. But at the same time, there were still those black students from affluent schools who would still feel like ok, why are you here? Why are you teaching me these things? And then it got to a point where I think I also got comfortable with my own skin to say, look, I'm here because I deserve to be here, and I'm here, and I will teach you what I need to teach you.*

Lecturer LIFB1U speaks about culture, demographics, and geographics as factors that impacted her experiences of power relations.

*... you'd find that some students will give you respect and will show it from a cultural perspective. It's difficult for them to open up because they see you as a senior and not a person who's trying to help them, and then power dynamics in relation to student versus student. It also comes back to culture. Not only culture but also demographics and geographics.*



The comment by LIFB1U is echoed in a statement by student SIMB16U: *"some students actually have the upper hand [i.e. they are confident] in expressing how they feel to the lecturers, and I feel like some of the students are scared to point out issues that will like make them feel uncomfortable and stuff."*

Lecturers indicated varying methods in which they navigate power relations. The following lecturers highlight the partnership and inter-dependence between lecturers and students. Lecturer LIMB3U: *"I've learned that learners like to be respected more than anything. The student and the lecturer should bring life experiences and knowledge to learning experiences altogether."* Lecturer LIM2U: *"I think education has a lot to do with being human. ...Because education is about sharing knowledge, sometimes it's better to share peer knowledge and knowledge from a lecture."*

Lecturer LIFB2U describes the journey it took for her to arrive at her current understanding of her role as facilitator:

*I have some power over how they progress and so on, but I think over the years, I've learned to work with that. My relationship with students is one of facilitator, and I always explain to them that my mission is to see you succeed, so I don't police them unless I have to. ... I'm really pleased that I feel after all of these years, I'm also learning just to be a facilitator and not be too domineering.*

Lecturer LIMC1U identifies ageism and racism as factors impacting his power relations experiences.

*...what I can say is the power relations I was confronted with is that I had to give class to students who were a year behind but who started with me, and immediately I was confronted with, we started the first year together, we started 2nd year together so why in my third year do I have to listen to you about what to do in design. What do you know that I do not know? So the knowledge capacity was one of the power dynamics I was confronted with. Age was another, and then race was something else. Pronunciation, language, dialect was something different because the people who are my race felt, but you have now changed your identity to speak a language or to speak in a way we cannot associate with.*

The impact of academic pressure on power relations is raised by lecturer LIMC1U

*There was your history in what you have done, [that] is a power relation, especially in education because you are only as credible as what you have done last. People come to you, and it's like a "publish or perish" mindset. What have you published? How relevant you are. It is not about how relevant I am. It is how relevant that one project is that I did at a specific time, that mattered in that particular moment.*

Lecturer LSFB1T mentions *"fear of power imbalances"* when speaking about challenges that design educators face. Lecturer LSFB1T identifies abilities that make an effective citizen designer: *"freedom to participate in any conversation around them without fear, discrimination or intimidation."* These reflections link the discussion to specific personality traits that play a role in the dynamics of power relations.

### 5.3.2.2 Personality traits and power relations

Educator awareness of students who do not participate or who feel 'less powerful' in lectures is critical. Ten students mentioned in their responses the impact of a student's personality and confidence on their perceived power in a class. Their comments provide insight into the power dynamic. Student SIMB5U: *"there are some students who are more confident than others."* Student SIMB17U: *"it all comes down to personalities."* Student SIMB7U: *"some students are more outspoken than others, so in some situations, some people can't defend themselves, or some choose to be quiet, but I just feel like that at school, we are all equal. Some people are scared. It all depends on personalities."* Student SIFB2U: *"I only feel that is true because they are able to speak up. That is the only reason why I feel like it is so. They have the energy [i.e. confidence], and they are comfortable speaking up more than others who would rather not say anything."* Student SIFC1U: *"from what I can see from being in my classes, it is sometimes the case that some people would be quiet and avoid attention on them."* Student SIFB4U: *"some students are very nervous."*

Student SIMB2U:

*Those people who have more power in a class are more outspoken and more confident than the rest because you find everybody you know silent and then waiting just for one person to put out an idea. Or, you know, to say something worthwhile so that they could also jump on the bandwagon.*

Student SIMB12U:

*I think in this instance, it has to do with personalities. You have some students who are quite shy who don't speak a lot, and then you have a few students who quite speak a lot, so most if maybe a question is asked that requires people to be vocal, some students actually don't speak a lot, and mostly they would take the words that were spoken.*

Lecturer LIFB1U:

*The challenge is that the ones who talk a lot will talk, [but] the ones who are shy, you need to zone them in, in your one-on-one consultation, so that they can come out of their shells, so it [this focus] doesn't particularly work online. One-on-one [in person] is far better suited for such dialogues, pedagogical dialogues, to happen. But in a group setting, they still have that. I don't have the power, or I'm not confident enough to say what I'm thinking.*

These individual personality factors also reflect in part the multicultural nature of society in South African. The analysis now considers the role of demographics in the power relations of the studio and campus environment.

### 5.3.2.3 Demographics and power relations

One lecturer reflected on the diverse high school background of students. He also mentions gender<sup>9</sup> as a confidence factor, and observes that female students engage more. Lecturer LIMB4U:

*A decade ago, students coming from [well-resourced] Model C schools would [stand out by being more confident] due to the confidence they had developed during their schooling. More recently, however, I feel that the power relations in class are more equal. I do not know if this is because most students are now on NSFAS [i.e. receiving financial assistance]. Therefore, do they come from more similar backgrounds? Also, there is a gender issue where female students engage much more than their male counterparts.*

The perceptions of male students in relation to female students give insight into the dynamics of power relations that impact on students. Student SIMB16U acknowledges the disparity between men and women that must be addressed and student SIMB17U observes 'expectations' that must be considered.

Student SIMB16U:

*Making sure everyone's opinion is valued, and everyone's opinion is catered for in different situations like not really shutting out other people because of their colour maybe or gender especially with us males we tend to have more power than females, so I believe we must treat everyone equally regardless of their background.*

Student SIMB17U: *"... as a male graphic design student, I have seen there are certain expectations that females have of male design students."*

The demographics of student groups is a reflection of the multicultural and multilingual society. This in turn is reflected in the approach used by lecturers in their teaching. LIMB4U explains how he avoids creating tensions in a diverse group from his position of power as lecturer. Lecturer LIMB4U: *"We have many cultures, religions, and races in our classes, and we do not want to create tensions. It is critical how one approaches those histories as a lecturer so that we do not create a divisive environment."* The comment from SIFB4U also illustrates how language impacts students because they have to navigate the position of power held by the English language as official teaching language and lingua franca on campus. Student SIFB4U stated *"... so I come with my Zulu [home language] background, and in class, we communicate in English."*

Lecturer LSF2C describes her strategy to counter harmful stereotypes (which also play a role in power relation dynamics).

*I currently teach units in Design Studies on gender and design and South African design history. In these units students are made critically aware of issues of race, gender and class in relation to communication design. Such knowledge, I hope, will inform their approach as designers with regard to aspects such as not perpetuating harmful stereotypes.*

<sup>9</sup> Survey and interview respondents use the word *gender* when they speak, but they almost always actually mean *biological sex*. In general, discourse in South Africa has yet to catch up with the complexity of the concept of gender, even in academic environments. The term gender has been left verbatim in responses as it was used by respondents, but is interpreted in general to mean biological sex unless indicated otherwise in the analysis.

### 5.3.2.4 Discussion

A statement by student SIMB11U succinctly captures the situation of power relations in general: "*The power is there, but it is a matter of how you use it.*" The theme of power relations emerged strongly from the data in the lecturer survey as well as the student and lecturer interviews. Aspects that became evident relate to students entering higher education; the nature of the relationship between design student and design educator; educator's skills; and perceptions of students and educators' awareness of their power and privilege.

The importance of the first-year experience and onboarding of new university students is well known. Transitioning from a high school environment into a university setting is a process that has received much attention and is well researched. Lecturer LIM11U reflected on the time when students were new in the design studio, and their interactions were hesitant and guarded. Student SIMB8U expressed how power relations became "*more equal*" over time, although this process is influenced by culture, demographics and geographics. Lecturer LIFB1U reflected on the respect she received from students that originated from cultural norms. The culture of respect for elders will make it difficult, especially for students from rural areas still embedded in their traditional cultures, to become fully engaged in interactions that challenge the authority of their lecturers. Evidence of this phenomenon was detected in a comment by lecturer LIFB1U. She indicated that some students have the upper hand in expressing their feelings while others are nervous to point out issues that make them feel uncomfortable. Lecturers reflected on the nature of the power relations between them and students. Lecturer LIMB3U described the importance of lecturers and students bringing their life experiences and knowledge together collaboratively for the purposes of learning. Lecturer LIM12U reflected on the purpose of education as sharing knowledge. Here again it is evident that the historical relationship in design education of 'master and apprentice' has given way to a more participatory relationship with a degree of equality that levels out the power imbalance between student and teacher. Evidence of this is seen in lecturer LIFB2U's description of how her relationship with students has changed over the years from being "too domineering" to "one of facilitator".

Johnson and Morris identify "skills of critical and structural social analysis involving knowledge and power" (2010: 90) as a component of their critical citizenship education framework. Lecturer LIMC1U demonstrated exactly this skill by critically analysing his socio-cultural contexts and reflecting on how age, race and culture impacted power dynamics as an educator. LIMC1U also reflected on the constant pressure to 'publish or perish'; this can be attributed to the financial and reputational dynamics in universities. The statement by Giroux that educators have become a dependent and powerless proletariat (2017: 206) is important but in the South African context this is nuanced by the fact that South African public sector universities are wholly reliant on government funding. This effectively turns academics into civil servants who are dependent on the government. Nevertheless, educators with critical and structural social analysis skills cannot be described as entirely powerless. In this context, design educators should be alert to warning signs of becoming 'powerless' when "low-level procedural questions" (Healy, 2016: 2) instead of critical reflection are foregrounded in studio-based programmes.

As highlighted at the start of this section, education is always inevitably a political act that requires educators to be critically aware of their salient power and privilege in the teaching environment (Apple, 2004). Evidence of this was found in several responses, such as lecturer LSF2C who described her strategy to counter harmful stereotypes. Lecturer LIFB1U illustrated this critical sensitivity in her attempts to 'lure' shy students "out of their shells" through one-on-one sessions. Interestingly, lecturer LIMB4U mentioned that female students were generally more vocal in class. From my own experience, I can confirm that design educators usually endeavour to engage all their students, and this is enhanced significantly by generally small class groups that are a key feature of our undergraduate design courses.<sup>10</sup> It is important to note, however, that an exceptionally high level of sensitivity is required by South African design educators due to the historical and present context that requires constant reflection on the power educators wield and their privilege. One possible avenue to facilitate the development of such sensitivity is the use of dialogue, the theme that is discussed next.

### 5.3.3 Dialogue

Dialogue is a key aspect of design education, critical citizenship and decoloniality perspectives. Freire describes the central foundation of critical pedagogy as a dialogue through which individuals can develop a critical view of their world (Freire, 2005). The role of dialogue in citizenship education, is to foster "capacities, knowledge, skills, and social relations through which individuals recognise themselves as social and political agents" (Giroux, 2004: 115). Dialogue skills are listed on the Johnson and Morris framework for citizenship education as a critical skill (2010: 90). Dialogue is also identified as one of the six signature pedagogies most commonly used in the field of design, along with the studio, projects and the brief, materiality, the crit and research (Shreeve, 2016).

Dialogue as pedagogy in design education is used to teach students the language of the discipline (Shreeve, 2016: 88). Dialogue should not be equated to the crit, although they could occur concurrently; the crit is focused on critiquing work where dialogue is an exploratory discussion (Volakos, 2016: 215). Dialogue has transformative qualities that can address social problems; nevertheless, dialogue remains part of a political process shaped by the education of the educator involved (Shor & Freire, 1987). The value of dialogue to design education is determined by the quality of questions asked during the dialogue (VandeZande, Bohemia & Digranes, 2015). It is common for design students to express frustration at having to engage in dialogue because design students are often inclined to focus on the practical work at hand and neglect the more intangible processes involved in dialogue (Swanson, 1994; Heller, 2006). The commercialisation and massification of higher education impact negatively on the quality of dialogue because dialogue requires a significant investment of time and that often takes the form of one-on-one scenarios (VandeZande, Bohemia & Digranes, 2015). In the broad theme of dialogue, two sub-themes emerged from the data: lecturer perspectives and student perspectives on dialogue.

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<sup>10</sup> Small classes are under threat due to massification in higher education that will further complicate the navigation of power and privilege.

### 5.3.3.1 Lecturers perspectives on dialogue

Lecturers frequently reflected on their use of dialogue in their teaching. Lecturer LIMB4U indicated that he used storytelling with art and design-related examples drawn from the contexts of the students. *"I engage with students through storytelling. I allow them to talk to art and design-related examples from their contexts, such as the decorations on their walls or gates at home; it opens dialogue."* Lecturer LIM11U: *"I think that is an absolute imperative. Conversations can't be mono-directional."*

Lecturer LIFB2U finds that it is essential for design educators to declare their position transparently and from the start so that students understand where the lecturer is coming from when approaching a topic through dialogue. She also describes having discussions with students about who they are, what they're about, their value systems and their heritage. In her opinion, these conversations can prompt 'amicable' and productive discussions that contribute to stronger student engagement with the learning process.

*I've certainly encouraged it [dialogue]. I always declare my position, I always say to students I cannot be neutral; I am not neutral. My value systems, heritage, and whatever I teach you are based on what I believe in. So, whatever you get from me, you need to reflect on critically, and you need to respond to me in that way, so that's maybe what you would then interpret as purposeful dialogue. But I always declare that, and I always get engagement, and I do get reflection, and so far, I've gotten some good results as I mentioned out of that, it's like what are you about? Who are you about? What's your value system? What's your heritage? Don't just accept what I'm saying blindly. It sometimes reflects, naively, sometimes competently in written documents, in the way they engage in class. Sometimes we enter into a little bit of arguments [in the sense of debate], but in a very positive environment, I would say. That's how I perceive it. It would be interesting to know how the students perceive it, but generally, I've had very good success with that approach where I declare myself and who I am and my intention, my value systems.*

Lecturer LIMB3U reflected on what she had learned from a teacher training course that shaped her teaching; she finds that students come to class with their own knowledge and that the educators cannot control everything; students also have a responsibility to contribute to their learning; she therefore adopts a student-centric approach.

*I definitely encourage dialogue as pedagogy in my lectures. I use what I learned from the [teacher training] course I did at [redacted], and I incorporate pedagogy with andragogy, where learning is student-centred. The student comes with knowledge, and it's not the teacher that controls everything where; the student also contributes to their own learning.*

Lecturer LIMC1U reflects on how his own lecturers had advised him to approach teaching when he first started lecturing. He says that he leads his presentations with thought-provoking images. His strategy is to encourage dialogue by firmly disclaiming the role of 'the knowledge holder'.

*...That feeling of responsibility, I do not know if I could convey it to someone, but it was intense, and I wrestled with it. My lecturers just told me that I do not need to know the answers, just nudge and guide them [the students] to the answers, and it changed me a lot, and I realised that if I present something, I do not have to present all the answers constantly to people. I do not have to position myself as the knowledge holder of a topic, but I can leave something there to tickle people's minds or their words.*

*...What I do when I put a presentation together is I lead with thought-provoking images. ...I open with evocative pictures and lead with open-ended questions and guiding them to either finding problem statements or solutions. I absolutely do not see myself as a knowledge holder on any level.*

In his response, lecturer LIM12U says that he prefers open discussion and dialogue on the topics they discuss in class; he feels that it is imperative for students to talk (i.e. verbalise) about what they're learning.

*I think at a tertiary [i.e. higher education] level, specifically, if we aren't talking about what we are learning, we are not going to expand the amount that we learn. So, as much as I'd give the foundation and the core of what we are discussing for that specific lecture, I prefer to have it as an open discussion or dialogue with students to let them start wearing it, and it starts swelling in their minds a little bit to understand what they feel about what we are teaching and what we are discussing. Maybe I could definitely learn something from them, and I think vice versa.*

Lecturer LIF11U reflects on how students should not only be a passive audience but need to become part of discussions that will bring out new ideas that the lecturer may not have thought of or anticipated:

*... we have crits, and dialogue is something that happens not only with you and the student when you have one on one discussions with them and kind of tease out ideas of what it is that they would like to promote. But it's discussions that you have among students because students also become an audience to what it is that you're presenting, and their voices in terms of appreciation or reflecting on new ideas that you may not have thought of are very much part of the discussions because this opens up new opportunities to recreate and redesign or stay with what you have and create confidence in what you have made.*

Lecturer LIMB2U added a concern that students with difficult personal circumstances and histories find it challenging to participate in dialogue:

*No. In order not to make students angrier, because some of them are angry, anyway. It could be because some of them are from broken homes where their parents were not living together as a family. As a result, they find it challenging to co-learn and tolerate others.*

Lecturer LIMB1U indicated that he follows a very structured approach where he consciously facilitates dialogue but also allows students to learn in their own way.

*I like it when we engage instead of [it] just being me, feeding them all the information all the time. So I do encourage dialogue where we discuss issues that are actually planned for a particular day. I think they [dialogue and discussion] are very critical elements of teaching and learning, so I encourage it in my teaching. How I do it depends really on that day and what topic is being discussed, but I do make sure that I provide my facilitation as my responsibility as the instructor. I also have to make sure that the students have [understood] their own responsibility, that they are able to do their own learning, and I provide them with the space where they can learn on their own without me being involved.*

### 5.3.3.2 Student's perspectives on dialogue

Although the opinions of students on dialogue were not directly probed in the interview questions, some of the responses given by students to questions related to dialogue provide a good indication of student perceptions about this theme.

Student SIMB1U suggests that when discussing problems, these be broken down into details to facilitate solution finding.

*I think we need to break down all the problems... Break them down, find out what is the cause of those things, then, in terms of finding the solution, then we tackle those things as a whole despite what race or age group you are. We discuss those things and find a solution in terms of how can we deal with those things as a whole, as a group, as a class or as a department.*

Student SIMB15U: "Yes, discussions on the history of the world help us to be better designers." Student SIFB3U: "Such topics may be discussed in a theory module; then it would make sense, and I wouldn't see it as a problem"

Student SIMB6U states the importance of political discussions to develop an understanding of the "bigger picture" of what is going on.

*Most people don't know anything about politics. Some are not interested in politics, and that puts people astray [i.e. confuses people]...so my answer to that would be yes, that [dialogue] is very important because, especially in our class environment, it is like an informal conversation about politics where everyone can weigh in. If you look at the students on our campus, there are students from different part of the world actually, so we have someone from Zimbabwe, we have someone from Kenya, so all these students have different views, you can hear different views, different informal views of their political stands; and also, when things like strikes happen, you know where you stand with people. Instead of just choosing one side, you actually have a bigger picture on what Africa is as a whole and they also give you a better understanding instead of having misconceptions.*



Student SIMB12U states that there should be a focus on the design context of political dialogue.

*I still like it [i.e. dialogue]; they [i.e. topics] should be discussed, but they should be a limit. There are certain aspects where we shouldn't go as we should only focus on design but not on the politics that is happening outside of this, like the politics of the government, only the design side of things should be discussed.*

Student SIMB16U also supports political discussions in the context of dialogue in the classroom situation.

*Actually, yes, definitely political issues should be discussed by students, especially we as designers, because I feel like we need to know what is going on around the whole world more than anyone else, so political issues that actually influence the country should be discussed. I feel we, as designers, need to be on point about political issues.*

### 5.3.3.3 Discussion

In 1994, South Africa emerging from a history of racial oppression with a strongly progressive constitution was seen by many as the epitome of democracy for the negotiated settlement that brought an end to the apartheid regime. This settlement was achieved mainly through facilitated dialogue. In 2022, South Africa is the most unequal society in the world (The World Bank Group: 2022). It is evident that dialogue holds great potential for societal transformation but that the actions that take place after dialogue are what determine the true impact. The centrality of dialogue as an instrument in design education, in critical citizenship and in fostering decoloniality perspectives is well established. In design education, dialogue is mainly used to establish the design language of the discipline with students. In critical citizenship education, dialogue is used to cultivate citizens with a critical worldview who see themselves as social and political agents. Decolonial dialogue aims to unsettle western epistemologies.

Dialogue emerged as a recurrent theme due to its commonality in these three areas of design education, critical citizenship and decoloniality. In the lecturer interviews, I probed the use of dialogue by the lecturer participants. The questions around the education of design educators also appeared in this theme. Dialogue is described as a political practice involving the educator's education (Shor & Freire, 1987). Lecturer LIMC1U reflected on the advice about teaching his own lecturers had given him when he first started lecturing, as well as the anxiety he experienced early on as a lecturer. Lecturer LIMB3U spoke positively about the valuable skills she acquired in a teacher training programme that introduced her to andragogy and student-centred learning. Key to this paradigm, both lecturer and student contribute knowledge in a context where lecturers do not control the process. From these two responses, it becomes evident that one of the lecturers (LIMC1U) was coached into teaching via a form of mentorship in the traditional master-apprentice relationship, while the other (LIMB3U) developed her teaching practice through a more formal teaching programme, that was itself focused on broadening the traditional learning situation. There are clearly a number of routes through which design educators can adapt and improve their teaching practice. From my own experience, I found that the development of teaching practice in design education is a highly individual and personal journey, where the skills for facilitating dialogue, for example, are often

drawn primarily from experience. It seems unlikely that the skills for facilitating dialogue are easily transferable in the master-apprentice approach, as these are skills that cannot be fully developed through observation and repetition. For the full potential of dialogue as pedagogy to be realised, it seems valuable for novice design educators to be given theoretical and practical training in these skills. This will also differentiate between the functions of dialogue and crit as pedagogies.

The idea from a critical citizenship perspective that dialogue can foster skills to help individuals see themselves as social and political agents (Giroux, 2004: 115) is pertinent to this study. The comment by lecturer LIFI1U on how students are an audience that becomes part of discussions stands out. She found that this approach brought new and unanticipated ideas, it "*...opens up new opportunities to recreate and redesign*". When design educators are sensitised and capacitated to describe and define the social and political roles possible for design students, this will create new opportunities and possibilities. The quality of the questions they ask during dialogue supports the formation of these skills (VandeZande, Bohemia & Digranes, 2015). Design educators will benefit if they critically reflect on their awareness of formulating 'quality' questions and mediating the subsequent dialogue.

Lecturer LIFB2U demonstrated awareness of her positionality and reflected on the necessity for design educators to declare their positionality with transparency in advance. For her, it meant that students understand her position and where she is coming from when approaching a topic through dialogue. She found this highly beneficial for all parties to the dialogue. She also indicated that having discussions with students about how they see themselves, their backgrounds and their value systems served to foster a paradigm of productive dialogue. In her opinion, these conversations may sometimes cause 'amicable' debates, but even these made a positive contribution to the students and their learning situation. The reflection by LIFB2U demonstrated in detail the importance of 'quality' questions and the subsequent learning that can take place as a consequence of such questions. The presence of 'amicable' arguments in this context is evidence of learning. The strategy proposed by lecturer LIMB4U is also very useful for formulating quality questions. He indicated he used storytelling in combination with art and design-related examples taken directly from contexts familiar to the students. "*I allow them to talk to art and design-related examples from their contexts, such as the decorations on their walls or gates at home; it opens dialogue.*"

The pedagogic use of dialogue for design students to facilitate learning the language of the discipline (Shreeve, 2016: 88) is richly demonstrated by lecturer LIMI2U, who indicated that he prefers open discussion and dialogue regarding the topics they discuss in class; he felt that it is imperative for students to talk about how they are feeling and about what they are learning as a way of strengthening the pedagogic process and fostering their own agency.

When the critical citizenship perspective is introduced to a design curriculum, consideration should be given to how this will impact the 'language' of design and to what extent the vocabulary of the discipline should be extended and meanings deepened. It is also vital to consider how the value of dialogue as pedagogy can be maintained in the context of commercialisation and massification of higher education. There are multiple contextual factors that could negatively influence dialogue; these need to be assessed and adjusted

for in the teaching situation. For example, lecturer LIMB2U drew attention to the personal circumstances of students that impact their ability to participate in dialogue. This is even more critical to pedagogy in a country like South Africa with its vast levels of disparity. In general, students supported dialogue as a means to solving problems in the learning process and gaining insight into difficult topics (in and outside the curriculum) that may not often be openly discussed.

Given the multiple challenges that design educators face in South African higher education, the theme of discomfort will be discussed next.

### 5.3.4 Discomfort

The word discomfort is defined as "mental or physical uneasiness" (Merriam-Webster 2012). Reference to the word discomfort was first made in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and it is derived from "Anglo-French *descomforter*, from *des-* *dis-* + *comforter* to *comfort*" (Merriam-Webster 2012). To experience discomfort implies that possibly something unknown, unexpected, or disagreeable is experienced on a physical or mental level. Here, discomfort linked to 'comfort zones' is not the same as pain and suffering attached to "injury or harm" (Zembylas, 2015: 173). Exploring decolonisation and critical citizenship perspectives in design education is not necessarily a comfortable journey for everyone as it has the potential to create discomfort on several levels for some educators and students. Discomfort as pedagogy has often been considered an avenue through which design educators may purposefully navigate discomfort. Research on discomfort as pedagogy is well established (Boler & Zembylas, 2003; Leibowitz, Bozalek, Rohleder, Carolissen, & Swartz, 2010; Costandius & Alexander, 2019). The aim of discomfort as pedagogy is to disrupt the comfort zones created through hegemony (Boler & Zembylas, 2003: 108). The danger of hegemony is that it is masked as being natural and 'common sense' (Boler & Zembylas, 2003: 114). Zembylas evaluates the ethical implications of pedagogies of discomfort and proposes that educators ask themselves the following questions before embarking on pedagogies of discomfort:

*"How can I minimize the ethical violence exerted on students? Is the cost of causing students discomfort and pain worthwhile pedagogically, politically, and ethically? If, in posing ethical considerations as questions, one must avoid claiming to know already the discomforting experience and its consequences"* (2015: 173).

Boler and Zembylas also state that pedagogies of discomfort embrace ambiguity.

*"We then argue for the importance of a pedagogy that embraces ambiguity in its critical conceptualization of identities. Our aim is to question some of our contemporary certainties about the kinds of identities we take for granted and the common normativity that is often at work in all diverse practices of individuals"* (2003: 108).

