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MEASURING AND VALUING SOUTH AFRICA'S CULTURAL AND SPORT ECONOMY

Towards a National Design Council for South Africa

Submitted to: Department of Sports, Arts and Culture | **Submitted by:** Nelson Mandela University

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Department:
Sport, Arts and Culture
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Table of Contents

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Abbreviations

ADA	Australian Design Awards
ADC	Australian Design Council
ADI	Association for Industrial Design
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIDA	Australian International Design Awards
AR	Augmented Reality
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUA	Africa Union of Architects
B-BBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (
BIIA	British Institute of industrial Arts
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CAA	Commonwealth Association of Architects
CADI	Industrial Design Centre of Aragon
CAGR	Compound annual growth rate
CC	Cultural and Creative
CCI	Creative and Cultural Industries
CCIDA	Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency
CDI	Craft and Design Institute
CEO	Chief Operating Officer
CIDA	Cultural Industry Development Agency
CIGS	Cultural Industries Growth Strategy
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
CND	Council of National Design
COID	Council of Industrial Design
COVID	Coronavirus disease
CSD	Chartered Society of Designers
CSI	CreateSmart Initiative
DAC	Design Advisory Council
DACST	Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology
DCHK	Design Council of Hong Kong
DDC	Danish Design Centre
DEFSA	Design Education Forum of Southern Africa
DI	Design Institute (South Africa)
DISA	Design Institute South Africa
DIT	Digital Imaging Technicians
DOCOMOMO	International Committee Documentation and Conservation of buildings, sites and neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement
DSAC	Department of Sports, Arts and Culture
DSC	DesignSingapore Council
DSIA	Design Institute of South Africa
DSR	Design Strategy Report
DT	Design Thinking
DTIC	Department of Trade, Industry and Competition
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EU	European Union
FAD	Fostering Arts and Design
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FHKDA	Hong Kong Federation of Design Associations
FRME	Forum of Renowned Spanish Brands
GDP	Gross domestic product

GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HDC	Hungarian Design Council
HE	Higher education
HKDA	Hong Kong Designers Association
HKFDA	Hong Kong Fashion Designers Association
ICOD	Industrial Council of Design
ICOMOS	International Commission on Monuments and Sites
IDA	Hong Kong Interior Design Association
IDC	Indian Design Council
IDCA	Industrial Design Council of Australia
IDSHK	Industrial Designers Society of Hong Kong
IID	African Institute of the Interior Design Professions
IP	Intellectual property
JCSA	Jewellery Council of South Africa
JDF	Japan Design Foundation
JIDP	Japan Institute of Design Promotion
JIDPO	Japan Industrial Design Promotion Organization
KIDP	Korea Institute of Design Promotion
KMP	Korea Millennium Products
MAAS	Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences
MDC	Malaysia Design Council
MGE	Mzansi Golden Economy
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MITI	Japan’s Ministry of International Trade and Industry
MOCIE	Korea's Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy
MRM	Majlis Rekabentuk
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
NAC	National Arts Council
NDP	National Development Plan
NDS	National Design Strategy
PCT	Patent Cooperation Treaty
PDC	Design Centre Philippines
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
PSI	Public sector innovation
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SABS	South African Bureau of Standards
SACAP	South African Council for the Architectural Profession
SACO	South African Cultural Observatory
SAFAITS	South African Finishing Artists and Imaging Technicians Society
SAJ	School of Art, Johannesburg
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authorities
SVID	Swedish Industrial Design Foundation
TUT	Tswane University of Technology
TWR	Techikon Witerwaterrand
UCT	University of Cape Town
UI	User interface
UIA	International Union of Architects
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UK	United Kingdom

UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNISA	University of South Africa
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USD	United States dollar
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UX	User experience
VR	Virtual Reality

Figures

Executive Summary

This research report examines the question of a mooted establishment of a professional National Design Council, or similarly conceived body. Such a body will help re-position and prioritize design within the country and the economy and help shape the country's design direction through a National Design Policy. The Design Council would foster an engagement with the design sector at industry, business, and policy levels to help develop more internationally competitive businesses. The Council would advocate for a design-driven future for the country and to champion the importance of design in addressing pressing socio-economic and environmental challenges.

A professional National Design Council would play a central role in the conceptualization and/or implementation of a National Design Policy and the promotion thereof. It would also help with the further institutionalization, coordination and promotion of the constituent design economy and its sub-sectors and impact positively on the creative economy and national economic growth and development.

This report is an exploratory and will consider the potential for formal pre-feasibility and feasibility processes regarding the nature and means of forming such a Council. In addition, the report should lay the foundation for the provision of a catalytic institutional structure for economic, industrial, and social development in South Africa.

The formalization and/or institutionalization of the constituent design sub-sectors in South Africa has been raised on occasion within the established sub-sectoral professional design bodies in the country, and within the relevant national departments and subsidiaries. At national government level, the project has been considered by the Department of Sports, Arts (DSAC) and its largest entity the National Arts Council (NAC) and it is understood that preliminary work has been carried out. Furthermore, the DTIC (Department of Trade Industry & Competition) has also considered the question of the organizational coordination of the sectors of the design industry and economy.

What Do Design Councils Do?

Design councils help improve people's lives through design by:

- Educating: Sharing examples of great design and providing evidence of its value
- Collaborating: Bringing together designers and non-designers to share expertise and transform the way they work
- Advocating: Championing designers and the design industry, and working to make it easier for designers to design for the planet
- Researching: Commissioning evidence-based research to demonstrate the power of design
- Developing programs: Creating programs to help businesses, public service providers, and others understand how design can help them
- Advising: Advising on policy and shaping the debate around the modern economy
- Creating a framework: Using a framework like the Double Diamond to help designers and non-designers understand the design process

The design policy process involves identifying goals and selecting the policy instruments to achieve them. The implementation process involves putting the policies into practice, which includes defining an implementation structure, decision-making, and target group behaviour.

Design councils and bodies have a variety of aims and objectives, including:

- Supporting businesses: Design councils can help businesses use design to create more inclusive products and services.
- Improving public services: Design councils can help local authorities transform public services.
- Encouraging community change: Design councils can help communities change the places they live for the better.
- Promoting better design: Design bodies can promote better design through a variety of means.
- Recognizing design as a creative act: Design bodies can recognize design as a creative act and advance the theory and practice of design.
- Transferring know-how: Design bodies can transfer know-how in the design field.

Snapshots/Overview of the International and South African Design Sector

In recent decades, the economic, developmental, and social importance of the collective design sector has received more coherent and considered attention with economic policy circles and debates. Formal design sectors include Architecture, Interior, Product, Graphic, and Fashion Design. But there are new cross-sectoral and digital-oriented design fields that have burgeoned. The design economy embraces a range of fields and activities within and without the creative economy. These range from design-intensive fields such as web design, animation to designers and design-engineers in manufacturing production including automotive and aerospace sectors.

Historically design has been supported for its value-adding capacity regarding products and services. This was expanded with the maturing of the industrial revolution and the search for foreign markets for manufactured goods. Indeed, with the evolution of contemporary capitalism it has taken on more substantive and complex roles. As Julien (2017) argues design in current times is conditioned by and actively shapes economic systems, with its impact and reach ranges from urban strategies to commercial processes and public policy making (ibid.). Nevertheless, as Nasimi et al (2021) argue, the impact of the design factor on the development of a country's economy is often underestimated or even overlooked by planners and analysts.

Interestingly, Churchill's war government established the Industrial Council of Design (ICOD) in 1944 to support the economic renewal of the nation. The country looked to design 'to rebuild, innovate and instigate growth' (Design Council 2018). ICOD was in effect the first national design council. Over time it became the UK Council of Design over time and has become an international touchstone regarding the professional institutionalization and coordination of design sectors.

The Council observed in 2013 that:

> Great design can change lives, communities, and organisations for the better. It can create better places to live, bring communities together, and can transform business and public services. Design is a way of thinking that helps small, medium, and large organisation alike, social enterprises and charities change the way they work (Design Council 2013).

The late 2000s and early 2010s saw a significant/dramatic expansion of design-intensive activities on the global and national stages.

Among the trends was the embedding of design into the city, and the accompanying linkage with the creative economy. The reasons are diverse. For one, as Pirinen et al (2022) point out: 'Design is increasingly deployed by governments and cities to address social and policy-related problems and to develop public services and organizations towards more citizen centeredness.'

Secondly, cities have interacted with differing design sectors from architecture to fashion and design awards have accompanied such shifts. Additionally, with greening and sustainability influencing global, national, and sub-national design activities and thinking, there has of late been a surge in the emphasis on **inclusive design** for urban environments, promoting new kinds of dialogue between design fields.

A further and related trend is the ongoing internationalization of certain design companies and the increased importance of global design value chains.

These shifts have been accompanied by the burgeoning of international design award processes and discourses. Indeed, in 2020 the International Council of Design was moved to note and warn of the potential dangers of 'the proliferation of Design Awards around the world' with certain of the awards considering the surface appeal of a design or product rather than considering the behind-the-scenes professional work involved (ICOD 2020).

The increased specialization and complexity of design fields has intersected with initiatives and production practices looking to establish synergies and new outcomes and products. Such developments while resulting in an increased range of professional associations focussing on new and more traditional specialisms, have also reinforced the need for more coordination and collaboration between such fields. This has reinforced moves to establish broader national structures to collectively further the interests of the differing private, public, and civil sector stakeholders in the design economy to find mutually beneficial opportunities and assist in resource mobilization.

Overview of the Report

This introductory chapter discusses the aims and objectives, as well as the parameters of the report. A compact overview of the question of design and its economic and social effects is outlined. The nature and workings of national design bodies (most particularly national design councils) is raised. In addition, the question of national design policies and their proliferation in recent decades is introduced. The chapter provides a short orientating discussion of the South

African design sector and economy, including its relationship with the South African creative economy. The question of a South African design policy is raised for subsequent consideration.

Design in its differing facets has been a crucial and often underestimated aspect of societies and economies both past and present. The literature review seeks to locate and discuss select strategic works and their significance within an international and comparative context, and thereafter consider relevant writings on the South African experience. In addition to a formal literature review there will be an overlapping policy and context discussion which will be informed by relevant studies, reports, and strategic productions. The literature review in its various aspects, is an integral part of the central line/s of argument and the accompanying narrative of this report.

The formal literature and theory review is presented in chapter one and two. The literature review seeks to identify and discuss select strategic and representative works and consider their significance at a comparative and international level, as well as within the South African context. Apart from a formal literature review there will be an overlapping policy and context discussion which will be informed by relevant academic studies, reports, and popular and topical publications and writings.

Chapter one focuses on key themes in international current design discourse and practice. Design in its differing sub-sectoral and cross-disciplinary aspects can be an underestimated dimension in economic and industrial development and social progress, both past and present.

The review commences with a discussion of select studies of contemporary and future design trends and developments. The analysis suggests the diversification of the field/s of design and the growing recourse to multi-disciplinary and collaborative approaches and outputs. There is also a burgeoning use of digital tools and capabilities. The question of environmental sustainability and design for an improved quality of life also come to the fore. Furthermore, there is also some blurring of the role of the designer and the recipient.

The expansion of the field of design thinking during the 2010s is a further theme in recent scholarship. The review considers the history and internationalization of the discourse and its expansion into business, the public sector and in new ways of shaping the built environment, as well as the economy and society. The growing use of design thinking in public policy such as the inception of public sector innovation laboratories is also noted. While the advantages of such an approach and mind-set are duly acknowledged, the review also takes heed of the scepticism of certain scholars about the claims of the discourse, as well as shortcomings in the implementation of design thinking. The differential application of design thinking in policy fields globally is also examined.

Historically, especially since the advent of the Industrial Revolution, design gained recognition and support for being able to add value to products and services. However, under late capitalism design has assumed, according to certain scholars, a more prominent and extensive of rules. For some analysts, the field of design should shift consciously beyond the logic and institutions of capitalism, blending design entrepreneurship with social empowerment. More consideration of the political economy and ethical aspects of the design discourse should be taken by designers and design-oriented companies and organizations.

The review considers the expanded response to sustainability issues and its conditioning of the design fields, particularly since the late 20th century. This is followed by an overlapping theme,

that of the increased recourse to inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches in design. Such developments are informed in part by the growing complexity of the design field, intersecting design production processes, and a more user-centred conception of design.

The importance of design education is also emphasized. The issues here are of direct relevance to all the current and emerging design fields an emphasis, as higher education, training, and the nurturing of design cultural capital are necessary to ensure the requisite skills are available and adaptable to the burgeoning to deployment in design sectors and economies globally. Also of growing importance is the managing of design research and its meshing with design practice as well as formal design practice. Also, there is a need for praxis in the design landscape with the growing number of multi- and cross-disciplinary approaches requiring evaluation and reflexive restructuring.

The review also considers the relationship between design, the reinforcement of national competitiveness, and the related emphasis on design-centred economic policy. The central role of the industrial profession in this process, most particularly regarding manufacturing and industrial development, is also underlined. The question of national design promotion, which is a central concern of our report, is a related and further theme. It is no accident that design policy has become a priority for high performing and ambitious developing states. The linkages of design policy development and promotion and innovation enhancement is also considered.

A directly related theme is that of managing the design economy. A functioning design and associated creative economy requiring institutional and organization structures of substance and the requisite capabilities to run such bodies with assurance and understanding. Such enquiry has relevance to the issue of the nature, form, and modes of embedding national design councils that we discuss in more empirical detail later in this report.

The review ends with a short exploration of select scholarly interest in the impact of AI on the design profession and economy, and a short consideration of possible future options and outcomes.

Chapter two explores compactly South African scholarly writings on the design field with a view to understanding the issues and possibilities regarding an envisaged national design council for the country. Among the selected studies is a piece on the relative paucity of work on the history of design in South Africa, and the lack formal recognition of the history of design as a higher education (HE) qualification. In addition, the formative role of industrial design education in national design promotion in the in the 1960s and 1970s is examined, with relevance to South Africa's manufacturing industries. The current deployment of design thinking in policy-oriented research is also discussed.

In chapter three, the methods that were used in order to determine the feasibility of setting up a NDC in South Africa are explained. Quantitative data was collected from the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) while qualitative data was obtained from structured and semi-structured interviews to give a comprehensive view of the design sector. The research context was established through a systematic desktop literature review and the identification of themes and gaps; while the stakeholder interviews provided the insights on the issues and prospects within the sector. The QLFS data allowed for the examination of employment dynamics and demographics over time and the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts produced key findings and suggestions. Despite constraints such as data limitations and the challenges

associated with semi-structured interviews; the ethical measures taken during the process ensured that the study is reliable and valid. This methodology provides a sound and holistic approach to the analysis of the conditions of the design sector and the potential role of an NDC.

Chapter four discusses the international policy and context implications of the study. It contains both a general discussion and then a series of select and regionally organized case studies of national councils and their particularities including their relationship to national design promotion. The first part of chapter four comprises a short and historically oriented discussion of design developments and the major design movements against a modernizing world shaped by the enlightenment and the first industrial revolution. The central role of industrial design in the development and expansion of manufacturing industry is illustrated. The expansion of design and design professions in the 20Th century is discussed, as well as initiatives in the new century such as the formation of IDEO and the commercialization of design thinking.

The origins and establishment in 1944 of Council of Industrial Design in the UK, the first modern national design promotion body, are discussed in some detail. The organization later changed its name to Design Council. Its activities, international influence, and its role as an exemplar for subsequent national councils of design in other parts of the world economy, are also outlined.

In this chapter a series of case studies is presented, grouped on a select regional and/or associational basis. Firstly, the experiences of certain countries linked to the British Commonwealth, namely Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and India are examined. The list of such countries also includes South Africa which established a National Design Institute in 1965 – a development which is discussed in a subsequent chapter. Further select regionally organized case studies are presented analyzing the formation and dynamics of national design councils (or similar organizations) and associated national design policies and initiatives. These focus on select countries in the East and South-East Asian region/s and in the European Union.

Chapter five focusses on South African policy and context vis-à-vis the promotion of design within and without the CC sector and economy. It provides an overview of post-1994 CC sector policy and considers select developments pertaining to the design sector and economy. The institutional make-up of the design sector is discussed, which in turn provides insight into the still fragmented design ecosystem in South Africa. Recent efforts to develop a national design strategy are identified, and South Africa's history regarding a national design organization is delineated. The question of establishing a new national design policy organization is addressed.

Chapter six provides a quantitative study of South Africa's design sector and the interpretation thereof. It provides a systematic examination of the employment patterns in the design industry of South Africa, detailing the quantity and key characteristics of designers, as well as the empowerment dynamics conditioning the design domain. Incorporating information from the Quarterly Labour Forces Surveys in South Africa for the period 2008-2023 an informative perspective is provided on the patterns and dynamics in play and the responses to economic and social changes. During this time, changes in the South African economy are mirrored in shifts in industry needs and accompanying technological progress while underling the growing relevance of design in different sectors. Insights on employment trends, as well as changes in the demographic and empowerment landscape within the wider South African design terrain, look to depict a sector experiencing constant change and growth.

This chapter is followed by discussion of the findings of the empirical side of the research, namely the strategic interviews and a mini-focus group. The findings reveal a fragmented design sector. Respondents offered different perspectives about the sector's economic value, and levels of support it currently receives. They identified the need for stronger Intellectual Property rights, better education opportunities and resources for young designers and professionals. All of the respondents supported the idea of NDC; they viewed it as a body that could help in the integration of the design sector, policy coordination, and strategic direction for the growth of all the design fields. The discussions provide the basis for a number of recommendations which position the NDC as a mechanism to enhance the development of the design industry and mitigate some of the systemic issues.

The penultimate chapter outlines policy recommendations and proposed research aimed at addressing strategic issues. Key recommendations include the formulation of a national design policy that prioritizes sustainability as a core principle, along with the provision of necessary financial and structural support to bridge existing gaps. Additionally, measures are recommended to raise public awareness about the economic and social benefits of the design sector.

This chapter also emphasizes the importance of closing educational and professional development gaps by integrating design principles into academic curricula, promoting inter-professional collaboration, and enhancing the accessibility of learning opportunities. To empower designers and nurture their creativity, suggestions include providing legal protection for ideas and offering affordable legal advice. The NDC is proposed to act as a catalyst for change by fostering Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), increasing design awareness through branding, and adapting best practices from other countries. The NDC is regarded as a powerful tool for promoting innovation, enhancing competitiveness, and addressing local and regional challenges, including those related to climate change.

The final chapter concludes the report. It pulls together the main lines of argument and the content. It emphasizes the under-rated significance of design in adding value to a country and in strengthening the competitiveness of its industries and economy more generally. The chapter also highlights the connected discussions of international perspectives and select case studies illustrating best practice lessons and showing regional patterns and particularities. It reiterates the specific follow-up research required to provide more evidence-based certainty to the question of making and institutionalizing reflexive and internationally competitive design policy.

Conclusion

Developing countries have not been as proactive or systematic at implementing national design policies and establishing and maintaining national design organizations. The international evidence suggests that those states who are vigilant and proactive in the embedding, institutionalizing, and promoting design develop quicker, are generally more economically and industrially competitive in world markets and have expanded to new and energizing ways of utilizing design to plan for a better and more sustainable society and future.

Chapter 1: Theory & Literature Review-International Perspectives

Introduction

Design in its differing facets has been a crucial and often underestimated aspect of societies and economies both past and present. This literature review seeks to locate and discuss select strategic works and their significance within an international and comparative context, and thereafter consider relevant writings on the South African experience. In addition to a formal literature review there will be an overlapping policy and context discussion which will be informed by relevant studies, reports, and strategic productions.

Design in its various disciplinary and multi-disciplinary discourses and forms/applications is a significant part of the cultural and creative economy and economic domains more generally. While the significance of design has been recognized in earlier epochs, there is of late a converging emphasis on the need for design to be formally entrenched as a catalyst for more dynamic national and regional economic development, national socio-economic and political branding, and in thinking about new global concerns and modes of living. It is more explicitly tied up/bound up with the engendering/stimulation/fostering of creativity and innovation from theory to practice. Along with such imperatives is the question of establishing the relevant institutional and associational structures for the design, its disciplines, and its operationalization on more strategic levels. However, such ambitions are not without their internal contradictions and shortcomings. Central to such institutional expressions is the marked shift to create and/or restructure national structures (usually councils) to help coordinate the differing domains of design to ensure a more elevated role for the design professions and design thinking within national economies, policy circles, and in the international calculations of advanced, middle-income, and developing states.