#### 5.3.4.1 Discomforting dialogue

Costandius & Bitzer (2014) state that careful planning of critical citizenship education can make it possible to address difficult and frequently avoided topics. In design education, socio-political issues easily stand out as difficult topics that are often avoided. I readily admit that as a white male design educator in South Africa, discussing socio-political issues during lectures is discomforting for me. My discomfort is primarily due to experiencing

the prevalence of deeply embedded stereotypes that continually emerge during such discussions. It is insightful for me that a black design educator also expressed discomfort when reflecting on a question regarding discussing politics during class. Lecturer LIMB1U commented:

*This one is a very controversial question. I guess as a democratic country, it would only make sense to do so. I'm not sure I would be comfortable with it, but I think perhaps it will also help to engage in such issues, perhaps somehow help in the development of a better society tomorrow. So I think yes, maybe I will adapt and see how I can fit it into their curriculum.*

Lecturers referred to the importance of designers having insight into the relationship between design and politics. Lecturer LSMW1U states: *"Insight both from theory and practice about ethics from socio-cultural, socio-political, human-centred and experiential design should be developed, understood and applied."* Lecturer LSMW1U mentions: *"They [the students] need to understand their role as a designer in the design process. All the social, political, ethical, economic, cultural and ontological concerns have to be considered before even thinking about what the end result or artefact will be".* LIFB2U raises the issue of politics and technology: *"I don't believe technology is neutral. Let me put it this way: technology is always all the other questions you are asking around social issues and politics and so on."*

Lecturer LIMB1U expressed reservations about discussing political issues in class. All the other lecturer indicated varying levels of support for discussions on political issues during lectures, and were able to provide reasons for this support. Fourteen students showed strong support for discussing politics in class, and nine supported discussing politics with some reservations. For example, student SIMB9U says: *"Not really, it depends on the topic. But if it is something political that involves design, it can be mentioned, but if it is something that is like general politics, I don't think it can be involved in class because we have different perspectives regarding politics."* In the online survey, lecturer LSF8U makes the following comment: *"Unfortunately in South Africa, politics are often brought into the academic sphere and cloud judgement and logic, obscuring facts."* Discussions around politics seem to make some students wary or nervous, as indicated by student SIFC1U: *"I feel yes and no; it is good, but potentially difficult topics will come up eventually given what has been happening in the country, like in the past few months; knowing that, it could be a sensitive topic for some people or they could just be more interested and less nervous."*

The possibility of political discussions creating discomfort for lecturers can be deduced from comments by students. SIMB4U expressed his perception that lecturers make mistakes that need to be fixed:

*I feel like sharing this kind of knowledge will help the lecturers to fix their mistakes and [show] how they should do those things [better]. For me to be able to say something like that to them, you know, because nobody is perfect on the earth, for me to have the freedom to talk to them if something was wrong, I raise my hand. It will help a lot to rectify mistakes if past issues can be addressed.*

Student SIMB8U commented that there are some things in the past that are better "left alone" and that political discussions where no solutions are offered produces anger. He was concerned that political discussions might create division in the class environment, but also felt that the process would be good for people of different races to understand how they see issues; discomfort will create common ground.

*I feel like some things have to be left alone in a way, but some people would say, especially for being taught what happened in the past, it [discomfort] would be good because people need to be [made] aware of what happened. But the problem is, sometimes speaking about it, some people they don't go the way of having solutions, they just have anger towards different topics. So having discussions, I feel like it would divide, especially coming to a classroom that has different colour races as well. So I think it would create a division in a way because I feel like this current generation, they don't have that thing of coming with a past because they act upon emotions. So that [process] would be nice for knowledge; it would be good, especially for other races to know to how other races feel about certain things so that they can have common ground.*

The discomfort arising from design educators' choices to declare or not declare their political stance should be considered. Lecturer LIMB2U argued for adopting party political neutrality, stating: "*Sometimes give the students politics-related assignments without showing any preference or affiliation to a specific party. They need to be aware of all these social and political issues.*"

Lecturer LIFB2U:

*Some people get very uncomfortable with the fact that I'm willing to declare my political position, which is not a political position in the sense that it's linked to a political party...  
I declare my position. I never come from a position of neutrality. I think it's just like whitewashing if you try and pretend to be neutral, so my colleagues at [redacted] love starting off by saying 'I am not political' in meetings with students. They love making that statement, that 'I am not political', and I've gotten into the habit of saying that by declaring that you are not political, you are making a political statement. It's a position, and it has political implications.*

Respondents reflect on possible considerations about guiding students in potentially uncomfortable socio-political debates. Lecturer LSMW4C:

*...a lot of the conversations that have happened in the class have then gone home and back to their families. And they then bring back these conversations into the classroom. And you start to see how important this aspect [is] of reflecting on one's past-- and I think there's an African proverb that says, "A tree without any roots is lost." So, it's really important to go back and understand even things that are really difficult.*

Lecturer LIMB3U responds by highlighting the importance of relating uncomfortable political discussions to the field of design. *"Yes, I would be comfortable with any topic because I think if it's linked to design, design is supposed to be a visual voice, I think it's a matter of how that environment is facilitated"*. Student SIMB1U states that political discussion is not necessary if it is not linked to design: *"To be honest, in my opinion, it is not necessary if it does not include design."*

Lecturer LIMB4U also mentions linking uncomfortable political discussions to the field of design.

*I can easily relate [to] such issues in my lectures as it has relevance to design. Things such as pricing your work and attaching value to different skills, such as craft vs other types of skills, are central to notions of capitalism and equality. Furthermore, it is easy to engage with broader societal issues because many artists and designers have produced enduring visuals [i.e. images] that force us to contemplate matters related to politics, the economy, gender parity, and the like.*

The potential for discomfort in class discussions is evident when students highlight various reasons why they feel the need to discuss the past during lectures; for example, student SIMB4U states: *"It will help a lot to rectify mistakes if past issues can be addressed."* and student SIMB7U responds:

*I think yes, those kinds of discussions could be helpful because it would make me understand some people's decisions that happened in the past in terms of social justice, and you know how as people, we all see things in a different way; one person uses the left-hand side, some people see the right, I see the front, you know; so such discussions would help so you wouldn't judge or anything like that.*

Students spoke about the idea of learning from the mistakes of the past. Student SIMB10U states: *"Personally, I would say that we could think of what happened in the past and learn from it."* Student SIMB13U: *"I think it can help us not to create the same mistake again because they can educate us on how the injustice was done and how things went bad so that we can correct it and not do it again."* Student SIFC1U hopes it would help to explain *"how these things happened and think of ways to actually improve things from hereon forward in the design we do."* Student SIMB18U: *"It is good to know the background and the history so that I can know how to connect it with the present life"*.

Two students reflected on being 'stuck' in the past, and felt that this was a negative factor to consider. Student SIMB3U: *"I do not have issues, "forget the past and move on" is a better way to recognise efforts."*

Student SIFB1U:

*I feel like our generation is more self-aware and more open-minded, and we are not really dwelling on the past. Because we haven't been affected, like personally. So I don't feel like it is relevant to our generation, because the generation we grew up in wasn't exposed to any oppression, so it doesn't affect me personally, so I don't think it is relevant.*

Student SIFB2U:

*Well, in my opinion, I think first of all, I remember reading, someone said it is better not to remember the past because how are we going to focus on the future if we are stuck in the past. I agree with that, but at the same time, I feel like we need to know what has happened in order for us to move on; we need to fix what has been broken, we need to address the problems in order for us to move on; so I feel like it is only fair, I would say, discuss these issues.*

Returning to the question posed by Zembylas: "Is the cost of causing students discomfort and pain worthwhile pedagogically, politically, and ethically?" (2015: 173), and considering this in the light of student responses, their reasons for having political discussions in class are revealing. Reasons include, for instance, the point made by Student SIMB4U who feels that these discussions "... help one to understand the kind of things they [the students] do not know. It is important to "go out of the line" sometimes." Student SIMB5U explains that such discomfort "...is necessary because it is going to [help students] be open-minded, yes." Student SIMB6U hopes the process will help them to "...actually have a bigger picture on what Africa is as a whole, and they [i.e. discussions] also give you a better understanding instead of having misconceptions." Student SIMB18U feels that discomforting situations "...help us to give us knowledge on how to approach the different kinds of people." Student SIFB2U welcomes discussion about "...political issues [because] they [i.e. the issues] actually affect us as designers, so we get to express our opinions through art." Student SIFB4U finds that, "...because we live in country that has a lot of politics and corruption, [discomforting discussions] help us to think broadly." Similarly, student SIFB1U says "...we should concentrate on what is currently happening in our country so that we can be aware of it and if we can do something and contribute to bettering it." Student SIMB17U reasons that "...we are able to make things better. So if we are oblivious to what is happening around us, then what are we designing for?" Student SIFC1U links discomfort to "... what has been happening in the country in the past few months; knowing that, it [i.e. discomfort] could be a sensitive topic for some people or they may just be more interested and less nervous."

#### 5.3.4.2 Discussion

When evaluating discomfort as a pedagogic strategy, the question should first be asked if it is worthwhile "pedagogically, politically, and ethically" (Zembylas, 2015: 173) to create discomfort in an educational setting. Considering the extreme disparity in the socio-economic situation of South Africans, I argue that it is imperative, both politically and ethically, to engage in difficult or sensitive discussions. The data shows that the majority of students see political discussion in class as having the ability to change mindsets, improve their own design practice and help make South Africa a better place. From a student perspective, the advantages of enduring difficult/sensitive discussions are substantial.

Lecturers reflected on difficult/sensitive discussions in class. In the data, both students and lecturers indicated that difficult topics (politics, in this case) could be engaged within the classroom if there is a clear link to how these issues impact or relate to design. This view will affect how critical citizenship education is integrated into design education. I argue that the role of a citizen designer is to act instinctively against oppression and injustice. Such action cannot be informed only by design-related oppression and injustice, and a

far broader perspective in this regard is essential for designers who identify as citizen designers. In the interviews, questions to students and lecturers about 'difficult topics' focussed on the politics, oppression and injustices of the past. The links between design and politics are well established (Fry, 2011; Vassão, 2017; Boehnert, 2018; Onafuwa, 2018; Pfützner, 2019). This establishes a 'design-related' theoretical foundation from where political issues can be discussed. Difficult topics related to the history of oppression and injustice provoke disparate responses. There were some views that the past is better left alone and that being 'stuck' in the past is not helpful. In contrast, some respondents stated that the past has to be 'dealt with' and processed to ensure we do not repeat the past mistakes and can move forward. This is especially relevant in a creative field like design. Design educators will have to be well equipped to facilitate dialogue on 'difficult topics' and interrogate issues from all angles while remaining critically conscious and transparent in their own positionality in the matters under discussion.

The framework for Critical Citizenship education proposed by Johnson and Morris describes the dispositions of a critical citizen as follows:

*"Actively questioning; critical interest in society and public affairs; seeking out and acting against injustice and oppression. Commitment and motivation to change society; civic courage; responsibility for decisions and actions" (2010: 90).*

To be involved as a citizen designer in the activities described by Johnson and Morris might stimulate a discomfort response for some lecturers and students, because acting against oppression and injustice will require new kinds of interactions and this can result in unfamiliar physical or mental experiences. There is an argument for discomfort as pedagogy to be considered by design educators as a way for educators and students to engage in critical citizenship education. This strategy will allow them to purposefully navigate discomfort through dialogue. It is important to remember that the discomfort referred to here is metaphorical and metaphysical, and not the same as the physical pain attached to "injury or harm" (Zembylas, 2015: 173).

The aim of discomfort as pedagogy is to interrupt comfort zones created through hegemony; as a pedagogic strategy it embraces ambiguity (Boler & Zembylas, 2003: 108). The ambiguity prevalent in the signature pedagogies of design was mentioned earlier (see 3.5.2). The pedagogy of ambiguity in design education relates mainly to three areas: the curriculum, for which there is little agreement on what should be included in a core design curriculum; the responsiveness and agility of the design curriculum; and the prevalence of part time lecturers in design education (Orr & Shreeve, 2017: 61). It is precisely because design education and discomfort as pedagogy embrace ambiguity that design educators will have more success in implementing pedagogic discomfort than other disciplines, such as science, that do not tolerate ambiguity. The motivation for interrogating the idea of discomfort in design education relates to the ability of design educators to contribute to addressing issues of social justice, which is the focus of the next theme.

### 5.3.5 Social justice

The concept of social justice is defined as "a state or doctrine of egalitarianism" (Merriam-Webster 2012). The idea that social justice is "a belief in human equality, especially with respect to social, political, and economic affairs ... a social philosophy advocating the removal of inequalities among people" (Merriam-Webster: 2012) is also integrated in the



Jonson and Morris Framework as "Commitment to values against injustice and oppression ...Knowledge and understanding of histories, societies, systems, oppressions and injustices, power structures and macrostructural relationships" (Johnson & Morris, 2010: 90). Critical citizenship education develops the contextual skills needed to promote social justice (Banks, 2008). The attainment of social justice is also linked to awareness developed through Freire's idea of conscientisation (Cammarota, 2012). From a decolonial perspective, the concepts of social justice and conscientisation are perceived negatively as convenient excuses by settlers in the decolonial project (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Conceptualising the idea of social justice is subject to the context from which it is viewed. For example, Wang describes social justice as "a commitment to living in ways that minimizes suffering" (Denti & Whang, 2012: xvii). Denti defines social justice as "access; an individual's fundamental right to access everything a society has to offer without fear of reprisal and to be treated fairly with dignity and respect" (Denti & Whang, 2012: xiii).

The student participants' conceptions of social justice can be described in three broad categories: equality, fairness and freedom. These three categories emerged from analysis of student perceptions of social justice and neatly align to the egalitarian beliefs inherent to the concept of social justice. Thirteen students described social justice as a way of addressing issues of equality. Three students related social justice to fairness. Five viewed social justice as being integral to their conceptions of freedom. Student responses are presented in more detail and analysed in these three categories.

### 5.3.5.1 Equality as social justice

The majority of students (thirteen) described social justice by linking it closely to the concept of equality. Student SIMB8U: "*I think social justice for me is consideration of other people's perceptions. I would say equality in their environment.*" Student SIFB3U: "*I would define it as a social aspect where people are equal in their choices.*" Student SIMB15U: "*Social justice to me ... It is when you have justice for everyone. It may be related to crime or any other thing as long as you get justice for every person.*" Student SIFC1U: "*Social justice, to me, I think, would mean I give more [value] to equality.*" Student SIMB17U: "*I would say that [social justice] is inclusivity, like ensuring that everybody socially has a platform to have the same opportunities.*" Student SIMB18U: "*I would say that social justice to me is all about equality in communication and everything, including the freedom of speech and so on.*"

Student SIMB9U:

*I think social justice is like being fair and equal in life in front of everyone, even if you are older or smaller, but we have to be treated as equals. Each and every one must be treated very equally. Regarding communication, when you talk with someone, there should be a proper way to communicate with each other.*

Student SIMB13U described social justice by relating it to the disparity in services and resources between urban and rural settings, which reflects a the lack of equality:

*I am not sure about that. For me, well, I think it depends on what region you are in. Like me, I am at Venda [a rural area] right now, so I think I won't get the same things as people in Pretoria [urban]. For my side, the [internet] network is dead [i.e. not working].*

Student SIMB16U:

*Social justice, I believe, in my opinion, is treating everyone the same around the community regardless of race or gender. For me, that is social justice.*

Student SIMB2U:

*Social justice, to me, feels like just making sure everybody is heard. No one is being discriminated against, especially on campus, since everybody has the right to do what they think is right, especially creatively because a lot of ideas can be popped around.*

Student SIFB1U:

*I would say fairness, like if something is not socially correct or like somebody is not equally treated, then there should be consequences for it in some way or another...*

Student SIMB11U linked social justice to exercising individual rights, although his response also contains some contradictory elements that imply an acceptance of hierarchies tied to status and position.

*I could say that social justice is, first of all, realising that we have rights, and those rights can be exercised. It is a matter of knowing what your rights are and then being respected in society, but it also comes with your position in society, your status and your title in society because the greater your title, the more the respect for you.*

### **5.3.5.2 Fairness as social justice.**

Three students linked their description of social justice to the concept of fairness.

Student SIMB1U:

*If I could explain social justice, it is like fairness between people. Everyone needs to be treated accordingly – [i.e.] equal, and if he or she is wrong, they must take responsibility and take accountability that he or she is wrong despite the race or colour he or she is. Fairness between individuals, I can say, is social justice.*

Student SIMB10U: "*Social justice is about being fair to one another as part of whatever system we are collectively in, whatever matter or cause we should focus on at that moment in time.*" Student SIMB14U: "*As a designer, I would say social justice is making them [i.e. people] understand and see, like [using] posters and billboards that you present to the world, [these] must be accommodating to everyone. They should not discriminate against others.*"

### **5.3.5.3 Freedom as social justice**

Five students gave a description of social justice closely linked to the concept of freedom.

Student SIFB2U: "*It is in my perspective and my view it [i.e. social justice] is [being] able to have opportunities. It is almost more like freedom. Proper freedom.*" Student SIFB4U: "*Social justice is being able to express yourself without being afraid of being judged or being stereotyped, [it is] where you have the freedom just to be yourself.*" Student SIMB3U: "*...it [i.e. social justice] is like people having a say in what happens to them. They have a say in things.*" Student SIMB12U: "*I would say it [i.e. social justice] is not about fitting in,*

*it is about being different and being comfortable about being yourself."* Student SIMB5U: *"I would say social justice is like just being professional to all people around social issues."*

The analysis of student conceptions about how they, as designers, can contribute to social justice in the world, shows them linking the goal of social justice conceptually to action in two main categories: inclusion/participation and awareness.

#### **5.3.5.4 Social justice attained through inclusion/participation**

Students generally described how they would advance social justice by giving expression to the spirit of inclusivity in the design process, which they extended in the broader sense of participation.

Student SIMB10U:

*As we are designers, [we] communicate a message through our design, [and] I feel that we can allow other people to have a say in the design we are creating, give the public a say in what we do and give each other ideas. We come together as a unit and try to create something that will accommodate everybody—more participation.*

Student SIMB13U:

*Well, when it comes to being creative, when it comes to designing, you can just create something educational to [show] people on how to be equal and how we can deal with social justice and all this, like creating posters, getting people to interact with the design and all that.*

Student SIMB1U: *"They [i.e. designers] must not discriminate or make the person viewing their designs feel some bad emotion..."*. Student SIMB16U: *"I think a designer can use visual language to make people understand what social justice actually means. Like treating everyone the same regardless of where they come from."*

Student SIMB18U reflected on an inclusive relationship between designer and client and said that designers should have a deeper understanding of the client's values.

*I can say as a designer because we work with different people with different beliefs, and they also have different perspectives and views, so as a designer the only thing you have to do before we start with our thing is that we have to know more about what we are dealing with; we must know our client, know their values and [we] must check the commissions they give us: are they safe for other people, are they safe for the audience? So, as a designer, the first thing is to do research about the commission and how people would see the output. Is your design going to show favouritism and so on?*

#### **5.3.5.5 Social justice promoted through awareness**

Eleven students described how they would advance social justice through creating and raising awareness. Student SIMB15U *"As a designer, I think I can be creative on posters. I can make posters to raise their awareness of things that are against social justice and inform people about it."* Student SIMB3U *"They could, while they design, reflect on social justice and advertise better on social media on social justice issues."* Student SIMB4U: *"I feel like, you know, using graphics to convey such messages. I feel like that would be my contribution. To*

search out the justice." Student SIMB5U "I would start by making people socialise, [so] that they talk to each other. Some event or something like that, [so that] they will get to know each other and be familiar with each other." Student SIMB14U advocates being aware of new trends as a component of raising awareness: "Doing more research and actually explore new trends, a thing I have seen most of the designers that I know [do] that; when we [stick to] an area of our strength, we focus on that and we never actually explore other areas."

Student SIMB17U:

*As designers, we have a way of changing people's lives. We have a way of changing things. We could create a movement and highlight the issues so that people are aware of issues. Creating awareness and making people less ignorant about issues.*

Student SIMB2U comments extensively on some practical aspects of the social responsibility of the designer:

*I feel designers, especially, have a most important role in social justice, and the way in which we can, you know, spread awareness, to make this thing an actual thing: We need to look into more interconnected technologies, like more thought-provoking posters or maybe links that can send you to a webpage where they tell you more about social justice. We can give more attention to some organisations that are headhunting this social justice issue and make it a more prominent issue for people to talk about rather than [accept] it is not so serious, instead of it being something that people will brush over, you know. Like now, everybody knows of Covid, and we forget that we also have other issues that we need to deal with.*

Student SIFB1U stated that she aims to create awareness through her design work.

*I like to believe that we, as designers, are visual communicators, so we create awareness through visual communication. I think that, as we continue with our designs and visually communicate pressing issues happening within our world or our country, we create awareness in a way that is appealing to different target markets.*

Student SIMB7U:

*With the way the world is now, things are spoken [i.e. communicated] visually; a lot of messages are being said visually in artworks and posters, and that has a huge impact on what society thinks; especially the fact that the current millennials are always on their phones, you always see these messages and pictures on social media, and so when graphic designers create such artworks that send out messages or make posters sending out messages about social justice issues, that would make a big impact because people are always on their phones [and] they will be able to see it.*

Student SIMB12U:

*As a designer, you have to communicate; it is easier for people to relate to design than to relate with a one-on-one conversation, so it is easier to show a strong message within design where people will just look at it and relate to it, because it speaks more than when you are going to tell [i.e. talk directly with] a person.*

Student SIMB9U:

*I would say by [using] visual expression. There are some drawings where [just] by looking at it, you can tell there is a meaning behind it, and it means social justice. It is that; we, as designers, can be the voice of the voiceless through the visuals that we actually create.*

### 5.3.5.6 Teaching social justice

Turning now to analyse the responses from the lecturers, they made frequent statements that reflected their views on how they could actively advance social justice through their teaching methods and strategies. The response from LIMC1U points to a possible method to advance social justice via design education when he defines design using an appealing image as "acupuncture for tension points":

*It carries a weight to be able to understand the history, to be able to see design actually has to do acupuncture for tension points that come from the past. These are very specific things because we cannot change everything in the past that is going to go wrong. Still, if we deal better with how we become specific, with specific trouble points, we can quickly come to terms with why some community sees it as necessary to keep a river clean.*

Lecturer LIM12U states that the past cannot be changed and indicates that lecturers must teach students self-confidence so that they can have an impact on the future.

*For me, and what I've seen so far, especially here at [redacted], is that there's a lot of students who don't have the self-confidence that they need or that they should have, because that's how good they are but they don't believe it. I have a responsibility as an educator to help instil that [self-confidence] and support that because I think if there's a level of self-confidence, I think we can sort of change the way things happen in the future as opposed to changing anything else in the past. You can't really change the past.*

Lecturer LSF6C indicated that actively engaging with students to develop as citizen designer is a social justice project in itself. *"If you approach your role as an educator to actively engage with your students in order for them to become citizen designers, then you have most probably already decolonised your approach to educating"*. Lecturer LIMB4U indicated that educators could advance social justice by conscientisation students *"... through the education of students to be conscientised towards social justice issues"*.

Lecturer LIMB2U explained that creative ways to highlight social problems need to be found and that these then lead to methods as solutions which in turn need to be promoted. He also felt that design educators need to teach students how to use their art and design to make their voices heard.

*There are some things we can do to contribute to social justice. One of them is to teach the students how to make their voices heard through arts and design. For example, now, with the pandemic, they can use their voice to create awareness and prevention. Besides that, we can also be involved in research that can even promote social justice systems, for example: conducting research on how art and design can promote the social justice system, e.g. transforming weapons collected by SAPS [the South African Police Service] after being dismantled into sculptures and artefacts such as traditional thrones, monuments, masks, and*

*other motifs to combat violence and instability. We can design and co-create some artefacts with our students. Teaching students how to make one's voice heard using art & design power. Promotion of a more compassionate, just and sustainable future. Join the power of social media and other new media in the tasks we assign to students to feature photographs, creative visuals, installations, and interactive messages depicting stories of men and women who triumphed over oppression. To develop creative ways to highlight a social problem and promote solutions.*

Lecturers LIM11U and LIMB3U indicated that design educators can advocate entrepreneurship as a social justice project: *by empowering design students to think as employers instead of employees, they can increase overall employment in their communities which in turn would lead to better socio-economic circumstances.*

Lecturer LIMB2U described the use of a pedagogy of care to advance the cause of social justice.

*Not with too much emphasis on history. Instead, teach students to be kind, understanding, and compassionate. Also, to keep them [focused] on the positive aspect, and encourage them to use their skills and design knowledge to promote harmony.*

Lecturer LSMW2C proposed that students might advance social justice if they are taught how to construct new skills and knowledge that are built on the foundation of their own existing practice and knowledge.

*... it's time to understand the needs of people-- understanding the needs of society in order to develop skills and capacities so a student can build their own practice and their own knowledge around skills pertaining to constructing knowledge. ... we definitely try to push our students to think about design as just being a service to society rather than to be a service to some kind of commercial entity. So in that way, we try to push their boundaries. ... if we're talking about a human-centred design project: to expand it into kinds of things like cultural sustainability as well as environmental sustainability.*

Lecturer LIMB1U described the fair distribution of possibilities and privileges as a social justice project where lecturers ensure that there is no discrimination.

*It would include, for example, a fair distribution of opportunities and privileges. For example, you should be able to, as a lecturer, ensure that all students receive the same standards of teaching. So it includes areas such as environment, race, gender, and also education.*

Lecturer LIFB1U described the possibility that lecturers could incorporate respect and tolerance into their teaching objectives. This will help students come to understand the power they have at their disposal through design.

*I'd say we have an impact as designers. If I could teach students how to tolerate each other, respect each other's space, understand their role as designers, and how they can affect how people think. The power of visuals and the power of [print]type takes that [which] you put on your visuals [and can] change mindsets; so, understanding that students have that power and trying to navigate or show them that, I think that's what I could do because those are the seeds that grow and those seeds are going to grow and become flowers, and they will spread; so where I am right now is where I can make the most difference, so that that difference can be seen in future by others.*

Lecturer LSMW2C cautioned against the possible pitfalls of applying critical theory indiscriminately in teaching practice, with the concern that theory can be damaging if it is not anchored in tangible design.

*I think that a lot of the problems of design are because it doesn't seem worldly. It seems to people who aren't designers to be unfeasible and undoable, and I think for me, as much as I appreciate social justice, I think it's got to be [tangible]. I think you need to be very careful about those things as well. Because I think that, for me, sometimes social justice, when it's equated to critical theory [i.e. something intangible], can also be damaging, if not really faux pas or constructed or just blindly applied. So I think society does need to fix these things, but I think for me, it's always about design for positive change or design for social impact. So balancing, I think social justice talks to that both, and I'm wary of just painting everything with a critical theory brush.*

### **5.3.5.7 Advancement of social justice through research**

It came as no surprise that lecturers – who are also researchers – would explore how their research activities could be used as an avenue to advance social justice. Lecturer LSFW5U mentioned that she addresses students' sense of social responsibility through teaching practices that she identified in her PhD research. These strategies aim to make students aware of their responsibility towards society.