Design Trends and Developments

A study by MB Daddanova (2021) entitled 'The Future of Design: Trends and Possible Aspects' provides an accessible overview of key trend, issues and means of the development of design in the future and for humankind in general. She emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinarity, rethinking the functions of the designer, and grasping the impact of design on the environment are becoming important aspects of the development of future design. Leading designers at present and even more so in the future will need to call on diverse fields of knowledge and perspectives and to collaborate with representatives of the natural/physical sciences. Contemporary design requires specialists with advanced capabilities in terms of conceptual, interdisciplinary, and logical thinking to achieve the following outcomes:

- Approach the project synoptically and systematically.
- To model the project object (whether space, process, image, communication, or relations).
- To take due cognizance of the particularities of consumer behaviour.
- To be willing and able to propose and develop fundamentally new conceptual approaches and solutions to design challenges.
- To select appropriate design methods for the specific task/s.
- Present strategies for project implementation (ibid:2)

The study also stresses that virtual and augmented reality (VR and AR) models are being increasing used with the design economy and design circles and being that these meta technologies are expanding many areas of life. The author also anticipates and discusses likely changes, increased complexity. and the expansion of the functions of designers with digitally intensive technologies such as the continued development of AI (artificial intelligence), robotics and neuro-implantation in the human body.

Jan Skibsted, (2023) chairperson of the Danish Design Council, in a 2023 Forbes essay, contends that the globally 'diversifying design' is more important global goal than that of 'designing for diversity'. Despite that rhetoric about a 'golden age of diversity and design' people are experiencing a 'more divided and increasingly intolerant world' (ibid.). Even in the West where calls to dismantle barriers to diversity seem more insistent, existing work cultures and structures are intrinsically exclusionary. There is therefore a need for 'an interconnected worldview' that embraces other realities and situations. The major impediment to diversity in design is the continued hegemony of 'one-size-fits-all design approaches' as is evidence in Western monoculture from learning systems through to mega digital technologies. Even conscious efforts to accommodate diversity within such monocultures are self-defeating. There is rather a need to encourage and incentivize differing design approaches. Currently, argues Skibsted, design is mostly appreciated as an European cultural expression while diversity is viewed through a North American cultural lens. Within the global village, Europe and North America have in fact appropriated and/or obscured its traditions.

In designing for diversity, a more heterogenous approach to design is required. Rather than looking for a universal approach there is a need to deconstruct and recreate new global clusters and spaces that embody the varied identities within the world (ibid.).

MN Petrova (2014) in a study entitled 'Emergent Trends in the Design Economy and their Impact on Consumption, Production and Design' points out the contemporary designers are operating in a more complex world, shaped by deep-seated entwined social, economic, digitally intensive environmental, and digitally intensive technological and environmental. Conditioned by such dynamics the concept of design in recent decades has shifted from a product-oriented to a solution-oriented one. To properly encompass such development a fundamental redefinition of nature design is entailed including its context, values, and principles. Design thinking will have to incorporate a close interest in systems and services (ibid).

This broadening of the design economy and thinking opens the potential of discovery of new opportunities of solving problems and constructing a more sustainable future. Designers would be able to add value at various levels ranging from strategic business planning and design management through to conceptual design and the develop of user-centred products and services. A 'blurring of roles' of the actors in the design process (designers, producers and consumers) is anticipated by the author. This includes the possibility of involving users more directly in design activities which would see a shift from passive consumers into partial or full creators (Petrova 2014).

Design Thinking

Design thinking has burgeoned as a discourse in the 2010s and found increasingly application in academia. For example, MK Foster (2021) contends that design thinking – which deals with the human needs aspects of a problem and allows the reframing of a problem in human-centric

and is well suited to brainstorming session and hands-on approaches to prototyping and testing – complements rational problem-solving methods usually offered in business schools. Foster argues further that design thinking can be introduced into curricula in low-cost and accessible ways (ibid.).

Lewis, McGann & Blomkamp (2020) examine the emerging trend among some governments to experiment with 'design thinking' to help reframe pertinent policy issues and to develop and assess new policy solutions. The authors discuss certain new developments in design thinking and compare these to more established approaches to policy making. This in turn reveals distinct differences between the foundations and principles in which policymakers are able to 'speak truth to power'. The study deploys the case study of public sector innovation (PSI) labs in Australia and New Zealand to model the impact of design thinking on the policymaking practice. They authors find that design thinking can encounter substantial challenges when it meets power and politics. However, there are nevertheless opportunities for productively linking design thinking with the process of policymaking (ibid.).

Spee and Basajawmoit (2016) show more scholarly scepticism about the discourse. In a study on 'Design Thinking and the Hype Cycle in Management Education and in Engineering Education' they note how Design Thinking (DT) as a paradigm has pervaded a range of domains across the disciplines and been given support in academic and popular publications. They query the foundational principles laid down by Simon (1988) emphasizing that natural and physical sciences are concerned with how things are, while design is focussed on 'how things could be'. The latter principle they argue is 'deeply connected' to the engineering disciplines without necessarily requiring user-input – a touchstone in DT. They posit that DT is not an entirely new field, and make a number of recommendations to help aid the discourse to transition to an assured cross-disciplinary paradigm (ibid.).

A not dissimilar line of critique is expressed in Harland and Meron's article 'Design Thinking: Standing on the Shoulders of… Graphic Design!' (2024). They argue that prominent design discourse and advocacy on 'design thinking' generally fails to grasp the nature, centrality, and contribution of graphic design to the development of design studies. There is too often a tendency to assume the graphic design is more 'a vernacular activity' notwithstanding its extensive academic presence, its prominence in industry and its embedded practice in social and economic life. The authors put forward a timely and necessary critical standpoint on the discourse of design thinking that has gone been frequently challenged over the decades. They call for more precision and integrity from those who invoke design in differing communication contexts, and a thoroughness and attention to detail that research on graphic design and its associated fields should command. This will provide a corrective to those protagonists of design thinking who tend to suggest that graphic design is informed by intuition than structured construction (ibid.).

Rebecca Ackermann, in a 2023 Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Technology Review essay entitled 'Design Thinking was supposed to Fix the World. Where Did it Go Wrong?' provides a critical historical overview of design thinking movement in northern California, and bound up institutionally with the iconography of IDEO, which started life as a social-impact spinoff of the conventional design consulting firm. IDEO was founded in the 1990s, by David Kelley, along with Stanford University's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design which Kelly also co-established. The methodology underpinning IDEO, which emphasized collaboration and

research, can be traced back to a human-factors engineering, a movement which emerged in the 1960s.

Notwithstanding a research emphasis since the 1960s on the usefulness of collaboration, work was largely a solo effort in many industries including that of design. Design thinking energized the design and corporate world more broadly, by positing that work should look and appear more hopeful and fun, and that design could take the lead role in this process (Ackermann 2023). Design thinking took hold of the 'collective imagination' during the years of the Obama presidency. By the end of the 2010s the influence of design thinking included health-care corporates, bid tech companies in Silicon Valley, government agencies in Washington DC, and beyond. Big city governments contracted design-thinking agencies to resolve their economic development challenges, and institutions such as Harvard, MIT and the UN General Assembly sought their services. This work saw in turn a proliferation of courses and the teaching of academic programmes on design thinking (ibid.). Central to the spread of design thinking was its 'replicable aesthetic' represented by the humble Post-it note – a small and colourful square that could be used in manifold ways. It promised a cooperative, egalitarian. and empowering process that would get things done (ibid).

However, in recent years the appeal of design thinking has dimmed somewhat. One line of criticism is that its short-term emphasis on novel, but often naïve ideas has led to unrealistic and untethered recommendations. Probably the main shortcoming of design has been that of execution. Some application of the six-step process of design thinking have even left off final step of execution. This issue, as Ackerman points out, has its origins in the culture of the agency world, where a firm operates on a set timeline, and with a pre-agreed budget, and leaves before or just after the pilot stage. Thus, the tools of design thinking are aimed more at the start of the product/services development process, rather than its conclusion or aftermath.

M. Baytass (2021) takes the critique a step further. He argues that design thinking is not unlike a religion with two 'core beliefs': (i) A tendency to assume that design can solve all problems whatever of the problem; and (ii) A tendency to suggest that design can be done by all kinds of people. While this depiction is a deliberate caricature, it does, Baytass argues, show design thinking has come to be perceived in the popular view. The success of design thinking was in effect to 'productize' (sic) the design process into a scalable methodology, that could be taught, and practiced extensively (ibid.)

A study by Tsegaye Tegenu (2019) considers the application of design thinking to an assessment of the theory and practice of national industrial policy, and seeks to provide a corrective to the relative lack of empirical evidence on the subject. Tegenu maintains that design thinking constitutes a new and alternative approach to resolve problems of least developed economies seeking to initiate industrialization faced with a low-level market and private sector development and rapid population growth. Raising the profile of design thinking skills and approaches in national industrial policymaking and implementation, would help confront the structural causes of domestic and international migration crises (ibid).

Tegenu stresses the importance of country context in industrial policy research and decision making. Using the criteria of best-design and non-design situation, the study identifies three broad design model options. These comprise (i) a sector-based design thinking approach with is informed by instrumentalist consideration as is manifested in most Western European countries; (ii) a system-based design approach and viewpoint as generally found in East Asian

countries; and (iii) a top-down and ad hoc orientation as most exemplified in sub-Saharan African countries (ibid, 1). The latter option is underpinned by ideologically intensive and political-conditioned industrialization, and a proliferation of policy instruments, rent-seeking, clientelism and state capture. This model results in a non-design or impoverished design scenario, in which manufacturing tends to remain a low levels of productivity growth notwithstanding various policy interventions (ibid.).

Capitalism and the Design Economy

Historically design has gained recognition and support for its ability to add value to products and services. However, under late capitalism, design has taken a more prominent and multi-faceted set of roles. In his book Economies of Design (2017) Guy Julier explores the connections between the development of design and neo-liberalism, and looks to establish the economic significance of design. For Julier the rise of design and subsequent of design culture paralleled the extensive restructure of global and local economic systems. This has seen everyday life becoming more aestheticized and design focussed. Julier delineates the various ways in which design has become a strategic feature of neo-liberal economic regimes. His analysis ranges from urban strategies, commercial discourses and processes, the relationship between design and intellectual property, through to the public policy making. He also considers the impact of design in informal and alternative economies (ibid.).

Stern & Siegelbaum's lead article for a special journal issue on Design and Neoliberalism, depicts contemporary design as bound up with the development, elaboration and implementation of neoliberalism. The authors show the success of Apple in marketing the company's retail products as 'designed by Apple in California' and managing to downplay the fact that the manufacture of the devices is in fact part of a massive manufacturing set-up in China marked by the qualifier 'Assembled in China'. This example, they argue, is part of essence of neo-liberalism in obscuring the 're-arrangements of labour and capital' (ibid. 266).

Matthew Wizinsky's book, Design after Capitalism: Transforming Design Today for an Equitable Tomorrow (2022) argues that the growth and consolidation of industrial capitalism that spawned modern design has been transformed. By taking a political economic standpoint, Wizinsky argues that the field should look to move beyond the logic, structures and particularities of capitalism and fuse design entrepreneurship with social empowerment to open itself to new ways and means of making the objects, representations, and experiences that condition everyday life. Design needs to reposition itself and look for a more reflexive and critical engagement with day-to-day social, political, and economic life.

Considering earlier histories of the relationships between capitalism and design, Wizinsky provides informative historical case studies of anti-capitalism and non-capitalist design practice such as the British Arts and Crafts movement of the 19th century. He also considers relevant contemporary practices of growing furniture and using bio-textiles and the contradictions in automated forms of production. Invoking a range of disciplines not usually directly associated with design, he outlines the main principles of post capitalist design and suggests strategies for achieving these principles in relation to the levels of project, practice, and discipline (ibid.).

Juliette Sgarro a designer and economist (2021) notes that debates on design ethics and accompanying frameworks for designers tend to omit analyses of the political economy of design. By taking the latter line of inquiry, design ethics takes cognizance of the social dimension. A key underlying question is how to design an economic system that places more emphasis on use-value rather than capital accumulation. In order to change meaningfully the design process entails a return to earlier political and philosophical considerations of economic alternatives (ibid.).

Environmental Sustainability, the Designer, and the Design Process

Sustainability and its related discourses and applications has been central to debates within the design community and economies in recent decades. Because the term has diverse and even conflicting meanings to people it is a kind of 'floating signifier' in a Foucauldian sense.

Tania Messel (2021) provides a compact and readable overview of select global aspects of the origins of the concerns with and interest in the core issues of environment (and subsequently sustainability) on in the global arena. Her study 'Sustainable Design on the World Stage: The International Council of Societies of Industrial Design and Environmental Concerns, 1970–1990' shows how such concerns gained momentum within influential industrial design institutions and overlapped during the closing decades of the 20th century.

An article by Zhang and Shen (2024) advocates a reflexive and interdisciplinary approach to integrating sustainability into contemporary art and design. Through an emphasis on the integration of nature and technology the authors range across the artistic disciplines, assessing the nature of their contributions to sustainable policies and practices. Their results suggest that creative use of materials and the incorporation of leading-edge approaches to design help foster sustainability. This indicates the under-appreciated role of contemporary art in developing environmental awareness and sustainability in the policy making. The article advocates a paradigm shift in art and design education and policy, in which the engagement with sustainability moves beyond conventional artistic borders. Furthermore, the study presents a robust model for comprehending and effecting sustainability that could help shape relevant artistic and educational practices on a globally (ibid.).

GM Mejía and D Fischer et al (2023) seek the complex engagement with the question of sustainability. They note that there are a growing number of approaches and methods in the design disciplines to respond to environmental sustainability. These range from principles and frameworks to develop sustainable products to strategies and visions to interact with socio-political systems. Via a systematic literature review the authors find that designers generally appreciate the importance of sustainability, but do not by and large incorporate sustainability into their practice.

Designers are constrained by other priorities defined by management and policy. Findings also show that researchers studying this issue have focused on exploring case studies of how designers apply and react to various proposed methods for sustainability (ibid).

Delaney and Liu (2023) focus on the question of how to manage the design for environmental sustainability within the broader design process. As they see it, sustainability is comprised of three interacting themes – social, environmental, and economic. Increasingly, the role of professional designers is becoming a trans-disciplinary pursuit, with clients expecting

designers to have the requisite expertise and skills to achieve sustainability goals within the proffered design process. While it is a given that environmental sustainability is now a key theme with design in practice and design management writings, there is still a lack of clarity on how designers are operationalizing and manging environmental sustainability within their selected design process. The study consequently offers a framework to assist designers in the implementation of environmental sustainability for their design process.

Disciplinary and Transdisciplinary Approaches

Coatanéa, et al (2023) consider potential trends and challenges impacting on the engineering design and the design sector more generally. Their study – 'Prospective Analysis of the Engineering Design Discipline Evolution Based on Key Influencing Trends' – is seen as an initial analysis attempting to grasp the array of factors conditioning the contemporary design process, in the engineering field and more broadly. The authors chart the 'fundamental changes' impacting on design and manufacturing activities. The main likely changes include the following:

- the shortage of energy and primary materials;
- the pervasive integration of electronic components and computing sciences in such systems;
- the extensive production of data by systems;
- the growing prioritization of C02-free production, recycling, and use;
- the reworking of the consumption model from one of product ownership to a product as a service (ibid. 263).

These kinds of fundamental changes are quantitatively and qualitatively increasing the complexity of the design process. The number of steps and the couplings are increasing, as the complexity of requirements and procedures; and the boundaries of the design process are being pushed outwards. The social and technological changes discussed, also affect the phases and nature of the design process. The changes in question would appear to be radically restructuring the design process from a traditional forward design process to what is in effect a 'looped design process'. The latter integrates classical forward design with large-scale data-drive engineering with data generated during the various phases of design and manufacturing as well as the phase of usage (ibid 263).

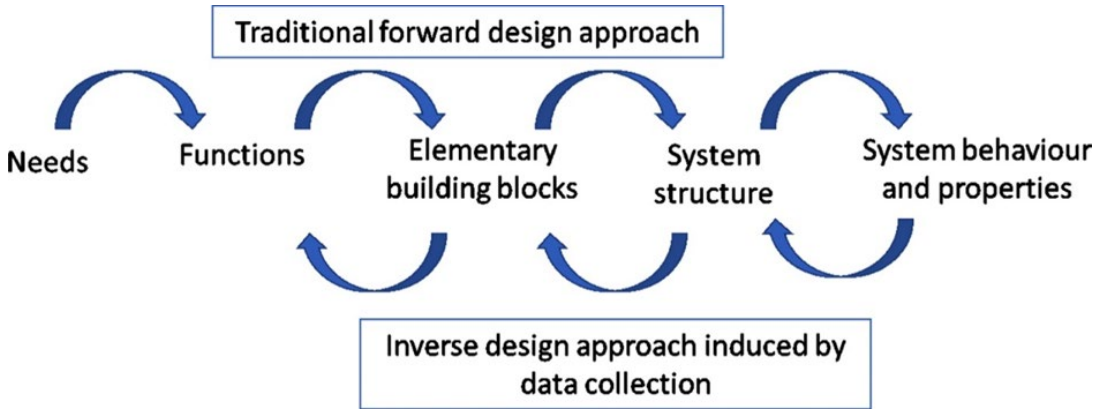


Figure 1: Evolution of the Design Process. Source: Coatanéa, et al 2023: 249

The study suggests further that early design automation is increasingly required to deal with what was becoming a challenging 'cognitive load' brought about by the raft of changes in the design process. The authors also outline the nature and uses of mooted new design tools.

Select Aspects of Design Education

Oliveira et al (2021) stress the importance of research to help respond to the need for innovative and multi-disciplinary programmes at advanced university level. This is particularly the case regarding developing built future programmes environment design professionals. In most prevailing programmes, multidisciplinary content is provided by project based or sustainability learning. However, the impact and mechanisms that condition outcomes are poorly understood. New ways and new structures are important in effective multidisciplinary programme development and implementation. Participants in the research underlined the importance of a shared vision irrespective of disciplinary differences and experiences. Such mutual multidisciplinary envisioning processes constitute a source of future knowledge in constructing new built environment roles. Although the implications of this study are primarily in developing engineering and architecture curricula, there are helpful insights that will have broader applications for science-oriented design programmes.

Participants conveyed the importance of fostering a shared vision regardless of disciplinary experiences or differences to develop a collective multidisciplinary approach. They also conveyed the potential such an environment within which different disciplinary positions can be shared as a source for future growth in developing new built environment roles (ibid).

National Design Promotion

A thoughtful paper by Sung et al (2007) explores the burgeoning interest during the 2000s in design promotion in a global context. The authors note the growing consensus that a strategic use of design will enhance national competitiveness. Because of this design promotion has become an item for cabinet-level attention in a variety of countries. They note the field of design promotion has expanded to include all design fields and activities including the original emphasis on industrial design. They point out as well, the differences of opinion on what constitutes the most appropriate design promotion organization. Via a comparative study of the then four leading design countries, namely the UK, Germany, Japan and South Korea, key factors in design promotion such as the development history, the changing nature of state support, and the relationship between central and local/decentralized design centres, are considered. Thereafter, a theoretical model of design promotion is presented. This model takes account of the particularities of the country concerned, and more specifically the inter-relationships, networks, and social capital of the relevant national and regional organizations (ibid.).

Hobday, Boddington and Grantham (2012) examine design policy in regard to innovation policy. They point out that traditionally advocates of innovation policy have paid insufficient attention to design policy which is seen as a minor field with the broader terrain of innovation policy. However, they note in various advanced economies and high performing emerging economies a central policy goal of government is to improve the contribution of design to innovation, business performance and the stimulation of economic growth. The authors point out that research reveals design to be a crucial aspect of innovation policy. While design policies usually

reflect more earlier models of innovation, the emergence of 'design thinking' could be used to help to identify shortcomings in the current parameters of policy making – in design and innovation fields – and come up with more reflexive and integrated approaches (ibid).

Mortati, Mullagh and Schimdt (2022) in a lead article for a Special Issue on Design-Led Policy point out that there is much debate about the relationship between policy and design disciplines. The field of policy design has its roots in the policy studies field, and the newer area of design for policy being grounded in design studies. They underline emerging research on how design disciplines and policy studies are considering options for convergence. They also draw attention to the need to bridge the academic/practices divide between design studies and policy design.

Design, National Economic Competitiveness and Growth

A book chapter by JR Bryson (2010) deals with the relationship between industrial design, national competitiveness, and the emergence of design-centred economic policy. Bryson advocates the incorporation of design, architecture, and related factors such as organizational capability, productivity, and their interplay, into the comparative advantage theory of international trade and industrial competitiveness. This he argues will help refine prevailing theories of trade to help explain the dynamics of international trade in the early 21st century. In addition, the concept of a design-bases comparative advantage approach is proposed which takes cognizance of the increasing influence in the 2000s of the design features of tradable goods (ibid.) Furthermore, the concepts of designed artifacts, design information and design processes, and the architectural context and influences, should inform an integrated and reflexive framework of manufacturing.