*This is why I love teaching and why the focus of my research in my PhD was on the development of educational practices that will challenge design students to acquire the essential human qualities required for a contemporary design career through which the quality of life for all will be enhanced. I implement these educational practices in my classes, and according to the findings of my research, this will assist in the development of our future 'citizen designers'. These educational practices include projects, assignments and theoretical work that make students aware of their responsibility towards society.*

In his response, lecturer LIMB4U spoke about how educators could advance social justice by doing meaningful research through engaged scholarship that is not just a 'quick fix' solution.

*...[we should aim] to be involved as a researcher in meaningful research that is truly impactful, not just 'hit and run' interactions that have no depth. The key concept here is engaged scholarship. I contribute toward social justice through engaged scholarship, both within the classroom and via my research endeavours.*

Lecturer LIMB1U similarly reflected on research-related activities that could advance social justice.

*Globally I would be involved and engaged in a variety of different activities, like maybe in conferences where we discuss issues that are related to all of these [social justice] issues. Or maybe by means of publishing: we can write articles, books, or any other type of information dissemination where we can share our ideas across the globe about the issues regarding social justice.*

### 5.3.5.8 Design education, social justice and the design industry.

Connecting South African design education and design industry has historically been problematic because there is no alignment between postgraduate degrees in design and career paths of design professionals (Van Zyl, 2018). The opportunities and potential tensions when design education and the design industry engage within a social justice context should be considered within the context of competing agendas and timeframes. Discussions that juxtapose the neoliberal nature of design education and the design industry with social justice issues could create discomfort for lecturers and students.

Student SIMB11U reflects on socio-economic inequality:

*For the longest time, the majority of people who are at the bottom of the class [i.e. social class hierarchy] are not represented a lot, and that is the majority. So as a designer, you must design in a way that you are uplifting those people, and then they also feel that they are welcome in the country. Because they are the ones that have the problems, really, if they feel like they are welcome in their country they are in, then I feel like that is part of our solution to our problems. Address social and political issues while calling a spade a spade. Knowing that in mass media, that is not happening, knowing it is the great powers in the media that decide what goes on and what doesn't. So also, now we have the power of the internet, and we can now publish stuff that could be the solution to the problem without being interrupted by the [traditional] forces.*

Lecturer LSMW2C emphasises the importance of ethical design practices:

*I think that people should have, firstly, a good concept of their own intent, why they're doing it, what it means to them, and what they are trying to achieve from the project. I think they should have a good understanding of design because I think a lot of design, there's a lot of ethical constraints, and there are a lot of things if they're not practised carefully, it can also be practised in a very reckless way. So I think a really strong understanding of design and design ethics is important. And I think that also probably a good understanding of what does it mean, what does citizen design mean, what does it mean to work*



*for communities, with people, etc., etc., what is that about. For that point that I just made, because I think design has got the capacity to do good, but as we all know, it's also got the capacity to actually do a lot of wrongs.*

Lecturer LSF11T explained her strategy to challenge the status quo in design education. She highlighted the relationship between designers and consumers, aiming for a situation where products are not exploitative. She felt it could be valuable to ask how design education conceptualises the relationship between designers and consumers and how this relationship can be made more socially just:

*A citizen designer could be someone who designs with the awareness of users of the designed product in mind. The user becomes an informant of the design process. The product is designed to enhance the user's well-being and experience of it. The design contributes to the welfare, happiness and security of its users. It does not exploit, manipulate or threaten users based on their backgrounds (socio-economic, racial, sexuality, gender, gender identity, religion, ability, HIV/Aids status, etc.). I use the word citizen and user interchangeably as I believe interior design as a cultural product should be explicit to the identified user as the occupation of interiors are consumption acts and are an extension of users' identity choices.*

Lecturer LIFB2U writes about the importance of the process of direct engagement and exchange to empower communities:

*I think significantly, so I started doing community engagement before it became popular, so that's one of the things that I am really happy about in my design career. I worked with communities, and I still do. At any given point, I'm constantly working with one or another community, and I believe that our knowledge needs to go out there, and a lot of times, our sites are in the city with communities. As I said earlier, my focus is now on knowledge exchange rather than knowledge transfer, and my focus is also on the process of engagement to empower communities in some way or the other. To take back information to improve the negotiating power of communities, let me put it that way. So, for example, now we're working with the community and have been in central Johannesburg for quite a few years, where we're helping improve their negotiating power so that they don't get evicted. So we go; we do building work as well, so we use our technical skills, knowledge, and resources to help improve those areas. But at the same time, while we're doing so, we try and put the community in a better place to negotiate with the council, [try] to work with NGOs so that they [i.e. the community] become less at risk. To what extent do we succeed? I don't know, but I believe that it's something that we have to keep on doing.*

Student SIMB12U spoke about the positive impact that design can have. "There is a better way to do things. Always be positive in your design, [so] that you uplift your fellow South African when they look at your designs."

Student SIMB16U also reflected on the past in South Africa and advocated looking forward to the future.

*As a designer, I believe that I can use my craft to show people a different perspective of life instead of focusing on where we come from. As a country, we come from a very difficult background, but as a designer, I encourage people to stop looking at where we come from and focus more on the future, because I feel that is what is more important at this stage. We are living in a constantly changing world.*

A comment by student SIMB3U can be viewed as contesting the decolonial perspective. When asked about how he would contribute to creating a better future for South Africa, he idealised western, especially US design.

*I would bring mostly American type of art, what we are here mostly incapable of, or are not into those type of things. So I would bring in the new and quite elegant designs that the Americans are doing.*

The comments by student SIMB2U already mentioned above on the social responsibility of the designer are similar to views expressed by other respondents. Lecturer LSF5U, for example, highlighted the importance of designers' social responsibility in society: "We, as designers, have so much influence on society through our design work. Therefore we need to be accountable for what we design and how that design will influence society." In a similar light, lecturer LSMB1U commented that students should be consistent in their attitudes and professionalism when interacting with rich and poor clients.

*When a student creates an excellent design/artwork (of whatever nature or modality) for a client that can only pay them the bare minimum or for a wealthy client, they are contributing to social justice in both instances if they approach both requests with the same attitude and professionalism.*

Lecturer LSMB1U also pointed to the need for rich and poor clients to be given the same attention:

*All design problems or projects are important, and a 'citizen designer' should be groomed to see design work for creches or under-resourced schools or public clinics, in the same vein as design work for corporate clients or individual moguls.*

Lecturer LIFB2U alluded to the discomfort that comes from interacting with rich and poor clients.

*...my colleagues constantly condone such kind of designed responses from the students when it comes to affordable housing because they say, oh, but that's what people can afford, Oh, but that's what's cheap, and so it's ok not to have proper lighting or ventilation, and I believe that's a political position.*

Lecturer LSF11T reflected on the complex relationship between social justice and capitalism.

*Commercial environments can become a viable channel to lead in socially responsive and responsible interior design. Since interior design is identifiable primarily by its expression in the commercial sector, abandoning corporate and personal financial gain could be at the expense of impacting the discipline and at the expense of the practitioner's welfare. My belief is that this is an irresponsible way of educating students as they will not only be unprepared for practice but they will also have nowhere to place their social values in conventional interior practice. I try to equip students to express social values through commercial interior design as a particular design challenge that can enhance the standard of interior practice in future.*

Lecturer LSMW6U identified the potential uneasiness between designer and client when approached from a social justice/ethics perspective.

*...in my view, it is not enough to take the virtue ethics approach (I am a good person, and therefore my designs will, inevitably, be ethical) but take into consideration other ethical stances (Utilitarianism, for example). Personally, for me, the central notion is one of Pragmatic Ethics of Care. ... Noddings, significantly, argues for the empowering of both caregiver (the social justice idea, for example) AND caretaker (who are, in fact, two entities -- the commissioner of the design AND those who are to have their lives changed by the presence of the design)."*

### 5.3.5.9 Discussion

This study is interested in critical citizenship and decoloniality perspectives; a "concern for social justice" (Johnson & Morris, 2010: 90) is central to the critical citizenship perspective, while social justice as a concept, when proffered by critical pedagogues, is seen as "contra" (Postma, 2019: 17) the decolonial perspective, as it does not address the "true causes" of oppression (Postma, 2019: 17). The dichotomy between critical citizenship and decoloniality perspectives on social justice is acknowledged as an element that needs to be considered in the formulation of the envisaged design pedagogy framework for citizen designer education.

In the motivation and contextualisation of this study, the vast degree of inequality in South African society is highlighted as one of the key reasons why South Africa needs citizen designers. This view is strongly supported by the data collected. Of the 23 students who were interviewed, 13 expressed the understanding that social justice is about addressing issues of inequality. The egalitarian concepts of fairness (mentioned by 3 students) and freedom (mentioned by 5 students) are very closely related to inequality. Nevertheless, the inequality described in the motivation of the study reflects the serious systemic socio-economic divide in South African society. It is unrealistic to argue that the presence of citizen designers in South Africa would be the only solution to such a deep-seated and wide-ranging societal problem. Strikingly, however, students who mentioned equality as a concept central to social justice also reflected on issues of equality related to the environment, infrastructure, justice and crime, access to opportunities, communication, treatment, race and gender, voice, choices, consequences and rights. The issues raised

by the students give insight into aspects of inequality that design educators and citizen designers could potentially address as their way of making a contribution to solving the broader socio-economic problem of inequality.

Both groups – students and lecturers – reflected on how they could promote social justice. Eleven students described how they would advance social justice through raising awareness. The methods and avenues they suggested for creating awareness about social justice include posters advocating social justice, social media posts and campaigns, infographics, social events, research on new trends, creating a social movement, use of interconnected technologies, visual communication of pressing issues and acting as the voice of the voiceless through visual communication. The responses from students can be interpreted as the potential of critical citizenship education to develop the contextual skills needed to promote social justice (Banks, 2008). It can be argued that critical citizenship education will enrich the curriculum and open new areas of knowledge and practice to design students by addressing issues of social justice. I argue here that the political/ideological "skills of critical and structural social analysis; capacity to politicise notions of culture, knowledge and power; capacity to investigate deeper causalities" (Johnson & Morris, 2010: 90) add clear intent to the methods and avenues raised by students. The advancement of social justice is also linked to awareness developed through Freire's idea of conscientisation (Cammarota, 2012). The development of political/ideological skills proposed in the Johnson and Morris framework for critical citizenship education is ideally formulated to attain conscientisation where "the individual becomes engaged with transformative, democratic, and humanistic pedagogical practices, and [designers] are not mere receptacles of reality" (Armitage, 2013: 3). The alignment of design education to critical citizenship education is also evident in student responses. The seven students who described how they would advance social justice through the concept of inclusion demonstrate forms of conscientisation that match the political/ideological skills proposed in the Johnson and Morris framework. Student SIMB11U demonstrates critical and structural social analysis when reflecting on the demographic situation and history of South Africa and examining how things have changed. Students SIMB10U, SIMB13U and SIMB18U show the capacity to politicise ideas of knowledge and power when they mentioned the knowledge and power that designers have to impact people's actions and perceptions. Students SIMB1U and SIFB2U in their comments demonstrate the ability to investigate deeper causalities when they reflected on discrimination and the impact of their work on other people.

The lecturer participants also reflected on how they can advance social justice. Lecturer LSF6C felt that actively engaging with students to develop as citizen designer outlook is a social justice project in itself. Lecturer LIMB4U was of the view that educators can advance social justice by conscientising students. The imagery used by LIMC1U that equates design with acupuncture to relieve social tensions is striking and insightful. Acupuncture is, for me, a relatable analogy of a potential new way of thinking about design and its role in a decolonial perspective. The idea that design educators can use their teaching as a form of acupuncture also links to an earlier statement that we need to reconceptualise how design educators are trained to teach. In thinking about strategies for teaching social justice, design educators should be cognisant from a critical pedagogical perspective of avoiding attempts to produce a culture of positivism. Giroux critiques this approach that "undermined the role of educators as engaged and critical public intellectuals." (2011: 43).

This is yet another aspect that demonstrates how critical the experience and training of design educators are more broadly and in the specific South African context.

Lecturers LIM12U and LIFB2U and student SIMB16U commented on the need for looking to the future because the past cannot be changed. From a critical pedagogical/decolonial perspective, design educators will need to reflect on the past injustices that manifest in the current context of South African design education. Having made this statement, I also support a positive future outlook, where design educators are too 'stuck' in the past or clouded with negativity. Lecturer LSMW2C warned against the possible pitfalls of indiscriminately applying critical theory in teaching practice because this can be counterproductive; instead he spoke about the need to focus on design for positive change and social impact. Lecturers also made various statements that richly reflected their views on how they advance social justice through their teaching. Lecturer views about what they proposed to teach design students in order to advance social justice can be summarised as follows:

Designers can:

- use their design work to make their voices heard
- find creative ways to highlight societal problems
- construct knowledge from their practice and knowledge
- be respectful and tolerant
- understand the power they have through design
- impact the future through building self-confidence

Lecturers LSF5U, LIMB4U and LIMB1U all indicated that they incorporate and implement their research findings in their teaching practice. This is commendable, because in my experience design education is not often researched and therefore does not have a major impact on how design lecturers teach. This is especially concerning in the historical context of South African design education.

The "concern for social justice and consideration of self-worth" envisaged in the Johnson and Morris framework came to the fore in many responses in this section (2010: 90). Lecturer LIMB4U, however, also proposed the idea of engaged scholarship as a vehicle through which educators can advance social justice; this entails conscientising students and doing meaningful research, and not just finding 'quick fix' solutions. Lecturer LIMB2U described the use of a pedagogy of care to advance social justice. Care can be used to transform the concept of solidarity relationships into praxis. Zembylas describes solidarity relationships as decolonised empathy that is built on a clear understanding and empathetic action toward the socio-political and economic factors giving rise to suffering. This then allows for what he terms "affective solidarity" (2018: 416) between self and others. The idea of solidarity relationships, as described by Zembylas (2018: 415) was frequently encountered in the responses from lecturers and students. Student SIMB9U reflected on the power of designers to be the voice for the voiceless, while lecturer LIFB2U explained how design educators could work with vulnerable communities and contribute to their well-being. Lecturer LIMB2U said design educators can teach students how to use their art and design to make their voices heard. Solidarity relationships in the context of design education immediately raise the question of the ethical implications of such interactions. Universities

are ideally placed as agents for developing solidarity relationships because they have the necessary structures to manage the ethical questions involved in such relationships. The idea of community engagement is well established at South African universities, and is integrated as a component of the regular performance assessment of academic staff. It is important to mention here, however, that solidarity relationships should not be confused with community engagement in the context of decoloniality and critical citizenship perspectives. Solidarity relationships imply a deep and enduring personal commitment whereas community engagement projects as they are implemented at universities are often opportunistic and aligned to short term annual achievable outcomes that deliver evidence of compliance with university goals for a specific reporting period.

I referred to Papanek's (1984) comments (see 1.2.1) regarding the harmful profession of industrial design that could be considered in the broader context of design. I also linked the design industry to the global matrix of power described in decoloniality theory. Lecturer LSMB1U described the exploitative nature of design. I have had a similar experience with the exploitative nature of the design industry, especially toward young graduates who are exploited during unpaid internships or paid meagre salaries when they start out in industry. My experience and first-hand accounts from our graduates show that they will often only stay at a design studio long enough to allow them to pick up crucial skills that they require to start their own business and then leave these exploitative environments and create their own enterprises. The disturbing accounts of the industry abuse of graduates have shaped my rather pessimistic view of this exploitative industry. It is also interesting to note lecturers LIM11U and LIMB3U responded that design educators can advocate for entrepreneurship as a social justice project; through such an approach, solidarity relationships can develop between designers and communities because of the potential positive socio-economic impact of entrepreneurial activities.

Lecturer LSF11T reflected on the relationship between designers and consumers and how end-users are impacted by what designers create. SIMB18U reflected on the relationship between designer and client and how this relationship is shaped by a deep understanding of the client's values. The insight of a conscientised citizen designer might help to navigate new pathways in the design industry that can counter the exploitative nature of the industry. The idea of the citizen designer is discussed in detail in the next theme.

### **5.3.6 The citizen designer**

I have already connected the critical citizenship perspective to design education through the idea of citizen designer. In this thematic section, I define the concept 'citizen designer' in the context of the study, explore perceptions of what knowledge a citizen designer should possess, and then examine the contextual considerations for a citizen designer and the conscientised citizen designer. These four elements form a rubric for exploring and integrating survey/interview responses that relate to the citizen designer.

#### **5.3.6.1 Defining the citizen designer**

Resnick describes the characteristics of the citizen designer as follows: "A designer must be professionally, culturally, and socially responsible for the impact his or her design has on the citizenry" (Resnick, 2016: 12). Vienne defines citizen designers as "people who put their talent and savoir-faire at the service of worthy pursuits and worthy causes" (Heller

& Vienne, 2018: 16). This is similar to Heller who defines citizen design in very practical, active terms as "first and foremost getting off our butts and doing something that will make even the smallest of differences. It's one thing to edit a book, write an essay, or shout a catchphrase. It's another to act" (Heller & Vienne, 2018: 16). South African lecturers who participated in this study expressed a range of views and interpretations about what they consider to be the definition of a citizen designer. Very strikingly, they all embraced this aspect of activism and agency. Lecturer LSMW1U stated that the citizen designer *"...acts/designs in a socially, professionally, and culturally responsible manner, positively contributing on the social being and order of people."* For lecturer LSF4P "A [citizen] designer ... is ethical and designs with the express objective to not negatively impact society and the environment." Lecturer LIFB2U described a socially sensitive designer as being occupied by *"knowledge exchange rather than knowledge transfer ... [to] improve the negotiating power of communities."* Lecturer LIM12U spoke about *"a designer with self-confidence."* Lecturer LSF7U defined this concept as *"Someone who is conscious of design as having an impact on the quality of life of members of a broader society."* Lecturer LSF6C responded that a citizen designer is conscious about the self and others in relation to design: *"A designer who is conscious of what is designed, how it is designed and for whom it is designed, within a context of self and the other, and the design in relation to the other."* Lecturer LSF7U felt *"...this designer would address social justice issues. Taking these aspects into consideration, a citizen designer then addresses issues such as equality, dignity, access, sustainability, etc."*. Lecturer LIM1U described in a social justice perspective a designer that is *"self-reflective ...building the future for ourselves [with] ...ideas that will have a shape in reality [to] ...mitigate or get past the social injustice of first world countries."*

Lecturer LSMB2C and LSMW5U referred directly to the relationship between the citizen designer and the citizenry. Lecturer LSMB2C spoke about a *"...designer who uses their design skills no matter the discipline, to address any cause that possibly promotes active citizenry."* Lecturer LSMW5U saw this person *"As someone with an awareness of and sensitivity to the needs of fellow citizens, and the ability to apply to address their needs in the design process."*

Lecturer LSF5U felt that

*...as designers [we] have so much influence on society through our design work. Therefore we need to be accountable for what we design and how that design will influence society. A designer like this is responsible and can, thus, be seen as a citizen designer in my eyes.*

Moving from the broader concept of society, respondents spoke about the importance of the connection of the citizen designer to his or her local community. Respondents made links between the citizen designer and their immediate communities, their role in, for and with their communities. Lecturer LSF1T described a person that *"...takes active participation in the community they live in without fear of intimidation."* For lecturer LSF2U, citizen designers *"Make students aware [of] their role in the greater community."* Lecturer LSMW6U expressed it as follows: *"Taken all together, my definition of a citizen designer, therefore, might be a person who is part of a community, who sees their task as contributing to the flourishing of the polis in the future, specifically in a concrete form."* Lecturer LSF9C went further: *"A designer implements the idea of Ubuntu. Design for and with the community, not*

*personal taste or style.*" The concept of Ubuntu, of course, has very strong significance, in South Africa and more broadly, as a central pillar of indigenous knowledge and pedagogy. Unsurprisingly, this important concept kept resurfacing in responses. It is discussed in detail below (section 5.4) as part of the decoloniality perspective. The connection of the citizen designer to their local community was further described by respondents who highlighted the need to focus on the specifically South African context of the citizen designer. Lecturer LSMW4C: *"I suppose it's a designer who has a particular sort of level of consciousness and conscience. And that particularly in relation to the South African context, someone who really understands first the history of the context."*

The respondents pointed to the professional character of a citizen designer when they described the 'desired' conduct of the citizen designer. These professional attributes of a citizen designer are described as being mindful, responsible, and accountable with ethical engagement. Lecturer LSFW2C: *"...mindful of the impact of their design work in the world."* Lecturer LSMB1U: *"A 'citizen designer' should approach every design problem regardless of who the beneficiaries are, with the same level of professionalism, work ethic, and creative genius."* Lecturer LSMW6U: it *"...implies an ethical engagement with the development of the polis [state]."*

Lecturer LSFW5U stated this aspect in relation to responsibility and accountability:

*To me, a 'citizen designer' is all about responsibility. We, as designers, have so much influence on society through our design work. Therefore we need to be accountable for what we design and how that design will influence society. A designer like this is responsible and can, thus, be seen as a citizen designer in my eyes.*

The ethical and responsible conduct of the citizen designer was also linked in responses to the environmental impact of design. Reference was made to ecological issues and the role of the citizen designer, who needs to consider the impact of their work on all forms of life to benefit the community at large without causing harm to the environment. Lecturer LSFW1C: *"...designs in the interests of social/environmental good."* Lecturer LSFW3P: *"A designer who participates holistically (thinking doing and being) in being committed to making the world better for those who inhabit it – people, animals, plants and 'place'."* Lecturer LSFW4P: *"A designer who is ethical and designs with the express objective to not negatively impact society and the environment."* Lecturer LSFW8U: *"Someone who considers the local and global community at large during their design process – ensuring designs could be realised without causing harm to, i.e. the environment etc. but also be beneficial to the community at large."*

### **5.3.6.2 Theoretical knowledge associated with a citizen designer**

In 1970, Papanek described the need for designers to understand the socio-political and economic background of design:

*"Looking at the books on design in seven languages, covering the walls of my home, I realized that the one book I wanted to read, the one book I most wanted to hand to my fellow students and designers, was missing. Because our society makes it crucial for designers to understand clearly the social, economic, and political background of what they do, my problem was not just one of personal frustration. So I decided to write the kind of book that I'd like to read"*  
(Papanek, 1984: xi)



Exploring the definition of knowledge that a citizen designer needs to have, respondents identified several epistemological aspects they think are imperative for a citizen designer. Lecturer LSF7U: *"Theoretical knowledge of a citizen designer should go beyond discipline specific knowledge and include basic knowledge of social and cultural developments, both current, and historical (to contextualise current developments)."* Lecturer LSF11T: *"Theoretical knowledge should be sourced based on a project basis."* Lecturer LSF2C: *"An understanding of gender theory. ...African critical discourse."* Lecturer LSF4P: *"Theories might include philosophies such as caring, empathy, Ubuntu, Zen, democracy, citizenship, sustainability, social justice, decolonisation, human and animal rights."* Lecturer LSM4C mentioned, *"I would also say one of the kind of core areas that we've been teaching in terms of sort of theoretical preparation is around kind of the decolonial discourse."* Lecturer LSM5U mentioned, *"code-switching between multiple registers of knowledge..."*

Lecturer LSF6C:

*I don't think there are specific theories, any theories/thinking/knowledge that a designer needs to understand their role as designer within society at large. It is rather a basket of a whole lot of things. There is no one route that ensures, if I understand and apply A, the result will be that I have become a citizen designer.*

Lecturer LSM1U:

*Theoretical insight of cognitive psychology with attention to behavioural, perceptual, interpretive, and experiential studies about the human condition should be attained. ...Sociology, phenomenology, cosmopolitanism, beyond posthumanism, nonmodern, neocybernetics, conceptual abstraction, space, and design thinking should be attained.*

Lecturer LSM3U:

*I mean I do think that if one needs to be academic, then first to be familiar with the post-colonial theories is useful. But they would have to-- they'd have to adapt that away from literature and towards more practical applications. I think there's a kind of general knowledge that I would want. I mean one of the things that I'm very much aware of is that most of us is a little bit ignorant of the world and the lack of interrogation of the information that we receive.*

Several respondents indicated that knowledge of sustainability is also a requirement for citizen designers. Lecturer LSF1C: *"knowledge of contemporary environmental challenges"* Lecturer LSF2C: *"sustainable design"* Lecturer LSF4P: *"Practical knowledge would be the technical stuff, what's good bad for people and the environment and what alternatives exist."* Lecturer LSF6C: *" ... within sustainability, a designer needs to fully understand the role of design as a component of the eco-system. If you have that as your worldview then you start thinking about your role as designer in a different light."* Lecturer LSF8U: *"They must be able to think critically about problems they encounter and solve these problems with consideration for local and global impact on community (economically and socially) and the environment."*

Lecturer LSMW1U:

*...but the design process, transdisciplinary design process and praxis, conceptual and technical skill relevant to the design intent, synthesis of visual communication from diverse platforms, and epistemological reassembly should be applied to the making of process that is kept up to date with future trends enabling sustainable design.*

Some respondents referred to need for involvement in community service by citizen designers, and relate this to certain required in-depth knowledge. Lecturer LSF1C: *"knowledge of the needs of the non-profit sector."*

Lecturer LSMB1U:

*I think a fundamental theoretical revolution that needs to take hold is the rethinking of nomenclature and classifications used in design education and higher education generally. The fact that we still refer to notions of 'community engagement' and 'community outreach' creates an undue and problematic binary between career/entrepreneurial income generating design work and outreach/developmental philanthropic design work (which is usually and incorrectly branded as non-income generating). ...My conviction is that we must forego the notions of community service or community engagement when referring to design inventions in poor or rural communities if we are to engineer a new cadre of 'citizen designers'.*

Lecturer LSMW4C:

*...how, as a designer, one manages the sort of interpersonal complexes and also manages the ego in the process because I think many designers are in some ways going out to try and put something out into the world that they can kind of claim as their own. And a lot of collaborative citizen design kind of orientated projects require the designer to be able to take a bit of more of a back seat, more of a facilitatory role. It doesn't necessarily mean it's not an active role, but it's less about the designers per se. And then also, it becomes relatively complex in understanding-- particularly in South African context, a different sort of, I suppose, what is appropriate in terms of engagement. Some of the projects that we had to take-- ultimately take a very long time. And I think that's something that I think sort of like more of commercial designers really don't appreciate. They think that you can kind of do this sort of parachute or ethnographies and kind of be able to design something. And very quickly that's going to solve someone's massive problem that in itself is way more complex than the designer could ever have comprehended. ...really getting students to understand that those that are being researched or those that are being designed for are-- or I suppose need to be getting out sort of equal benefit in the process. So when the students are doing master's projects and getting a master's qualification at the end of it, what is the benefit that's going back to the community that have been working with them? And I think, for an example, with the [redacted] project, it was really designed around those kind of distributed economic models, so that jobs were created through the process of developing the project, and that at the moment, that project is now being the mould to produce the hires, so it's literally*

*the distribution of the ability to actually become an enterprise have been sold in 13 different countries around the world. So it in itself is something that spread from a very specific context, which really then benefited the participants locally to something that has then had much broader sort of impact.*

### 5.3.6.3 Contextual considerations

Respondents reflected on the contextual factors that a citizen designer has to consider. Lecturer LSF6C: *"It is specifically the need to be constantly pliable, to understand and operate within specific contexts. And isn't that what makes design unique."* Lecturer LSF9C reflected on generational knowledge: *"Know about the context, and connection with various generations in the community."* Lecturer LSF3P highlighted the importance of context: *"Designers operate within a context and I believe this is where it starts."* Lecturer LSF1C linked context to the importance of local designers, *"...and knowledge of the work of South African and African creatives."* Lecturer LSM3T also mentioned this aspect, with a practical example: *"Because I found that most people tend to only look at their immediate surroundings. I'm in this town I'm producing this, I'm selling to this person, and that's it."*

Many respondents saw the local and global contexts as interrelated and closely linked. Lecturer LSF11T: *"I believe that local design knowledge is important to truly be inclusive in a globalising design world."* Lecturer LSM3U: *"I kind of think the main thing is that they should be significantly aware of what's going on around them so both locally and in the world at large."* Lecturer LSF8U: *"They must be able to think critically about problems they encounter and solve these problems with consideration for local and global impact on community (economically and socially) and the environment."* Lecturer LSM3U: *"I kind of think the main thing is that they should be significantly aware of what's going on around them so both locally and in the world at large."* Lecturer LSM3T: *"but in terms of how the economic fabric, not of the country, but of the world"*

Lecturer LSM3T felt that the local situation must always take precedence, even in a global context:

*So if people were that cautious to say, "If I'm going to be dealing in clothing, are there any fabrics that I can get from here and work a system in that particular tool?" You'd find that would reduce our balance of trade, yet increasing our contribution to taxes, GDP, as well as employment. Because increasingly, many will circulate within the country other than leaving the borders and so forth. So if people can think broadly in terms of their little corners where they sit to operate, how are they affecting their own community? Are they keeping the same grant within that community? Are they keeping the same grant within their province, within their country? So we need to exhaust those channels before we can think of going abroad in anything that we do. It's okay to produce products and target selling them abroad, great. But we need to be conscious that whatever elements we use are localized in order to ensure that we maximize the beneficiary of the value chain.*

#### 5.3.6.4 Conscientized citizen designer

Freire describes conscientised individuals as "knowing subjects [who] achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality" (1972: 51). From this definition of conscientised individuals, it stands to reason that respondents described citizen designers with characteristics aligned to Freire's conscientisation. Lecturer LSF11C: "*Knowledge of the work of Paolo Freire.*" Lecturer LSMW5U: "*adopting a multi-focal perspective, self-reflexivity and being empirically informed and symbolically attune.*"

Lecturer LSF7U:

*Such knowledge of social historical trends should be accompanied by exposure to critical thinking methodologies and frameworks. This will provide a critical framework for a citizen designer from which to make decisions about her or his practice.*

Lecturer LSF11T:

*Designers should be aware that their own position and privileges which can provide grounds for design practice that perpetuates certain norms. I believe that co-creative / participatory approaches to design have the potential to alleviate the gaze involved in the power dynamics between a designer and user / citizen.*

Lecturer LSMW2C:

*I think they should have a good understanding of design because I think a lot of design, there's a lot of ethical constraints, and they're a lot of things if they're not practiced carefully, it can also be practiced in a very reckless way. So I think a really strong understanding of design and design ethics is important. And I think that also probably a good understanding of what does it mean, what does citizen design mean, what does it mean to work for communities, with people, etc, etc, what is that about. For that point that I just made because I think design has got the capacity to do good, but as we all know, it's also got the capacity to actually do a lot of wrong. And it's not really [them?] to make informed positions.*

Lecturer LSMB2C:

*...citizenry for me cannot be divorced from practice. I imply that a student as a person in the process of being a 'citizen designer' as per the project that I conducted, needs to have the capability to take what happens in the classroom, find ways to make and adapt it towards a societal cause (for the upward mobility of society). But they should also have the capability to challenge what happens in the classroom by stating the inability or difficulty for that content to be adapted towards active citizenry.*

Lecturer LSMW4C:

*...the important part of such design work needs to be considering. It's like, "What kind of impacts are designers heading after? What intention do they have in the beginning and what sort of impact do they have.*

*...and I think that intentions in many cases, don't necessarily play out as one might hope. I suppose there needs to be kind of a pragmatic approach to it where the kind of practical engagement with somebody else always doesn't necessarily go to plan...*

Lecturer LSMW4C:

*...ultimately it comes down a lot to the personality of the individual, one of the aspects of the teaching that I try to help prepare the students for this kind of work is really about understanding personality types, almost understanding the human psychology, even though I'm not a psychologist myself. But to try and be able to get to a point where they can be, I suppose, present in the moments that they're engaging with others, which requires a significant energy and consciousness to be able to do that. And, at the same time, to be mature enough or to develop a level of maturity to be sort of critically reflective on their own positionality in the project, and also, at the end, when you're talking about impact, what, if negative aspects arose out of the projects, how were those dealt with? Because I think nothing in life goes smoothly, and I think what can completely derail such a project is when something does come up is handling that situation incorrectly.*

Lecturer LSMW6U, who has already been quoted above on the related idea of a pragmatic ethics of care, highlighted:

*The skill to determine the dynamics that are in play in the domain in which they are to operate to make the change. Secondly, it seems to me that, when operating in that domain, the citizen designer needs to work in modes that present and reflect an ethical stance towards that domain.*

### **5.3.6.5 Discussion**

The relationship between the individual, society and state is critical for the South African democracy to succeed (Ramphele, 2001: 6). Enslin (2003: 82) argues that the "ambitious constitutional goals" of the South African constitution are in danger because of a weak basic education system and challenges the idea that the acclaimed South African constitution will deliver on its promise for everyone in South Africa. Fenn and Hobbs (2018: 146) argue that 'good' western values can be perpetuated under the guise of 'constitutional values', and this risks ignoring African values and morals. They (2018: 146) also criticise the use of the critical theory foundation that is evident in critical citizenship "when applied as a seemingly unquestioned moral compass". A re-evaluation will be required to de-centre the western conceptualisation of critical citizenship and, in the context of this study, the citizen designer (Jorgenson, 2016: 20). Citizen designers should have knowledge and an understanding of their role in the community that is multifaceted, and they should avoid any attempt at homogeneity (McDougall, 2005: 27). Design educators should guard against the weaknesses of critical theory in the context of design education that according to Fenn and Hobbs lies in its incorrect application -

*"Applying critical theory as a default approach to criticality perpetuates the role of design as a purely responsive set of activities to strategic direction rather than as an active agent capable of generating strategic intent. In this sense, critical theory articulates a viewpoint that design*

has been 'captured by capitalism' and that the only form of defiance is to use capitalism's own forms of media against itself." (Fenn & Hobbs, 2018: 146).

The central premise that the citizen designer takes up challenges and issues of inequality was frequently reflected in responses from lecturers. Their views echoed those of Vienne describing citizen designers as "people who put their talent and savoir-faire at the service of worthy pursuits and worthy causes" (Heller & Vienne, 2018: 16).

The valuable role of the citizen designer in their local communities was a recurrent comment that emerged from the data. The active participation of the citizen designer in their community without fear or favour is presented. The promotion and advancement of communities where citizen designers are located was seen by respondents as a base from where further exploration could take place, including then a more global outlook. The rootedness within the community is also described as an informed role where the citizen designer has a keen understanding of the histories and contexts of their community. This was linked to Ubuntu as an important concept which South African citizen designers can engage. The professional role of the citizen designer was also discussed extensively by respondents, who focused on attributes such as mindfulness, responsibility, accountability and ethical engagement within the profession. The ethical conduct of citizen designers in relation to the impact of their work on the community and environment, whether local or global, was especially important to respondents. Lecturers LSF1C, LSF2C, LSF4P, LSF6C LSF8U and LSM1U all mentioned that knowledge of sustainability is a requisite for citizen designers.

From the data, a definition of a South African citizen designer emerged as follows: South African citizen designers have a deep understanding of self, ethics and critical thinking; they operate in transdisciplinary settings with a focus on the tangible betterment of sustainable quality of all life through a caring conscience.

The respondents listed specific areas of specialised and local knowledge that a South African citizen designer needs. These are summarised in table 5.1. The diversity of knowledge areas listed supports an argument made already in 1970 by Papanek, that designers should clearly understand socio-political, -economic and political contexts of design that "must be carried out by cross-disciplinary teams." (1984: 301).

**Table 5.1: Knowledge areas of a South African Citizen Designer.**

Theoretical knowledge sourced on project basis	Gender theory	African critical discourse
Transdisciplinary design process and praxis	Synthesis of visual communication from diverse platforms	Code-switching between multiple registers of knowledge
Philosophies of caring	Philosophies of empathy	Philosophies of Ubuntu
Philosophies of Zen	Democracy	Citizenship
Economic impact	Social justice	Social impact
Human and animal rights	Decolonial discourse	Decolonisation
Sociology	Cognitive psychology	Behavioural studies

Perceptual studies	Interpretive studies	Experiential studies
The human condition	Non-modern	Phenomenology
Cosmopolitanism	Beyond posthumanism	Epistemological reassembly applied to process
Neocybernetics	Conceptual abstraction	Space
Design thinking	Post-colonial theories -practical application	General knowledge
Interrogation of information	Contemporary environmental challenges	Sustainable design
What is good/bad for people	What is good/bad for the environment	Design as a component of an eco-system
Think critically about problems	Sustainability	Conceptual and technical skill relevant to the design intent
Environmental impact	Future trends enabling sustainable design.	Alternatives

The idea of community service was discussed by several respondents. There was a call to re-evaluate the concept of community service/engagement, with attention given to the idea of being a change agent in a community with a long-term and honest commitment to bring about improvements.

Freire's concept of conscientisation was encountered in respondent expectations for citizen designers, frequently resonating with Freire's definition of conscientised individuals as "knowing subjects [who] achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality" (1972: 51). Lecturer LSF1C even directly referred to Freire's work as knowledge South African citizen designers should have.

In general, the context of a citizen designer emerged as a theme in the data. The ability to adapt to contextual factors within a local context was seen as important by respondents, while the linkages between local and global contexts also received emphasis. The two were seen as interrelated, where local challenges can be solved with a global perspective and vice versa. The critical citizenship perspective is concluded with the citizen designer theme. The focus now shifts to the decolonisation perspective.

#### **5.4 Decolonisation in South African design education**

In this study, the decolonial perspective relates to investigations into coloniality of power, coloniality of knowledge and coloniality of being. Coloniality of power focuses on forming political and financial power relations through the Colonial Matrix of Power and the concept of modernity. Coloniality of knowledge engages the who and how of knowledge formation from an epistemological and power perspective. Coloniality of being acknowledges the dehumanisation and degradation of black people on a global scale and the general denial of the contribution that Africa could make. As discussed in the literature review, decolonisation is understood as a political/territorial project, while decoloniality is an epistemological/ideological project. From the data collected in the lecturer survey, lecturer interviews and student interviews I now analyse and discuss the conceptions of

South African design educators and students related to decoloniality. The analysis has identified three themes, namely belonging, cultural representation; and indigenous knowledge and the African university. These provide the structure for the discussion of decolonisation in this chapter.

### 5.4.1 Belonging

Merriam-Webster (2012) defines belonging as a close or intimate relationship. The complexity of belonging is captured by Mahar, Cobigo & Stuart, who describe the foundational premise of belonging as being "built on a foundation of shared experiences, beliefs or personal characteristics" (2013: 1026). They qualify their definition by denoting the complexity of personal and environmental factors that impact the idea of belonging. It may therefore be argued that the absence of shared characteristics, together with the complexity created by environmental and personal factors, could evoke feelings of not-belonging or vice versa. In this theme, the state of belonging of design educators and students is discussed in relation to the presence or absence of shared beliefs, experiences, or personal characteristics in the context of South African universities and the global design industry.

In the broad theme of belonging, various sub-themes emerged from the data, including the state of not belonging, identity and historical legacy of racial and cultural segregation caused by apartheid. These sub-themes help to segment the comments made by respondents. The sense of not belonging reveals instances where participants made comments that point to feelings of not fitting in or perceptions of being excluded in the university and professional contexts. Identity as a recurrent idea includes cases in which participants reflected on identity and its evolving nature; in particular, students showed a sense of their evolving identities and the impact if this development on belonging is discussed in this sub-theme. In South Africa, the concept of belonging cannot be raised without giving consideration to the legacy of racial and cultural segregation produced by apartheid so this area is therefore discussed in a separate sub-theme.

#### 5.4.1.1 Not belonging

Participants made several comments that signify feelings of not belonging in the university environment. Lecturer LIFB1U expressed a need to "bringing out who we naturally are within the universities". This statement reflects how black academics feel they do not belong in the rigid university structures that ignore the flexibility in African traditions such as Ubuntu.

*Ubuntu, [means] understanding your role. Understanding how powerful you are as a nation, as a continent and being comfortable with oneself; one being, one humanity, and imposing that in the way you teach. I wish one could come in and have a conversation with the students but have a conversation that can start with, ok, let's just talk about ancestors today and how you appease your ancestors or how you do certain things within your space to see the humanism in people. ...It has more to do with bringing out who we naturally are within the universities. And that also goes back into a whole lot of the drive started with Ubuntu: the humanity, the humility, that warmth that you get when you're at home with your grandmother also needs to permeate within the universities, and that knowledge that you get but not knowledge that is rigid. I think there needs to be room for flexibility.*



Lecturer LIF11U made a statement implying that her students are "very far away from established ideas of who they are and what they feel". This statement gives insight into the possible factors that impact students' sense of belonging.

*Yes, there's absolutely no problem with discussing political matters. In fact, political matters go further than democracy and capitalism, and political issues could be gender issues. It could be the idea of sexual transition. These are all political matters. In fact, the idea of not being called he or she is political, so students are very, very far away from established ideas of who they are and what they feel, and these are important in terms of discussion also.*

Student SIMB8U reflected on how he found a calling in teaching and how he plans to use this knowledge to educate people from his home environment about design. Through this action, he could address possible issues of belonging in his home environment by making them aware of what design is.

*For me, it is all about teaching other people because I have been given the platform to know what I did not know. So also contributing to giving other people opportunities as well, I think that would have an impact on the next coming generation. Especially for where I come from, design is not a career choice or a career path you can follow. It is taken as something that is not for us. So for me, seeing the brighter side of it, I would actually make it required that people know about it, like give them skills. One of the things that I want to do when this is over is open up an academy, giving people the actual knowledge that I have. It would definitely help, especially for people who can't afford to have an opportunity like this. That is what I would do.*

Perceptions of design by communities and family members can impact South African design students' sense of belonging in design education. In addition to the "not for us" (SIMB8U above) comment made regarding not having design as a career option in a rural community, student SIMB16U commented on a deprecating perception of African design that he thinks exists.

*In my opinion, actually, I enjoy seeing stuff like that because I feel like that would present Africa as a whole, because, especially if I make an example, there is one artist I know, Kharabo Popi, she references a lot of art from Africa, so I feel like that takes us as a continent and shows our cultural backgrounds to the whole world. I think now art and design from Africa are shown more as a craft than as design.*

Student SIMB9U identified a perception of design in rural areas that could impact a student's sense of belonging to design education because they could possibly not be 'understood' in their communities.

*My aim is to contribute to my community to go to some other places to be an example. I am from a deep rural area. The only thing that I see that I came to know when I came into the college because I started at college it was only drawing, I knew how to draw, and no one else advised me to do art because in some other areas when you tell them that I am doing art, they think that I am just drawing and painting only.*

*They don't think and know that arts are more worldwide actually. So I just think for me to contribute I would go to some other places where they do not have a modern background and teach them because I think more of other people from those places they can do better than the ones that are in the modern villages.*

Lecturer LSF2U also commented on a perception of design that she experienced in black communities. This diminished perception that designers are just there to make things 'pretty' undermines the status of designers in communities and could therefore impact a student's sense of belonging in design education.

*The greatest challenge for designers in future is for them not to become absolute (these days and in the future AI [artificial intelligence] will create a website and an app just by verbal instructions); on the other hand, limiting designers' roles to creating pretty things is also a problem that must be addressed in black communities. Designers should constantly find innovative ways to use technology in producing and selling real-life experiences and also assist in solving or highlighting social issues. The future will always need visual communicators who can deliver messages to the viewer (probably in half the time).*

Lecturer LIM4U responded that to make students feel that they belong in their environment, lecturers connect to students through shared experiences facilitated by lecturers sharing the personal characteristics of their students.

*Our lecturers give students ample examples from their own [African] experience up and above the prescribed textbooks that are more Eurocentric. This is achieved by showing students examples of artworks, designs, artefacts, etc., that have been created by creatives who look like the students and come from the same social, economic, and cultural contexts.*

Lecturer LIM2U describes circumstances that could foster or stunt the development of belonging through the inclusion or exclusion of students' culture (in the broadest sense) in the curriculum.

*Yes, when we give examples or allow them to express themselves, I think they will be able to 'see' their cultures in what we teach them. No, if we continue giving them examples of foreign concepts when some of them have not even travelled outside South Africa. Therefore, if all the knowledge we teach them is based on foreign knowledge, they will not be able to see themselves in what we teach them.*

Student SIM17U commented that his culture was only lightly touched on in the first year of his studies, thereby identifying a lost opportunity to create a sense of belonging by exploring diverse cultural experiences and beliefs in a shared space.

*No, honestly no, my culture is not represented in the university. I mean, I do realise we learnt about it in history; in the first year we learnt about African arts, Egyptian art, but even when we were learning about that African art, it did not even cover my culture. It covered only the Khoisan and that art. It did not delve into my culture, which is the Swazi culture, so it was not really included. In terms of design, the only time we get to showcase our culture is during the Africa day campaign when we had to incorporate our culture into a poster.*

Eleven students indicated that their cultures were not represented in what they were taught, and the remaining twelve students expressed varying opinions on the extent that their cultures were included in what they were taught. Student SIMB12U, however, expressed an insightful view that can counter the feeling of not belonging when he responded, "I would say it is not about fitting in; it is about being different and being comfortable about being yourself."

#### 5.4.1.2 Identity

Inclusive shared experiences, beliefs and personal characteristics foster a sense of belonging that is also instrumental in identity formation. However, when linking belonging to identity, the role of exclusion in identity formation must also be considered: "identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render 'outside', abjected" (Du Gay & Hall, 2011: 5).

Lecturer LIM12U struggles with conceptions of African identity and describes a 'good Africanized learning environment' as participative and inclusive. It could be defined as a potentially enabling environment for developing belonging.

*It's a tough one because I battle with this concept of Africanism, and when you say Africanism, people assume you're living in a hut with your face painted and stuff like that. I think modern Africanism is probably something that's still developing, and I don't think anybody or any university for that matter, has the right answer. But I think it's an environment, potentially, in my opinion, that is open to conversation and learning from each other's experiences as well as giving input from your perspective as well, and I think that is, for me, ideally is, a good Africanised learning environment.*

Lecturer LIF11U also questions conceptions of African identity and illustrates the complexity of the personal and environmental factors involved in the context of an African university. Personal factors, such as a person's own understanding of what is meant by being African, and environmental factors, such as globalisation, have a potential impact on a student or lecturer's sense of belonging.

*... what determines African? Because we are in the continent of Africa, would that then determine who we are? ... what determines a European university? You know, it's not about the continent where you come from, but it is the content that you instil in particular programs or offerings. I think the area that we stumble with is understanding the idea of Africanisation or issues of decolonisation. And it is the grappling with these kinds of situations of so-called colonial teaching, colonial content, colonial approaches, colonial metaphors of individuals such as you know, white, or Indians etc. in specific institutions that make it very difficult for us to really understand what it is we mean when we say African, we can say African content - But what does that mean? African content? Because Africa is very, very hybrid. In whichever way you want to slice the pie. So when we talk about and say an Africa-centred institution. I think for me, it is teaching for the African child, which is all children in Africa and what is best suited in terms of educational content that serves the current society that serves the current people*

*that make up this continent. So it's very difficult for one to immediately respond and say, well, this is what constitutes an African university. I think we need to peel back a range of spheres or layers that determine who we are and what we are in order for us to assimilate areas that have been created as foundations for ourselves and explore what we could bring in terms of the way we think and the way we actually envisage our lifestyle, it is like a 'future Africa' in a sense, and it would always be a hybrid. It could never, ever be a so-called 'traditional' Africa that one would consider truly African because we are part of the global village that has determined the hybridity, and this will always remain a strain within an African university.*

Lecturers are integral in facilitating learning experiences that can help the development of a sense of belonging in students. Lecturer LSF11T commented on the role and importance of reflective practices and diversity in the lecturing staff of a department.

*Decolonising design education includes validating and acknowledging the loss of indigenous knowledge systems, the absence/contortion of documentation of this knowledge, validating oral histories and rethinking the conventions of what is regarded as legitimate knowledge. Students need to be able to relate to projects, their educators, the content that is presented and how it is presented. Design educators need to be informed and seek out resources to educate themselves and each other on issues of student identity and the impact of socio-economic status and health on educational success in South Africa. Representation is important and valuable. Diversity in educators' identities gives students opportunities to relate to educators more easily. I believe, like design, design education is an iterative and reflective practice in which we continually need to improve our practices.*

Lecturer LIMB3U alluded to the evolving identity of South African design students that creates complexity. The opportunities for South African design students and lecturers to develop a sense of belonging is impacted by the complexity of personal and environmental factors they have to navigate.

*I think that more research needs to be done or we need to put in more work in understanding the students' cultures. When I say student cultures, I don't mean their cultures in terms of their tribal, you know, Pedi or Afrikaans or Zulu. I think the student culture is over and above their background. What is the culture of the student or the culture of the teenagers currently?*

Student SIMB11U also reflected on the multiplicity in the identities of design students:

*Ok, my culture because I am not only black, I am a Xhosa. This is like a culture that is my ethnicity and then the culture which is like the things the way I grew up 21st-century modern black male. You know how they advertise South Africa as the rainbow nation because it is just like a whole pot full of different flavours; well, it is not specific. ...I am definitely on a side where I am more modern, so the music that I listen to, the food that I eat, the clothes that I wear – it is all modern and*

*influenced by a lot of work, such as entertainment. All of that, it is just a culture that has an African flavour to it but is also highly influenced by the west because they are the one who are the leaders in terms of what is trending or what not, or what the best thing currently in society.*

The response from student SIMB14U reflects on Ubuntu, "*people of Africa are all about harmony and like Ubuntu.*"

"Ubuntu means humanness – treating other people with kindness, compassion, respect and care. These virtues are usually referred to as the summation of Ubuntu or humanness. Ubuntu is well captured in the adage which says Umuntu ngomuntu ngabantu (Zulu) – a person is a person because of other persons" (Murove, 2012: 37).

This could be possibly a concept that could assist students in fostering belonging.

### **5.4.1.3 Racial and cultural legacy of apartheid segregation**

The concept of belonging within the South African context cannot be explored without considering the legacy of apartheid as a complex personal and environmental factor that is expressed through shared experiences of exclusion. Furthermore, the lived experience of rural and urban people in South Africa are extremely disparate. These persistent spatial arrangements are themselves also a component of the legacy of colonial and apartheid social engineering. In this context, comments from participants relating to belonging to a rural or cosmopolitan setting are considered.

Lecturer LIFB1U reflected on her perception of the disparity between urban and rural village schools. This disparity has a number of causes, including to an extent the legacy of apartheid, and is linked in comments to the availability of resources that impact a student's sense of belonging in design education.

*All of those were students from the rural area who would feel lesser than a student from a model C [school], from a Township [school] or [schools in] affluent suburbs. So trying to bring up the students from the villages, to say: you are also worthy, I find that that journey for them is a bit difficult, but once they get out of their shell, they realise that they can be on par, and those are the students who sometimes keep quiet and keep to themselves. But once you have a one-on-one conversation with them, you realise that these students are yearning to learn. It's just that they are learning at a slower pace than the other ones, but immediately when they catch up, there's a nice fine balance. So I think they still think that they are less[inferior].*

The experience of the difference between students from urban and rural backgrounds mentioned above by LIFB1U was also the focus of a comment by SIMB8U. The impact of design students' backgrounds on their sense of belonging was also seen in comments made by participants.

Student SIMB8U:

*most of the students became friends because they can relate to one another based on their background. For example, some students came from the rural areas, and some came from the city so that differentiation became a contributing factor because it was a challenge for a rural person to make a relationship, but I think it became better with time, because, in terms of*

*respect, I think it took a long time, because some students thought they knew [i.e. were] better than other students. On the issue of respect: it was a problem initially but over time it is better now.*

Lecturer LIMC1U vividly describes the spatial separation that is still prevalent in South Africa that impacted his sense of belonging in design education.

*... you just look across the road and see that the type of community here is not the same as the type of community that sits at the bottom of Newlands<sup>11</sup>. Yet in proximity, it is terribly close, and we use these little things to, for one, bring spatial segregation.*

Lecturer LIFB2U reflected on the geographical legacy of apartheid segregation in South African cities; she comments about persistent feelings of rejection and not belonging for the majority of South Africans:

*You cannot speak about the South African city without speaking about the humiliations that people are subjected to daily, and you can't speak about the riots that took place without taking into account that humiliation. People are humiliated through the way that the city is structured, daily you are told who you are, and you are told what your position is in society through the way that the city is structured. ...a lot of the objects that they ask students to design are alien to a large portion of our students, so he will ask students to design something in a rural area that some of the urban students have never heard of before, which puts the person coming from a rural or a township setting immediately in a better position because they hold that knowledge. ...So, even when you go and build in townships, you build using a particular standard of specifications which you wouldn't do in the suburbs, and it becomes entrenched in practice. It becomes entrenched in the way we think. People get used to it and start normalising it, and it's not normal, and it is political.*

Lecturer LSMW3U offered an example of how the legacy of historical segregation still impacts on the lived experience of South Africans, which in turn will have implications for how belonging is experienced by individuals.