The author argues that the choice of design locations by firms often precedes the identification of production location. Furthermore, he argues that the initial production location of a new product usually coincides with its design location. Thus, design is important in explaining the dynamic of contemporary international trade. The author also asserts that Ricardo's concept of comparative advantage should be re-theorized in a more dynamic fashion than previously, with shifting labour-coefficients classified as variables and shaped by capability-building competition between factories on an international level (ibid.). This analytical framework is shaped by a range of observation on manufacturing sites seeking to adapt to heightened global competition via an ongoing process of capability construction.

Raulik, Cawoord & Larsen (2008) explore the relationship/s between economic and industrial competitiveness and the self-conscious institutionalization of strategies for the fostering of design in differing countries. The study enlists a survey of the countries in questions examining the design support programmes and initiatives, along with the specific national design policies adopted. This map of design strategies is compared to the relevant countries' economic status and geographical location. The empirical evidence reveals that more advanced economies have been leveraging design as a substantive asset for their economic and industrial benefit and competitiveness, as well as for the favourable international promotion of their image. Most developing countries have eschewed design as a means for socio-economic development (ibid.)

As Beatrice D'Ippolito (2014) the question of design on countries national and international economic performance has a wider set of implications. She argues that research needs to pay

more attention on the consumption of relevant goods and services, appreciating how design has reshaped individuals' perceptions of new products and the associated restructuring of the organizational forms and strategies of firms, as well as the development of the value creation processes of firms seeking improved competitiveness both at home and abroad (ibid.).

Managing the Design Economy

A related area of interest is that of managing the design economy. An early article by Leslie, Rantisi, and Norma (2005) on the design economy at sub-national level in some advanced economies such as Canada notes that little attention has been accorded to the accommodation of a complex set of activities entailed in creative and cultural production, particularly at sub-national level. Through an exploration of the design sector in Montreal (a sector with international visibility) the authors examine the role played by a mix of public and non-profit institutions in regulating the sector and delineate their mechanisms for reconciling commercial and aesthetic considerations. They outline the opportunities and challenges within the relevant policy circles for incorporating a conceptualization of creative industries (including design-related firms) that takes full account of their inherent hybrid nature.

Artificial Intelligence

Farhana Hoque (2023) explores the possibility of AI taking over designer's job in the future. She notes that advances in technological aids and applications such as AI have enabled planners, architects, urban and interior designers to better and more easily visualize their designs and to reduce the time component. Furthermore, new design-oriented technologies such as Open Ai, Dall-E2 and Mid Journey, tend to blur the distinctions between people do at work and machine learning and algorithms. However, given that design is a discipline which demands a high level of creativity, and thus often requires a synthesis of aesthetic insight and judgement, technical expertise and an empathy with the user, currently AI models and systems are not able to fully reproduce such overlapping skill sets. Such systems largely generate output that is determined with system input.

The article then examines how AI technology will mitigate or see a restructuring for designers' duties going forward; and thereafter considers why this technology won't be able to replace designers and architects in the shorter term (Hoque 2023). Furthermore, using existing studies, the articles look to summarize the impact of AI on the professional work of designers, and to anticipate in which fields such designers will find themselves the future.

Sreenivasan & Suresh (2024) explores how design thinking and AI can be combined to improve design by rendering it more innovative and novel. The authors seek to grasp how AI technologies can add value to and advance the design process, foster innovation, and produce solutions that are more bespoke and user centric. The study underlines the potential of AI as a stimulus to creativity, reveals likely future fields of study and cross-disciplinary cooperation which leveraging AI-informed design thinking. AI can restructure the design process by reducing the time-intensive processes, and enhancing user-centricity, and allow for more reflection and thereby creativity. Properly and thoughtfully applied, AI could improve the decision-making of designers, as well as streamline prototyping and ideation processes. It is important, however, to address bias in AI algorithms and ensure data privacy to ensure that AI is ethically embedded in the relevant activities.

Meron (2022) via a focus on the impact of AI on the graphic design profession explores more deeply the problematic side of AI and digital resources within the design economy. He argues that the introduction of technologies such as electronic publishing, multimedia, social media and the internet more generally have posed a set of challenges for graphic design which have been reinforced by the growing application of AI. While the latter resource within graphic design software has allowed the automation of a range of design processes, these processes may deskill the profession and enable the creation of a second tier of 'non-professional' designers. This development is most pronounced within less creative work that stresses quick turnover and the production of functional artefacts. Part of the problem has been that the bulk of work at the convergence of AI and graphic design has been spearheaded by computer designers invoking 'functional approaches' to design. A central complaint is that engineers and designers struggle to communicate with one another constituting in effect a cultural and discursive divide. This situation makes cross-disciplinary collaboration particularly difficult. Notwithstanding. the author concludes that the onus falls on design professionals and researchers to find ways to engage with computer science and digital technologists in mutual Research and Development (ibid.).

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed key aspects of the international scholarly literature on the design field and economy. Given the breadth of the writings and the constraints of this report, the discussion has looked to provide select/strategic analyses and outcomes rather than providing a more exhaustive treatment. The international components are articulated with the relevant policy and context expositions in subsequent chapters.

The perspectives given in this chapter show an interesting array of subject matter within and without the design fields. In recent decades there is an increased invocation of interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary collaboration and inquiry. This is particularly so in the built environment and here the question of sustainability and the techniques of 'greening' space, products, services, and capabilities are more prominent than a decade or so ago. The impact of digital technologies and economies, and the related and seemingly rapid uptake of AI (artificial intelligence) resources within the design economy and fields, is particularly topical.

Of particularly significance to the aim of the report is the continued interest in the relationship between the national and institutional promotion of design and its apparent beneficial impact on economic growth and development for those national states which have embraced and embedded design in its various facets. There is still scope for more critical work on the dynamics and play of institutions and agencies in the design sector, and the associated question of the development of associationism within the sub-fields.

Chapter 2: Literature Review-The South African Design Field

Introduction

This chapter explores the landscape of South African literature on design, setting the stage for understanding the potential role of a South African Design Council. While various higher education institutions across southern Africa offer design qualifications, as noted by Pretorius (2016), there is a notable gap in the formal recognition and historical study of southern African design. This gap extends to the scarcity of academics identifying as design historians and the limited presence of journals specifically dedicated to African or South African design history. However, as Pretorius suggests, a fragmented history of southern African design does exist across various disciplines such as visual arts, material culture, media studies, and anthropology. This chapter seeks to map these interdisciplinary insights to trace the historical development and academic contributions in the field.

Key academic figures, such as Angus Campbell, document the evolution of industrial design in South Africa, particularly at the University of Johannesburg, and underscore the adaptation of industrial design education to suit the local context, moving beyond British models to address unique South African needs. This historical trajectory reveals a growing emphasis on design for social impact and community development, aligning with the objectives of institutions like the Design Institute of South Africa (DISA) and the broader global movement toward Design for Development.

Further contributions to the field, including those by Hull and Whittal (2021) and Breed, Cilliers, and Fischer (2014), highlight the role of design in areas like land tenure reform and green infrastructure, reflecting a shift toward socially responsible and sustainability-focused design in South Africa. The work of these scholars emphasizes the transformative potential of design thinking and science in addressing complex societal challenges. Through this review, the chapter underscores the current challenges and opportunities within South African design, setting the foundation for evaluating the role a Design Council might play in supporting the design sector's growth, cohesion, and impact.

Historical Gaps in Southern African Design Literature

Deidre Pretorius's study (2016) considers the seeming paucity/scarcity of historical study of design in South and Southern Africa. She notes that while there are a range of southern African higher education institutions offering qualifications in various design disciplines, these have not been accompanied by the inculcation of an historical understanding of southern Africa design history. She found that no institutions in South Africa offered design qualifications. In addition, described themselves as design historians. Furthermore, those academic journals claiming specifically to contribute to African and South African design history were few and far between. The author agrees with the contention that southern African design history doesn't formally exists, but with a codicil that such a history can be detected across a 'dispersal of sites', and disciplines. These span design in general, art history, visual arts, material culture, media and cultural studies, anthropology, and certain inter-disciplinary studies. Taking cognizance of an earlier historiographical art survey work by Margolin (1988; 2002) on the matter, the author looks

to detect and map southern African design history through an examination of how academic institutions have helped shaped the field in question.

Angus Campbell (2008) outlines the work of South Africa's first programme in industrial design, now centred at the University of Johannesburg. He outlines the historical background of the UJ Department of Industrial Design and its innovative role in responding to the need for more coherent and user-oriented approaches to the partnership between design and development which became more fashionable in the early 2000s and after. Campbell shows that in fact that there has in fact been a tradition for lecturers associated with the department to demonstrate a distinct 'awareness and understanding' that industrial design could not merely replicate British models of industrial design.

The author outlines the formation of the first programme in industrial design at the School of Art, Johannesburg (SAJ) in 1963. In 1979 SAJ became the Techikon Witerwaterrand (TWR(. This was subsequently merged with the then Rand Afrikaans University which became the current University of Johannesburg (UJ). This industrial design programme was the only one in South Africa for around 25 years until a second one was set up in Cape Town as part of Cape Technikon in 1988. The third such programme was formed in 2008 at Tswane University of Technology (TUT).

When the SAJ programme was introduced, as Campbell points out, it had close and defined links with the South Africa manufacturing industry. In fact in the early decades there were a number of manufacturing firms in close proximity with the campus. This impacted on the emphasis of the programme in those years which included the designing of products for mass production.

With subsequent shifts in the spatial location and nature of the manufacturing firms in the city saw the dilution of links with manufacturing for SAJ. The programme was also influenced, but at a somewhat later stage, by certain of the activities of the Design Institute of South Africa (DSIA) which had been established in 1965 within the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS). From the 1980s onwards the industrial design programme of SAJ (and subsequent at TWR and then as an academic department at UJ) began responding more directly to the South African context in its teaching trying to use design for the benefit of the developed and developing economies and societies of South Africa (ibid.).

Impact of Institutional Partnerships on Design Education

The teaching of this design process is better suited to South African contexts because of the need to use design to the benefit of both developed and developing society. DISA's involvement in two global Interdesign events in 1999 and 2005 strengthened collaboration between the Institute and the industrial design teaching programme. Furthermore, students' practical involvement in Interdesign 2005 initiative, and smaller but similar ventures, helped foster positive exposure to and engagement with the broader society in which they operated and provided valuable work experience (ibid.).

These projects spurred research and R&D work on community-centred design and a greater involvement into 'Design for Development' initiative. A range of appropriate technology products were designed several of which found realization in select developing countries (Campbell 2008).

The focus on broader development concerns in South African and beyond, may have led to a partial dilution of concentration on building alliances with manufacturing in South Africa. Indeed, the broadening of the core business of Design Institute South Africa (DESA) may have contributed to its decline in fortunes in the 2010s. However, more academic research is required on such matters.

There is considerable scope for research into the workings of the associational and institutional networks of the design sector in South Africa. Communian & England (202) deal with the workings of creative intermediaries through a case study of such operatives in the craft and design field in Cape Town. They show the importance of locating and delineating such activities to better understand the challenges of the CC sector (including the design field) in finding suitable institutional and business support especially for disadvantaged creative producers at particular stages in their professional development.

Ndovela and Olalere (2023) consider the nature of the South African interior design profession's body of knowledge of and engagement with social innovation and socially responsible interior design. They argue that while the design disciplines have often provided a behind-the-scenes input for corporates and organizations seeking profit and/or an edge in their sectors. Interior design is among the professions in which such tendencies can be discerned. However, the drive to profit and the inequalities spawned by neo-liberal priorities have reinforced inequalities in most developing and emerging economies. More socially responsible perspectives on design are required.

Their qualitatively inclined research suggests that the South African interior design profession is not as reflective as it might be on such issues. However, their respondents provide cause for optimism about the direction of the profession in South Africa. The authors find a level of consensus that social innovation would benefit the discipline by demonstrating that interior design was concerned with more than seemingly shallow design aesthetics (ibid.). ,

Adaption of Design and Design Thinking

Simon Hull and Jennifer Whittal of UCT's School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics, explore whether design science research and design thinking processes can improve the application of the 'fit-for-purpose' approach for securing and beneficiating the aim of land tenure for all in South Africa (Hull & Whittal 2021). Given that land tenure security presents a challenge for over 60% of the population in areas outside of the formally registered title, the is a profound need for the cadastral and land systems to be reshaped and new land tenure forms to be instituted. Employing a thematic framework that incorporates fit-for-purpose, design science research, and design thinking, the authors undertake a retrospective analysis of the processes of land administrative reform in the country. Design science research enables cross-disciplinary analysis such as the utilization of the tools of behavioural science. The design thinking process in turn allows the leveraging of human abilities such as empathy, deep-rooted understanding, and the critical questioning of assumptions. This allows freer flowing thinking. Collectively, such approaches should result in innovative solutions and lead to land administrative reform that helps achieve suitable restorative justice (Hull & Whittal 2021).

The Built Environment, Greening and Sustainability

The study by Breed, Cilliers, and Fischer (2014) considers the role/contribution of landscape gardeners in South Africa in promoting a balanced approach to green infrastructure. Via an analysis of design projects in leading profession-focussed magazines since 2004, they find that contrary to conventional scientific wisdom landscape design practitioners tend to view cultural and regulation services as more important than provisioning and support services. This perspective is reinforced by the relevant discourses in such publications which concentrate on social and community aspects, sustainability, and the highlighting of design and aesthetics. The analysis also shows that environmental laws and regulations, rating regimes, and award systems condition what design practitioners take as their main priorities (ibid.). The authors argue that award systems are well suited to the resetting of values and the promotion of a balanced incorporation of an emphasis on the ecosystem with the field of green infrastructure.

Conclusion

This chapter underscores the complex and evolving landscape of South African design literature, highlighting both the gaps and potential pathways for developing a cohesive historical and institutional understanding of design in the region. Despite the scarcity of dedicated design history scholarship, interdisciplinary contributions across visual arts, material culture, and industrial design reflect an emergent narrative of South African design that is increasingly attuned to local context and societal needs.

The historical development of industrial design education, particularly through pioneering programs at the University of Johannesburg, illustrates a tradition of innovation that has moved away from imported models, aiming instead to serve both South Africa's developed and developing communities. This progression is mirrored in initiatives like DISA's Design for Development, which emphasize community-centred design and social responsibility - a theme gaining traction across various design disciplines, including interior and landscape design.

Academic research on topics such as creative intermediaries, social innovation in interior design, and sustainable design practices reveals the growing influence of design in addressing broad socio-economic issues. Furthermore, the application of design thinking to land tenure reform exemplifies the cross-disciplinary potential of design to drive impactful change in pressing societal areas.

As South Africa considers the formation of a National Design Council, these diverse strands of design practice and scholarship highlight the need for a central body that can unify and support the sector, advocate for a stronger historical foundation, and promote sustainable, socially responsible design practices. Such a council could serve as a catalyst, enhancing collaboration, fostering research, and guiding policy that leverages design's unique capacity to contribute to South Africa's social, economic, and cultural development.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Methods

Introduction

This study uses a mixed-methods approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of complex social phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The goal is to assess the feasibility of establishing a National Design Council for South Africa by gathering both numerical data and in-depth insights.

Quantitative data is derived from structured interviews and the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), while qualitative data is obtained through structured and open-ended interviews. This approach enhances the reliability and depth of the research findings.

Mixed-Methods Approach

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data provides a balanced view, consisting of objective measurement and contextual insights. Quantitative data, including statistics from the Stats SA Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS), provides measurable indicators such as employment rates and demographic patterns in the design sector.

Qualitative interviews add depth, revealing individual experiences and perspectives that enrich our understanding of the quantitative findings. Although surveys were initially planned, they were not conducted due to resource constraints in the form of a database of individuals and organisations involved in design.

Desktop Research

The research started with a desktop literature review. A systematic examination was conducted of academic papers and government documents with reference to design – both internationally and in South Africa. These papers and reports were then collated and analysed to identify key findings, themes, and concepts. Gaps or areas that require further research were also identified. This review of existing literature provided the researchers with an overview of existing knowledge and enabled them to establish the context for the report and the qualitative interviews.

Interview Sampling and Data Collection

Participants were selected based on their relevance to the research topic, availability and willingness to contribute. Interviews were conducted in person, by phone, or online, with strict adherence to ethical standards, including informed consent. All interviews were recorded (with permission) and transcribed for accuracy, providing a reliable basis for qualitative analysis.

Qualitative Data Analysis

A thematic analysis approach was used for the transcripts, allowing researchers to identify recurring themes and patterns. This process involves coding responses and grouping them into

categories aligned with the study's objectives. The qualitative analysis approach complements the quantitative data and provides richer insights into the participants' experiences and views.

Quantitative Data from QLFS

The QLFS provides comprehensive data on employment and labour market trends in South Africa. This dataset includes variables such as occupation, industry, demographic details, and employment status, offering valuable information for a longitudinal analysis of the design sector. Data cleaning is performed to ensure reliability, including handling duplicates and addressing missing values. Relevant variables are formatted consistently for accurate analysis.

Although the data is collected and collated by Stats SA, the data was obtained from Data First (https://www.datafirst.uct.ac.za/dataportal/index.php/catalog/960).

Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied to the QLFS data. Descriptive analysis provides an overview of variables such as employment rates and demographic distributions, while inferential analysis, such as regression modelling, explores relationships between variables. The QLFS data is weighted to represent the broader population accurately, adjusting for sampling biases and enhancing the generalizability of the results.

The QLFS data's longitudinal aspect allows for trend analysis, helping to identify shifts in employment patterns, industry changes, and responses to economic conditions over time. This temporal analysis is crucial for understanding the evolving dynamics of South Africa's design sector and assessing the potential impact of a National Design Council.

Triangulation of Findings

Triangulation, or cross-verification of data from multiple sources, is a critical step in research. By integrating quantitative data from QLFS with qualitative insights from the interviews, the study enhances its validity and provides a comprehensive narrative. Interview responses help explain trends observed in the quantitative data, adding context to the statistical findings (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018).

Limitations and Ethical Considerations

All research methodology has limitations. It is possible to miss certain nuances in structured interviews, or for there to be insufficient time to go through all the topics in depth. For the qualitative analysis the main constraint is that South Africa is a data-poor country. Researchers have to rely on data sets which often lack variables relevant to research or are outdated. Stats SA is also a single source of data.

Ethical guidelines were followed rigorously, with confidentiality and informed consent upheld to protect participant rights and data integrity.

Conclusion

This chapter provides a brief outline of the research methods used to explore the need for the establishment of a National Design Council for South Africa.

This mixed-methods approach provides a well-rounded framework for the study, allowing for a detailed exploration of the design sector in South Africa. By combining complementary data collection methods and applying robust analysis techniques, the research effectively addresses its objectives and contributes valuable insights toward the potential establishment of a National Design Council.

Chapter 4: International Policy Context and Background

A Brief History of Design

There is a long history of patronage by the different kinds of states across the globe, acting as patrons to artists, which nowadays would include those who would be described as designers (Thompson 2014; Design Du Lelieu 2024).

While the history of design is closed linked to the development of industrial production, design can be traced back to early civilizations where artisans and artists took the functional and aesthetic properties of the tools they produced and the spaces in which they lived. The concept of 'design' can be detected according to some scholars in the daily life of people in 16th Italy, later diffusing to other European countries. At the time it had a different meaning – the multi-word construction 'disegno intero' connoted an original idea and/or the first sketches of an envisaged work of art by the artist.

Shared Memory of the Artifact

These plans, sketches and drawings contributed to what Subrahmanian, Reich & Krishnan (2020) describe as a 'shared memory of the artifact'. Over time this externalizing of the artistic and design process saw the supersession of the 'advanced generalist' by a team drawn from varied fields with each field having a shared memory of a community of practice.

This trend to sharing across a broader spectrum was not without its selectivity and secrecy. For instance, Italian architect Filippo Brunelleschi, not wanting anyone to see how he conceived the idea for the dome of the Santa Maria del Flore cathedral, drew up different plans and split the work so extensively that no other person could piece them together (ibid.). Thus, this accumulated body of knowledge is not available to all and there are social constructions over time that determine how the shared memory is to be controlled and accessed. During the 17th and 18th century the access to such knowledge was widened to a degree hastening the advent of the industrial revolution.

Before the Industrial Revolution the shared memory of the artifact was transmitted in two ways, from parent to child, and from master through to apprentice. Often there was not much change over generations and a relatively modest application of knowledge from differing fields. This was changed by the scientific revolution of the 17th century, described by Mokyr as the 'Industrial Enlightenment'. With the maturation of the shared memory of the artifact there was accompanied by an exponential expansion of the differing forms of knowledge of the how, why, and what. These in time developed into firmer disciplinary specialisations.