*Then we had another incident where a student, a Zulu student, was interning at a local agency. She became aware of quite appalling levels of ignorance of how black society lives, more or less at the same time that the agency realised that they didn't know enough about such things, and as a result, their ad campaign was failing. So in her campaign [she] was trying to give basic guidelines to white designers about what the average, ordinary village person living in [redacted] had to contend with just in their daily life, going shopping or using transport, all these kinds of things.*

Lecturer LIFI1U draws attention to language that can also contribute to belonging or not belonging.

*They may have come from very rural communities where the language they use most often is not English. English as a medium of instruction is not the first language [of learners], so they are immediately oppressed in a sense, so it's not just the past, but experiences which they actually*

<sup>11</sup> The lecturer is referring to Newlands, a previously 'whites only' affluent suburb that he contrasts to his own 'coloured suburb' with lower standards of living due to the legacy of apartheid.

*negotiate daily, and injustice which they feel are inherent in their environment. Things that one can talk about. So it's not only historical matters that one needs to look at but how the historical past actually filters into the present and that our young people are still in the same kind of swamp as people were during apartheid, but to a lesser extent in a sense, we may have a democracy in a sense, but the kind of pleasures of democracy are not as easily available or experienced or harnessed in a way that makes our lives better.*

Lecturers LSF11C and LSMW5U describe projects that challenge the inequalities in South Africa. Students that engage in projects which expose the prevalent residue of segregation in South African society will be better positioned to engage critically with issues of inequality. By developing such sensibilities, students' conceptions of belonging – in relation to themselves and others – can be deepened. *"My students were required to photograph and interview (and be interviewed by) scholars from a disadvantaged township towards a publication entitled [redacted]. The initiative sought to lessen boundaries between communities."* Lecturer LSMW5U described another project that engages the inequalities in South Africa. *"I conducted live project research where students engaged with informal settlement residents to co-design upgrading solutions."*

To conclude the analysis of belonging, it is important to consider the role of memory in relation to the sub-themes. Mattes, Kasmani, Acker, and Heyken state that memory and the failure of memory play a significant role in the dynamics of belonging: "Texts, artifacts, buildings, anniversaries, icons, feasts, symbols, stories, rituals, rites, images, bodies, food, and landscapes become materials and mediums through which belonging is actively realized, sensorially perceived, and mnemonically live" (2019: 302). Belonging becomes alive in our memory (mnemonically live) through experiences. As design educators, we are responsible for the design of learning experiences that create live memories for students. The projects mentioned above by LSF11C and LSMW5U, for example, have the potential to create live memories of the communities involved through shared experiences with students, artefacts and buildings they would have seen in person, as well as cultural activities such as anniversaries, feasts, rituals, rites and food they have experienced. It is my experience that facilitating such live memories is often not possible due to financial and bureaucratic limitations at universities. Pedagogy that brings students into contact with real-life situations where the legacy of segregation and the present inequality in South African society are visible will develop a critical understanding of the factors that promote and inhibit a sense of belonging.

#### 5.4.1.4 Discussion

Humans have a deep-seated need for belonging; it enables us to make sense of and give purpose to our lives (Healy, 2020: 120). The idea of belonging is central to the decolonial perspective, where conceptions of belonging are implicated through coloniality of being (see 2.3.4). Colonialism gave some nations a great sense of belonging while depriving oppressed nations, societies and individuals of belonging. The violence of denying humans of belonging is placed in context by Kuurne & Vieno, who state, "Human beings need belonging to survive. Exile and isolation have historically been among the most severe forms of punishment." (2022: 280). Critical citizenship perspectives inherently denote belonging through the status that citizenship bestows upon citizens. Johnson and Morris's requirements for critical citizenship education identified the development of a reflective capacity in relation to belonging "status within communities and society" (Johnson & Morris, 2010: 90) as integral to critical citizenship education. The concepts of citizenship (see 2.2.1) and belonging are both still evolving. Historically, relationships that denoted belonging were structured hierarchically; currently, however, these relationships are becoming more unstable and variable (Girard & Grayson, 2016: 2).

From the data, three facets of design education emerged that can meaningfully impact design educators' and students' sense of belonging. Firstly, the relationship between design educators and students; secondly, the physical environment where design educators and students are located and thirdly, the content of the curriculum. Each of the three aspects identified has the potential to develop different kinds of belonging; the relationship between design educators and students primarily develops belonging in relation to design education at university; the physical environment mainly involves developing belonging in a socio-cultural/economic/political context; and the content of the curriculum facilitates belonging to the local and global design profession. I do not see this analysis as exclusive, however; linkages between the different kinds of belongings in these three facets will and should occur.

In design education, the relationship between lecturers and students is under pressure. The 'traditional' master/apprentice relationship has historically enabled closer relationships than what would typically be prevalent in other disciplines in higher education. This close relationship is threatened; one-on-one tutoring is under pressure due to massification in performance-based, neoliberal university settings. Lecturer LIFB1U described how a rigid university system made her feel that she could not be herself because she thought the university does not allow for the ambiguity that would flow from discussion with students about ancestors (for example). The need to be respected and valued in a reciprocal relationship is a determining factor in developing belonging (Mahar, Cobigo & Stuart, 2013: 1026). The importance of a reciprocal relationship between students and lecturers was highlighted by student SIMB10U who stated that lecturers and students must take responsibility for their respective roles.

The socio-cultural gap between design educators and their students can also significantly impact design educators' and students' sense of belonging. Lecturer LIF11U pointed to the established identities of students who are far removed from the context they find themselves in when entering design education. This fracture between a student's home' and university identity can be attributed to the lack of information about design as a



profession in rural and township communities. SIMB8U and SIMB16U reflected on their experiences in townships where design is perceived as a craft consisting of drawing or painting; it is not seen as a professional career path. In my environment, most students are first-generation university students, and their families and communities do not have a frame of reference for the 'western' conventions attached to design education at universities.

The challenges inherent to complex diversity are another factor that can meaningfully impact design educators' and students' sense of belonging. The relationship between design educators and students can be strained in the South African context due to demographics and the legacy of apartheid. The demographic profile of design students in SA offers many possible combinations of identifiers<sup>12</sup>. Descriptors such as white privilege, previously disadvantaged, affluent, poor, cosmopolitan, rural, suburban, township, race, age, culture, gender and sexual orientation are determining concepts that are further complicated by South African having eleven official languages; English tends to dominate (for political, historical and economic reasons) even though it is the mother tongue of a small minority. These descriptors apply, in any combination, to the demographic profile of a South African design educator or design student. The students who participated in this research are predominantly black, and the lecturers who teach them are primarily white because of a lack of qualified black design educators in South Africa. The shortage of black design educators is caused mainly by the high demand for black designers in the industry. A lack of diversity in lecturing staff can limit the ability of an academic department to accommodate the inherent challenges posed by complex diversity. When lecturers look like their students, can give examples and speak in a student's home language, it seems inevitable that a student would feel a greater sense of belonging. LIMB4U confirmed that lecturers connect to students in their environment through shared experiences facilitated by examples of work from creatives who share the same personal characteristics as their students. Lecturer LIF11U viewed the use of English as the primary medium of instruction as oppressive, placing students in the situation of having to negotiate daily the injustice inherent in their environment. However, being taught by someone that looks like you is not necessarily without issues; LIFB1U, later in the discomfort theme (5.2.4.1), describes her struggle as a young black female lecturer to gain the trust of black male design students. Her observation brings into context the complexity of patriarchy and gender bias in South African society. Age is another determining factor in this situation. It is my experience from lecturing in a demographically diverse international class in the Netherlands that, as a South African design educator, I could step into such a context with much less difficulty than my Dutch counterparts; I felt that growing up in a diverse society allowed me to develop a set of sensibilities that is not necessarily found in more homogeneous communities. Purposeful and planned opportunities to facilitate the development of relationships between design students and lecturers in order to foster belonging require strategic consideration, especially in the context of complex diversity.

The multiple and evolving identities of design students can also significantly impact design educators' and students' sense of belonging. Shared experiences, beliefs and personal characteristics foster a sense of belonging that is instrumental in identity formation.

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<sup>12</sup> As already mentioned above, the students interviewed for this research comprised five female and 18 male students. Of the 23 students, 22 are black and one coloured. Students' ethnic, tribal and cultural affiliations included Tswana, Tsonga, Zulu, Xhosa, Pedi and Ndebele.

However, the role of exclusion in identity formation must also be considered when linking belonging to identity: "identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render 'outside', abjected" (Du Gay & Hall, 2011: 5). Lecturer LIF1U, for example, argue that 'true' African identity in future can never be a so-called 'traditional' African, because of the elements added and excluded. Lecturer LIMB3U suggested that more research needs to be done to understand the cultures of South African design students; this will provide insight into students' teenage 'culture' and its relation to their indigenous culture. The need for such research is confirmed by the comments by student SIMB11U. He described himself as a Xhosa, 21st-century black male. As a design educator, I ask, what does that mean, what does that look like? When I interviewed the students, I asked them to describe in visual terms what their cultures looked like. Most of them had difficulty making this description. This may be attributable to the fact that the interviews were conducted in English, and such descriptions might flow freely in their mother tongue. Design educators need to consider how we empower students to narrate their visual cultures. Belonging is fostered when design educators and design students develop connections through engaging their identities. The comment from student SIMB12U captures for me the essence of an ideal outcome when design educators and students connect through their identities: "*I would say it is not about fitting in; it is about being different and being comfortable about being yourself.*"

The physical environment where design educators and students are located has an impact on their sense of belonging. The challenges faced by government-funded design students at public universities is well documented and differ vastly from those of design students at private design institutions. These students are, however, competing for the same positions in the neoliberal design industry that expects them to compete on an equal footing. Lecturer LIMC1U captures the socio-economic disparity in South Africa, which is the worst in the world, when he reflects on gazing at an affluent suburb from his position as a coloured person living in a township. Lecturer LIFB2U also described the impact of the legacy of apartheid in the city that inflicts daily humiliation on students and reinforces feelings of not belonging. The constant dehumanisation and degradation of black people as reflected in the decolonial perspective becomes evident when this spatial separation directly impacts the studio's functioning. One example is the unpredictable daily commute to campus for students from townships who are reliant on minibus taxi transport, which is unreliable and often dangerous. Lecturer LIFB1U commented on how students from rural schools feel inferior to students from Model C schools, but once they come out of their shells, they are equally competitive. LIFB1U also refers to those who never come out of their shells and remain in the background. My experience of graduates from the institution where I am based is that some of our most successful alums came from rural environments. Seeing them at their graduation ceremonies where you share in the boundless joy of their families is one of the reasons motivating me to work in higher education. Student SIMB8U echoed this comment from lecturer LIFB1U by commenting on the same delineation between rural and township students who form friendships along these same lines. SIMB8U described a tension between rural and township students that, in his view, came from a lack of respect. Happily this improved over time as they got to know each other better. The impact of rural/township tensions in a studio has to be acknowledged and purposefully addressed by design educators.

Students were asked questions that prompted their views on their studio as a place of belonging. Almost all students indicated positive feelings in this regard. Reasons they gave include the studios being well-equipped spaces that are not overcrowded and kept clean. Student SIMB4U commented that the well-equipped studios are the one thing that made him feel welcome on campus. Only three students mentioned their relationship with lecturers when they spoke about feeling 'safe' in their studio. Student SIMB10U commented on students and lecturers who need to be present and participating in the studio, and student SIMB4U referenced the inspiration he gets from the artworks placed on the wall by lecturers while student SIFB1U appreciated the freedom of expression facilitated by the lecturers. The importance for students of well-resourced environments is not surprising. Feeling safe in a studio does not necessarily mean students feel they belong there. The overwhelmingly positive response from students regarding their studios has to be interpreted in the context of their backgrounds, where such facilities are not common. I also had the sense that despite probing students' perceptions from different angles, they did not critically respond to this issue as I expected from students who completed a module on critical citizenship. At the time of the student interviews, South Africa was in the midst of a third lockdown, and I had to phone students at their homes when they were once again sent home after spending a very short period on campus. In reflecting on this, I have to acknowledge the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had on this group of students. I could sense their disconnectedness and yearning to return to campus, which was for many an escape from their township realities which included household chores and responsibilities, babysitting and earning extra money, where many of their parents/caregivers were unemployed. The underlying yet ever-present impact of the Covid-19 pandemic can also be seen in comments that create the impression their appreciation for the well-equipped studios is much more significant after not having access to them for several months. Considering my perceptions of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the students, I argue that the students' lack of critical responses demonstrated the crucial importance of the studio as a space of learning and connection that is indispensable in creating a sense of belonging.

In the context of the coloniality of knowledge, specific demands are placed on the design curriculum. These demands include a focus on indigenous knowledge systems and the advancement of plurality that respects all knowledge of humanity, and is inclusive of all cosmologies and worldviews which are placed on an equal footing (Fataar, 2018: 2). Considering these demands in the context of the neo-liberal nature of the design industry, the development of belonging has to be recognised as a complex task. A curriculum's content is one aspect of many pedagogical choices that need to be made. In my view, the critical citizenship and decolonial perspectives imply the inclusion of pedagogical approaches such as critical pedagogy. My choice to focus on curriculum content is guided by what I perceive as the area needing the most attention, where several signature pedagogies are already well established in design education.

## 5.4.2 Cultural representation

Within the decolonisation perspective and specifically the colonality of being, this theme explores the perceptions of culture in the design curriculum of South African design students and lecturer participants in the study. Coloniality of being is described in part as a general denial of Africa's cultural contribution (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: xi). The issue of Africa-centred education, one of the demands by students during the Rhodes Must Fall activism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020), is also considered. Two sub-themes emerge from student responses, namely positive and negative experiences concerning the representation of their ethnic culture in their studies. Two further sub-themes are analysed: representing African culture, which explores how students describe their culture, and cultural interpretations, which examines the complexities of interpreting African indigenous cultures.

### 5.4.2.1 Positive experiences of cultural representation

To investigate the current situation regarding the prevalence of African knowledge in the design curriculum, participants were asked if they experienced any aspect of their own culture during their studies or lecture material. Student SIMB2U described a project that allowed him to discuss his culture with his parents. He says of the experience, it was "*eye-opening to see what I could create from my own cultural beliefs*". He describes the experience in greater detail as follows:

*I think through illustration. There was an assignment where we had to talk about it. You know, my family and the family tree, and how our culture influences our family, you know, through family children. So whatever cultural things we have gone through, it was really cool because then I could actually go and talk to my parents about our family line and work out even more about life in our culture and where we come from as people. In this course, I have used my cultural sense to design.*

Student SIMB9U said that projects involving his culture had helped him to know himself better.

*Yes, in the first year, there were some projects like actually, it helped a lot because they gave us that platform in the first year whereby you had actually to know yourself. We were supposed to create some paintings and drawings expressing who you are, where you come from, what you believe in and where you want to see yourself. So from there, you know, ok, in the first year I did something like that, so I know I have to focus on one, two and three, I must not change what I believe in. So, regarding the culture, I think it was mentioned because even now, there are some other projects we are doing during this pandemic where we are supposed to mention our childhood and where we come from. Who are we and stuff like that, so it helps a lot.*

Student SIMB10U indicated that cultural projects in the course had helped him to express aspects of his culture.

*Yes, I do feel like it was taught, and it was. Actually, I was allowed to express my culture, so I was allowed to inform people personally. The tribal design that I did allowed me to express myself.*

Student SIFB2U found the course helped her to learn more than she knew before regarding her culture.

*Well, I say yes. I believe I have seen some things from my culture, especially the projects I have been given. I have always tried to increase my [knowledge about my] culture. I have learned more about it than I used to [know], so yes.*

Student SIMB13U said that the course had inspired him to research his culture.

*Yes, when it comes to the history of art, we were taught the background of art, where it comes from, and the art of Africa and all that, so I think we were part of the research we were taught.*

Student SIMB15U also found himself doing more research about his culture.

*Yes, in Illustration, we used to do research and illustrations which are culturally related, and they didn't choose for us which culture we should go for and then I did [select] my culture because it is something I know more about. Even the research, I did more research on my culture.*

Student SIMB18U said that he learnt a lot about his culture, including Christianity.

*Yes, I think so because I remember in my first year in African Art, I learnt a lot about my culture, where we come from and so on and how we developed, even including Christianity, religion and so on.*

Student SIMB4U felt that projects were linked to his culture.

*I do, because, with a few design projects, I had to design with my own culture. There was this well-being project that we were given last to promote our culture, our training on our traditions. I feel like projects are linked to my culture.*

Student SIMB5U: "Yes, they were. There were certain projects that included our cultures".

Student SIMB3U: "Yes, I think so because most of the time, that is what is learnt in class and how you break it down if you go back to the lessons we go to."

Lecturer LIFI1U described the complexities associated with identity and culture.

*I think that the curriculum allows for a great deal of freedom, and yes, education within the arts does not happen in a vacuum. There is a constant flow of information, idea generation, and discussion between the student and the staff member. So students actually bring forward their ideas of what culture is, and it's not necessarily the idea of people dressed in skins and dancing the rain dance or anything like that. But their culture, in terms of their current lifestyle, is a very dominant feature, and for me, the idea of culture is really encased in so many things. First, a lot of our students deal with issues of identity and that in itself brings forth the idea of the cultural embodiment and that seeking cultural identity or identity within particular groups or within South Africa in terms of its very prominent changes. In terms of spaces, they visit in terms of people they meet or trying to understand who they are when they are a hybrid in their upbringing, etc. It is definitely content that students actually work with, so it's not about teaching them, but it's bringing forth and managing the kind of ideas that constitutes student culture into our framework of education.*

### 5.4.2.2 Negative experiences of cultural representation

Lecturer LIMB1U wondered if students are fully equipped to find ways to relate their education to their culture, and to integrate the two:

*I'm trying to find what could be the reason. Let me tell you, this morning I was speaking to some of my students because our department was requested to contribute to the cultural day... They want them to display some of their artwork on that particular day. When I asked them whether they would be able to display some of their artworks related to culture, they couldn't identify some of their artworks. They said most of their artworks do not necessarily relate to culture. That really gives me an impression that our students, and in fact, I didn't even mention it to them, maybe we should put more emphasis on giving them projects based on cultural norms. So, in my opinion, I don't think that the students see their own cultures in what we are teaching them. Maybe we have somehow, or perhaps a little bit of it is included, but it's not much.*

Lecturer LIM11U indicates that more work needs to be done to help students celebrate their cultures.

*I don't believe enough. I think there's an opportunity to do more in terms of having students celebrate their cultures and traditions, and I think there are some educators with the right vision, so I think in the next ten years, we should be there.*

Lecturer LIFB2U describe the use of students' own cultural context as "still very much niche".

*... in my experience, I think I try, but I don't think I do enough. I myself rely heavily on western knowledge and resources in my own courses, and I don't think I've done enough. I really, I cannot claim, I can claim to have asked questions or critiqued or tried to fix myself, but I haven't been fixed to fix others. So I don't think I think it's happening, but very incrementally and in very minor ways and not at a scale that is really transforming our institutions. There are initiatives here and there from myself and from colleagues, .. my doctoral student [redacted] because he's looking at it. He says a lot of the objects that they ask students to design are alien to a large portion of our students, so he will ask students to design something in a rural area that some of the urban students have never heard of before, so which puts the person coming from a rural or a township setting immediately in a better position because they hold that knowledge. So there's definitely very noble, very good. I ask the students to write about their own living contexts and to research their own living contexts, so there are very noble attempts. But we are really a minority, I think, and everything is done almost like just enough to get through the accreditation panels. Just enough for people to think of us as transforming, just it's not in any major way. ... So, we are all the efforts that we do and what this, so the students don't see their own cultures, not in the awards that are given, not in what is celebrated, not in the content of the curriculums, they see hints of it here and there, but it is mainstream. It's still very much niche.*

For student SIFB1U, the range of diversity itself was a difficulty and she indicated that there are too many cultures for all to be included or integrated.

*Well, not really I don't think so because that is like two different hemispheres, like everybody has different cultures, and I don't think that all of them can be incorporated in like one course. So I don't think so.*

Student SIMB12U spoke about his culture being marginalised but said that he used the opportunity to teach others about his culture.

*Not quite because my culture is not that big so what I would do is I would try in most of my designs to incorporate it and teach some of my lecturers about it. I do certain designs using cultural elements taken from my culture, and some of my [fellow] students would also ask, so you are from this culture, and this is nice. They would ask things about it, then I would educate them. I feel like, in the [design] department, it is my part to educate some of the students and lecturers about my culture.*

Student SIMB14U found the course did not relate Zulu culture to design.

*No, because I am Zulu, and in the history of design [course], there has been nothing spoken about Zulu people. Only Xhosa, but I think my culture has more [elements] of fashion [and] apparel, so I think maybe in the fashion department they might speak more about that, because in my culture there is not a lot of illustration, just patterns and cultural clothing.*

Student SIMB16U indicated that there was a greater focus on western culture than his own African culture.

*Not really, I feel like, at school, we focus more on the western culture than our own culture, I do not know. I remember the first year we did learn about African arts, that kind of stuff, but I believe that wasn't enough for some of us. There could actually be more that is added to the curriculum that could help everyone express their different cultures in design.*

Three students said there was no content in the curriculum that related to their own cultures (SIFB3U, SIMB1U, SIMB6U), while student SIMB8U felt only "a small percentage" of course material related to his culture.

#### **5.4.2.3 Representing African culture**

To counter coloniality of being and to acknowledge the cultural contribution of Africa, South African design students need to have the necessary vocabulary to represent African culture on the global stage. The ability of South African designers to describe and discuss their visual cultural contribution gives an indication of the level of success they might achieve in promoting the cultural contribution of Africa to the world. Students expressed their visual culture with varying levels of depth. Student SIMB17U achieved a sophisticated description of his culture. He described Swazi culture through colour, pattern, structure and "technical aesthetics."

*Well, I describe my own culture as colourful, very colourful. I describe my culture as it focuses on patterns and structure in a colourful manner in as much as it is technical in terms of it is based on patterns. It is a combination of technical aesthetics; my culture is bright and vibrant.*

Student SIMB12U described Ndebele culture as a form of "pop art".

*I am from the Ndebele culture; I would describe it as pop art; it is "in your face", and speaks volumes and is something that grabs your attention from afar. .*

Student SIFB3U described the "forms and shapes" in the Tswana culture: *"I am Tswana. We have really much of forms and shapes in our culture. We have cultural clothes as well."*

Student SIFB4U also focused on Zulu culture as colourful, *"It is African and has a lot of colours. It is very colourful."* Student SIMB14U highlighted the animal prints of his culture. *"King of the jungle. Like, illustrate lions and leopards because those are the animal prints used in my culture."* Student SIMB15U described the warm colours of his culture: *"My culture is colourful but with warm colours. What more can I say?"*

Student SIMB6U spoke in detail about the significant role of blue and white in the Tswana culture.

*Every culture has its own colour, if I may say so; for example, I am Tswana, and our colour is blue and white. The colours were chosen by our ancestors, and they tell a story of where we come from and who we are. Colour goes a long way in explaining something in design, so I think our culture tells us something about who we are as different cultures.*

Student SIFB2U used the metaphor of colour, music and dance to describe her culture but she also found it hard to express culture in detail in words:

*I would describe my culture as colour. I see colour when I think of my culture. I see music people dancing at celebrations. I see something deep I do not know how to explain that, but something deep there.*

Student SIMB18U described both his Christian and traditional culture in terms of colour and shape"

*I was born into a family that believes mainly in [traditional] rituals. In black society, some people believe in rituals and so on, but when I was growing up, I discovered Christianity. At the moment, I am someone who is following Christ, I am someone who loves God, but I was born into a family of ancestors. I am someone who preaches and so on. In terms of Christianity, the main colour is white, which represents purity, and then as for symbols, it is only the cross of any Christian. When you talk about the symbol, what comes first is the cross. In terms of where I come from and my roots, it is all about the symbols. They are very different shades; they use zigzags, they use curved lines to make their patterns, and they are like inspired by Pablo Picasso. The shapes when they decorate their houses, and so on, shapes and forms they use are closely related to how Pablo Picasso would do his artworks.*



Student SIMB4U described Tsonga culture as having a "clear identity" without visually describing it.

*I am Tsonga, so I would have a lot to say about my culture, you understand. I would say everything that is good about my culture. Like you know, as a person, the image of my culture is aligned with my personality, you understand? Someone could tell you are a Tsonga from a distance because Tsongas have a clear identity.*

Several students described their culture by relating it to social values but struggled to extend this to using design-related terminology. Student SIFC1U described her culture in terms of the values the culture subscribes to. "*I would say that we are quite disciplined. I can't really think of how I would describe it in design terms.*" Student SIMB3U gave a description that captures the patriarchal nature of the Tsonga culture. "*It is quite picky in a way, meaning what the men in Tsonga have to represent [their culture].*"

Other students also described their culture by speaking about cultural values. SIMB13U:

*Well, I am not sure, but I would just tell the person that we are like a loving culture. We are like welcoming. I think some of us, I think it depends on the person. We are welcoming, we are loving, and I have no other things that I can say.*

Student SIMB1U:

*I am coming from a Zulu tribe; I am a Zulu. So the things we are taught from home [i.e. tradition] include respect and dedication, like when it comes to respecting it comes from elder people and people from the same age as you are taught to be dedicated, don't do things that will make you happy while others are not happy. So you mustn't do things that make you happy while others are getting unhappy about it.*

Student SIMB7U:

*I think, as a Zulu man, my culture is a very respect [oriented] culture, and we are people who respect you. If you respect someone, you will never come to them rudely, but if you come to us with disrespect, we will disrespect you. We are a culture that deals a lot with discipline. We are very disciplined, and we follow our culture. You know, we stick by our rules and try our best to respect our rules, so basically, my culture is based on respect. I think we are a very strong clan like a lion, alpha males. We always want to be in control. As a Zulu, I need to be in control of my household because it is how I was taught.*

Student SIFB1U:

*.. my [North Sotho] culture is all about unity. Where my parents come from, everyone in the neighbourhood knows each other, everyone in the neighbourhood helps each other out. It is all about unity, everybody is united, and everybody helps one another. If a neighbour maybe doesn't have sugar, they can go to a neighbour and ask for sugar, and it is not like something that is taboo or anything. It is their way of living. They are used to helping each other within their own little neighbourhoods.*

Student SIMB16U:

*I would describe it [Swazi culture] in the way of showing people how I express myself as an individual, where I come from and how I actually came up as a designer. Actually, try and show people different backgrounds of work, how I was raised and how I actually came to be a designer.*

Student SIMB10U:

*We are people of very high and strong traditions. We take pride in what we do and in anything that we share. We are multi-diverse, and we are a colourful nation, if I may say so.*

Student SIMB9U:

*It is a powerful, colourful culture, and the more dominant reason being it is because most of the things that I have seen regarding my Zulu culture are like everywhere, and in my culture, most of my youth, the tribe people like they are all over so I think that is it.*

#### 5.4.2.4 Interpreting African culture

In their responses, students reflected on the use of cultural symbols in their designs. For example, student SIMB1U enjoys seeing African design but also cautions against the inappropriate use of cultural symbols, because they have a plurality of meaning.