Impact of the Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution and its aftermath brought an increase in complexity in production both in terms of machinery and the scale of deployment. Increased complexity led to further specialization as the different disciplines with the shared memories of designing journey on independent paths. To enable the dissemination of the shared memory across people working on assembly line certain aspects of the shared memory had to be standardized for ease of transmission (ibid.).

The ide of making things experienced a major transformation during the Industrial Revolution during the size of new production aspirations (Mokyr 2007). As Subrahmanian, Reich & Krishnan (2020) argue, it is at this juncture that histories of design in fact commence because the process and act of making and the act of design become in effect a site and means of study and the gaining of understanding. The Industrial Revolution and its aftermath, facilitates the paradigmatic shift from 'the shared memory of the artifact to the shared memory of designing' (ibid. 20220: 28).

There was a discernible formalization of attitudes in the mid-1700s regarding the work of those involved with a broadening process of design. This was spearheaded by the publication of the Encyclopédie by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond D'Alembert. This comprehensive set of studies included a systematic representation by Diderot of the work and knowledge of those practitioners of the mechanical arts. While Diderot sought to improve the status of the artisans and the nature of their work, he neglected certain social aspects of their culture and the complexities of such knowledge. Thus, aspects of the arts and associated technology that were difficult to articulate, draw, and diagnose, were obscured by omission. This included technical problems, design failures, human experimentation, curiosity, and creativity. All these qualities were central for processes of invention and innovation. Diderot did, however, remind readers that social thinker Francis Bacon 'regarded the history of the mechanical Arts and the most important branch of true Philosophy' (cited Pannabecker 1994).

However, Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers (1794) in Paris, that saw the dawning realization by certain politicians and state functionaries that the function of design differed from traditional arts practice. This entailed a shift from direct patronage to one that emphasized education, training, and promotion. More significantly was the realization that design, more popularly understood at the time as industrial art, could play a central role in the development of trade and industry (Thompson 2014).

Although Britain had taken the lead in industrialization by the early 1830s it was facing increasing competition from French, Prussian, and Bavarian industry. This stemmed partly from the poor standards of the design of its manufactured goods. Sitting from July 1835 to July 1836, a House of Commons Select Committee sought 'the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and the principles of design among the people (especially the manufacturing population) of the country' (cited by Thompson 2014). Among the outcomes of the Committee's conclusions was the formation of twenty Schools of Design in manufacturing centres across the country, including schools. A further reflection of this new direction in policy was the 1851 Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations.

The Arts and Crafts Movement

At the end of the 19th century, the Arts and Crafts movement emerged in England, led by designer William Morris and critic John Ruskin. They looked to crafts and the past as an alternative to industrial mass production, opposing what they saw as 'faceless production', and insisted that the aesthetic and artistic value of products be embodied and acknowledge in their design (Design Du Lelieu 2024)

Unlike the Arts and Craft movement, in the Netherlands, the De Stijl group formed in 1917 invoked a future-oriented social and aesthetic utopia. Leading lights were Theo van Doesburg, Piet Mondrian, and Gerrit Rietveld. Both the Morris and De Stilj group expanded the artifact to

incorporate knowledge not only of technology but also of society and other imperatives central to designing. Beyond the language of speed and efficiency linked to technology and machinery, they explored intangibles such as values, quality and aesthetics (Subrahmanian, Reich & Krishnan 2020).

The Bauhaus School of Design

In 1919 the Bauhaus, possibly the first substantive school of design education was founded in Germany. The Bauhaus was perhaps the most influential modernist art and design school of the 20th century. Its approach to teaching, and to the relationship between art, technology and society had a significant impact in Europe and the US long after its forced closure by the Nazi government in Germany in 1933. It was influenced by late 19th and early 20th century artistic and design currents such as the Arts and Crafts movement and Art Nouveau. It had many international incarnations. As Walther Gropius, the German founder of the Bauhaus described it, the establishment of the Bauhaus was informed by the objective of realizing 'a modern techtonic art which like human nature was meant to be all-embracing in its scope'. It sought to avert 'mankind's enslavement by the machine by saving the mass product and the home from mechanical anarchy and by restoring them to purpose, sense and life'. There was an emphasis on the 'common citizenship of all forms of creative work, and their logical interdependence on one another in the modern world'(Cited in Subrahmanian, Reich & Krishnan (2020)). For the Bauhaus originators their main touchstone was that design is not an intellectual or material affair, but rather 'an integral part of the stuff of life, necessary for everyone in a civilized society' (ibid).

Its emphasis on uniting art and industrial design was probably the most original and important achievements of the institution.

The formation of the Bauhaus in 1919 was followed by not dissimilar developments elsewhere. For example, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) created Higher Art Technical Workshops, which were located not only in Moscow and Petrograd, but also other cities. At the same time the first certified designers appeared in various areas of industrial production (Design Du Lelieu 2024).

Among other related developments the early 20th century saw artists appointed to the boards of various large corporations tasked with helping the owners to develop their own corporate style and advise on new product designs (ibid.).

A significant development in the post-war period was the establishment of HfG Ulm in Germany based on Bauhaus principles. Ulm focussed on the relationship between science, technology and design. The disciplines Ulm drew from were diverse ranging from ergonomics, mathematics, physics, the social and economic sciences. It was something of a clearing house for advanced thinking on the theory, methodology and application of design. Importantly it gave impetus to the emerging design methods movement of the late 1950s and 1960s. The language of the discourse at the time was strongly influenced by science and a range of new terms of a rational and functional and solution- oriented connotations became embedded in the expanding lexicography of designing.

The consolidation of the design methods of the 1960s and 1970s embraced too uncritically a scientific approach of a Cartesian nature in which the discrete parts can be broken down into individual parts for solutions and then recombined into a whole. But there was a feeling among

certain of the design community that a behaviourist and managed approach to design was omitting the inter-related human, social, cultural, and political dynamics of design.

Design - Change Existing Situations with Preferred Ones

Nobel prize winner, Herbert A Simon in a seminal work argued that approaches that worked for the natural sciences did not work for a world that is human made (Simon 1969; 1988). He argued for a new field of study – the artificial. He noted that medicine, engineering, architecture, business, and painting deal with the contingent not with the necessary – how things are not how they should be. In short, they deal with design. This opened up new possibilities for the advanced pursuit of design with an emphasis on changing 'existing situations with preferred ones' (Simon 1988, 67). He argued that counter to the 'homo economicus' model which derived in part from Newtonian physics, the alternatives and consequences of actions and decision making might only be partly known, white means and ends could be imprecisely delineated. Thus a 'bounded rationality' was a more likely outcome.

The l1970s and 1980s saw more questioning of the over-emphasis on scientific method in design.

The work of design theorist Horst Rittel in the 1960s and 1970s on the notion of the 'wicked problem' and the question of problem solving gained traction in subsequent decades. . For Rittel, wicked problems lay at the very heart of design thinking, as these complex problems seemed to require the use of a collaborative methodology to gain a more nuanced and deeper understanding of humans' needs, behaviour and motivations (Dam & Teo 2022; Sam..) Design methods underpinned by a systems approach struggled to solve such problems as they were obscurely defined. Tackling such problems required 'second-generation design methods'. These new kinds of methods would look to ensure a continuity between previous methods inspired by science and the more flexible methods put forward by Rittel. And in combination with Werner Kunz, the notion of involving users in the design process was put forward.

Further impetus was added to this line of inquiry with Nigel Cross's seminal paper 'Designerly Ways of Paper' (1982), In this paper, Cross compared the problem-solving processes of designers to the non-design problems and the solutions thereto that humans experience on a daily basis (Dam & Teo 2022). Christopher Alexander's widely read work, , A Pattern Language (1977) contends that structures, buildings and objects have their own language and knowledge. With such patterns regions, cities, localities, and even interior aspects such as seating, lighting and colours can be constructed. In other words, users had more scope to design for themselves than was assumed (Sub.... 2020). Pattern Language, part of a trilogy of works by Alexander, is also important for demystifying socio-spatial aspects via an comprehensible building block format, which makes the work accessible to non-professionals (Dawes & Ostwald 2017).

Wicked Problems in Design Thinking

In 1992, an important article on 'Wicked Problems in Design Thinking' by Richard Buchanan, then head of Design at Carnegie Mellon University, provided both a retrospective look at the origins and expansion of design thinking but also mapped out a new territory. He points out that as sciences develop over time, they tend to become more isolated from each other and become specializations in their own fields. Buchanan argued that design thinking should be used to integrate or articulate these very specialized fields of knowledge (Buchanan 1992). This would

enable for holistic perspectives and approaches to deal with the new and clustered problems we encounter today.

In recent decades the general understanding and use of the concept of 'wicked problems' has matured, with human-centred design advocates such as Don Norman using the terms such as 'complex socio-technical systems' (Dam & Teo 2022).

A significant institutional event was the establishment of IDEO in the Silicon Valley area of North California in the 1991. IDEO played a distinctive role in helping bring design thinking into mainstream state and private sector work. Developing their own customer-friendly terminology and accompanying 'toolkits' they looked to render the design process accessible to those not versed in design methodology (Dam & Teo 2022).

The origins of IDEO can be traced back to pioneering work by the likes of visionary engineer and psychologist, John E Arnold of Stanford University. In a collaborative effort he helped found the Joint and novel Programme in Product Design between the Departments of Mechanical Engineering and Art and Architecture. In this programme Arnold (1959) and his collaborators developed a design philosophy and practice that focused on creativity and invention (Auernhammer & Roth, 2021). In 2004, David Kelley, the joint-founder of IDEO, set up the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford, popularly known as the d.school. The US school was later supplemented by d.school affiliates in Potsdam, Germany and in Cape Town, RSA. Central to the d.school has been the development, teaching and realization of design thinking. (Dam & Teo 2022).

The UK Design Council

Institutional Origins

By the late 19th century, the interest of the British state in design and industry had dimmed, even though it seemed to be losing out in the international manufacturing wars, against both its old competitors in Europe as well as the burgeoning industries of the USA. Belatedly, the government set in motion a set of design-focussed initiatives (Thompson 2014). This included a dedicated exhibition design organization, the Exhibitions Branch, which was housed in the British Board of Trade. During the early post-World War I period the Board of Trade established a semi-public design promotion agency, the British Institute of industrial Arts (BIIA) which was incorporated in 1920. Its main aim was to raise standards of design in British manufacturing industry in tandem with the improvement of public taste. Its significance lay in that it was the first state organization specifically established to deal with matters on industrial design (Suga 2001). Also, its idea of industrial art grew in sophisticated during the 1920. Collaborating with the Design and Industries Association the BIIA gave attention to the standardization of public design, such as the designs of telephone boxes and road signs in joint efforts with other governmental departments. Although it was disbanded in 1933, most of its key ideas would be incorporated in newer organizations such as the Council for Art and Industry.

Council of Industrial Design

In 1944 the Council of Industrial Design (COID) was established under the leadership of Hugh Dalton, President of the Board of Trade in Churchill's wartime Government to drive innovation and economic reconstruction at a time of austerity and great change. Its mandate was 'to promote by all practicable means the improvement of design in the products of British industry'

(Whitworth 2005; BIS 2010). It was the first national publicly funded design body, with the partial exception of the Swedish Society of Crafts and Design a non-profit body with a small state subsidy. This body was likely the world's most influential state-funded promotion organization in the 20th century (BIS 2005; Whitworth 2005). It also stimulated the formation of similar bodies in the Commonwealth countries, Europe, and the Far East.

The COID's first major project was an international exhibition in 1946 termed Britain Can Make it, constituting a propagandist role for manufacturing and consumers as well as a shop window for British design internationally. It was also responsible for advice on design education and training, and the schooling of the public on the aesthetic and social benefits of well-design goods and objects (Thompson 2014; BIS 2010) This was followed up in 1951 with the launch of a popular journal Design. Central aspects of the COID's strategy during the 1950s was the foundation of a Design Centre in the Haymarket, London in 1956. This was followed in 1957 by the setting up of a Scottish Design Centre (Thompson 2014; BSAA 2024).

By 1947 the Council"s internal organisation had firmed into a binary structure. Its s Industrial Division looked to promote the manufacture of better designed goods, and its Information Division aimed to develop a responsive audience for those goods. The Information Division comprised sections for Education, Retail and Exhibitions. With minor modifications this broad arrangement prevailed to the late 1970s (BSAA.... 2024; BIS 2010)

In view of the impact of economic stagnation of the 1970s on consumer and contract goods industries, the Design Council formed a Design Advisory Service which offered direct help and advice to manufacturers. The Council acquired a manufacturing magazine, Engineering and along with the publication of Design Guides was able to provide designers and industrialists with topical information and ideas regarding engineering design (BIS 2010).

Design Council

By the early 1970s the remit of COID had evolved and expanded resulting in it changing its name to 'Design Council' to reflect a broadened emphasis on a range of design disciplines (BIS 2010). It still retained however its focus on the promotion of links between industrial design, engineering and technology with increasing emphasis on a range of design disciplines. In 1976 the Council's Charitable Status was incorporated by Royal Charter, with a stated objective of 'the advancement of British industry and society by the improvement of design in the products and services thereof' (BIS 2010).

In the late 1970s, the Council scaled back its work for the Central Office of Information and Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the UK Government. A decade later, in the wake of a fundamental review the Council cut its Marketing Services division and its the Design Selection initiative that had recognised well designed goods in their thousands since 1956.

The Design Advisory Service

The 1980s saw heightened consumerism and an accompanying demand for increased quality. In addition, the period ushered in a more human-focused approach to design. This saw the Design Council exploring on social, environmental, and regenerative issues. Support for British companies remained as core business. The Design Advisory Service linked manufacturers and external consultants. In turn, this stimulated the growth of independent design consultancies in the UK. In the early 1990s this service was restructured into a regional network of support

agencies for manufacturers with particular attention to the clothing and textiles, furniture and medical equipment sectors (BIS 2010; BAASA 2024).

Design Council as Agile Collaborative Thinktank Organization'

In 1997, after a further reconsideration of its role, the streamlined Council adopted a revised three-pronged approach (BAASA 2024). It became more of an 'agile collaborative thinktank organization' (ibid.) This placed a new emphasis on the commissioning and generation of design-related research, as well as building new awareness, and creating new resources and partnerships. It was responsible for the delivery of the government's Millennium Products initiative to identify designs that would inspire product development in the 21st century. This initiative was followed by a 2001 Great Expectations exhibition that included a variety of the Millennium Products as well as new innovations.

In 2010 a further a substantive review was undertaken to consider the future role and status of the Design Council as the national and strategic body for design. The review was a response to a perceived need to cut public expenditure at a time of tight fiscal challenges (BAASA 2024). The Design Council was considered to have delivered value and it retained its Royal Charter and at the same time merged with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (BIS 2010; Design Council 2023).

The early 21st century saw the Design Council increase its interest in innovation and cross-sector collaboration which could have a positive influence on economic, social, and sustainable issues. In 2005 following an internationally influential review of the contribution of design, innovation, and creativity to the UK economy, popularly known as the 'The Cox Review', the Design Council paid more focussed attention to the identification and demonstration of design's value to the UK economy. In 2015 as part of a widening interest in design and the built environment, the Design Council developed a new City Model as a means of supporting local authorities in the UK in delivering well-designed places and infrastructure and stimulating economic growth. In the same year the Council published The Design Economy expanding on previous research and traditional definitions of the design economy. The report provided a particular accurate and substantive assessment of the contribution of design to the UK economy (BIS 2010: Design Council 2023).

The UK Design Council as an Exemplar

A variety of countries around the world have stressed the importance of investing in design to grow their economies. A central part of the process has been the establishment of design councils which are usually based on the UK Design Council whether past or present.

Over the years the UK Design Council has forged policy networks globally, with many developed and certain developing economies looking to the Council and its activities as an exemplar, whether past or present.

The Design Council can be seen as a broker of facilitator – a role it has been able to perform over time be because of its reputation and its heritage as being the oldest state-supported design body in the world (with the partial exception of the Svensk Form in Sweden). It is linked with the government but has a degree of independence and objectivity. In addition, it is also a charity and well disposed to help countries, organizations and practitioners negotiate the complexities of the contemporary design industry (BIS 2010; BAASA 2024).

National Design Councils in the Commonwealth

Australia

The Industrial Design Council of Australia (IDCA) was originally established in 1958 and funded by the Commonwealth Government. Its inception was informed by strategic discussions at federal government level regarding the need to reinforce the performance of Australian industry., It was also in part a response to lobbying by several design associations in Austrialia (Hutchinson 2006). The industrialist and Chairperson of BHP, Essington Lewis served as the inaugural Chair of the Council and Sir Walter Scott as Deputy Chair.

Based primarily on the British Design Council, IDCA was conceived as a national umbrella organization with the chief aims of establishing, maintaining and promoting high standards of design in manufactured goods, and fostering the understanding and appreciation of design in the community at large. (Hutchinson 2006

The 1960s were productive years for IDCA. The Council took a leaf out of the UK Design Council book in introducing the Prince Philip Prize for Australian design which was personally supported by the Prince. This was supplemented by the Duke of Edinburgh Prize and the Good Design Labels awards which constituted distinct indicators of quality design and manufacturing. In addition, Design Centres were opened in the capital cities of the Australian commonwealth. The underlying aim of such initiatives was to encourage excellence in the design and manufacturing processes of Australian designed and developed products.

Notwithstanding these developments, the Council had to close operations in the 1976 due to funding difficulties but was subsequently had its funding grant renewed following strong rallying within industry. A new 'Innovation' recognition program was initiated o run alongside the Prince Philip Prize. The Australian Design Awards (ADA) programme was set up and became a valuable promotional tool for manufacturers and designers. The Prince Philip Prize continued to be awarded, but only to products which had received the Australian Design Award

Persistent funding challenges, erratic industry support, and a lack of clarity of direction affected IDCA. To reinvigorate the organization the Government re-launched IDCA as the Australian Design Council (ADC). This restructuring took note of the expansion of the design sector and professions in the country and saw a renewed emphasis on design information and training (Good Design Australia 2024). In 1991, the control of the Council was shifted to Standards Australia, the country's national standards body acquired the ADC along its Australian Design Awards (ADA) programme (Standards Australia 2024). This was a similar organizational positioning as that of the Design Institute of South Africa (Standards Australia 2024). In 1992, the Powerhouse Museum, part of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (MAAS) establishes the Powerhouse Museum Design Award and Selection as part of the Australian Design Awards programme. Winning products would be displayed in the Powerhouse Museum for one year with the Selection added to the Museum's permanent collection of Australian design (GDA 2024).

In 2010 the AIDA programme and associated initiatives were spun off from the ADC and a new organization Good Design Australia established under the directorship of Dr Brandon Given. The new agency was tasked to operate the Awards and to continue the legacy of the IDCA in promoting design in Australia and internationally (GDA 2024). The Australian Design Council

was placed under the control of Good Design Australia. With certain of its programmes and initiatives being run directly by the GDA, the Council languished organizationally.

In 2020 it was decided by industry and professional representatives, and new advocates of design-led development, to re-establish the ADC as a not-for-profit industry body. The ADC revealed its desire for a more inclusive and reflexive approach to design by attracting an impressive set of council members, comprising leading thinkers, innovators, and entrepreneurs in Australian design (Water 2020). The renewed ADC would focus on innovative strategies and advocacy to bring about a diversified future economy and to respond to complex, social, environmental, and economic challenges. Additionally, the Council would look actively for solutions to revive Australia's advanced manufacturing challenges.

The new ADC Executive Chair, Dr Sam Bucolo stressed that said design-led thinking had the power to transform an industry and accelerate the creation of new businesses whose products and services drive growth and sustained competitive advantage (GDA 2024). He stressed that design should play a central role in the rebuilding of the Australian economy post-Covid-19 with the Council shaping 'how we create new and emerging areas for a strong competitive advantage through design' (ibid).

The ADC's first step in raising awareness of the capability of design to diversify Australia's economy has been through the publication of Design Manifesto – the Council's action plan to help shape a brighter future for Australia through design. (ADC 2020).

New Zealand Industrial Design Council

In the aftermath of World War II several organizations were established to develop design. One of the earliest agencies to foster the appreciation of design was the Wellington Architectural Centre set up in 1946. In the same year it launched the country's first design publication, New Zealand Design Review which it published until 1954 (ref). The Design Guild was established in Auckland in 1949 but closed shop after a short time. Other professional design associations were established including the Design Association in 1946. Initially representing industrial draughtsmen over time it expanded to include multi-disciplinary field of design professionals. In 1959, a designer practitioner body the New Zealand Society of Industrial Designers. The latter structure was formed by a group of mainly British-trained designers in Auckland and modelled on the British Society of Industrial Artists (Thompson 2011 and 2014). It differed from structures such as the New Zealand Design Council as it dealt mainly with the interests of the design profession (Slappendel 1996).