*It is quite a good thing to see African symbols in designs, but it is very important for each and every individual designer to pay full attention because some symbols mean a different thing. For example, there are symbols that explain a bad feeling. Maybe they took that symbol and put it on a t-shirt so some of us when looking at the t-shirt, will see that symbol, and that symbol will mean a totally different thing.*

Student SIMB2U said he finds it empowering to see his African culture reflected in designed artefacts, as long as there is no offensive use of cultural icons.

*I feel that it is very empowering to show people [symbols] of our culture because most of the things that we see are now more westernised. There is nothing really African these days that everybody knows. Our African culture needs to make new things. It is very empowering. I think so because most of the time, it can be a good thing, but it can also be a bad thing when somebody uses African art to make a detailed design. It needs to be authentic, because when you just put different African religions together, it would be an insult or an offence to somebody who actually belongs to the culture that you're mixing with another culture. It could be bad, depending on how you do it. So sensitivity plays a role in designing African art.*

Student SIMB7U also indicated that if his culture is used respectfully in design, it can raise the regard for that culture:

*I think if it is not disrespecting the culture, then I do not have a problem with it because some things can be read in the wrong way when they actually mean something totally different, so I don't have a problem with that as long as it is going to respect that particular culture and make everyone in that culture feel good about themselves, then I have no problem with having art on T-shirts and whatever.*

Student SIMB8U similarly said that designers must be culturally conscious and do the research required before deploying African visual elements.

*For me, using such elements are not a problem; the problem is that some things that I use from different cultures mean different things. For example, a certain culture perceives [the colour] black as [a symbol for] death, and you would hear another culture saying black (same colour) being joyful to them. I think designers should, before they apply those things do proper research because when it comes to our cultures, things can get very complicated. It gets offensive if someone from another culture tries to do something [with a cultural symbol] because they don't represent what that actual thing means, and it becomes a bad symbol to that very same culture. It feels like they are being insulted, so when using cultural or other elements from those cultures, you have to consider if this is good for a particular purpose or if I am doing this because of fun. Some things you cannot just use for fun; it would look nice but would it be the answer as a good thing? For example, when using the Ndebele pattern, you need to know the ins and outs of where to use them and whether it is appropriate at that time to use them in a particular project.*

Student SIMB11U also commented on the need for designers to be culturally sensitive and aware of offending people through the inappropriate use of African cultural elements. In particular, designers need to avoid stereotyping and misrepresenting cultures.

*As long as people do enough research to not offend a certain group of people, then there would not be any big problem. I will say as long as it is not stereotypical to a point where now it becomes like promoting a sense of misconception about a certain culture because that is the downside of stereotypes, designers need to do enough research to actually promote a certain culture, like trending it instead of just using stereotypes in a way people feel: this is misrepresented; I always go back to representation, that is why I see it as key.*

Student SIFB2U expressed pleasure that Africanness is being embraced.

*It not only represents the African culture on the outside, but it also gives us the chance to express ourselves and know more about the logos and everything related to the African culture. I would say it is quite pleasing, and in a way, it feels like people are now beginning to understand who we are and embrace their Africanness.*

Lecturer LSF3P reflected on the characteristics of a citizen designer, especially the need to develop a "design culture"; her comment is made in relation to the prevalent student culture.

*First and foremost, people have to be personally sensitised and actually care. Secondly, and what would help with the first, is for this to become a 'normative standard' in the industry, starting in education. Then one can talk about knowledge and skills, first about 'a design culture' and 'personal way of being'. Designers operate within a context, and I believe this is where it starts. But this could also become a chicken and egg conversation – not sure which should be first or how it starts, perhaps it has started already.*

Lecturer LSFBI1T reflected on the idea that students need to be made aware of possible discriminatory cultural beliefs: "*open up spaces for learners to see that some of the so-called cultural beliefs are discriminatory*"; here one can reflect on the interpretation of patriarchal statements such as that made by SIMB7U "*I think we are a very strong clan like a lion, alpha males. We always want to be in control.*"

#### 5.4.2.5 Discussion

Coloniality of being is defined as the denial by people in the world of an African cultural contribution (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: xi). It is necessary to consider the role design education can play in the context of coloniality of being. How does South African design education place African culture on the global stage? How do design educators acknowledge the contribution of African culture, especially in the face of "western cultural and capital overkill" (Dei, 2006: 4). The motivation to probe students' experience of culture in their design education was initially meant to gauge if the demands of the Rhodes Must Fall campaign have filtered through into the design education curriculum. As this study progressed, however, it became clear that the issue is much greater than simply including indigenous cultural knowledge in curriculums. The intention of such actions is a crucial factor. There were examples in South Africa where 'Africanised' design curriculums had instances where educators incorporated African design in a superficial manner, by adding the word African in a module name and including content that could be described as advancing African cultural knowledge, without fully integrating this knowledge in the entire undergraduate programme.

From student responses, it can be seen how projects that involve their cultures helped them form a better understanding of their own culture. Such projects were "eye-opening". Students said that these projects stimulated them to talk to their parents and families about their cultures, which was valuable and created a deeper understanding. Students also found that they had to research their culture, which promoted growth in their knowledge of their culture.

Coloniality of being, however, also requires design education to focus on assisting students to grasp the value of their own cultural capital. Experiencing a culture in the curriculum is not enough. The challenge is to find ways of placing the intrinsic value of African culture on an equal footing with cultures from the rest of the world. Design educators, therefore, have to be clear about the purpose of including African cultures in the design curriculum. To do this, educators in this sphere will need to understand African culture, knowledge formation and development (Akena, 2012: 617). The 2011 Design Education Manifesto also called for the inclusion of "regional design history, ethnography, sociology, economics, philosophy and politics" (Lange, 2011: 94) in the design curriculum.

Gaps are observed in the current approach when engaging with students on their cultures and requesting them to verbalise their culture. Some students used design terminology, such as colour, shape and line, to describe their culture but several students could only express their culture by describing cultural values instead of engaging in the language of the discipline of design. For African culture to compete on a global stage, our students have to be fluent in describing their cultures in the international language of design.

The question has also to be asked: which cultures are included or excluded in the design curriculum, as suggested by student SIFB1U, who indicated that there are too many cultures for all to be included. Several students reported negative experiences where they did not 'see' their cultures in the design curriculum. These negative experiences point to the work that must still be done regarding inclusivity in the design curriculum. Interestingly, exclusion was experienced by student SIMB12U, who reflected on his Ndebele culture being marginalised, but he also used the opportunity afforded to him by his studies to teach others about his culture. Despite the international status of Ndebele culture, student SIMB12U experienced his culture as marginalised, which brings into focus the complexity of students' perceptions of their experiences in the curriculum.

Students also spoke about the dangers of indiscriminately using shapes and colours that could be offensive or inappropriate. This concern links to the issue of lecturers' ability and preparedness to give guidance in this respect. It prompts questions of how design educators can navigate this complexity, and who will provide the mainstream resources to address this issue?

Lecturers also described the complexities of culture and reflected on the interaction between students and lecturers in bringing forward their ideas of culture. She also accentuated that traditional culture is evolving, culture is influenced by the spaces students' visit and the people they meet. It is the role of design educators to navigate cultural identity in partnership with students, acknowledging the hybrid nature of developing cultures. The idea of "it's bringing forth and managing the kind of ideas that constitutes student culture into our framework of education" is presented by LIF11U. Students may find it difficult to incorporate their cultural identity into their design work. At the same time, they are also busy developing their identity as students within a multicultural environment. This often also includes adapting to city life and adapting to group identities and societal expectations of what a creative's identity should be. In addition to this, there is also the professional identity that students have to develop, as stated by LSFW3P, "a design culture and personal way of being."

### **5.4.3 Indigenous/Local knowledge**

The complexity of the concept of indigenous knowledge is recognised, as outlined by Dei on indigenous knowledge, who is "well aware of the challenges, dangers and misreadings" (2000: 113). Tharakan defines indigenous knowledge as "knowledge systems that have developed within various societies independent of, and prior to, the advent of the modern scientific knowledge system" (2015: 52). The knowledge generated by universities and research entities is seen as "separate and different" from indigenous knowledge (Tharakan, 2015: 52). In the context of this study, the discussion of indigenous knowledge is located within the coloniality of knowledge described in the decolonisation perspective (see 2.4.2). Students raised several key issues related to indigenous knowledge during the Rhodes Must Fall movements, these issues are education centred on Africa with global competitiveness, use of African languages, removal of Eurocentrism and preference for African indigenous knowledge (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020: 895). The hybridity of knowledges and the interplay between different knowledges are seen as a compelling reasons for advancing indigenous knowledge in the university (Dei, 2000: 113). There are also views

that 'African knowledge' is a contradiction that creates more problems than solutions. Horsthemke, for example, argues that proponents of indigenous knowledge face logical and epistemological problems that could be better addressed through restorative justice, focused on reconciliation and framed within basic human rights (2009: 3).

In this final theme of the thesis, four sub-themes emerged from the data and are discussed: global and/or local, eurocentrism, African languages and African universities. The global and/or local sub-theme will address issues of the global context of design and the employability of students; the eurocentrism sub-theme considers participant responses regarding the de-centring of eurocentrism; the African languages sub-theme looks at comments from participants related to language policy and power; and the African universities sub-theme examines the context of the coloniality of knowledge in the decolonial perspective.

#### **5.4.3.1 Global and/or local**

The implications of indigenous knowledge in the local and global context of design is a core concern of design educators. Global knowledge was spoken about and contextualised locally by respondents, and they also raised the matter of the employability of students.

Lecturer LSF8U described the need for global knowledge that should be contextualised locally.

*Focusing project work on local issues and problems but allowing students to solve their problems in a local context and also drawing from the global context is important. Students need to also understand that there are indigenous knowledge and knowledge systems that they are able to tap into. As educators, we need to provide well-developed course content that will allow students to solve local design problems by thinking globally but contextualising locally. It is, therefore, essential to not limit design thinking to a geographic location regardless of political pressures but to keep the focus on what is better for the students.*

For lecturer LSF11T, there is the concern that designers can inadvertently perpetuate 'certain' norms and forget that local design knowledge has a role in global design.

*Theoretical knowledge should be sourced based on a project basis. Designers should be aware that their own position and privileges can provide grounds for design practice that perpetuates certain norms. I believe that co-creative / participatory approaches to design have the potential to alleviate the gaze involved in the power dynamics between a designer and user/citizen. I believe that local design knowledge is important to truly be inclusive in a globalising design world.*

Lecturer LSMW3U commented extensively about how the curriculum needs to be changed in response to decolonisation while still maintaining a focus on employability and competitiveness.

*But the other thing was that I think there has to be a balance between how one changes the curriculum and employability. The institutional guidelines take no account of this situation whatsoever. I do think that's unfortunate because we are preparing our students to go out and work, which is not really a priority for traditional universities. But what has been the development? I think that we are encouraging students towards a combination of the pragmatic and the decolonised being on ethics. Because the kind of projects that I've mentioned to you are very much investigating the position of the local person in their world and taking into account how the current conditions came about, which inevitably goes to the colonialism debate. ... Today, in that sort of broad sense, I think that when you're encouraging students to take a decolonised approach, you can do it very much with lowercase rather than capital letters. One of the reasons for that is that it lets the student take the lead. What we have found-- when we look at our institution that wants very explicit module content and assessment criteria about the academic work and students react badly because we must almost teach down. We want to avoid that, where issues like that are coming out. Then it's kind of tricky because, again, the institution wants their paperwork. They want very much academic checks to occur on tracked planning. I think it's inappropriate, and I also think it's educationally unsound, but I think the biggest problem is that nobody really knows what decolonisation means.*

### 5.4.3.2 Eurocentrism

The de-centring of western thought is mentioned by several lecturers. Instances where "eurocentric knowledge masquerades as universal knowings" (Dei, 2006: 4) are called out and challenged. Ndlovu-Gatsheni pointed to the "global economy of knowledge" (2020: 887), driven by Eurocentrism, as countering the epistemic freedom sought through decoloniality.

Lecturer LIMC1U voiced the concern that Africans should not aspire to European ideals.

*How do we build ideas in such a way that they can have a shape in reality? A simple example is that one person presented the concept of the great wall of China to a certain few other people, and there was belief. That was just one idea. Pyramids are probably also one; someone had to say it. So how then, out of a personal capacity, does one bring social justice into the world for me? It lies in how we imagine that future for us, and I can unpack this now at a bit of a theoretical level, and I then put it within the feminist theory, and I bring in aspects and components of decolonisation and say that we as Africans, why should we aspire to others, what is our definition of normal and if that definition is outside of our national borders why do we build a future based on someone else's future imaginaries. Why do we put in effect our idea of social justice, or why do we modulate it on what is happening in America? Why do we modulate it on what happens in Europe?*

Lecturer LIFB2U reflected on her own education journey and felt that her local knowledge was not recognised in her education despite the rich local resources available.

*I always say decolonise yourself. I believe I'm the first person that needs to be decolonised because I've really been trained in Western modes of thinking. I've been trained. I studied in the 80s at the University of Khartoum, an African university. I studied architecture, and by the time I graduated, I knew everything there was to know about Greek and Roman architecture. A few kilometres up the road, you know, just a few kilometres out of Khartoum, there was ancient Nubia. There was old Meroë. ... Not once was I taken to one of those archaeological sites, and that is the extent to which we have been colonised. Our minds have been colonised. I was not taught by the British. I was taught by Sudanese architects who were taught by the British as being a British colony. It shows you. My father is an architect. My father has taken me, I remember in my childhood, running around and exploring the ruins of Rome and my father, Sudanese. But I was never taken to old Meroë, which is a few kilometres away from his birthplace. So, decolonising our minds as Africans has not been an easy process and the damage that colonisation did.*

The eurocentric nature of design education and the lack of African cultural references were noted by lecturer LIMC1U who reflected how these factors create a disconnect between self-identification and the culture of students.

*I have already taught a class in product design, and visual communication design and if we start talking about what are the principles of design principles or Art, those principles come from the European context. It is influenced by practices that were pioneered by Bauhaus for example. What makes it so alluring is how it copies and pastes as a generalist approach. Then you look at universities in Africa, the context in Africa and it is highly specialised and that type of formality and how one transfers the knowledge and doesn't necessarily land in the student's frame of reference. Then they have to do an unlearning of their own cultural references to get into the basics that are so far removed from their whole visual point of reference. Now you sit with an interesting dynamic where you teach a first-year student of Bauhaus and Italian design and the formal aspects for example calligraphy from Asia's countries on how to understand typography. We do not necessarily look at what the basic design structures, constructs and formalities are within our own context. It does not carry over and we lose the student's relatability and I think if I have to throw the whole business a little far, I think that what students see is that they practise it abroad because there is no immediate point of reference in where they come from. It is difficult to make that bridge but I think there is something to be said about our lack of cultural references because I have talked to students who were ok to learn from other cultures of design but then I also talked to other students who have institutional frustration about seeing nothing from their culture within the framework of design education. Where is African design? Where are the references that are from my culture? Why should my name be pronounced so you*



*have to understand it because it is not pronounced as it is said in my community. So there are those types of self-identification that does not go to the person's borders but it transcends it in the cultural borders in that there is a disconnect because I think the universities in South Africa model their generalist courses on international benchmark institutions and they think certain pedagogies are used there must be able to be applied here to set a type of world standard of design education.*

Lecturer LSFW2C proposed a reading list that will include a South African perspective on gender issues, for example:

*Critically look at what informs your content and your reading lists. For example, there is a wealth of literature on gender issues from a South African perspective that is better suited for teaching this content than Euro-American examples.*

Lecturer LSFW1C highlighted the need to change teaching methodologies as a requirement for decolonising design education. This will involve reflection on current practices by design educators.

*I produced a series of seminars on decolonisation involving both colleagues and students to educate and inspire the potential of decolonisation (publication from these seminars is still to be published). Decolonisation also involves changing the methodologies of teaching (see Freire).*

Lecturer LSF2U warns of lecturers "window dressing western /eurocentric pedagogies."

*Our social constructed beliefs and Ideologies have permeated into our DNA, ...behaviour that was adopted generations ago is still very much alive within today's society. Therefore decolonising education needs to start with how we view ourselves first and how one is perceived by others. In education, students or 'Africans' life experiences need to be reflected within the education system - educators should be careful of window dressing western/eurocentric pedagogies. Educators need to be open to discussing African or indigenous pedagogies within the classroom, and educators should make students critically reflect on their own life experiences. The problem with the word decolonisation within education is that it is a synonym for Transformation or Africanisation and Glocalisation.*

Lecturer LSF11T states that the loss of indigenous knowledge systems should be acknowledged.

*Decolonising design education includes validating and acknowledging the loss of indigenous knowledge systems, the absence/contortion of documentation of this knowledge, validating oral histories and rethinking the conventions of what is regarded as legitimate knowledge.*

Student SIMB17U describes his emotional reaction when seeing African visual culture that really defines him.

*I love it. I love it because I believe that it is a creative way to incorporate what really defines us. I am more towards incorporating African culture, whether it is Swati, Ndebele or Tsonga, anything that is rooted within African culture. I feel like it is aesthetically better than any European culture. For me, it triggers certain emotions.*

A negative response from students when they are presented with an opportunity to engage with indigenous knowledge was mentioned by one lecturer. LSMW3U said that students demonstrated diminished interest in indigenous knowledge, labelling it as underdeveloped. The comment could be an indication of how students experience eurocentric knowledge that is masquerading as universal knowing.

*I did my Master's on indigenous African systems, and for some years after then, I tried to work in that sort of context. They [students] weren't interested at all because they thought it was just undeveloped and not to bother and not relevant to their lives.*

### 5.4.3.3 African languages

The importance of mother-tongue education is well researched (Stoop, 2017). The development of African languages in South African universities in general has gained momentum in the last few years, with the focused development of African languages prevalent in the footprint of the universities. Several respondents made comments related to language.

Lecturer LSMB2C reflected on the use of *indigenous* African proverbs and symbols as preparatory measures: "*I found strength in certain African indigenous systems as tools for such preparatory measures. Those systems such as proverbs and symbols*". Lecturer LSF2U questioned how lecturers could decolonise design if they do not understand an African language. "*Also, how does decolonisation happen when design educators do not have vernacular languages as electives?*". Lecturer LSF1C highlighted the need for students and lecturers to read African scholars as a requirement for decolonising design education, "*Design educators need to highlight African work and thinking. Students and lecturers must begin to read African scholars*"

Student SIMB14U reflected on how the meaning of African patterns is lost when descriptive words are pronounced incorrectly.

*I do appreciate the patterns that they are using in African patterns. The thing I would actually take away from it is the naming. Most are named in African languages. Some are difficult to pronounce, and you actually lose the meaning of what it actually means.*

Student SIFB1U spoke about how designers could access a large market if they use African languages.

*...in South Africa, we have eleven official languages, and most of those languages are African languages, so I feel that creates a bigger target market because more people are interested in it, and it speaks to the majority of the population in South Africa, so I feel like it is a smart marketing move because more people will be drawn to it.*

Lecturer LSMB3T identified older generations as sources of local indigenous knowledge inspired by the cultural heritage.

*I think one of the things I typically like to do when we do the design elements, I typically draw students' attention to their immediate surroundings. I found that a lot of designs reside in the older generation because those are the people who knew certain things, how they operated, or certain levels of inspiration that we draw from that are rooted in our country, in our heritage and so forth. And draw from the - it could be how knitting is done. It could be how we normally carry babies on our backs, the elements of the design aesthetics that come from that element.*

Lecturer LIFB1U spoke about her experience with commercialising indigenous knowledge.

*Recently we were experimenting with indigenous games. So the students are creating an indigenous game, a mobile game for [redacted], and then with us now, we're trying to commercialise the mobile game. So inasmuch as it's not technically going into this specific culture, it's more to do with our heritage as South Africans and what we do, which we deem as being indigenous to us. So they need to commercialise that and package it nicely for us, presented well, so we're doing this hand in hand with marketing so that they can understand the role, how you would take something as simple as a game and transfer it into something commercial, but also understanding that you still need to keep their integrity of that game as well.*

#### **5.4.3.4 African universities**

In the context of the colonality of knowledge in the decolonial perspective, the African university is defined as a home for plurality and all cosmologies where the knowledge of all humanity is placed on an equal footing (Fataar & Subreenduth, 2015; Fataar, 2018: 2). Mbembe describes the African university as a concept that will extend beyond the borders of a single nation-state; it questions and challenges the spatial politics of decolonisation to focus on the future of humanity instead of demographic classifications (2016: 35). Gray responds to the call for 'autonomy' by what he terms corporatised South African universities; he argues these will not be "able to deal adequately with problems that are invoked in the name of social justice such as marginalisation, unemployment, poverty and inequality" from their positions of autonomy (Gray, 2017b: 17). Similar concerns are raised by Mbembe.

*We need to decolonize the systems of access and management insofar as they have turned higher education into a marketable product, rated, bought and sold by standard units, measured, counted and reduced to staple equivalence by impersonal, mechanical tests and therefore readily subject to statistical consistency, with numerical standards and units. We have to decolonize this because it is deterring students and teachers from a free pursuit of knowledge. It is substituting this goal of the free pursuit of knowledge for another, the pursuit of credits. It is replacing scientific capacity and addiction to study and inquiry with salesman-like proficiency. (2016: 32)*

The reference to corporatised and neoliberal universities by South African academics should be considered in the context where there are diverse categories of universities and institutions of higher learning in South Africa. Lecturer LIF11U identified the lack of a clear definition of universities of technology in the South African university sector. She states that UoTs continued on the technikon trajectory even though the idea of technology in the visual arts is not fully interrogated.

*In my opinion, a University of Technology has not really been defined as a space in higher education. It has continued to a large extent as part of the previous technikon, and the notion of technology has not yet fully been unpacked within the visual arts specifically. As a once industry-focused education space, a UoT retains this link with industry but struggles to include research into its framework of education. The student who enters into a UoT is often an individual with an APS score of 30 or less. The student is often from a public secondary school that does not necessarily offer arts as an examination subject. Socio-economic factors that affect these students are very visible in their responses to projects in materials available, knowledge generation etc.*

Lecturers commented on the global nature of the African University. Lecturer LIM11U said an African university must be "conscious of global trends" while celebrating Africanness:

*I think the university needs to be aware and conscious of global trends, which is quite important. It needs to ensure what that will do is it will ensure that it is cutting edge. But at the same time, I think there's an opportunity for African universities to celebrate their Africanness, and I think that's lacking. Not for lack of trying, I think it's a really big mountain to climb.*

Lecturer LIMB3U believes that the African university should be closely aligned with the globalised design industry, producing students who will change the "current human conditions"; lecturers need to have a highly detailed understanding of the students they are teaching.

*Well, I think I will maybe come from a different angle. I think the curriculum should be designed to match the realities of specific industries. It must be dedicated to producing young people or, let me say, a new generation of young people trained specifically to focus on changing the current human condition. I think, as a strong believer, I think that that should be done through entrepreneurial activities. If we're speaking of an African university, the educators or the lecturers need to understand their clients or the type of students they have. Very detailed understanding of the type of students they are dealing with, and then, in that case, we will be able to solve the problems that society is facing.*

Consideration was given to the context where African universities operate. Lecturer LIMB4U warns that we should not exceptionalise the African university as different from other universities. He also brings to the fore the importance of context for an African university.

*This is about considering the African context of the university. However, a university remains a university wherever it is; we do not talk about American, European or Asian universities. We must be careful not to over-exceptionalise the African university as being different from other universities around the world. So, the African University is about taking the African context into account.*

For lecturer LIFB2U, the embedded context of an African university is important. Lecturers must seek local examples from which to teach. These spaces need to avoid perpetuating eurocentric views.

*The characteristics of an African university in general, immersed in context, definitely. I used to always, very arrogantly for years, I would say we need to transfer knowledge to communities, and for many years now, I've kind of modified my language and reduced my arrogance and become a lot more humble. I hope, and I say, that we need to exchange knowledge. So, I think that for an African university to be meaningful, it has to be based and deeply embedded in context, and we really need to uproot.*

Lecturer LIMC1U identifies the community-focused nature of the African university as a commonality. He also noted the expectations that African universities be involved in "issues that trouble us."

*I think it is almost like the historiography of African universities. The history of it, and I think it is again a case of microaggression. It is a position of power when you say you are from Africa or South Africa, and you say it within a global north community, whether European, the Americas, or Asia. Africa looks almost like in this context of what one sees as developing, and if one sees what the focus of many African universities is that it is much more community-focused. There is a common basis on which growth takes place, and I do not think one finds it in other universities. I have already had the opportunities to teach at other universities and also be involved in projects in Asia and Europe, too, and I do not think it comes off so strong that the focus or the emphasis is on how what you are doing now influences the community you come from. The emphasis is more on how you favour the individual and what's best for that individual. Within that is an inherent benefit what is essentially the DNA of all the African universities I have been involved in now is that the socioeconomics, social-political, and social-ecological climates often determine the positioning that African universities occupy. I think because of all these complexities in our everyday society. There is an expectation placed on African universities about what you, as thought leaders, do about the issues that trouble us. We, us, they, and them are collective terminology used in African universities. I think there is less self-reliance on individual capacity or a specific skill set or expertise group of actors. I think there is a very natural overlap of expertise.*

Lecturer LIMB2U also spoke about the expectation that African universities need to be contextualised in "African-related issues" related to the socio-economic and cultural spheres.

*In my opinion, African universities should be where African-related issues, socio-economic solutions, and cultural topics are taught. Then, make scholars from other continents pay to observe and learn from us.*

Lecturer LIMB1U reflected on how he envisaged an African university by reflecting on his childhood experience that was filled with indigenous spiritual knowledge which he experienced as currently taboo.