State-led explorations of institutionalizing national design promotion followed. For some time, it had been argued that to improve the quality of New Zealand's manufactured goods, for domestic use and exports, an Industrial Design Council should be formed. The national Department of Industries under its permanent secretary, Bill Sutch, systematically investigated the possibility of establishing a national design promotion agency. It was decided to do this via a legislative route and in 1966 the Industrial Design Act made provision for such a body. Consequently, the New Zealand Industrial Design Council was established in 1967 'to promote the appreciation, development, improvement and the use of industrial design in New Zealand'. The Council was established at a time when there was more support for the welfare state (Thompson 2014). It operated from 1967 to 1988 when it was abolished, with some of the Council's functions shifted to a quality assessment body,.

The Council was intended to be funded mainly from its primary beneficiaries, the private sector. It aimed at educating manufacturers and consumers to achieve economic efficiencies and contributing to a manufacturing culture. However, it was viewed by designers as more of an institutional resource for their practice, and the private sector was overly complacent. However, as Christopher (2014:1) Thompson argues, while 'intended to benefit society at large, it ended up providing state-funded largesse for private sector management' (Thompson 2014: 1).

Some of its organizational aspects were included in subsequent developments in the professional design community. In 1991 the New Zealand Society of Industrial Designers which had been formed in 1960 and the New Zealand Association of Interior Designers (formed in 1968) merged to establish the Designers Institute of New Zealand. Today this body represents a range of disciplines including graphic, digital, motion, spatial, industrial, fashion and craft design as well as the management and teaching of these disciplines (DINZ 2024).

Canada and its National Design Council

A Canadian design academic newly returned from a fact-finding trip including a visit to the UK Design Council remarked in 2010:

> There are definite advantages of having an organization like the Design Council for a country. My sense is that design is much more a part of the British culture than it is the Canadian culture. True — Canadian geography makes all of our national initiatives challenging – but we complain frequently about our productivity and our innovation quotients — both of which could be assisted by a better design literacy in both businesses and the general citizenry. No shortage of projects to tackle. And the good news is that there is precedent in the UK in terms of the "how" to set up and the value of doing so.

Ironically such a Council had been in existence in Canada from the early 1960s through to the late 1980s. In 1961, the Diefenbaker Government passed An Act for the Establishment of a National Design Council to 'plan and implement programmes to create an awareness by industry and the general public of the need for good design'. The subsequent establishment of the Design Council by Industry Canada, include all the design disciplines of the time, and built on the foundations by its predecessor the National Industrial Design Council, established in the post-war period to assist Canadian firms compete in international markets (Diamond & Lewis 2011; Dorland 2012)

There were some signal successes, most particularly the 1967 Expo 67 held in Toronto. The Exposition with its focus on design and electronic media owed much of its acclaim to the initiatives of the National Design Council (Diamond & Lewis 2011). Industrial designers, architects, urban planners, graphic designers, landscape architects along with photographers and filmmakers all participated in a memorable celebration of Canada's Centenary and the associated design components. Among other achievements was the inception of The Chairman's Award for Design Management is sponsored by the National Design Council in co-operation with the Department of Industry, Trade. The Award recognized the outstanding contribution made by the management of a Canadian business enterprise in advancing the cause of good design by 'the application of effective design management' (Cited Diamond & Lewis 2011).

Despite these encouraging developments, the Canadian government appears to have lost its focus in using design to enhance national economic performance (Dorland 2012). Possibly other national economic imperatives such as a focus on commodities and branch plant manufacturing held their attention (Diamond & Lewis 2011). In 1988 the National Design Council, a joint industry-government body, and its public arm, Design Canada, were dissolved. In 2012, policy analyst Caroline Dorland (2012) presented a succinct interpretation of the outcome of these events:

> Currently, Canada does not have a policy for design, nor does it have a formalized promotional or supportive organizational body charged with the growth and development of the design industry in our country.

Diamond and Lewis (2011) take a similar tack:

> There was and is a national failure to acknowledge that design policy is not solely about designers but about innovation and Canada's capacity to compete through design.

India – National Design Council

Although newly independent India began look to add design to its craft and manufacturing production in the post-war years, its relationship to the COID in the UK and design practice in the Commonwealth grouping, appears to have been a more tangential relationship with Great Britain on these matters.

In the 1950s influential links were developed at personal, business and state levels with the US and certain European design discourses and networks. The period was a time for 'reappraisal and reconstruction' with the emerging nation faced with the major task of nation building and balancing centuries-old traditions with modern technology and ideas (NID 2024)

At the time, the India Government and particularly its Trade and Industry ministry was considering establishing an institute or organization to respond to the rapid industrialization o fhte economy and signs of growth in its exports. Informed by leading and iconic figures in the cultural industries new linkages were cultivated or advocated (Balaram 2018; NID 2024) A key development was the request by the Indian Government to the Ford Foundation to invite renowned US designers Charles and Ray Eames to visit India. This they did and the result of their meetings and travels was the presentation of the 1958 India Report to the Government of India by the Eameses (Balaram 2018; NID 2024). This was to become a touchstone of design policy thinking in India for many decades.

The Report defined the principles and approach that lead to the formation of the NID, and the beginnings of design education in India (Bela... 2009). The Report recommended a problem-solving design consciousness and suggested that the designer could help bridge traditional and modern discourses and practices (NID 2024). Also important were the links with the Bauhaus movement expressed in part by the post-war Ulm Design School. (Balaram 2009).

In 1961 confirmed an Act of Parliament the National Institute of Industrial Design was established by the Indian Government with funding coming from the Ford Foundation and the Sarabhai family. It was originally set up in Delhi by subsequently moved to less-hectic centre of Ahmedabad. It was originally set up as an all-India body. (NID 2024; Balaram 2009). The NID was not merely an institute. It was embodied the notion that a design school and research

institute were both vital in aiding industrial production and contributing to national socio-economic development (Balaram 2018).

Though originally termed the National Institute of Industrial Design, this name was changed to the National Design Institute before assuming its present nomenclature of the National Institute of Design (NID) in 1970. The became the country's pioneer in design education in industrial design as well as textiles apparel design and communication design. Hands-on learning and practical experience were emphasized. Its pedagogy and curricula were informed by the Bauhaus design movement and its insistence on learning by doing (NID 2024).

By the early 2000s, although there was a diversification of design-related associations, there was an acknowledgement of the need for India to embed design more directly within industrial and trade activities given the new realities of globalization. Closer ties were forged with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) leading to several initiatives such as the inaugural Design Summit of 2001 (Vyas 2024) which brought together industry, government and academic to underline the increased significance of design in development.

In 2007 partly because of thoroughgoing collaboration with the CII, India became one of the early movers in adopting a National Design Policy. The National Design Policy has influenced significantly the design industry in India. Its main objective has been to enhance the competitiveness of its industries. The Policy has consequent sought to promote Indian design via a comprehensive framework, concentrating on regulation, promotion and institutional support to articulate Indian design education with international standards. It has sought to leverage the country's rich craft and cultural and design traditions to position India a hub for design innovation and support (Vyas 2024). Among the main provisions are raising manufacturers' awareness, especially SMEs, regarding the competitive advantage of originals designs, attracting investment in design-related R&D, and securing a deep-seated collaboration between industry and professional designers (ibid.).

Among the key objectives of the policy was the establishment of a state-funded Indian Design Council (IDC)to help implement the policy. The Council was formally established in March 2009 and composed 32 eminent members from the fields, of design, industry, academic, media and select state agencies (NID 2024; Yangra 2020).

Situated in the Ministry for Commerce & Industry, under the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, the IDC is the national strategic body for design in India (Vyas 2024). It has sought to cover and transition design from 'handicraft to spacecraft' (Vyas 2024). Its stated objectives include Design Awareness and Design Promotion; Design Development; and Positioning India as a Top Design Destination. There was also a commitment to reinforce design education nationally (Yangra 2020; NID 2024).

Among the Council's successes in its first decade were the Design Clinic Scheme, which saw thousands of SMEs improving their products and/or services through design initiatives, which in turn had a positive impact on the national economy. In addition, new national institutes for design aimed to supplement and strengthen human resources in the design field. The Council was also tasked with various research, impact, and strategy studies with the aim of enhancing India's international competitiveness (Vyas 2024; NDC 2024). Furthermore, the introduction of an India Design Mark helped incentivize industries to pay close attention to design excellence (ibid.) Currently the Indian National Design Council is considering ways of upgrading and

updating its National Design Policy with increased emphasis on digital inclusion and ethical practices within industry and society (ibid.).

Design and the East Asian Economies: Select Examples

Introduction

In 2010 a UK government commission report stressed that the scale of investment in building design capability was considerable. By illustration it was noted that design investment by the Korean Government as a proportion of GDP was at the time nearly 'ten times greater than in the UK'. Indeed such was the importance of design that people with industrial design masters degrees 'are even exempt from military service' (BIS 2010). It was also underlined that these countries 'commonly have explicit national and regional design strategies driven by the top echelons of government' (ibid.).

In support of a 2011 Bill to establish a national design council in the Philippines, Senator Guigona pointed out that while the UK, Denmark and Finland could be seen as among the 'bigger Western frontrunners' in design and innovation the Philippines government was 'surprised to find that our Asian contemporaries are already catching up with these major players'. He noted that Singapore and Korea were the 'most aggressive' which was earning them 'top spots' in world rankings for global and design competitiveness. Furthermore, the Singaporean government was invoking design as 'a strategic tool to future-proof their country'. In addition, the Korean government had introduced 'Designomics', a strategy to use design directly to power economic growth via high-value products and exports. Furthermore, he pointed out, 'even Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia have already established official government bodies to boost the global competitiveness of their respective design industries' (ROP 2011).

Design Promotion in Japan

The origins of national design promotion can be traced back to the 1860s when Japan's modernization commenced, with attention being paid to upgrade the external form and colour of chinaware and handicrafts which constituted the main exports at the time (JIPP 2024). In 1928 a small national laboratory established to coordinate study and practice of what constituted modern design. Various internationally recognized designers visited the organization from several western countries (JIPD n.d.)

With Japan looking to develop export trade in the post-war period, and to move beyond design imitation, several linked institutional interventions took place. There was a concerted effort to ensure that Japanese design benefited from an active reconnection to Europe and the US. Japan's famous and innovative Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) set Japanese industrial designers on overseas study programmes to upgrade the quality of the county's products (Chalmers 1982; JDP 2024). In 1957 the Good Design Product Selection Programme (the 'G-Mark' system) was launched by the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry) -- one of the first of such schemes internationally. The awards were based on both the aesthetics of design as well as the features of the products such as function, safety value, and post-sales consumer services (JIDP 2024).

In 1958 a Design Section was formed within MITI which was to become the Design Policy Office. Reinforcing such efforts was the establishment in 1952 of a non-profit organization the Japan

External Trade Organization (JETRO) to promote and represent Japanese export abroad. This was re-positioned within MITI in 1958. In 1960 JETRO established the Japan Design House as a permanent exhibition hall of 'superior design commodities' (JICA 2006).

In 1960 it set up a Council of Design Promotion within the Ministry which in 1961 recommended the establishment of a substantive design promotion institution. This led to the formation in 1969 of the Japan Industrial Design Promotion Organization (JIDPO) which became the backbone of state-sponsored design interventions (Sung et al 2007; JIDP 2024). JIDPO took on board the 'G-Mark' system and export promotion projects from Japan Design House. It expanded the scope of business promotion with the '73 Design Year promotion in tandem with the Japan Industrial Designers' Association. Furthermore, in 1975 it fostered regional industry promotional projects.

In addition to individual awards programmes the 1964 Tokyo Olympics drew attention to Japan's technological and design capacity. The event showcased the country's return to the international economic arena, and was accompanied by urban renewal projects, new highspeed 'bullet trains' as well as a thoroughgoing involvement in terms of the facilities and promotional material by top Japanese designers (Sung et al 2007). The 1970 Osaka Expo saw the extensive involvement of design and designers in the planning of the event, and the venue. The fair also featured Japan's technological dominance especially regarding automobiles and household electronics (ibid.). Through such measures Japan would become a global leader in design (Pollock 2020).

The Japanese government also sought more organizational specialization and deployment of resources in the design field. In 1981 after a MITI-sanctioned process the Japan Design Foundation (JDF) was established as a dedicated institution to foster international exchange through design. From 1982, the JDF ran a series of design conventions as a means of promoting under the auspices of the International Design Festival a range of initiatives including the International Design Competition, the International Design Award, and the International Design Exhibition. The JDF also promoted regional and international design competition and design exchange activities with various Asian countries (JICA 2006; JIDP 2024). The JDF was subsequently closed as part of a government It closed shop in 2009 as part of a government restructuring process (JIDP 2024).

In the 1980s and 1990s the JIDP continued to develop its core design award processes. The G-Mark system was reorganized with certain new categories, and in 1984. it expanded its subjects eligible for entry to all industrial products. In 1998 the Good Product Design Selection Programme was privatized, with JIDPO continuing with the central programme which was renamed 'The Good Design Award' (JIDP 2024; JICA 2006). There was a shift to consider the broader set of core design sub-sectors within the design economy. This had been prefigured by the release in 1993 by MITI and JIDP of one of the early formal design policy documents, namely 'New Design Policy to Meet the Changes of Our Times'. In the same year, JIDPO set up the Design Resources Development Centre to provide i.a. assistance and advice to SMEs in the industrial design field.

In 2011 JIDPO was restructured as a public interest incorporated foundation and rebranded as the Japan Institute of Design Promotion (JIDP 2024). This move established the JIDP as the sole comprehensive design promotion centre in Japan (ICOD 2011). JIDP's central objective/s were to contribution to the further promotion of industrial production, cultural development, and the

holistic enhancement of society through the encouragement of design. The JIDP would continue with global design promotion through projects such as the Good Design Award. There would be new activities to revitalize economic fortunes with the Ministry and other design organizations and firms (ICOD 2011)

By the early 2010s Japanese design promotions was extensively organized in three categories. The first would be design organizations such as JIDP supported by central government. The second category is comprised of a network of regional design centres supported primarily by regional government. Thirdly there are decentralized centres supported at by local government and/or companies and economic organizations (JIDP 2024; Sung et al 2007).

At the beginning of the 2020s the expectations for design from various quarters in Japanese state, society and business had extended well beyond their institutional origins in an industrializing economy. There are growing concerns with sustainability and greening of the economy and the need to harness design and design-thinking for solving seeming intractable problems (JIDP nd; Pollock 2020).

In 2022 a group of like-minded of officials of differing ages in the MITI design section looked to introduce a new and popular policy report termed 'Transforming Japan's Administration with the Power of Design' (MITI 2022) outlined an envisaged process for embedding a design approach to the policy process. Termed Japan+D the working group had already reached out to the UK, Denmark, Sweden, Singapore and Chile to learn from pioneers in this new kind of endeavour. By learning from their efforts in policy design thinking the team hoped 'to create a design organization that can bring to life a uniquely Japanese approach to policy design' (MITI 2022). The group emphasizes the need to develop 'more citizen-friendly' policies, to be 'more creative' and develop 'more playful ideas'. It was vital to transform the country's collective future 'by incorporating a design approach into Japan's administration' (MITI 2022).

Currently the JIDPO is carrying on its long-standing and focussed promotional activities on design. Its 2023 Annual Report gives an idea of the continuities and new directions (JIDP 2023). Core business includes the hosting of the 2023 Good Design Exhibition and the Good Design awards for the year. The organization also hosted a special exhibition for Thailand, Indonesia Design Awards, and ASEAN Awards in commemoration of 50 years of cooperation between Japan and ASEAN nations (JIDP 2023).

The Report outlines collaborative projects such as the Tokyo Midtown Design Hum operated by JIDP, Japan Graphic Design Association and the Tama Art University and their various projects. One such exhibition deals with Italian-Japanese cooperation in creativity and creators who design to enable 'prosocial creation and education to all citizens'. JDP was increasing its footprint regarding assisting aspirant Design Cities competitors in the country (JIDP 2023. Annual Report of Japan Institute of Design Promotion).

JIDP has launched a new design award in 2022 for students at various vocational colleges, universities, and graduate schools who are either aspiring to be creators or have established themselves as young creators who have just graduated or completed their studies. The programme is in line with the Institute's emphasis on talent encouragement. In addition, JIDP has endowed 14 courses in Design Management in the Business Design Programme at the Rikkyo University's Business School. JIDP have organized and delivered curricula comprising

lectures by managers and project leaders of several Good Design Award-winning companies as well as designers with a track record of consulting with companies and governments (JIDP 2023)

The Institute ran a series of workshops to discuss the design possibilities of 'wider range of fields and regions' with an implementation commitment by 2030. A further policy exercise saw a collaboration with MITI's Research division, Mitsubishi Research Institute, and two other design organizations, to produce a substantive analysis of the design trends for companies, regions, and governments in Japan. This led to a conference on Japan's challenges to the global trend of design investment to promote cooperation among industries. These findings led to the publication in June 2024 of a White Paper in on Design (ibid.) which elaborated on these 'design-related initiatives and trends' and 'the significance of investing in design from a variety of perspectives' and the impact such investment is having on economy and society (JDP 2024).

South Korea and National Design Promotion

The 1960s and 1970s saw the copying of overseas designs and efforts to establish original equipment manufacturers. Today, Korea's industrial capacity has increased, and its industrial design is considered globally competitive. Meanwhile, the process of indiscriminately accepting Western design as a means of industrial development has raised questions about the identity of Korean design and led to efforts to identify and develop indigenous Korean design. As a result, 'Korean design', which is imbued with Korean history and tradition, continues to emerge.

As Kim (2022) points out, Korean industrial design as opposed to Korean craft has had a rather short history. Following years of Japanese colonial rule, Korean industrial design only really commenced in the 1950s. From that time the government's priority was that of economic and industrial growth. Design was seen as integral to industrial competitiveness. By the late 1960s the government had begun instituting a coherent and planned process of national design promotion.

The central and long-standing organization in charge of national design promotion was founded in 1970 as the Korea Design Packaging Centre, this seemingly prosaic title reflected the emphasis at the time on improving the design and quality of manufactured goods. Affiliated with the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The body was founded to plan and implement national design policies and strategies and inter alia was influenced by the workings of the UK's Design Council.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the copying and/or adaption of designs from other countries and regions, and efforts to establish original equipment manufacturers. Today, Korea's industrial strength has grown significantly, and its industrial design is considered globally competitive (Kim 2022). Kyong-Won Chung (2004 highlights Korea's achievement as a high performing developing economy in progressing through various stages from imitator to pioneer in design and design promotion

In 1997, signifying the expansion of the role of design in industrial production, it was renamed the Korea Institute of Industrial Design Promotion. This was amended in 2001 to its current name, the Korean Institute of Design Promotion (KIDP). Although a centralized state input remained the early decades of the 21st century saw a degree of decentralization with an expanding but articulated set of support agencies and interventions at sub-national levels (Choi 2014).

From the late 1990s Korean design developments burgeoned. Initiatives included a 1998 Comprehensive Plan for Promoting Industrial Design. Furthermore, from 1996 the KIDP instituted and ran the Korea Industrial Design Exhibition which became the premier design exhibition. In line with other leading design organizations in industrialized economies, the Institute launched its design award scheme – the Good Design or GD Mark. This was followed by another awards scheme the Korea Millennium Products (KMP) which was awarded from 19990 onwards to innovative, smartly designed and technologically advanced products (OR 2024). In 1999 the 1st Korea Industrial Design Convention. Several prestigious conferences and conventions followed. In 2001 the Korean Design Centre was established with a Design Innovation Centre and Exhibition Hall – all concerned with promoting increased awareness of and a sense of pride of a country-wide understanding of design and design culture (KIDP 2024; Cho 2004; OR 2024).

In recent years the structure of design promotion has been driven by the central government and complemented by the regional governments of Korea. There are three sets of organization the KIDP, 29 design innovation centres and three Regional Design Centres (RDCs). The Korea Institute of Design Promotion (KIDP), with the support of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy (MOCIE), presides over this expanded matrix of Korean design promotion. Since 2013 there is a Chinese division of KIDP located in Beijing (KIDP 2024).

In 2012 the KIDP initiated the K-Design programme which in turn became the keyword of Korean Design Policy. As Choi (2014) points out, K-Design is not yet a fully developed concept but more vision which aims to develop a unique Korean design identity with global appeal. Although this is an encouraging development it is still dependent on a centralized approach which characterized the intensive development phase of Korea in the 1970s.

Among current major programmes of the KIDP include support for the design industry and designers; improving design education & training; promoting Korean design both nationally and internationally; building design infrastructure; and raising national design awareness (KIDP 2024). Among developments are the ongoing establishment and operationalization of design-driven manufacturing innovation centres (DK Works) in several cities. International events include the International Korean Design conference in November 2024 which focuses on how designers are shaping an AI-driven world and influencing transformative shifts in everyday life. The event brought together leading international and domestic experts in design, AI, and digital transformation to discuss the evolving relationship between design and technology.

Indonesia Design Council

Indonesia's move to the establish of design promotion interventions in the late 20th century was informed by internal organizational effort and subsequently by external assistance and involvement (Amir 2002). The structural imperatives for Indonesia involved shifting from a primarily agricultural base to a more mixed economy and developing an industrial base with some degree of export capability (Amir 2002; JICA 1998). The process of substantive industrialization commenced in the late 1960s and was conditioned by import substitution. In the mid-1980s the country shifted to a strategy of export-oriented industrialization. The country's large population and central geographical location made it attractive for large powers looking to open future collaboration and new markets (Amir 2002).

During the 1980s and after a range of private and professional design-related bodies and associations were formed. These appear to have lacked something in the way of resources and funds. Industrial design was slowly institutionalized and benefited from the expansion of design education expansion from the late 1960s (JICA 1998).

The growing involvement of the national state in design promotion appears somewhat slower than many other Asian economies at the time (JICA 1998), but there were organizational achievements such as the establishment National Design Centre (NDC) under the National Crafts Council and Allied Institutions Act No: 35 of 1982. The Centre commenced formal operations the following year (NDC 2024), with a mission 'to introduce market-based creative designs in line with global and local market trends through promotion, development, capacity building, and popularization' as well as adaptation' to mainstream demand (NDC 2024). Presently the Centre falls under the State Ministry of Batik, Handloom and Local Apparel Products providing market-oriented designs, technology transfer programmes, consultancy services, and information and research findings to the handicraft sector (ibid.). Its services include:

- Upgrading traditional handicrafts and develop new design concepts as well as prototypes for the handicraft industry.
- Organizing New Design and Technology Development Training programme.
- Developing appropriate mechanisms and approaches that will eventually build a network of various marketing agencies for the regional craft industry.
- Conducting research in the chemical and mechanical field to arrive at suitable solutions for the handicraft industry.
- Organizing diploma level design education programmes.
- Provide design consultancy services to government and private sector institutions.
- Provide common facilities to craftsmen and entrepreneurs

In 1995, spurred by national design promotion initiatives in neighbouring countries, and with assistance from i.a. the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japan Design Foundation, the Indonesian Design Council was established in 1995 (JICA 1998; Amir 2002).

Malaysia Design Council

The origins of contemporary design discourses and institutions in Malaysia were shaped by independence in 1957 which saw a search for a new identity for the country. This was influenced by the various cultures and ethnicities in the country, the continued but waning British colonial legacy, and a growing engagement with countries in Southeast Asia and beyond. Design education emerged in the late 1960s (Abidin 2015; Rahman 2012). As Omar (2020) points out, the 1960s and 1970s saw a continued interaction with British creative firms in the design sector, primarily regarding industrial design and advertising. Such relationships remained but in a more attenuated form in the 1980s and were also overtaken by the growth of global value chains.

The Look East Policy and the Islamic Revolution of the 1980s impacted on Malaysian design inspirations. The establishment of professional design associations also played a part. By the turn of the century Malaysian designers such as Jimmy Choo had gained international recognition (Rahman 2012; 2016). The growth of the country (Rahman 2016; Amir 2002).

The Malaysia Design Council (MDC) or Majlis Rekabentuk (MRM) was established in 1993. It is a non-profit agency operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Investment, Trade, and Industry. It is views as a think tank and advisor to government and business and a catalyst for design innovation (MRM 2024; Rahman 2016). Since the 1990s the MDC has sought to promote the productive use of design and associated thinking in business, education, and government (Rahman 2016). A core emphasis is to enhance design methods and to strengthen creativity among manufactures (MRM 2024). Of late it has explicitly fostered a design ecosystem where creativity drives economic growth and elevates the Malaysian brand internationally (MRM 2024)

The key objectives of the MDC include:

- Leading and coordination design activities and work among Malaysian society
- Nurturing new groups of young innovative and creative persons
- Guiding manufactures along the path to world-class design capabilities
- Developing a competitive edge among manufacturers to ensure that they are on par with the international market
- Promote good design among manufacturers with compromising on the quality of the products

The main functions of the MDC comprise the following:

- To educate industries on the importance of quality and effective design management in product manufacturing allowing them to compete in open and global markets
- To organize activities for the promotion of locally design products on the international front
- To coordinate advisory services for the relevant industries
- To promote programme focussed on the improvement of product designs among local industries
- To promote greater public awareness of the question of quality design

Challenges remain on the design promotion front. In 2018 one industry commentator argued that art and design required more intensive attention by government, pointing that the country was still without a comprehensive national policy, although there had been promising discussion between designers and policy makers (Hsean 2018). At the time of writing the mooted national design policy had not yet been released. A recent analysis of the impact of industrial design on the Malaysian economy suggests an underperformance vis-à-vis other SE Asian economy (Omar 2020). The study notes, interestingly, that there was something of a conflation of the creative economy and design economy in national strategy documents (ibid.) possibly contributing to a reduced and very modest contribution of industrial design to national GDP (ibid.).

Philippines Design Council

The Philippines moved relatively early in establishing a national design body. In 1973, through Presidential Decree the Design Centre Philippines was founded with the mandate of developing, enhancing and promoting the design of Philippine-manufactured handicrafts. The Centre's activities during its first decade of existence were primarily concentrated on two aspects, namely the promotion of design awareness and the creation of new product designs.

With export promotion becoming the focus of the national Department of Trade and Industry in the early 1980s, the next decade saw its work shift towards the quality improvement and competitiveness of non-traditional Philippine export products through design. The country's particular expertise lay in furniture design and manufacture with several furniture designers winning international awards. In certain quarters the country was described as the 'Milan of Asia' (DC 2024). From the c1993-2010 the Centre shifted attention somewhat to work more closely with government in assisting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) design advice in line with the capabilities at national and sub-national levels (DC 2024). MSMEs at the time comprised around 99% of the country's manufacturing sector (ibid.) During the 2010s the Design Centre looked to foster the country's creative and design economy by reinforcing its cultural underpinnings and fast-tracking relevant businesses by providing more opportunities and inputs for the creation of new value, markets and stimulating new user experiences.

This period also saw an increased investment in design research. One area of interest was that of human-centred designs. And materials research saw the development of new materials with low raw materials to add value and to create viable agricultural by-products. This in turn signified the Centre's increased engagement with sustainability discourses (ICOD 2021). The Design Centre's then Executive Director noted in 2021:

> Design is an essential human skill for the 21st century - driving the creation of responsible and intelligent products, services and systems of the future. Therefore, we have the immense responsibility to use our design skills and expertise not simply for aesthetics or to make things beautiful but to create a just society and sustainable economy for all (ibid.).

To add solidity to its outlook the Centre now bases its initiatives on a quadruple bottom-line approach involving people, planet, prosperity, and purpose (DC 2024; ICOD 2021). In the early 2020s, the PDC was also involved in the Design Economy Mapping exercise which featured in the policy document (ICOD 2021). The Mapping helped raise the profile of the country's design sector and its major role in national development (ICOD 2021). https://designcenter.ph/about/history/

With the Centre's expanding portfolio of activities, it was deemed necessary for a complementary body to deal intensively with matters such as the development of national design strategies and policies. A Design Council was proposed in a government Senate Bill in 2011 (GOP 2011). This led to the subsequent enactment Philippine Design Competitiveness Act of 2013. The Act strengthened Philippine products and market-oriented design services, highlighted the importance of design and creativity as key factors in engaging with the global economy without leaving behind the identity and roots of the national culture. There is also an emphasis on protecting local creatives by reforming intellectual property rights protection.

The Design Advisory Council (DAC) formed in 2013, is a public-private partnership which is tasked with shaping the country's design direction via a National Design Policy process. The Council is seen as inter alia as a 'think tank' about design in the country. It is comprised of thought and industry leaders from both the public and private sector, with key representatives from the Philippine design industry from the place-making, object-making, image-making, and business innovation designs. The Council was to be co-chaired by the Secretary of the DTI, with representative from the private sector appointed by the President. The Council is mandated to empower and strengthen the Design Centre and the country's relationship with the design

industry as well as to invoke the power of design in assisting in nation-building particularly to drive competitiveness and innovation and to facilitate sustainable development in the Philippines (DCP 2024b).

Its aims were in effect three-fold: (i) to guide the establishment of design as a national strategy for innovation and economic growth; (ii) to advocate the development of design education; and (iii) to champion the development of design education to great heights (DCP 2024b).

Specific tasks and functions included:

- Providing advocacy and insights in realizing the mandate of the Design Centre by representing the collective views of the public and private sectors.
- Push for a wholehearted consideration of the contribution of design to programmes and innovative thinking regarding government policy making.
- Review and promote policies where design is a central component.
- Ensure that comprehensive and active liaison between professional design, design education and state design stakeholders take place.
- Provide advice and guidance to design education institutions on the development and standardization of curricula and ensure high quality design education in all regions of the country (ibid.).

In March 2019 the DAC held the first meeting of a process which led to the release of a National Design Policy in 2021.

DesignSingapore Council

Singapore is a relatively young independent state but is known for its impressive economic growth since the 1960s and its rapid progression from a 'developing' to 'developed' economy.

It opened its first national design centre in 1964 which highlighted local design talent, products, and opportunities. From the early 1960s to early 2000s state sponsorship of industrial and product design on the national and international fronts was undertaken by two related organizations, the Trade Development Board (part of the national Economic Development Board). This was supplemented from the mid-1980s onwards by International Enterprise Singapore which undertook a range of promotional exercises such as the Singapore Design Awards and Design Conferences, to promote the competitive advantage of design on the international stage. This was complemented by an externally focused Design Centre in 1992. And in 2010 plans were put in place to establish a restructured 'national design centre' by 2013 (Wormald 2012).

In the early 2000s, government was looking for new options for economic development. An Economic Review Committee argued strongly for the creative industries (including the design sector) should be emphasized strategically for the future Singaporean economy. The report also stressed that value of the 'creative cluster' was relatively low when compared to leading countries such as Australia, UK and USA, and, as such, it had room for growth (Wormald 2012)

Singapore has made significant progress in diversifying its manufacturing-oriented economy to one with a substantive knowledge-driven component. Among the key initiatives outlined in the Economic Review Committee report was the drafting of a strategy for national design. The proposals in the strategy document included integrating design in enterprise; the establishment

of an authoritative national design agency and fostering an integrated design community. This led to the formation of the DesignSingapore Council (DSC) in 2003 as a subsidiary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (DSC 2024). The mission of the council is to develop Singapore into a global city for design where design innovation drives economic growth and enhances the quality of life (DSC 2024). For the DSC design was broader than an industrial design approach, covering the professions such as advertising, architecture, web and software development, graphics, industrial products, fashion, interior, service, communication, and environmental aspects (Wormald 2012).

Key current objectives of the DSC are to

- To cultivate and foster a culture of design excellence.
- To develop and facilitate an integrated range of design-driven initiatives with government, industry leaders, international agencies, and strategic partners.
- To actively invest in and nurture and develop local talent through collaboration with academic institutions, relevant industry partners and the design professions.
- To promote design as a 'differentiator' in the global marketplace. The Council thus enhances the country's international competitiveness and appeal by fostering a unique Singaporean design identity.
- Advocating and engaging with policy makers to formulate design-centre policies that create an enabling environment for the design community by broadening collaboration between government agencies, the private sector, and other strategic partners (DSC 2024).

Innovation and creativity have been blended with design to help shape the nation's growth and identity during the later 2010s and early 2020s. In 2015 Singapore was designated as a UNESCO Creative City of Design in 2015, and this recognition has reinforced government's desire to mesh design with its economic, lifestyle and education ecosystems.

DesignSingapore Council has worked intensively both locally and internationally to develop a comprehensive series of interventions on the local and international fronts.

Local examples include:

- Design incubation and innovation through such means as incubated design-led start-ups and stimulating innovation across various industries.
- Enabling design-integration in business strategies to enable companies to gain a competitive advantage. DSC offers curated toolkits and resources for such exercises.
- The DSC's advocation of design-led urban planning has improved public services by creating user-centric environments and aesthetically attractive and functional spaces for citizens.
- Facilitating Design Tourism and Festivals to reinforce the nation's reputation as a dynamic but for the creative professions (DSC 2024).

The DSC has also extended Singapore's international design impact. Key interventions include:

- Fostering international collaboration via its work and networking with international design organizations; organizations; cultural diplomacy and educational institutions.

- Implementing and managing awards and recognition programmes such as the President's Design Award to boost the country's international design profile.
- Leveraging design diplomacy to promote the country's soft power and cultural and creative identity globally.
- Providing inspiration and best practices which inspire other countries to prioritize design and creativity as central to socio-economic development (DSC 2024)

A planned third iteration of a national design centre was formally established in 2013 in the inner city (Wormald 2012; NDC 2024). The body was the outcome of Singapore's national design master plan to embed design innovation and support the emerging creative sector via an approach which prioritized the embedding of a dynamic eco system (NSC 2024). The National Design Centre is seen as a physical and aspirational nexus for design. Designers, businesses, students, and the public meet there to exchange ideas, use the amenities and attend local and national design-themed exhibitions and programmes (NSC 2024).

Hong Kong Design Centre

In 1968 the Federation of Hong Kong Industries formed the Design Council of Hong Kong (DCHK) with the initial mandate of promoting the interest of the country's local design industry. The founding objectives are three-fold:

- To promote and enhance the importance of design within the field of Hong Kong's economic development.
- To encourage and facilitate the business community in adding value to their products and services through design.
- To develop and enhance Hong Kong's design standards and quality via collaboration with professional and educational institutions.

The Council comprised prominent leaders from relevant industries, professional designers and academics (DCHK 2024). The DCHK has a long record of collaboration with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC), a statutory organization set up in 1966 to develop and promote Hong Kong's trade and related industries.

The design eco-system has been underpinned by a substantive set of professional associations including the Chartered Society of Designers (CSD), the Hong Kong Designers Association (HKDA), the Hong Kong Federation of Design Associations (FHKDA), the Hong Kong Interior Design Association (IDA), the Hong Kong Fashion Designers Association (HKFDA) and the Industrial Designers Society of Hong Kong (IDSHK) (HKTDC 2024).

The Council was supplement by the Hong Kong Design Centre in 2002 which was set up with the collaboration of these professional associations to promote the pursuit of design as a value-adding activity and to raise the profile of Hong Kong as a hub of innovation and creativity (HKTDC 2024; DCHK 2024)

Contemporary Hong Kong houses the regional offices and headquarters of numbers of international design firms expanding into Asian markets and has become the location of choice for many in the global design community. The attractiveness of the location was reinforced by the introduction by mainland China in 2006 of a zero-tariff policy on all imported goods of Hong Kong origin (HKTDC 2024).

Increasing government support and institutional provision in recent decades for the growing creative economy of the city has also been a significant factor. This was underlined by the establishment in 2009 of the Hong Kong government's Create Hong Kong Office (CreateHK) which operated under the auspices of the national Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau. In June 2024, CreateKH was restructured as the Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency (CCIDA) to speed up the development of the city's creative sectors (GHK 2024). CCIDA will provide one-stop services and support to the CCIs and look to develop the creative economy ecosystem. CCIDA administers and manages two funding schemes, the CreateSmart Initiative (CSI) and the Film Development Fund (ibid.). In recent times, the restoration and reworking of decommissioned buildings has become a popular means of providing spaces for the development of the design industry with this urban cultural and creative renewal allowing spin-off creative and design opportunities (ibid.). A recent promotion project involving the CCIDA is the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Design Innovation Hub (Zetta Bridge, Qianhai Shenzhen) which is envisaged as an exchange platform for designers and entrepreneurs in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (HSBC 2024).

The past two decades have seen an almost three-fold increase in the number of design firms locating in the city, which has also become a leading regional design nexus to innovative design, products, and talent development (HKTDC 2024). The annual Business of Design Week (BODW) has been the region's flagship event for design, branding and innovation since its launch in 2002. This event has been complemented by other design and creative events (ibid.).

EU Design Councils and National Design Policies

Introduction

The established EU countries have by and large generally score well in the design and associated creative industry global indices. In part this reflects long traditions of design and design culture, especially in the likes of Germany, Italy, France, and the Scandinavian countries.

Since the 2000s a growing number of EU member states have adopted or are developing design policies, design strategies and design action plans (BEDA 2018). For instance, the Bureau of Development Agencies notes that between 2012 and 2018, design policy and action plans have been introduced by Denmark, Finland, Sweden France, Netherlands, Hungary, Lativia, Estonia, Slovenia, Hungary, Malta, Ireland. Some of these policies were in the third or fourth iterations, while other countries were still at the first stage (BEDA 2018). The Bureau observed the necessity for EU countries to look beyond keeping abreast of their immediate neighbours and to look at successful design planning of other best practice examples drawn from the likes of Singapore, Hong Kong and New Zealand (ibid.)

In 2008, the President the European Design Association) Michael Thomson, remarked at a World Design Organization gathering that:

> The need to develop national design policies as soon as possible is becoming an urgent requirement felt all around the world…The hope is that work begins immediately together to ensure that design, underpinned at the institutional level, will become more and more a strategic asset in the development of every country, proposing sustainable solutions to people's real needs (WDO 2008).

For Christina Melander, Programme Director at the Danish Design Centre it is also important to take account of the dynamics and particularities of the differing countries involved in national and extra-national design policy exercises.

> You cannot copy and paste design policies between countries. You need to understand capacity, build effective partnerships, harness the power of data and evidence and use a design process to develop design policy. [confirm source]

However, there has been some complacency within the more established member states and the EU more generally regarding the nature and extent of the challenges faced by the need for more specific and focussed policies, and strategic thinking and implementation (Interreg 2022; McDonald 2004; Whicher 2017). More systematic, well-conceived and resourced interventions are required. Moreover, as MacDonald (2004) writes, delineating the role and contributions of the design and CCI sector with which it is linked, is a major economic issue. 'The real challenge lies not just in designing better products and better processes but in designing entirely new business models.'

Reflecting on the surge of interest in national design policy and planning in the 2010s, Diamond & Lewis (2011) underline the importance of taking design investment seriously:

> Our assertions about the efficacy of design are evidence-based. The importance of design to innovation capacity and productivity growth is well documented in a number of international reports .... all measuring design intensity and linking it to innovation growth and capacity building at the regional and national levels. These studies show that design operates as a critically important source of economic value, raising firms' levels of profitability and productivity, and contributing to national economic competitiveness and performance (ibid.)

Furthermore, as Li & Köster (2020) following a study of 50 European design innovation initiatives, conclude that European design policy in the 2020s is at a juncture, 'at a point of intergenerational transition from awareness raising to capacity building'. This situation 'calls for more coordinated policies to tackle current opportunities and challenges.' In turn this means that the institutional aspects, including the presence and functionality of national design councils or similar bodies are key aspects of the developing and implementation of new design-oriented policy.

In such calculations the nature and efficacy of design policy organizations are crucial. The best ones internationally, as Dorland argues (2013) strive to deliver policy and recommendations regarding industry support to government. They also enable design initiatives to be yoked with business to ensure economic growth, and to standardization within the design production processes to ensure more beneficial environmental and socio-cultural impact (ibid.). They also help underwrite design endeavours that consider problems, products and opportunities that are not market-driven (ibid.).

Other vital issues at the national and supra-national levels are the tendency to blur the distinction between design and innovation policy, as well as conflate design promotion with a broader initiative of fostering the creative industries and economies. Mortati & Maffei (2018) argue that design policy is 'often embedded with innovation policy, and thus it is difficult to identify'. In addition, not only is design policy often possesses too many gaps. Also, it is often a tacit component of innovation policy (ibid.). Thus, the authors propose a Design Policy

Ecosystem framework as a way of identifying 'embedded design policy actions in a given national context and establish a clear picture of the organizations and government bodies that support design policy in practice' (Mortati & Maffei 2018)

Compounding matters is the pressure on the EU as a region to remain internationally competitive with the impact of the Russian war in the Ukraine adding to the list of challenges. A range of factors, many of which are long-standing, such as the shortages of skilled labour, digitalization, and the quality of infrastructure impact on EU competitiveness. ... emphasize three imperatives in the turnaround process, namely formulating a thoroughgoing EU industrial policy; adapting to the shifting energy landscape; and finding a strategic position for the EU within the tense geopolitical situation (Lindner, Findeisen & Jäger,P. 2023).