*I remember when I was a child, when I was still growing up, we were actually taught to understand the uses of plants, of animals and the locality, and all of the additional taboos that were associated with all of these things we have talked about were spiritual situations and things like those, so I think that would be a kind of university, which is characterised by an educational system where a child is expected to grow and behave according to those or some of the accepted norms like religious, political, cultural norms and so on?*

The spirituality attached to his culture was also raised by SIMB2U:

*I could tell them an old story of my family because my family has a huge history in Mozambique, that's really originally where they came from. So, I first tell them my story of how our clan kind of got started and then from there I'd go into details of how we were just one clan and the grandfather had lots of children and something spiritual happened. Something that he could not control and then sent us to different places all over Africa, it is colourful. Actually, I have been to the place of our culture and there are lots of colours, lots of mountains, green grass, and flowing rivers today. In a sense, it is a very spiritual space. I try and make it as respectful as I can by telling them, you know like there's lush flowing water and green grass big tall mountains.*

#### 5.4.3.5 Discussion

South African design educators address the advancement of indigenous knowledge in the decolonial perspective from several perspectives (di Monte-Milner, 2017; Giloi, 2017; Mastamet-Mason, Müller & Van der Merwe, 2017; Mchunu, 2017; Newport, 2017; Osman & Musonda, 2017). A few students expressed something like a form of Steve Biko's Black Consciousness when expressing their approval for African cultural elements in a design context. This captures the essence of what decolonised design education aims to achieve. The response of student SIMB17U in the context of the account by lecturer LSF2U is summed up by the statement that "*decolonising education needs to start with how we view ourselves first and how one is perceived by others*". The role of the design educator is to be a partner and facilitate the development of a positive outlook toward indigenous knowledge. The position of African visual culture as indigenous knowledge is considered in this study. This role of the design educator to advance indigenous knowledge will be challenging given the historical degradation of indigenous knowledge. Some lecturer responses reflected these challenges, where students themselves showed diminished interest in indigenous knowledge. The level of confidence attained by a student during their education is proven to be essential and could be achieved through a human-centred approach (Yiannakaris, 2017).

The experiences of some lecturers capture the impact of the eurocentric foundation of design education on students, where local knowledge is neglected and eurocentric knowledge, such as the Bauhaus design, reified. Lecturers' responses indicate how they navigated the eurocentric foundation of design education. One developed a reading list to promote South African perspectives, while other spoke about renewing the sources of knowledge and the methodologies of teaching, with reference to Freire. In general, design educators need to be critically conscious of the eurocentric foundation of their design education and consider how they are perpetuating a eurocentric approach in their teaching. Critical reflection by students on their lived experiences can also be considered a strategy to introduce indigenous knowledge into the design curriculum. When students such as SIMB8U make comments describing their culture as "stuck in its old ways", design educators could use such comments to open dialogue on the eurocentric foundations of design.

The global reach of the design industry and the opportunities it offers are reasons many students choose to study design. Ndlovu-Gatsheni describes one of the demands of the Rhodes Must Fall movement as education centred on Africa with global competitiveness (2020: 895). Dei argues for the hybridity of knowledge and the interplay between different knowledges to unlock the value of indigenous knowledge (2000: 113). Lecturers suggested that students should be able to solve local problems globally and vice versa, although one lecturer was concerned that a decolonial approach might lead to political pressure which limits design thinking geographically. Considering these comments in the context of Kruger's argument that design as a discipline cannot be decolonised due to its structural relationship with neoliberalism (2017), the local/global context of design education requires interrogation from the coloniality of knowledge perspective. Advancing plurality while being critically aware of one own bias and grounding will be a requirement for design educators' working towards decoloniality.

Lecturer LSMW3U commented on how explicit module content and assessment criteria required by university administration leads to situations that frustrate students, inappropriate expectations are placed on design education. He states, "They want academic checks to occur on tracked planning." The situation described by LSMW3U reflects the lecturers' experiences regarding the quality assurance frameworks put in place by institutions to satisfy the criteria of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). The issue here is the ambiguity of design education in the first place. Secondly, engagement around decoloniality does not fit into the prescribed framework of rubrics, module descriptors and assessment criteria.

Design educators who participated in this research made the case for mother tongue education. Lecturers pointed to the need for students and lecturers to read African scholars, which would in turn enable decolonised design education. Language was also highlighted in its proverbs and symbols by some lecturers, linking to the argument that African oral literature is a rich source of material for socially-engaged student projects (Mchunu, 2017). One lecturer even suggested that decolonisation is not feasible unless design educators can speak an African language. Reference was made to older generations as a rich reservoir of inspiration in African culture. One student made the point that the use of African languages would allow designers to access a larger market, linking to a comment by a lecturer on the general need to commercialise indigenous knowledge. Students spoke about the problems caused by the hegemony of English, such as the difficulty of communicating indigenous culture in English in class. The implications of African languages for dialogue as a signature pedagogy in design necessitate consideration

for building design vocabulary in African languages, in line with Shreeve. She describes dialogue as enabling students to "practice arguments, explain thinking processes and learn the languages of design, whether verbal, visual, critical, historical or contemporary" (2016: 88).

The African university is defined as a place of equal plurality. In the diverse South African higher education landscape, the concept of a university of technology is not yet fully developed, especially where technology links with art and design. The African university as a model seems useful in this regard. It is seen as a space where Africanness is celebrated while being fully conscious of global trends. The linkages between the global design industry and African universities are important, with a focus on producing students who can impact the current human condition and lecturers with a clear understanding of the students they are teaching. The African university is not exceptionalised from its international counterparts. All universities need to be comparable, but, in addition, an African university takes into account its African context. Lecturers in the African university use local examples, methods and styles. The African university is also community focused, which means it is engaged with "issues that trouble us." In the African university, indigenous knowledge and spirituality are acknowledged and celebrated.

The indigenous knowledge theme concludes the section on decolonial perspectives. The next and final chapter presents the conclusions and implications of the research.



# CHAPTER 6

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

### 6.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, the factual and conceptual conclusions and implications of the research are discussed. This chapter is also structured so as to present themes that can be considered by design educators for translation into a conceptual framework for citizen designer education focused on their individual design disciplines. Possible further research emanating from this study is then identified, followed by an assessment and critique of the research. The contribution made by this research to the field of design education is discussed in the concluding remarks.

This research explores the role that critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives can play in a design pedagogy framework for citizen designer education in the context of South African universities of technology. I argue that South Africa, in the context of its colonial and apartheid history and faced with increasing social and economic inequality that negatively impacts social justice, requires conscientised citizen designers who are able to think and act beyond current paradigms and practices. This in turn will require that South African design educators are capacitated to educate conscientised citizen designers.

Through my exposure to critical citizenship and decolonial perspectives, I came to realise that these two perspectives can make a significant contribution to the development of South African citizen designers, living in what is known to be the most unequal society in the world because of the past and current social and economic injustices. The case study underpinning this study involved data collected via a survey of 21 South African design educators, interviews with 10 South African design educators and interviews with 23 South African design students. An inductive qualitative content analysis of the data was conducted.

### 6.2 Conclusions drawn from the findings and implications

To answer the main research question posed in this study, of how critical citizenship perspectives and decolonisation perspectives can contribute to a design pedagogy framework for citizen designer education in the context of South African universities of technology, various central themes were identified within the critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives. These were presented as a conceptual framework that allows design educators to consider and relate the themes to their own teaching contexts. Design is a highly diverse field that consists of multiple disciplines to which design educators can select and apply the themes most relevant in their own contextualised design pedagogy frameworks for citizen designer education.

## **6.2.1 Conclusions and implications related to critical citizenship perspectives**

Conclusions are now discussed in relation to the themes identified in the empirical data. To highlight themes from a critical citizenship perspective that might contribute most fruitfully to a pedagogical framework for citizen designer education in South Africa, the following thematic areas were the focus: learning environment and safe space, power relations, dialogue, discomfort, social justice and the citizen designer.

### **6.2.1.1 Conclusions and implications regarding the learning environment and safe space**

In the learning environment and safe space theme, sub-themes were identified as follows: lecturers' and students' views on safe spaces covering self-awareness, interaction with fellow students, physical comfort, access to equipment, arrangement of the physical working environment and inspiration in the environment. Within a critical citizenship context, safe spaces allow lecturers and students to become familiar with and proficient in engaging with difficult and uncomfortable topics, such as those associated with a decolonisation perspective. In a design education context, it is paramount that students and lecturers are able to flourish in environments that they experience as safe and respectful.

Design educators who participated in the interviews and survey recognised that safe spaces in design education require alignment with their perceived purposes of design education, which was expressed as pushing boundaries and gaining new perspectives. When invoking the concept of safe spaces in a design education context, the critical consciousness of educators regarding the implications of declaring a safe space is essential. The didactic training and teaching experience of design educators, therefore, come into focus when the idea of safe spaces is considered because the ability of design educators to deal with difficult and challenging topics improves as they become more skilled and experienced in teaching. The teaching experience of design educators is also crucial: students reported that lecturers instilled confidence in students by demonstrating their professional abilities as well as by treating all students equally. Although the fundamental concept of a safe space can be facilitated in design education through studio pedagogy, there was also caution that being too safe can impede the development of the critical thinking skills necessary to solve complex societal problems. It was felt that such problems cannot be resolved from a position of comfort. Design education that avoids disagreement and divergence will deprive students of opportunities to develop coping mechanisms where social disagreement is normalised and tolerated. These coping mechanisms are fundamentally important for students navigating experiences such as the #Feesmustfall and #Rhodesmustfall campaigns as well as working in the design industry in general.

Design students associated safe spaces with issues such as self-awareness, interaction with fellow students, physical comfort, access to equipment, arrangement of the physical working environment and inspiration in the environment. Students' self-awareness in safe spaces manifested as their feelings of appreciation for not being publicly exposed to their shortcomings or inabilities, being able to be themselves and having the courage to trust their creativity that could go against what they were taught in class. Students also mentioned their interaction with other students as an essential aspect of feeling safe in the studio environment; feelings of insecurity are perpetuated when students feel that there is always someone else in the group who has the same ideas that they have; in certain cases, this experience might cause students to feel more comfortable working

alone. Students also mentioned the benefits of working together with 'like-minded' creatives. Design educators need to be critically aware of how students experience the design studio, and how lecturers can assist students to navigate emotions and perceptions, especially in culturally diverse environments. Students reflected on the inspiration they got from their studio and the campus environment that impacted positively on their creativity and feeling welcome in their environment. Students attributed feelings of safety (which can also be interpreted as feelings of belonging) to physical comfort in their learning environment. Students link physical comfort to well-resourced studios with the required advanced equipment and technology that is not generally available to students. The physical appearance and characteristics of learning spaces, such as the size, accessibility (access hours), cleanliness and staying in the same venue all day, influence students' emotions. Feelings of being secure/safe were also linked to small class groups. The continued viability of small-class groups and well-resourced studios is threatened by the massification and commercialisation of higher education. The diminishing South African fiscal outlook means that the government will struggle to maintain current funding levels to the NSFAS, which in turn also threatens the viability of small-class groups and well-resourced studios. These pressures will force design educators to be more vocal and engaged in institutional and national decision-making forums about the impact thereof on their disciplines.

#### **6.2.1.2 Conclusions and implications regarding power relations**

The following sub-themes were identified in the power relations theme: transitioning to higher education, personality traits and power relations, and demographics and power relations. The ability of students and lecturers to engage in "critical and structural social analysis involving knowledge and power" (Johnson and Morris, 2010: 90) is central to the theme. Students and lecturers reflected on how the experiences of students in the shift from high school and orientation into higher education had an impact on power relations between students themselves and their lecturers. Respondents stated that over time students and lecturers negotiate and change the power relations that are impacted by ageism, racism, culture, demographics and geographics. South African design educators need to be aware of the context of new design students in their first-year of studies; students may require additional support programmes beyond the curriculum to better equip them specifically in design education and the design studio context.

Lecturers mentioned academic pressure created by the 'publish or perish' syndrome and their fear of power imbalances (which stood out as a future challenge for design educators) as factors influencing power relations. Design educators who adopt the approach of critical pedagogy will need to negotiate the loss of power and embrace equalisation of power relations with their students. The partnership and interdependence of students and lecturers also emerged from responses as crucial aspects of negotiating power relations in the design studio. Design educators' and students' success in design education is fundamentally linked to the relationship of trust between them. Within the South African context, the culture of respect for elders can make this process difficult for students, especially those from rural areas who are often more strongly identified with traditional cultures of authority. They may find it more difficult to be engaged in critical pedagogy because it challenges the authority of their elders, in this case their lecturers. The sensitivity and insight of design educators and students towards cultural values and power relations in the diverse South African society will help to build their trust relationship.

Design educators' awareness of students who do not participate actively or who experience feelings of being excluded in the design studio is critical. Students made comments reflecting the impact of individual personalities on studio dynamics. Some spoke about their confidence levels when it comes to a student's perceived power in the design studio environment. The secondary school background of students was also a factor that emerged in relation to confidence and the subsequent sense of a student's power in studio. The social and cultural disparity between men and women and perceived expectations based on gender stereotypes were also mentioned as factors that impacted negatively on power relations. The dominance of the English language as medium of academic instruction was also a factor raised in the context of power relations. This is critical to consider in the South African context where English is not their mother tongue for the vast majority of students. In future, design educators will increasingly need to reflect on their role in facilitating design education in vernacular African languages. The demographics of students and lecturers also impacts design education. The demographic factors mentioned in responses point to the need for design educators and students to be well informed about the demographic representation in their studio. Lecturers and students who are critically aware of the studio demographics will be better prepared to navigate critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives with skill and sensitivity, not just because they are aware of 'who is in the room' but also because there is an acknowledgement of who is not represented. Hesitancy to engage with power dynamics in politically charged environments was observed in some respondents and might suggest an inherent problem in studio-based education, where educators and students prefer engaging in comfortable 'low-level' procedural discussions instead of critical reflections and engagements.

### **6.2.1.3 Conclusions and implications regarding dialogue**

The theme of dialogue was discussed from both lecturer and student perspectives. Dialogue is intrinsic to design education, critical citizenship and the decolonisation perspectives. In design education, dialogue is a signature pedagogy that is mainly used to establish the language of the discipline with students. In critical citizenship education, dialogue is an essential skill used to develop citizens with a critical worldview who see themselves as social and political agents. Decolonial dialogue, in turn, aims to unsettle western epistemologies. Considering the extreme disparity in the socio-economic legacy of the colonial and apartheid past and the current political corruption in South Africa, engaging in difficult/sensitive dialogue is politically and ethically imperative.

When initiating a dialogue, it is essential for design educators to declare their positionality on the topic, thereby allowing students to gain insight into the judgements made by the lecturer. It was also important for educators not to claim positions on the basis of knowledge holders but rather to facilitate participatory dialogue that allows new ideas to come to the fore. By declaring their positionality and avoiding the position of knowledge holder, lecturers come to terms with vulnerability. Knowledge and skills gained through traditional teacher training courses and academic research helps design educators to navigate such vulnerability and enable the full potential of dialogue as pedagogy. The discomfort that develops through meaningful dialogue on topics that have the potential to bring about real change can be mediated by experienced design educators using careful implementation of a pedagogy of discomfort (Zembylas, 2015).

Lecturers spoke about several strategies through which they deployed dialogue as pedagogy. Storytelling with art and design-related examples from student contexts was one very appealing such strategy. Tapping into storytelling within the rich but neglected context of the African oral tradition is immensely valuable for design education, and is also a potential source to increase the available epistemology and literature on local African visual culture. Lecturers also reflected on the utility they found in dialogues with students about who they are, their value systems and their heritage, which reaffirmed the value of dialogue. The challenge for design educators now is to translate these dialogues into texts (in the broadest sense) to enrich the literature on African design education. Maintaining and strengthening the value of dialogue as a signature pedagogy in design education needs further consideration in the context of the commercialisation and massification of higher education.

Educators reflected on student participation in dialogue, observing that personal circumstances play a role. Students from poor, traumatised or disadvantaged backgrounds find it challenging to participate in dialogue, in part due to their previous negative experiences associated with dialogue. Students indicated that structured dialogue which allows for self-directed learning is an option to facilitate dialogue. To further support the structured approach, students identified the strategy of breaking problems down into manageable units as a way to facilitate solution finding. In general, students responded positively to the idea of engaging with difficult contemporary issues through dialogue and they described it as a constructive opportunity to develop holistic views of such issues.

#### **6.2.1.4 Conclusions and implications regarding discomfort**

Students highlighted the need to discuss the history of South Africa in order to learn from the mistakes of the past. Students drew attention to the potential for difficult discussions to develop understanding and common ground. From my own experience, political discussions create discomfort especially for white design educators who have to reflect on the apartheid past of South Africa. Careful planning of critical citizenship education can help to address difficult and frequently avoided topics that might cause discomfort to students and lecturers (Costandius & Bitzer, 2014). Discomfort as pedagogy (Zembylas, 2015) is an avenue through which design educators could purposefully navigate discomfort. Considering the question "Is the cost of causing students discomfort and pain worthwhile pedagogically, politically, and ethically?" (Zembylas, 2015: 173), became evident in the data that – from a student's perspective – the advantages of participating in difficult/sensitive discussions are substantial. Students showed strong support for engaging with socio-political topics in class, and lecturers also indicated varying levels and reasons for support of such discussions. Some concern was expressed about discussions that failed to consider alternative views because they might lead to division. Design educators highlighted the importance of designers having insight into the relationship between design and politics, which is well documented (Fry, 2011). The willingness of design educators and students to declare their political outlook in political discussions can only increase the impact and meaning of such discussions because it mitigates possible covert political agendas.

### 6.2.1.5 Conclusions and implications regarding social justice

In the social justice theme, the following sub-themes were identified: equality as social justice, fairness as social justice, freedom as social justice, social justice attained through inclusion/participation, social justice attained through awareness, teaching social justice, advancing social justice through research as well as design education, and social justice and the design industry. Concern for social justice is central to the critical citizenship perspective; however, when social justice is engaged from a critical pedagogy approach, it can be perceived as counteracting the goals of the decolonial perspective. Some argued that critical pedagogy does not address the origins of oppression (Postma, 2019: 17). The possible pitfalls of indiscriminately applying critical theory for social justice education are relevant for design educators. These pitfalls have the potential to perpetuate eurocentric and exclusionary cultural views, which just replaces one hegemonic system with another.

The majority of students described social justice within or closely linked to the concepts of equality, fairness (between individuals and systems) and freedom (where individuals have a say in all aspects of life that impacts them), which can also be related to aspects of socio-economic circumstances. The conceptual connection of social justice with equality reaffirmed the case for South African design educators to meaningfully engage with the root causes of the massive inequality that threatens the aspiration of South Africans to live in a socially just, free and peaceful society. The student responses about how they, as designers, can contribute to social justice in the world focused on inclusive participation by end users and creating awareness through design to advance social justice issues. It is evident from the student's responses that there is scope for deepening their conceptual understanding of where design as a profession can impact social justice in all spheres of life. Predictably, lecturers had more complex ideas of how social justice might be advanced through design. The metaphor used by LIMC1U that design education can act as acupuncture for tension points resonated strongly with me, and suggests design educators can use design to release tension caused by inequality.

The focus on developing self-confidence in design students is seen as a social justice project that will increase the potential impact of citizen designers. By implementing a pedagogy of care (Tronto, 2018), design students' self-confidence can be fostered. A pedagogy of care enables students to make their voices heard through their practice and helps them realise the power they hold in their design work. The involvement of design educators in the development of citizen designers was identified as a social justice project in itself. The possibility of improving the socio-economic circumstances of design students and their communities by enabling them to engage in entrepreneurial activities was also described as a social justice project.

Design educators reflected on how their research activities can advance social justice. Examples of were presented research-informed teaching practices that create student awareness of social responsibility. Research in the area of social justice needs to be meaningful and avoid quick-fix solutions. In South Africa, there is an opportunity for design educators to use their research to explore the possibilities of critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives, and in turn to use this to improve their teaching practice. A specific area of research interest is how design education and the design industry can engage with social justice in the context of competing agendas and timeframes. Research

can also explore how design education conceptualises the relationship between designers and consumers and how this relationship can be transformed to be more socially just.

I suggest that South African citizen designers conscientised by design education that is purposefully infused with themes from critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives will be better prepared to address pressing social justice issues, such as the environment, infrastructure, justice and crime, access to opportunities, communication, race and gender, voice, choices, consequences and rights. These aspects, related to inequality and injustice, point to significant local issues of concern. South African design educators and citizen designers can address these through the lenses of critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives.

### **6.2.1.6 Conclusions and implications regarding the citizen designer**

In the citizen designer theme, the following sub-themes were identified: defining the citizen designer, theoretical knowledge associated with a citizen designer, contextual considerations and the conscientised citizen designer. The data showed that the knowledge of theory needed by a South African citizen designer is broad and transdisciplinary (see table 5.1. page 98). In-depth knowledge and understanding of community service and engagement was raised as a critical aspect of the knowledge base of a South African citizen designer. Contextual factors are also crucial to the South African citizen designer, where consideration for both local and global contexts can offer new solutions to problems. The attributes sought in South African citizen designers align with Freire's concept of conscientised individuals as "knowing subjects [who] achieve a deepening awareness both of the sociocultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality" (1972: 51).

When themes from the critical citizenship perspective are introduced to a design curriculum, the impact of this perspective on design terminology and student vocabularies requires consideration, especially regarding how design language can be extended and semiotic meanings deepened. A revaluation of current practices will help to de-centre the western conceptualisation of critical citizenship and, in the context of this study, the citizen designer (Jorgenson, 2016: 20). Example of de-centring the western conceptualisation of the South African citizen designer is for students to draw knowledge and understanding from their multifaceted roles in their local community and to counter attempts at homogeneity that facilitate eurocentrism (McDougall, 2005: 27).

Johnson and Morris describe the dispositions of a critical citizen as follows: "Actively questioning; critical interest in society and public affairs; seeking out and acting against injustice and oppression. Commitment and motivation to change society; civic courage; responsibility for decisions and actions" (2010: 90). From the data, a South African citizen designer can be described as having a deep understanding of self, ethics, and critical thinking and operating in transdisciplinary settings with a focus on the tangible betterment of the sustainable quality of all life through a caring conscience. Comparing the Johnson and Morris description of a critical citizen and the description of the South African citizen designer developed from the data collected in this study, the correlation between the two is evident and substantiates the relevance of the critical citizenship perspective to the development of a citizen designer.

## 6.2.2 Conclusions and implications related to decolonisation perspectives

Conclusions related to the themes identified in the decolonisation perspectives are discussed in the section that follows. On the question of what themes in the decolonisation perspectives could contribute to a pedagogical framework for citizen designer education in South Africa, the following themes were identified: belonging, cultural representation and indigenous/local knowledge.

### 6.2.2.1 Conclusions and implications regarding belonging

Under the theme of belonging, the following sub-themes emerged: not belonging, identity and the legacy of racial and cultural segregation caused by apartheid. The idea of belonging is significant to the decolonial perspective, where conceptions of belonging are implicated through the coloniality of being. Critical citizenship perspectives inherently denote belonging through the status that citizenship bestows upon citizens. Three facets of design education emerged from the data that meaningfully impact design educators' and students' sense of belonging. Firstly, the relationship between design educators and students; secondly, the physical environment where design educators and students are located; and thirdly, the content of the curriculum. Each of these three aspects has the potential to develop different kinds of belonging.

Participants pointed to factors that caused feelings of not belonging, such as the rigid university structures that ignores flexibility in African traditions such as Ubuntu, the sense that South African design students are "very far away from established ideas of who they are and what they feel" (LIF11U). These are factors that impact on the sense of belonging of both lecturers and students. Student SIMB8U indicated that design as a career in his community is not an option and that he could change this by going back to his community by educating them about design. The status of designers in rural/small-town communities (physical environment) is diminished in that it is stated that the perception exists that design is only valued for its aesthetic contribution in some rural communities. The true value of design is not fully developed in all rural/small-town communities in South Africa. Design educators have to consider their role in educating rural communities about the potential of design as a career.

Personal factors such as language, their own understanding of what is meant by being African and environmental factors, such as globalisation, potentially impact a student or lecturer's sense of belonging. Lecturer LIM12U grappled with conceptions of African identity and described a "good Africanized learning environment" as participative and inclusive that could therefore be defined as a potentially enabling environment for developing belonging. Respondents stated that inclusive shared experiences, beliefs and personal characteristics foster a sense of belonging which is instrumental in identity formation. Some participants also questioned conceptions of African identity and illustrated the complexity of the personal and environmental factors involved in the context of an African university. Design educators are integral in facilitating learning experiences that can aid in the development of a sense of belonging in students. Learning experiences to develop a sense of belonging in students need to include reflective practices. The success of such learning experiences will be influenced by the diversity of the lecturing staff



involved. Ubuntu was also identified as a concept that could be interrogated by design educators to assist students in fostering belonging.

Belonging in a South African context cannot be explored without considering the legacy of apartheid as a complex of personal and environmental factors that develop through shared experiences of exclusion. In South Africa, the lived experience of rural/small town and city-based citizens are highly disparate and this is evident in the disparity between some urban and rural village/small town schools. Design educators need to take note of the differences between the city and rural/small-town students, as mentioned by LIFB1U and SIMB8U. The legacy of geographical segregation that is still prevalent in the lived experience of South Africans is a contextual factor that has implications for how students and lecturers experience belonging.

The importance of a reciprocal relationship between students and lecturers was highlighted by student SIMB10U who stated that lecturers and students must take responsibility for their respective roles. The need to be respected and valued in a reciprocal relationship is a determining factor in developing belonging (Mahar, Cobigo & Stuart, 2013: 1026). Lecturer LIF11U pointed to the established identities of students that are far removed from the context they find themselves in when entering design education. This socio-cultural gap between design educators and students meaningfully impacts their sense of belonging. The challenges inherent in complex diversity are another factor that meaningfully impact design educators' and students' sense of belonging. The comment from student SIMB12U reflected for me the essence of an ideal outcome when design educators and students connect through their identities, "I would say it is not about fitting in; it is about being different and being comfortable about being yourself."

Including or excluding a student's culture in the curriculum also influences the student's sense of belonging. In the context of the colonality of knowledge, specific demands are placed on the design curriculum. These demands include a focus on indigenous knowledge systems, advancement of plurality that is open to all knowledge of humanity, and inclusive of all cosmologies and worldviews that are placed on an equal footing (Fataar, 2018: 2). Considering these expectations in the context of the neo-liberal nature of the design industry, it needs to be acknowledged that the development of belonging is a complex task.

The role of memory in relation to the identified sub-themes in the theme of belonging is also relevant. Design educators are responsible for designing learning experiences that create memories for students. Design education has the potential to develop inclusive memories through shared experiences. Such experiences could include visits/storytelling/recollections/visualisations of cultural activities such as anniversaries, feasts, rituals, rites and food that they could have experienced.

#### **6.2.2.2 Conclusions and implications regarding cultural representation**

In the cultural representation theme, different experiences of cultural representation and representing and interpreting African culture were identified as sub-themes. Students reported that projects which involved their culture assisted them in having a better understanding of themselves and their culture. Students reflected on the opportunity

they had to research and discuss their cultures with other people, such as their parents, and how this created a deeper understanding of their own culture. Several students reported discouraging experiences where they did not 'see' their cultures in the design curriculum. At the same time, the statement was also made by a student that there are too many cultures for all to be included in the design curriculum.