EU Design Councils and Organizations

Belgium

Of the original members of the EU and its institutional predecessors, there are definite variances in the provision of national organizational structures for design promotion. Belgium has some a national design organizational lineage dating back to 1964 when the Brussels Design Centre was established a vehicle to promote and market contemporary Belgian through exhibitions, competitions, and promotional tours. The Centre embodied the post-war Belgian state's interest in public promotion of industrial design which as Serulus (2018) notes was an important 'marker of modernity and progress' at world fairs, as well as a 'vital political and economic strategic tool '. Design lost its privileged position as a state-supported institution, a process that led to the closure of the Brussels Centre of Design in 1986 as part of the federalization of Belgium at the time (ibid.).

Thirty years later, the Belgium Design Council was formed with the aim of uniting the design industry, and business organizations of the public and private sectors, and government agencies to achieve better understanding of the value created when collaborating and incorporating, creativity, design, innovation and technology and the role they have to play in achieving objectives (BDC 2024).

France

France was influenced by the American model of industrial design in the post-war period. This stimulated the professionalization of the developing design field, and garnered public support. This led to the establishment of the Centre de Création industrielle (Centre for Industrial Creation) in Paris in 1969, which was subsequently incorporated in the Pompidou Centre of Art and Culture in the mid-1970s.

It was some time before a formal national design promotion body was established. In September 2021, the Conseil National du design (CNDes) Council of National Design (CND) was established. The Council is comprised of various design professions, strategic stakeholders, and state and business representatives. The Council is part and parcel of the current national design strategy process. It is tasked with observing current developments, planning, and submitting proposals to government for the introduction of a national design strategy and policy. It was also to 'revitalize industrial production, strengthen the cultural aura of design, and promote the emergence of new forms of design' (CND 2024). Furthermore, the

CND was to pool practices and share reflections on the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of design.

The National Design Council has a flexible organizational structure comprising the Chair, the Presidium, and the General Secretariat, which are renewed bi-annually. It reports to the Prime Minister and then the Ministers of Culture and Economy, and Finance and Economic Affairs. The organisation of Council is based on a flexible structure consisting of the Chair, the Presidium and the General Secretariat, which are renewed every two years. The Conseil will submit its activity report to the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Culture and Economy, Finance and Economic Affairs, which will then be published (CND 2024).

The German Design Council

As one of the design leaders globally, Germany has a substantive institutional tradition in terms of design promotion. The country faced fierce and emotive criticism in the presentation of German products of the post-war international export trade shows. Ludwig Erhard, the then Minister of Economics, noted in 1952:

> The post-war exhibitions in New York, Chicago (1949) and Milan (1951) demonstrated the deficiencies of German products in terms of taste with shocking clarity... Despite acknowledgement of their technical perfection, they do not satisfy modern design requirements (quoted Hahlweg 2013).

The German Bundestag resolved in 1953 to establish ‘an official neutral authority for design’ (Hahlweg 2013). Consequently, the German Design Council was established in 1953 by the Federation of German Industry and several leading companies. It is a non-profit organization centred on the representation of the interests of German firms with a substantive design focus (GDC 2023). The overall aim of the GDC as to support the German economy in the use of design as ‘an economic and cultural factor’. It would thus promote the overall competitiveness of German firms and the German economy more generally (ibid.). For over 70 years the GDC has contributed to the knowledge transfer, networking and promotion in all fields of the design process (GDC 2024).

The Italian Case

Italy does not possess a formal national design policy (Griffi 2016). Indeed, its design policy has been described in a 2010 study as ‘a fragmented and uncoordinated system of local initiatives that are insufficiently funded’ (Arquilla, Bianchini & Maffei 2010).

Nonetheless, Italy is world-renowned for its design, which includes and shapes industrial, fashion, graphic, interior, architectural and urban design globally. With its historical city state structure still patterning contemporary Italy, design traditions are promoted in somewhat more decentralized and regional fashion, and in terms of professional and business associations. Among the leading bodies are the Association for Industrial Design (ADI) and the Italian Patent and Trademark Office. The ADI has over 1,000 members across Italy and manages the the Compasso d'Oro Award, Europe's oldest design recognition.

Netherlands Design Policy Organizations

The notion of Dutch Design was not well defined or institutionalized in the pre-and post-war years. As Meroz (2024) argues, the establishment in 1966 of the Government Advisory

Committee for the Coordination of Exhibitions of Dutch Applied Arts Aboard, signalled the entrenchment of the idea of applied arts as a field distinct form yet valid as that applied to the internationally popular visual arts from the country. Indeed, its working definition of the applied arts was left imprecise to provide more room for manoeuvre. This in turn allowed the coalescing of more coherent notions and practices of Dutch design and practices (ibid.). The Advisory Committee for Dutch Applied Arts Abroad was closed in 1972.

In 1993 the Netherlands Institute of Design and Fashion was formed and ran until 2002 when it was succeeded by the Premsela Platform for Design and Fashion which ran until 2013. Both structures appear to have focussed more narrowly on design promotion than working directly with industry. Some of the design promotion and research functions seem to have been taken up by Het Nieuwe Instituut which had a broader cultural policy role. Interestingly, it was formally instructed by Government in 2019 to research the state of design heritage, especially archives (Compendium 2019).

In 2018, the Dutch Council for Culture presented their advisory report Design for the Future with six key recommendations for the central government and the design sector:

- Strengthen the existing infrastructure of the design sector.
- Facilitate and fund research related to design.
- Stimulate the flow of new talent.
- Use the potential of the design sector in tackling social issues.
- Ensure better management and preservation of design heritage
- Create more opportunities for the internationalisation of designers (DDC 2018).

Significantly, the Council stressed that a solid foundation for the design sector in cultural policy is desperately needed (DDC 2018).

Portugal

The first design courses in Portugal only began in 1969, later than other neighbouring countries. Some scholars have noted the seeming lack of importance of the discipline of design in Portugal, with a 2014 study criticizing the lack of a museum devoted to research on and the display of Portuguese design (Branco et al 2014).

In the mid-1990s a Design Centre was established in Lisbon and a special building commissioned for the organization. However, this organization was shut down in 2013, a move which is seen as exacerbating ‘this lack of representation of design among companies, the public administration, and the general public’ (Ribeiro, M & Providencia 2023). In terms of national design policy, the move, ‘left Portugal with no instruments of mediation between the Portuguese design ecosystem and the socio-economic fabric’ (Costa et.al. 2023).

Spain

Like its Iberian neighbour, Spain does not possess a national design council for the national promotion of design and design policy. There are, however, six representative organizations of the Spanish design sector that are collaborating to implement a National Design Strategy (Dexigner 2024; Interreg 2021). The Strategy would look to ensure that design, as a vehicle for innovation and competitiveness as well as promoting a favourable international image of Spain, would play a strategic role in the socio-economic transformation. Overall, the strategy aimed at

increasing the impact of design within the economic, academic, public sector and society more generally.

The organizations in question are:

- The Spanish Network of Design Associations (READ), which is a non-profit organization that coordinates and links the design community in the country. READ comprises 13 with a strong inclusion of professional associations.
- The Barcelona Design Centre, a regionally located but nationally representative organization of the Spanish design community.
- Fostering Arts and Design (FAD) is a non-profit association of professionals, design schools, universities and companies located in the arts and design sectors. It was founded in Barcelona in 1903.
- Forum of Renowned Spanish Brands (FRME) a representative organization of the branding and graphic art professions of the country.
- Industrial Design Centre of Aragon (CADI), which represents mostly the industrial design sector and its stakeholders (Dexigner 2024).
- Valencia World Design Capital 2022, group.

Hungary Design Council

The Hungarian case should be seen in the broader context of Eastern European and former states of the USSR looking to establish substantive and market-oriented economies capable of delivering good rates of economic growth and development. Hungary has a distinct design tradition (DAT 2024), stretching back to the old Austro-Hungarian empire. Among various developments was the establishment of the Museum of Applied Arts in Budapest in 1872, and the significant post-war interaction with the Bauhaus movement.

By the early 2000s the country was absorbing some of the early policy implications of the emerging creative industries discourse, and the growing importance of the knowledge economy. It was at this time that certain states in the EU orbit and internationally were also taking heed of the imperatives of formulating more systematic approaches to the question of design and its promotion in spurring new industrial opportunities and diversifying national economies (Whitcher 2017; BIS 2010).

The Hungarian Design Council (HDC) was established during 2001-2. Interestingly, and not without its practical advantages, it was housed in the Hungarian Intellectual Property Office. The HDC was set up on the lines of an advisory board that would monitor and evaluate the economic importance and development of Hungarian design and deliver proposals for national government strategy regarding the development of the country's creative industries. The central aims are to reinforce the competitiveness of the economy via design-driven innovation, improve the Hungarian design culture.

The fifteen-member advisory board is mandated for a three-year cycle and operates with a comprehensive framework spanning areas of operation to promote and enhance Hungarian design culture ultimately in accordance with the global imperatives of economic policy, innovation, education, and environmental policy. The emphases of the organization are represented in the composition of the board with the members have strong ties with government, economy, business, and the design profession. In addition to advising and

contributing directly to strategic planning regarding national design promotion, there are a variety of established programmes and events the HDC operates. The **Hungarian Design Award** is a multi-category award acknowledging the achievements of Hungarian designers, firms, and design community in promoting the application of design in the country.

- The Design Management Award established by the HDC in 2009 focuses on the recognition of the professional management of design within an organization.
- László Moholy-Nagy Design Grant recognized the contribution/s of young Hungarian designers.
- The Budapest Design Week launched by the HDC in 2004 is an annual design promotion week of events.
- A Design Start-Up Guide is an e electronic publication by HDC, with an annually upgraded content, providing support for young designers and design start-ups (HDC 2024).

Hungary was one of 11 EU states identified as having a formal design policy between 2011-2018 (BEDA 2011).

Scandinavian National Design Promotion

The Scandinavian countries linked to the EU have been proactive in maintaining and reinforcing their international renown and standings in the global design economy. They have leveraged their design culture, heritage, and capabilities, and ensured that the institutional underpinnings are in place.

Sweden

Sweden possesses the oldest design society in the world, namely Svensk Form, the Swedish Society of Crafts and Design. It remains as a non-profit organization with a government mandate to promote Swedish design nationally and internationally. Supplementing this body are several linked agencies such as the Swedish Industrial Design Foundation (SVID); ArkDes, a Swedish architecture and design centre in Stockholm that collaborates with Sevnsk Form to promote architecture and design in society (Johannsson and Persson 2010). The Swedish Arts Council, a formal government agency tasked with developing and implementing national cultural policy and development, operates closely with the leading design promotion bodies. Sweden also has a comprehensive and functional legal framework for protecting design rights.

As Johannsson and Persson (2010) observe, understanding design is ‘a matter of policy in Sweden’. They underline the range of government supported projects from medical technology through to enhancing the competitiveness of automotive suppliers.

Finland has been hailed for its innovative approach to design promotion since the late 1990s (FT 2022). The first national design programme, Muotoilu 2005! was launched in 1999, making it the first of such policies globally. The second national design programme, Design Finland was initiated in 2013, with the implementation scheduled (at the time) for the period 2013 and 2020 (Design Finland 2013).

National and sub-national design promotion and support in Finland has been historically something of a collaborative undertaking. Institutional input has come from the Ministry of

Employment and the Economy; TEKES (Finish Funding Agency for Innovation), the Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environ¬ment and Finpro promote the use of design through programme funding, grants and business services. The Ministry of Education and Culture and the Arts Promotion Centre Finland along with its regional offices help contribute to the promotion of design and the working conditions of designers. Regional support from EU Structural Funds and agencies is also leveraged. In addition, Design Forum Finland, a professional body with a claimed 150-year history in promoting design in industry and business, is part of a vibrant design community. Its stated aim is to support the growth, international competitiveness, and success of Finnish companies by the invocation of design, especially at a strategic level (FDI 2022; Design Forum Finland 2024).

However, the Design Finland report emphasize the need to develop a coordinating agency to embed an 'efficient design ecoystem'. They recommend the establishment of a Finnish Design Centre network to improve 'the dynamics, effectiveness, and impact of the ecosystem'. The envisaged Centre would not be so much a new organization but rather 'a new way of bringing together currently fragmented resources' (Design Finland 2013).

Denmark

Denmark is one of the leading design nations in the world with international acclaim for a range of design products from furniture to high-end electronic goods. The Danish Design Centre (DDC) is Denmark's main national agency for design. It was established in 1978 as a non-profit foundation under the Danish Ministry for Business, Industry and Financial Affairs. Its role was to promote the use of design in industry and business, and to improve the competitiveness of the country's manufactured products. In 2015 the Centre was not fully living up to expectations. A restructuring process commenced including a new CEO, Christian Basson. As he recalls:

> When I started, the centre was in a crisis and in need of reinvention. Having been a semi-independent institution of the Ministry of Business for nearly 40 years, there was a desire from government to see a revitalized and dynamic centre

Within three years the DDC was rebuilt as essentially new organization. There was an extensive engagement with the design community and strategic stakeholders. Organizationally the staff was expanded from 14 to 30 and the budget and revenue streams were raised. There was a paradigmatic shift with a broader and more multi-disciplinary take on design, and a conscious use of a collaborative design approach. These shifts appear to have had a positive effect both nationally and internationally (Basson 2018). In 2020 the DDC launched a new five-year strategy of sustainable growth through design, focussing efforts on three societal challenges, namely the green, social and digital transition (DDC 2023). The significant turnaround in the DDC's fortunes suggests that the rejuvenated centre has a good deal to teach other countries.

Interestingly, a smaller and independent agency, the Danish Design Council was founded in 2017, supplementing the institutional design landscape in Denmark. The Council was conceived of as Danish design's independent think tank with an emphasis on conceiving and exploring new perspectives on design (Danish Design Council 2017).

Norway

With the country recovering economically in the 1950s, a cohort of well-trained design graduates provided a filip to the country's design outlook and output. Norwegian design

flourished in this and the next decade. However, the discovery of oil dampened the drive for export competitiveness in furniture and select manufactured goods. This in turn de-emphasized the centrality of design in economic development and growth. But in recent decades there has been a burgeoning in design-inspired production and thinking in Norway (Dowdy 2020).

The Norwegian Design Council was established in 1963 as a state-controlled foundation through the efforts of the Norwegian Trade Council and the Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry (NHO). By the 2000s the NDC was a foundation under the Ministry of Trade and Industry with provision made for business consultancy and for its own standalone projects. Its original aims were to promote design for manufactured products primarily for abroad, and to promote the Norwegian brand of design. Later the emphasis expanded with the NDC seeking to promote design as a strategic vehicle for innovation, to offer increased competitive advantage and profitability for Norwegian trade and industry. The NCD undertook national and international design promotion, developed design awards, exhibitions and other select events. In the 2010s its activities included the Design for All initiative. This saw an Innovation for All approach to support industrial output and growth by working closely with select Norwegian industries (Eikhaug n.d).

In 2014 the Norwegian Design Council was merged with the Foundation for Design and Architecture (Norsk Form, established 1992) to form the Norwegian Design and Architecture Centre (DFA Europe 2024) This new entity is active in the fields of design, architecture and the urban and built environment. Among its initiative is the Design-Driven Innovation Programme that supports innovation projects using design-driven methods (ibid.).

Conclusion

This chapter examines the historical evolution of design and its institutionalization across various regions and economies, highlighting the dynamic relationship between design practice, technological progress, and societal change. From the artisanal techniques of ancient civilizations to the formal establishment of design education and policy during the Industrial Revolution, design has transformed into a vital force for economic growth and cultural identity. Significant historical milestones, such as the founding of the Bauhaus School, the Arts and Crafts Movement, and the creation of national design councils, demonstrate how design has evolved beyond its functional origins to tackle complex social, economic, and environmental issues.

The chapter also emphasizes how different countries, especially in Europe, Asia, and the Commonwealth, have utilized design as a strategic tool to foster innovation, enhance industrial competitiveness, and address national development goals. Case studies from the UK, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Australia offer valuable insights into the role of state-supported design councils in cultivating design culture, promoting education, and encouraging collaboration across sectors. These examples highlight the importance of aligning design strategies with national economic objectives, ensuring inclusivity, and adapting to contemporary challenges, such as sustainability and digital transformation.

Ultimately, the historical and international context presented in this chapter provides a foundation for understanding how a NDC in South Africa could act as a catalyst for innovation, economic progress, and cultural revitalization while addressing unique regional challenges.

Chapter 5: South African Policy Context

Introduction

South African design is the product of cultural diversity and a complex set of narratives of indigenous knowledge, imperialism and colonialism. The country has an impressive record of innovation, creativity and business acumen (Haines, 2018). However, the design sector has been partly and strangely neglected in the post-1994 decade, notwithstanding a national policy emphasis on the creative economy and the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs), and some regional and local initiatives.

With the inception of the post-1994 democratic administration, the then Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) sought to create a more inclusive and dynamic notion of arts, culture and heritage as part of the social restructuring of South Africa. The objectives included expanding opportunities for women and youth in the CCI sector. Guiding this transformation is the 1996 White Paper on Arts and Culture (DACST 1996), which was developed through a wide-ranging process of consultation and multi-agency collaboration across the public, private and civic sectors (van Graan 2019).

Cultural Policy Snapshots

The 1996 White Paper on Arts and Culture provided for the establishment of national and provincial agencies, with their own governing boards and advisory councils. By 2013, the set of public entities linked with and funded by the national Department of Art and Culture (DAC) amounted to 28 (DAC 2013).

The GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution) strategy (RSA, 1996) represented a shift in South African economic and industrial policy from a Keynesian approach to global economic orthodoxy and fiscal discipline. (Haines, 2014:158). Part of the thinking behind GEAR was to reduce and/or supplement spending by government departments by exploiting commercial opportunities as well as partnerships with the private sector (Haines, 2014). Thus, the White Paper stressed that publicly funded cultural institutions would need to become more commercially driven and organized along business lines through public private partnerships. (DACST, 1996).

Such partnerships were part of a growing recourse at local, regional and national levels in advanced economies to more market-oriented approaches to government and increased enthusiasm by the international development agencies for the adaptation of such approaches for developing and emerging economies. These developments intersected with a growing appreciation of partnerships in the space between the market and the state, as well as alliances and networks to held reinforce and embed social capital.

In the 1990s and 2000s there was a growing interest in identifying international best practice which demonstrated the effectiveness of partnerships in creating linkages to leverage the power of culture and the creative economy (Haines et al 2020). The UK was a key site for efforts at finding market solutions to previously designated state activities, which found further momentum with the advent in 1997 of the New Labour government and its emphasis on ‘the third way’ (Haines et al 2020).

Such approaches were increasingly incorporated into the expanding cultural external engagement of UK agencies such as the British Council, as was the emerging discourse on the creative economy and creative industries at the end of the 1990s and in the 2000s and after (ibid.).

Despite several local-level projects and programmes In South Africa, there is significant underachievement in regard to the potential that exists (Haines, 2018).

In 1997, a Cultural Industries Growth Strategy (CIGS) process was implemented to promote dialogue within government structures, most especially between the ministries of Trade and Industry, and Arts and Culture (Haines & Lotter 2023). A multi-disciplinary consortium, the Cultural Strategy Group was commissioned by DACST (the then Department of Culture, Science and Technology) to research the creative industries and draft strategies for their growth and development. The CIGS investigated only four of the commercially active sectors, being music, film and video, publishing, and craft. (CIGS 1998a).

These sectoral emphases would continue into the subsequent decade (Haines & Lotter 2023). Several sectoral studies were produced followed by a fifth and capstone report in November 1998, termed Creative South Africa (CSG 1998).

A leading recommendation of the 1998 report was for the establishment of a public-private organization in the form of a Cultural Industry Development Agency (CIDA) to coordinate and foster the cultural (and subsequently) creative industries. The proposal was not implemented at the time, but aspects of the function of such a body were retained with the Department of Arts and Culture (CAJ and DoL 2008). Efforts continued regarding the linking of the CCI with mainstream industrial policy (CAJ & DoL 2008). There was, however, no explicit focus on the design sector and national design promotion, including links with South Africa's industrial base.

The Creative South Africa in 1998 was informed in part by the Creative Australia report of 1993. It was published in the same year as the seminal report by UK's restructured Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS 1998) on the conceptualization and categorization of the creative industries (Haines et al 2020). A follow-up in 2001 report refined the model.