Some students used design terminology such as colour, shape and line to describe their cultures. Several students described their visual culture as cultural values without mentioning design terminology. The concern was raised about how the meaning of African patterns is lost when descriptive words are mispronounced. Students reflected on the complexity of African cultural semiotics. The risks of indiscriminately using shapes and colours that could be offensively abused was raised as a concern by students. This concern brings to the fore the critical issue of the preparedness of lecturers to give guidance when they are not familiar with different cultures. How can design educators navigate this complexity, and who will create the mainstream resources that might assist in addressing this issue?

The complexities of the background of student cultures also became evident. It was observed that traditional culture is evolving, and student culture is influenced by the spaces they visit and the people they meet. It is the role of the design educators to navigate cultural identity with students while acknowledging the hybrid nature of developing cultures. Students potentially find it difficult to incorporate their cultural identity into their design work because they are simultaneously in the process of developing their identity as design students and professionals within a multicultural metropolitan context.

### **6.2.2.3 Conclusions and implications regarding indigenous/local knowledge**

The indigenous/local knowledge theme identified sub-themes of the global/local, euro-centrism, African languages and African universities. The implications of indigenous knowledge in the local and global context of design education were considered by design educators. Global knowledge was contextualised locally, and students' international employability (competitiveness) was considered. Several lecturers mention the de-centring of western thought. Some concerns were voiced that Africans should not only aspire to European ideals, and it was recognised that local knowledge is not always valued in design education despite the rich local cultural and historical resources available. The eurocentric nature of design education and the lack of African cultural references create a disconnect between self-identification and the cultural borders of students. To counter eurocentric approaches, reading lists were proposed that include more African authors. Specifically, a South African perspective on gender issues was mentioned. Design educators were cautioned to guard against window-dressing eurocentric pedagogies with an African veneer. There is a need to change teaching methodologies as a requirement for decolonising design education that will involve reflection on current practices by design educators.

The importance of mother-tongue education was mentioned by several respondents who commented on the issue of language. Their concerns extended to how the meaning of African patterns is lost when descriptive words are mispronounced. The question was

raised if decolonisation and the inclusion of indigenous African knowledge is feasible if design educators cannot speak an African language. There is a need for building design vocabulary in African languages, seen in light of the statement by Shreeve where she describes dialogue that enables students to "practice arguments, explain thinking processes and learn the languages of design, whether verbal, visual, critical, historical or contemporary" (2016: 88). For African visual culture to be competitive on the global stage, design students will be advantaged if they are able to describe their visual culture through design terminology. A student also reflected on how designers could access a sizeable untapped market if they access African languages where the sensitive commercialisation of indigenous knowledge would benefit local communities. Older generations were also identified as a source of local indigenous knowledge.

Lecturers commented on the global nature of the African university, where educators in the African university need to be aware of global trends while celebrating Africanness. A lecturer mentioned that the African university ought to be closely aligned with the design industry, which is globalised. The linkages between the global design industry and African universities are seen as necessary; however, the focus is on producing students that can impact the current human condition with lecturers that have a good understanding of the students in their classes. The context where African universities operate was reflected in responses; some cautioned that the African university cannot be exceptionalised from its international counterparts. All universities ought to be comparable, even while an African university explores its African context. Lecturers mentioned that in African universities, lecturers need to find local examples to teach in spaces that must not perpetuate eurocentric views. The African university is also seen as community focused and engaged with local issues of concern. The community-focused nature of the African university was a broad commonality that informed expectations of how African universities need to be involved in African-related socio-economic and cultural issues. It is also envisaged that the spirituality of African culture will be reflected in an African university, so that it will reflect on and advance indigenous spiritual knowledge. The African university was described by respondents as a space for plurality. Advancing plurality, while being critically aware of own bias and grounding, is a requirement for design educators' working towards decoloniality. The African university is a space where Africanness is celebrated while remaining fully conscious of global trends.

Design education has a significant role to play in the context of coloniality of being because it has the potential to advance the global 'belonging' of African culture. Design educators' acknowledgement of the contribution of African culture, especially in the face of "western cultural and capital overkill" (Dei, 2006: 4), is critical in changing the narratives of inferiority and superiority that continuously surface. The role of the design educator is to facilitate the development of a positive outlook toward indigenous knowledge through epistemological inclusion and validation. Design educators who advance indigenous knowledge will, however, find this challenging due to the historical devaluation of indigenous knowledge. Design educators need to be critically conscious of the considerable eurocentric foundation of their own design education. They run the risk of naively perpetuating a eurocentric approach in their teaching if they continue to teach in the same ways they were taught. Encouraging critical reflection by students on their lived experiences can also be a strategy for educators to introduce indigenous knowledge into the design curriculum. When students such as SIMB8U make comments describing

their culture as "stuck in its old ways", design educators could use such comments to initiate dialogue about the eurocentric foundations of design. In this way they can, for example, implement Dei's (2000: 113) argument for the hybridity of knowledge and the interchange between different pieces of knowledge to unlock the actual value of indigenous knowledge.

The association of design with neoliberalism means that design education's local/global context requires interrogation from the coloniality of knowledge perspective in order to engage the who and how of knowledge formation from an epistemological and power perspective. The global reach of the design industry and the opportunities it offers are reasons many students choose to study design. Ndlovu-Gatsheni described one of the demands of the Rhodes Must Fall movement as education centred on Africa with global competitiveness (2020: 895). This is an achievable challenge in the South African context.

### **6.2.3 Conclusions and implications of the education of the design educator**

My own experience as a professional designer who became a lecturer at a technikon (now a UoT) based on my industry experience indicates possible hurdles for design educators at UoTs who are considering implementing themes from critical citizenship and decoloniality perspectives in design education. My experience suggests that design educators need to evaluate their experience and theoretical knowledge of educational theory before engaging with themes from critical citizenship and decoloniality perspectives. Pedagogies of discomfort/care/critical/dialogue that proffer critical citizenship and decoloniality perspectives can be harmful to educators and students if applied indiscriminately. Design educators will find it valuable to assess their experience and theoretical knowledge of all the themes listed in the updated conceptual framework in Figure 6.1.

### **6.2.4 Conceptual conclusions and implications**

The themes that emerged from the data can be broadly categorised into concepts related to context, African focus, personal development, and curriculum development. The context category determines the relevance and approach to be taken when engaging with the African focus, personal development, and curriculum development categories.

It can be argued that the African focus category should be included in the context category; however, from the decolonisation perspective, it is essential to elevate the African focus. When design educators engage in developing a framework for citizen designer education, it is essential that they first reflect on their specific context and have insight into the implications thereof. It could be said that design educators need to be conscientised regarding their context. The purpose of the African focus category is to focus explicitly on actions that will elevate Africa. The personal development category relates to the knowledge, skills and attributes a design educator should embody when engaging in educating citizen designers. The curriculum development category indicates aspects that relate to critical citizenship and decolonisation. These can be incorporated in a design pedagogy for educating citizen designers. In Figure 6.1, further examples are listed of concepts that can be considered in each category.

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**Figure 6.1: Updated conceptual framework of theoretical perspectives, methodology and data sources in the study.**

### **6.3 Critique of the research and further research**

The themes that were identified from the inductive content analysis of the empirical data are a reflection of the opinions of culturally diverse design students and educators who are predominantly associated with South African universities of technology. It is possible that the resulting themes could vary substantially if responses were collected from comprehensive or traditional South African universities. An exploratory table of themes is included here merely as a demonstration of the probable use of the themes identified. Further research is required to determine how these themes can be interpreted and integrated into a framework for citizen designer education that is applicable to the various specialised disciplines in the field of design and the various contexts where teaching and learning are facilitated. In my reflection upon concluding the study, I realise I could have drawn from and referenced more work from authors in and on the Global South. This is a rich and potentially vast area for extending the research.

### **6.4 Concluding remarks**

This research explores the contribution that critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives can add to a design pedagogy framework for citizen designer education in the context of South African universities of technology. I argue that South Africa, with the legacy of its colonial and apartheid history and the increasing social and economic inequality that negatively impacts social justice, requires conscientised citizen designers who are able to think and act beyond the current situation and discursive expectations. This will require design educators who work against domination by western knowledge and promote and advance African perspectives. This study contributes to the field of design education by identifying a wide variety of relevant and significant themes in critical citizenship and decolonisation perspectives that could be considered for implementation by design educators in their specific discipline working towards the development of a South African citizen designer.

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## Appendix A

### Design student interview consent form



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#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Dear (Student first name and surname)

I cordially invite you to participate in a research study entitled Exploring critical citizenship and decolonisation as a framework for design education in South Africa. The study is part of research towards my doctoral degree in the Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University. You are a preferred participant because the topic of critical citizenship and decolonisation is part of your theory course with [redacted].

Please take time to read the information in this leaflet. Contact me if you need additional information or if you want me to clarify aspects of the study. I will use the results of this study in my PhD and for scholarly articles. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Refusal to participate will not affect your studies in any way whatsoever. If you do agree to participate, you are also free to withdraw from the research at any point.

1. **Purpose of the study**

I have proposed a Framework for Design Education. This Framework is aimed at design lecturers as a guide on how they can discuss citizenship and decolonisation in class and the type of projects that they can give to students. This framework provides ideas for first, second and third-year work. Prof [redacted] discussed this framework in class. I need your input so that I can add value to the Framework. Your participation will give me an idea of what you think of the Framework. It will also allow you to express how would you like lecturers to handle decolonisation in class.

2. **Procedures**

*If you choose to participate in this study, please do the following:*

- Give consent (permission) for me to read your assignment about citizenship. This will help me to expand the Framework. Prof. [redacted] will remove your name from the assignment and forward the assignment to me in an anonymous text format. In this way, I will never know who wrote which assignment.
- Agree to participate in an interview about the framework. I would like to listen to your ideas and use these to improve or amend the framework, and to shape how lecturers should approach this in future. The interviews will take about 30

to 60 minutes. You will participate in a interview via Teams or a similar electronic platform. The interviews will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for you.

*How will I record your ideas?*

An audio recording of the discussions will be made during the interviews and then transcribed. I will provide a copy of the recording transcription to all participants and ask them to check if the transcription is accurate. I will reflect the ideas from your interview in my doctoral thesis. I will provide a copy of the transcription to you where you will have the opportunity to correct errors or add to sections that are not clear. As mentioned earlier, the input will be anonymous. I will also not identify the university or the department. I will keep the audio files on a memory stick for three years in a locked safe in my office, after which I will delete the raw data.

3. **Potential risks and discomforts**

I do not anticipate that there will be any risks, nor that the topic will create any discomfort.

4. **The potential benefits**

Your participation will enable me to improve the Framework and contribute to the development of design education. In addition, the Framework and your ideas could assist lecturers to enhance their approach to teaching critical citizenship and decolonisation. In exchange for your participation. I will also make an electronic copy of my thesis available (once it is finished), if you would like a copy.

5. **Payment for participation**

There is no payment for participating. I will, however, reimburse any travel costs you incur if you come to the campus for the interview.

6. **Confidentiality**

Information collected during this study will always remain confidential. As mentioned earlier, your name will not be connected to your assignment; Prof. [redacted] will remove your name. The transcription will not have your name or any information about you. I will only make the raw data available with your permission or as required by law. You may ask to look at the notes or listen to recordings at any stage. If you wish to edit any of this information, you will be allowed to do so. I will keep all notes and recordings on an external hard-drive locked in a locked safe in my office. I am the only person who has access to the safe. In order to protect your identity, your name or any organisation you are associated with will not be used. I will delete the raw data after three years.

7. **Participation and withdrawal**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Stellenbosch University Division for Research Development. You have the right to receive a copy of the Information and Consent form.

8. **Identification of the researchers**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me at:  
18844693@sun.ac.za  
Cell: 0827707763

You are also welcome to contact my supervisor:  
Prof. Elmarie Costandius  
Department of Visual Arts  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences



elmarie@sun.ac.za  
Tel.: (021) 808 3053

The next step  
If you are agree to participate,  
please complete the electronic Declaration of Consent  
by following the hyperlink below:

## Appendix B

# Design student interview guide



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### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENT INTERVIEWS

EXPLORING CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP AND DECOLONISATION  
AS A FRAMEWORK FOR  
DESIGN EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The interview will consist of three sections:

1. **Welcome**

I will welcome the participant and explain the study's value. I will stress that there are no right or wrong answers and that I want their honest opinion and ideas about the topic. My welcome and introduction will reflect on conceptions of citizenship, projects related to citizenship, design education methods, conceptions of decolonisation and actions related to decolonisation. These issues will have been covered by Prof. [redacted] with the students earlier in the quarter.

2. **Discussion**

I will start by asking participants how they understand the Framework and answering questions that they may have about the Framework.  
Open-ended question will initiate the focus group discussion as follows:  
Could you please reflect on the proposed Framework ?  
How should we approach citizenship and decolonisation?  
Follow up questions will prompt students to clarify issues.

3. **Summary and conclusion**

I will close the interview by summarising the main issues the student discussed. I will invite participants to reflect on what they have said and encourage them to contact me again later if they wish to add or adjust any of their comments made during the interview. I will inform them about the transcriptions and how I will provide them with a copy.

Thank the participants for their time.

# Appendix C

## Design educator interview consent form



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### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Dear Design Educator

My name is Herman Botes and I am a PhD candidate at Stellenbosch University. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project entitled EXPLORING CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP AND DECOLONISATION AS A FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project and contact me if you require further explanation or clarification of any aspect of the study. Also, your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

- 1. Purpose of the study**  
The study aims to propose a possible framework for South African Citizen Designer Education grounded in Critical Citizenship Discourse. This aim will be focussed on the South African context by triangulating design education with critical citizenship and decolonisation directive.
- 2. Procedures**  
If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things: The researcher will conduct a 20-30 minute semi-structured interview with you. The interview will commence with a 10-minute presentation of a possible framework for South African Citizen Designer Education. Interviews will be conducted via telephone or Videoconference at a suitable time selected by yourself.
- 3. Potential risks and discomforts**  
I do not anticipate any risk to you.
- 4. Potential benefits to subjects and/or to society**  
You may benefit from the study in that it is anticipated that the outcomes of this research could advance the field of Design education.
- 5. Payment for participation**  
You will not receive payment or gifts for participating.

6. **Confidentiality**

Any information that is gotten in connection with this study and that can be identified with you as participant will stay confidential and will be made known only with your permission or as required by law. You can ask to look at the notes or listen to your telephone or Videoconference recordings at any stage. If you want to edit any of this information you will be allowed to.

Your confidentiality will be protected by keeping all written notes and telephone or Videoconference recordings safe on an external hard-drive locked in a safe in my office. I am the only person who has access to the safe. I will also not use your name or any organisation you are associated with in the study, to protect your identity.

Results will be reported in my PhD Thesis. If you are interested, you will be told about the findings of the research.

If you contribute to the research, you will be given information of how the research will be done. You are free to stop taking part in the research without any negative consequences.

7. **Participation and withdrawal**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development. You have the right to receive a copy of the Information and Consent form.

8. **Identification of investigators**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact myself at:  
18844693@sun.ac.za  
Cell: 0827707763

You are also welcome to contact my supervisor:  
Prof Elmarie Costandius  
Department of Visual Arts  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
elmarie@sun.ac.za  
Tel: (021) 808 3053

The next step  
If you are agree to participate,  
please complete the electronic Declaration of Consent  
by following the hyperlink below:

## Appendix D

### Design educators interview guide



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#### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DESIGN EDUCATORS

##### INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

###### NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER OF RESEARCHER

Herman Botes

Tel.: 0827707763

Email: 18844693@sun.ac.za

###### TITLE OF RESEARCH

EXPLORING CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP AND DECOLONISATION AS A FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

###### PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

To propose a possible framework for South African Citizen Designer Education grounded in Critical Citizenship Discourse and the Decolonisation directive.

###### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

- (a) To identify the relationship between critical citizenship education and citizen designer education.
- (b) To identify which design education pedagogies are applied in citizen designer education.
- (c) To describe the relationship between critical citizenship education and design education decolonisation directive.
- (d) To describe the perceptions and attitudes of South African design educators towards the notion of citizen designer education
- (e) Develop a possible South African Citizen Designer Education framework grounded in Critical Citizenship theory and the decolonisation directive.

###### ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Participation in the research is voluntary.

All the participants in the research will be fully briefed and their participation will be voluntary. I will not use the names of the participants to keep their identities confidential. The information from the participants will be kept confidential and any personal information will not be shared with other participants.

###### INTERVIEW: INDIVIDUAL

Person interviewed

Date

Place

Duration

## **INTERVIEW STRUCTURE**

### **INTERVIEW: SEMI-STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

Person interviewed  
Date  
Place  
Duration

### **PURPOSE OF RESEARCH**

To propose a possible framework for South African Citizen Designer Education grounded in Critical Citizenship Discourse and the Decolonisation directive.

### **PURPOSE OF THIS INTERVIEW**

Obtain perceptions of participants regarding a proposed framework for South African Citizen Designer Education.

### **ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

All the participants in the research will be fully briefed and their participation will be voluntary. I will not use the names of the participants to keep their identities confidential. The information from the participants will be kept confidential and any personal information will not be shared with other participants.

## **INTERVIEW CONTENT**

### **1. Introduction**

- Explain objectives of the interview and explain what topic areas will be addressed
- Explanation of the potential value of the research as to how the information will be used for the benefit of design education
- Give an indication of the expected length of the interview.

### **2. List of topics regarding project**

- Conceptions of citizenship
- Projects related to citizenship
- Design education methods used
- Conceptions of decolonisation
- Actions related to decolonisation
- Reflection on experience as design educator

### **3. Closing**

- Summarise the main issues discussed
- Discuss the next course of action to be taken such as a possible follow-up interview
- Encourage participants to reflect on what they have said and to contact the researcher if they want to edit any of their comments made during the interviews.
- Thank the participant for his or her time

## Appendix E

# Design educator survey consent form



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### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Dear Design Educator

My name is Herman Botes, I am a PhD candidate at Stellenbosch University. I would like to invite you to participate in a research project entitled EXPLORING CRITICAL CITIZENSHIP AND DECOLONISATION AS A FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGN EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA. Project reference number: 9146.

Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project and contact me if you require further explanation or clarification of any aspect of the study. Also, your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part.

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to propose a possible framework for South African Citizen Designer Education grounded in Critical Citizenship Discourse. I will be triangulating design education and critical citizenship theories with the decolonisation directive within a South African context.

#### 2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

You may choose to participate in either an interview or complete an online survey. I will conduct a 15-20 minute semi-structured interview with you, or you may opt to complete an online survey consisting of the same questions. Interviews will be conducted via Skype™ or phone at a suitable time selected by yourself.

You will be requested to answer the following questions:

1. How would you define the term 'citizen designer'?
2. Can you describe any projects, assignments, theoretical work that you are or were involved with that you think could contribute to the development of a 'citizen designer'?
3. In your opinion, what theoretical or practical knowledge should a 'citizen designer' possess to have an impact?
4. Do you encourage your students to place issues of social justice before corporate or personal financial gain?
5. In your view, how can design educators decolonise design education? Do you have examples of where you have done it?
6. What do you think will be the greatest challenge for design educators in the next 20 years?

**3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

I do not anticipate any risk to you.

**4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

You may benefit from the study in that it is anticipated that the outcomes of this research could advance the field of Design education.

**5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

You will not receive payment or gifts for participating.

**6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is gotten in connection with this study and that can be identified with you as a participant will stay confidential and will be made known only with your permission or as required by law. You can ask to look at the notes or listen to your Skype™ recordings at any stage. If you want to edit any of this information you will be allowed to.

Your confidentiality will be protected by keeping all written notes and Skype™ recordings safe on an external hard-drive locked in a safe in my office. I am the only person who has access to the safe. I will also not use your name or any organisation with whom you are associated within the study, to protect your identity.

Results will be reported in a PhD Thesis. If you are interested, you will be told about the findings of the research.

If you contribute to the research, you will be given information on how the research will be done. You are free to stop taking part in the research without any negative consequences.

**7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development. You have the right to receive a copy of the Information and Consent form.

**8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me at:

Mr Herman Botes  
botes@tut.ac.za  
Cell: 0827707763

You are also welcome to contact my supervisor:

Prof Elmarie Costandius  
Department of Visual Arts  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
elmarie@sun.ac.za  
Tel: (021) 808 3053

If you are willing to participate in this study, please complete the electronic Declaration of Consent by following the hyperlink below:

[CLICK HERE FOR DECLARATION OF CONSENT and survey/interview](#)



## Appendix F

### Covid Protocol requirements

Guidelines for researchers during COVID-19 Faculty of Arts and Design, June 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic may be with us for some time. Researchers and postgraduate students who aim to collect data from participants through face-to-face interviews or focus groups are encouraged to change their approved data collection methods.

- Data collection via focus groups and individual interviews may only be possible under level 1 and level 2. For more detail, see pages 6 – 11.
- Researchers and postgraduate students may not proceed with face-to-face data collection from participants as approved by the REC or the FCRE before the lockdown.
- Researchers must adjust their proposals and aim to collect data via online platforms where possible.
- Researchers, in an update submission to the REC or the FCRE, must provide a written protocol about how they will collect data from participants – and only when this is permissible during an alert level.
- The protocol must provide detailed information about social distancing, masks, shields, hand sanitising, cleaning of surfaces before the participants arrive, cleaning of surfaces after the engagement, cleaning of measuring instruments and data collection instruments such as paper, pens, video and audio recorders. For more details, see page 5.
- Researchers, in addition to the above, must measure participants' temperature with an IR digital distance thermometer, and screen participants for COVID-19. The measurement and screening process must take place before a participant enters a space where interaction is to take place. Researchers must keep a detailed log of the screening process and the results.
- Protocol and screening procedures must adhere to national and international safety guidelines and recommendations.

#### **REC guidelines, extracted from the REC communique of 18 May 2020**

The following guidelines should be noted by researchers (including undergraduate, postgraduate, postdoctoral students, and research administrative staff) who are actively embarking on, engaged in research or required to engage in research during the National Lockdown/COVID-19 period.

- 1) Researchers should adhere to National regulations and guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, adhering to rules that guide access to public spaces, social distancing, participant encounters, providing hand sanitisers or soap and water, and protective clothing.
- 2) Researchers must avoid or minimise personal contact with participants. Researchers should aim to collect data via online platforms as far as possible.
- 3) Research studies that require direct or face-to-face interactions may need to be reduced, postponed, or suspended. As such, researchers may need to adjust timelines and request an extension on previous ethical clearance documents. In such an event, the Research Ethics Progress Report should be completed and submitted to the REC. The REC will issue an updated ethical clearance certificate.

- 4) Researchers are required to put proper measures in place that ensure safeguarding access to data that is collected via online platforms. Participants should be briefed on the limitations regarding confidentiality and possible third-party access to the information they provide via online platforms.
- 5) Researchers who need to collect data in a face-to-face manner are required to consider the scientific justification for the study, confirm that measures are put in place to protect participants and the research team, and ensure that ethical concerns are addressed.
- 6) Researchers who interact with participants in a face-to-face manner should ensure that they wear protective gear, e.g., face masks, adhere to social distancing guidelines, and provide participants with soap, water, and hand sanitiser.
- 7) Researchers who need to collect data from vulnerable persons will be required to discuss the scientific justification of the proposed study, offer guidelines on how the participants' safety will be ensured, and report on how ethical measures will be implemented. Vulnerable populations include, but are not limited to: Persons who are homeless, persons or businesses that under financial strain due to the lockdown regulations, schoolchildren, university students, and academic personnel affected by school and university closures, persons who have tested positive for COVID-19, or persons who are regarded as high-risk for contracting COVID-19, such as the elderly, persons who are suffering from diabetes, auto-immune diseases or who have an HIV positive status.
- 8) Researchers who need to collect data from front-line responders, such as medical doctors, nurses, police officers or members of the military, will be required to discuss the scientific justification of the proposed study, offer guidelines on how the safety of the participants and research team will be ensured, and report on how ethical measures will be implemented. Researchers who are collecting data and are required to deviate from previously approved data collection procedures ought to submit a deviation report to the TUT REC. Examples of deviations concerning data collection would include collecting qualitative data via an online platform versus using a face-to-face format. Researchers/students should use the Research Ethics Progress Report to inform the TUT REC of the deviation.
- 9) The onus is on researchers to contact the REC or the respective FCREs if they are uncertain about how to proceed.
- 10) The following contact numbers or contact details may be of value to researchers:
  - The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) hotline: 0800 029 999 (number operational Monday to Friday from 08:00 until 16:00).
  - REC Administrator: [ItsueniMM@tut.ac.za](mailto:ItsueniMM@tut.ac.za)
  - REC Chairperson: [masonh@tut.ac.za](mailto:masonh@tut.ac.za)
  - REC Vice-Chairperson: [RamukumbaTS@tut.ac.za](mailto:RamukumbaTS@tut.ac.za)
- 11) The following documents may be of value to researchers:
  - Doing fieldwork during a pandemic – [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1clGjGABB2h2qbduTgfgribHmog9B6\\_P0NvMgVuiHZCl8/edit?ts=5e88ae0a#](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1clGjGABB2h2qbduTgfgribHmog9B6_P0NvMgVuiHZCl8/edit?ts=5e88ae0a#)
  - Qualitative research-<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2020/04/20/carrying-out-qualitative-research-under-lockdown-practical-and-ethical-considerations/>

## COVID-19 meeting protocols

The TUT Covid-19 Task Team issued a meeting protocol on 19 June 2020. Researchers must adhere to this protocol when they interact with participants – and when meetings become permissible under a lockdown level.

In the interest of the health and safety of everyone, it is important to note that meetings should, whenever possible be held online.

If there is no other option but to gather in a venue for a meeting, the following rules will apply:

The organiser of the meeting will ensure the following:

- A PPE and tracing register must be completed and kept on record (sample attached);
- Every member of the meeting must be screened (temperature measured and recorded) before entering the venue;
- Hands must be sanitised before entering the venue;
- Every member must wear a mask and keep it on for the duration of the meeting;
- Frequently disinfect touched objects such as laptops, pointers, roving microphones, remote controls;
- Seating arrangements should be such that proper physical distancing rules are applied – at least 1.5 meter between every member; stickers for this purpose are available and can be collected at the Prestige Auditorium, Pretoria Campus.
- The maximum number of people allowed in any meeting is 50.

TAKE NOTE: even if the venue can accommodate more people, after applying physical distancing, the maximum number remains 50

•When members break for tea, or any other reason, the physical distancing of at least 1.5metre and the sanitising of hands must still be applied.

Together we can manage this pandemic and stay safe. The register would typically contain the following details:

TUT - COVID-19: PPE AND TRACING REGISTER

Campus/Activity:

Date:

No	Name and surname	Mask	Screened	Sanitiser	Contact details
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