The selection and categorization of industries informed international best practices. Most particularly, a range of East Asian economies and China benchmarked analyses of their creative industries against the UK model (CAJ 2008). In addition, the DCMS definition and approaches used internationally by the British Council impacted on the South African researchers and planners involved in the cultural and creative sector (ibid). These developments saw South Africa among the frontrunners of the developing and middle-income countries in seeking to conceptualize, develop and manage a dynamic emerging design sector.

In the wake of CIGS, several sector-specific initiatives were agreed on to advance the growth of the CCIs. These included the establishment of Film and Publishing clusters; the Music Industry Task Team; the Local Content Strategy and the Copyright Review Commission Report. Other projects included the SA Music Week; the Customized Sector Programme for Film and Craft by the DTI; and efforts to institutionalize export promotion by the CCIs (DAC 2013).

In addition, since 1998 DAC, has sought to broaden strategic partnerships in cross-cutting national policy areas which sought to leverage culture in areas such as poverty alleviation, economic empowerment and sustainable development. In 2006, these interventions were

reconstituted as an Invest in Culture Programme which sought to provide access to relevant skills and markets as a means of urban regeneration, rural development and job creation (DAC 2013).

In 2008, in partnership with the British Council, the South African government undertook the first substantive mapping of the creative economy, with a pilot study in Gauteng (AMARU & CAJ 2008). Discussions were held in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) to extend the exercise to these provinces, but this did not materialize. In the same year a report commissioned by the Department of Labour on the Creative Industries in South Africa gave passing attention to the design industry, which was described a 'cross-cutting sector' (DoL & CAJ 2008).

A 2006 MAPP-SETA report identified a series of skill sets required in the design sector including contract and intellectual property management; new technology management; and product development and presentation (Cited in DoL & CAJ 2008)

The 2008 study of the Creative Industries in South Africa was unusually frank about the policy and accompanying management changes. The 'primary challenge' lay in the implementation of policy in the CC sector:

> South Africa is one of the few countries in Africa that has an enabling environment comprising policy, resources, capacity and appropriate linkages to other important policy arenas and yet the impact of this policy is inconsistent across the creative industries and would appear to be too generic to deal with the unique needs of the different sectors. A lack of clear coordination, overlapping responsibilities in different spheres of government resulting in duplication at best and confusion at worst, and a constituency base that feels it is excluded from government policy making seems to typify the creative sector in South Africa. Core problems still relate to the lack of careful and precise evaluation of outcomes of the various policies and interventions that have been developed and the clear lack of seamless government with working relationship between various government departments and spheres of government as well as governance issues in many of the dedicated government agencies... (DoL & CAJ 2008).

The publication of UNESCO's Cultural Statistical Framework provided international benchmarks for the categorization of cultural and creative industries (UNESCO 2009).

From a meso-level policy perspective during the during the period 1994-2012, the previous government-led investigations, strategies and development of the sector included the following initiatives: The Amendments to the Copyright Act (1978); 1998 Cultural Industries Growth Strategy; 1998 Film Development Strategy; 2001 Music Industry Task Team report; 2003 Local Content Strategy; 2012 Copyright Review Commission report.

In 2011-2, DAC introduced its MGE (Mzansi Golden Economy) programme, which was aligned with the 2010 New Growth Path strategy of the Department of Economic Development and periodic IPAP (Industrial Policy and Planning) implementation and policy review processes of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTIC). The National Development Plan provided an overarching socio-economic framework for development devised to unite South Africans of all races to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. The National Development Plan (NDP) has remained the key policy touchstone for CCI-oriented and other national policies to this day (DAC 2013; DAC 2018; DSAC & DTIC 2022).

The MGE aimed to align more closely the creative economy with the industrial economy, to create sustainable meaningful jobs, including among women and youth (Kaiser and Kea 2013). This involved in part a redirection of funds from the Investing in Culture Programme so that the economy could be stimulated on a broader scale to expand job creation (PMG 2012).

An Events and Festivals Grant was introduced to create a coordinated programme for events and touring exhibitions to allow DAC to move away from ad-hoc funding to one of strategic funding based on structured programmes (DAC Press Release, 23 July 2012). The MGE was planned to work through existing institutions and predicated on existing initiatives within five areas: (i) the stimulation of demand; (ii) audience development; (iii) audience development and consumption; (iii) heritage, (iv) a cultural observatory; and (v) and human capital development (PMG 2012).

There is not overmuch discussion of the 'design and creative services' in this report, besides noting that 'representative design organisations exist for architecture, ceramics, fashion, graphic design, interior design, jewellery, set design and textile design' (RSA Government 2012). Further relevant details are elaborated on and/or supplemented in subsequent policy productions.

In the wake of the MGE, the 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage went through an initial set of revisions during 2012-2013. The earlier versions of this Revised White Paper were not accepted, and it was reworked later in the decade with a final version being produced in 2018 and accepted by Cabinet in the same year. (PMG 2021).

The 2013/4 version does not provide much detail about the design sector. It stresses that the MGE should be delivered holistically by CCIs across the ACH value chain of activities and that the CCI be 'integrated into architecture, urban design and planning' (DAC 2014). It is notable that the SABS Design Institute was not included as one of the DAC related agencies to assist with the MGE implementation.

The initial RWP MGE strategy focuses on six sectors of the creative economy, namely (i) Cultural and Natural Heritage; (ii) Performance and Celebration; (iii) Visual Arts and Crafts; (iv) Press, Books and Information; (v) Audio Visual and Interactive Media; and (vi) Design and Creative Services. (RSA Govt 2013). These are in line with the UNESCO Cultural Statistical Framework of the time.

The 'Design and Creative Services' sector is in turn broken down into the following categories: Fashion Design; Graphic Design; Interior Design; Furniture Design; Landscape Design; Architectural Services; and Advertising Services. The RWP further proposed that the Stats SA Standard Classification codes (SIC codes) be mapped on this UNESCO framework to allow for 'national and international comparability, reliable analysis and better decision making' (DAC 2013).

The 2013 RWP rather briefly acknowledges the significance of design in a support role falling within the 'Design, Creative and ACH Technical Support Services' category. Such services are described as 'a tool for innovation and competitive advantage as well as cultural identity and manifestation'. The Report shows little awareness of the growing international trend to national design promotion and its centrality to the development of national creative economies. And while new courses are mooted for the CCI sector more generally, there is not specific mention of the education and training for the design industry (DAC 2013).

The advent of the MGE resulted in focused long-term discussions within DAC as to the need for a formal research agency to study and provide evidence for policy advocacy and design. By the beginning of the 2010s these deliberations had firmed into a preference for cultural research observatory. The South African Cultural Observatory (SACO) was subsequently established in 2015 by the then Department of Arts & Culture, with the purpose of developing a comprehensive cultural information system in South Africa and providing policy-relevant research for South Africa's growing CCI sector. SACO, the research arm of DSAC, is currently hosted by the Nelson Mandela University in partnership with Rhodes University and the University of Kwazulu-Natal.

After several draft iterations, the revised White Paper on Arts, Culture, and Heritage was approved by Cabinet in October 2018, and thereafter by Parliament in November 2019. The Paper emphasizes aligning the sector's policies with national development goals, including job creation, poverty eradication, and social cohesion. The RWP also highlights the strategic value of African Knowledge Systems in decolonizing the global knowledge economy and promoting inclusivity within the cultural sector (DAC 2018).

Somewhat confusingly the RWP in its broad policy outline for the arts and heritage disciplines refers to a sub-category of 'visual arts, crafts and design'. Later in the report, discussing the six categories of CCIs underpinned by the MGE strategy, the category of 'design and creative services' is used. What is interesting is that addition of crafts to the 'visual arts and design' discipline differs from earlier usage in the original 1996 White Paper (DAC 2017: 15, 38).

In addition, the RWP neglects to mention the policy efforts within DAC at the time (discussed below), regarding a national design strategy. This seeming oversight is partially explained by an emphasis on the need for the development of 'individual sector and sub-sector strategies that capture these specific details and needs of each of the sub-sectors' (DAC 2018: 53). These sub-sectors should be defined according to the 2009 UNESCO Framework for Statistics.

The participation of the private sector is seen as crucial in the development of the CCIs, and the importance of partnerships, innovative funding, and promotional activities and awards are raised as examples of the varied and innovative ways such involvement could be secured or expressed (DAC 2018). This increased emphasis on the cost of CCI promotion is more evident in the later version/s of the RWP, and the associated drift to increased collaborative, inter-government and inter-agency solutions in the late 2010s and early 2020s. Signs of such a shift are also evident in the CCI Masterplan of 2022 discussed below.

Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) Masterplan 2022

Government's 2019 Re-Imagined Industrial Strategy (DTIC 2019) identified the creative economy as one of the country's priority areas. The Strategy envisaged a range of targeted interventions in the economy and a variety of masterplans were consequently commissioned and delivered in the early 2020s including the Creative Industries Masterplan of 2022. The masterplan was a joint endeavour of the Ministry of Sports, Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Trade and Industry (DSAC & DTIC 2022).

The focus of Creative Industries Masterplan is the six direct UNESCO CCI sector categories namely:

- Visual arts and Crafts: inclusive of Fine arts; Photography and Crafts.

- Audio-Visual and Interactive Media: inclusive of Film and Video; Television and Radio (also internet live streaming); Internet podcasting; Video games (also online).
- Design and Creative Services: Fashion Design; Graphic design; Interior design etc.
- Performance and Celebration: inclusive of Performing arts, Music; Festivals; Fairs and Feasts.
- Press, Books and Information: inclusive of Books, newspapers and magazines; Book Fairs etc (DSAC & DTIC 2022).

The design sectors identified in the CCI Masterplan are listed in the third item above. However, there is no formal discussion of the design industry as a whole nor a deconstruction of the design sub-disciplines and their dynamics. This can be explained in part by the emphasis on integrating the Masterplan with the six CCI categories of the UNESCO Cultural Framework, rather than considering cross-cutting interventions. In other words, the CCI Masterplan is primarily concerned with the conceptualization and operationalization of the CCI sector as a whole and ensuring alignment with the Reimagined Industrial Strategy and current DSAC and DTIC policy priorities. The question of national promotion of design, its institutional requirements, and its relationship to industrial and particularly manufacturing production would appear to have fallen outside the scope of the brief by the DTIC for this Masterplan.

Towards a Rediscovery of the Design Economy: 2012-2024

While there was development in terms of the promotion of the CCI sector, and the establishment of formal research capacity in the establishment of the SA Cultural Observatory in 2015, work on a national design strategy and the accompanying institutional coordination and consolidation took somewhat longer to gain national traction.

The reasons for this situation are varied. For one, there seems to have been a general assumption that as the 'design and creative disciplines/sub-sectors' were one of the six classifications of cultural and creative industries under the UNESCO Cultural Statistical Framework. Secondly, given the cross-cutting nature of the design economy, substantive inter-departmental collaboration was required. It is likely that some of the necessary catalytic work fell between the main departments, which in this regard, were the Ministries of Arts and Culture and Trade and Industries.

Thirdly, compounding the matter was that the Design Institute which had been established in 1967 with the aim of enhancing the design of South African manufactured products, had become somewhat institutionally and strategically marginalized in the post-1994 environment. It was positioned as a unit within the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) -- one of the dti agencies. In the fourth place, one might speculate that with the emphasis on the CCIs as drivers of social and economic drivers of development, the industrial design sector was in effect overshadowed by the enthusiasm for the possibilities of the former.

By the early 2010s, however, there were signs of increased recognition among certain policy makers that a more formal and focused national design strategy that took due cognizance of key international developments and trends had to be conceptualized and planned.

In the early 2010s, stimulated in part it seems by the National Development Plan (NDP), New Growth Path and MGE exercises, and influenced by internation trends, the Department of Arts and Culture looked to recentre design within its core transformation agenda involving a more

collaborative processes (DAC 2019). This led to a draft National Design Strategy (NDS) policy process with looked at a post-industrial incarnation of design which relates to 'every aspect of modern existence' and thus becomes a crucial set of tools for the new knowledge economy. The draft NDS had as its overriding goal the positioning of design as the prime enabler of socio-economic and spatial innovation (DAC 2015; DAC 2019).

The authors of the 2015 draft strategy emphasized that contemporary design was not confined to the efforts of professional designers and not, as in the past, mainly directed at physical objects and communication. The concept of design was in fact expanding and evolving on a global scale. Design was being extended to services, spaces, systems and experiences, with more attention to human-centric methods. These in turn brought user needs, technologies and economic needs together in a quest for practical solutions and improved life experiences. (Townsend & Romme, 2024)

Underpinning the report was an emphasis on the interplay between innovation and design. Design was seen as unlocking innovation, with innovation in turn leading to competitive advantage. This, in turn, increased the demand for well-designed products and services. This was an updating of the earlier link in the second half of the twentieth century between design and product improvement on the one hand, and improved manufacturing output and competitiveness on the other.

The NDS identified four focus areas which (i) aligned with national priorities; and (ii) were measurable. These comprised:

- Economic development: Levering design in the service of radical economic transformation.
- Spatial development: Designing and shaping sustainable and human-centred urban and rural built environments.
- Social development: Invoking design in the improvement of human living standards.
- Nation building: Reinforcing social cohesion through more inclusive design.

The NDS was followed by a draft Design Strategy Report (DSR) in 2015. The DSR was more delivery oriented than the NDS. It stressed that design entailed the skilful fusion of intelligence and resources to provide effective solutions to meet current and future requirements of consumers, industries and citizens. It sought to emphasize the importance of designers within the CCI and strengthen and enhance their contribution to economic and industrial development.

The DSR evaluates in some detail the chief challenges and opportunities for the design economy in South Africa. A key issue is that South Africa currently lacks an effective design policy for industry. Such a policy requires a multi-pronged response.

Firstly, the question of the role and deployment of design in helping improve national and industrial competitiveness represents a major challenge. South Africa has capable and innovative manufacturers, service providers and good marketing back-up, but conditioned consumer preferences for overseas goods and services needs to be meaningfully addressed. There is an undervaluation of the skills and capabilities of local designers. The local market is increasingly awash with cheap imported garments benefitting from relatively low tariff barriers.

This leads to a shortage of job opportunities for young university graduates in design disciplines.

Furthermore, there needs to be more of a dialogue between South African industry in their utilization of the local design capacity. Design professions must be more proactive in articulating an accessible and strategic picture of the relevance of the design process in industry (... 2015; DAC 2019). A vision of a working alliance between design and industry must be developed.

Secondly, more scrutiny of the resourcing challenges in the domestic design economy is imperative. There seems to be insufficient start-up funding for designers to establish their own companies. There is also a lack of business training and expertise, which could be addressed in part by tailored training programmes and business support. Providing more BBBEE opportunities and improved perceptions of the sector from all communities was a further concern.

Thirdly, inter-related institutional issues were noted. These included the demise of certain councils and regional bodies in the design sector, which closed off opportunities for learners. The absence of a broad-based and funded national body for design is seen to have inhibited the development of the design sector (DAC 2015).

Key recommendations of the DSR including the following:

- The need for a comprehensive and representative body or institute to assume the role of the custodian of the design sector.
- The careful specification of DAC's role and responsibilities within the design industry. This would potentially include the provision of a supportive environment for the design industry.
- Positioning design as an essential component of the management of South Africa's industrial and commercial futures.
- Establishing design as a key competency in the quality control and innovation discourses.
- Reward and acknowledge South Africa's design successes throughout the design economy and in the media to develop domestic and international awareness of the potential and accomplishments of South African design.
- Develop a body of knowledge on design practice and management in South Africa and internationally, to provide a significant resource base on design as a value added and competitive strategy.
- Direct action to encourage firms to gain competitiveness through design.
- Direct action to benefit and encourage the design profession to be accepted as a broader management and industry discipline.
- Direct action to facilitate the protection and registration of designs and related intellectual property.
- Develop a reflexive body of knowledge on design practice and management in South African locally and globally to provide a resource base.
- Specific actions to see the design profession being accepted as a disciplinary component of business and management discourse and practice.
- Intervene directly to ensure the protection and registration of designs and related intellectual property (DAC 2015).

Following the NDS and NDR exercises, a study was commissioned in 2018 by DAC to lay the groundwork for a design strategy which in turn would inform a plan of action (DAC 2019). Given the emphasis on select design industry interventions in the past, Letsema Consulting was appointed to draft an evidence-based strategy to evaluate and develop recommendations on 'the various aspects of the value chain within the textile, graphic, jewellery and ceramic industries that require government interventions, accelerated growth and promotion' (DAC 2019). The specific objectives were:

- Identify areas of focus within the value chain for each discipline, with specific analysis on scope, size, structure and relevant dynamics with implications for talent, training and transformation in the sector.
- Benchmark South Africa against top performers analysis of design principles both locally and Internationally.
- Consolidate the dynamics within the policy and national strategy environments to feed seamlessly into the holistic design strategy.
- Update the database of the stakeholders / role players within the design industry (DAC 2019).

A draft report was subsequently produced, which delineated the selected value chains, and delivered a set of useful policy conclusions. The report stresses that countries can and do differ significantly, due to their 'unique attributes and competitive advantages that may be leveraged'.

There are several main policy initiatives and/or strategies that potentially form a 'golden thread' in the design policies of selected global leaders in the field. These are underpinned by a self-conscious and unremitting focus on driving design awareness, design education and seeking a collaborative effort in policy design (DAC 2019).

Regarding the fostering of design awareness, the authors observe that it is common for countries to concentrate on the communication of the centrality of design in product development and business more generally. This helps create a more transparent approach to the value-add aspect of design and has a variety of 'economic knock-on effects' including the demand for skills and improving design competitiveness in the markets.

Design education, the report emphasizes, is a critical success factor and thus a policy priority in many design-intensive countries. The emphasis was not confined to the tertiary education sector, but also the question of integrating design within the national school curricula.

Thirdly, because design is bound up with R&D and innovation as well as policy imperatives such as education and industrial production, it was essential that the development of national design and policy strategy should be 'co-created' and/or shaped by multiple departments and agencies. This suggests the need for strategic partnerships and inter-governmental initiatives in the field of design. Moreover, as the report stresses, all aspects of the construction of national design policy and capacity should be examined in producing a synoptic approach and linked outcomes (ibid.).

Recent Developments

During 2023-4 a Working Group of select academics, design and business, and state representatives was tasked to develop a position report on the question of national design

promotion in South Africa, and its institutional underpinnings. While making some headway, it was decided to recommend that consultants be procured to draft the strategy document. This has eventuated and a tender was issued for consideration in September 2024.

A related development was the closure during 2021-22 of the South African Design Institute based in the South African Bureau of Standards. The impact of the closure and the institutional legacy of the Institute needs to be evaluated. The records and intellectual property of its work and activities between 1967 and its closure need to be curated. In addition, the institutional continuity of the Institute vis-à-vis the envisaged National Design Council of South Africa should be explored.

Sub-National Interventions

There has been relatively little in the way of formal design promotional policy at sub-national and local levels. Most of the focus has been on the competition between Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town for international recognition and awards which has included a design component, most particularly the World City of Design award won by Cape Town in 2014.

It has been primarily in the Western Cape that more explicit linkages between design and regional CCI has been stressed. In 2005 a compact report on the Creative Industries produced for the Western Cape government in the province dealt briefly but directly with the question of the regional design sector (van Graan 2005) and listed the various forms of design and their industrial links. These were:

- Industrial/product design: Engineering and manufacturing.
- Interior and architectural design: Construction.
- Fashion design: Clothing, textiles, footwear and leatherwear.
- Graphic design: Media, advertising, printing, packaging and publishing.
- Jewellery design: Mining, retail and wholesale.
- Multi-media design: Media, advertising, printing, packaging, publishing and Information.
- Technology Set design: Theatre, film, television and video.
- Furniture design: Forestry, retail and wholesale (ibid.).

The report noted that in the fashion design sub-sector, participants ‘bemoan the absence of the economic importance of this sector’ (van Graan 2005) The author stressed the absence of quantitative statistics at the time about the design sector. The report also noted the exponential growth of design-related events in the Western Cape, including Decorex -- Design for Living and ‘the ever-growing Design Indaba that attracted 1900 delegates in 2005’. The event, the largest of its kind in Africa, brought attendees from South Africa and internationally and importantly ‘brings income into the provincial economy (ibid.)’.

The Western Cape is, at the time of writing, the only province to have developed a Design Strategy. The initiative was launched in September 2013 at a premier’s workshop and was conditioned, in part, by Cape Town being selected as the World Design Capital for 2014 – an award offered by ICSID -- the International Council for the Society of Industrial Designers (Graaf 2014). The joint effort between the provincial Department of Economic Development and Tourism and the then Café Craft Design Institute (CCDI) prioritized the creative sector, and

design in particular, as drivers of competitive advantage and innovation in the region (Makalima-Ngewana 2014).

- The objectives of the Strategy were four-fold:
- Design-ready businesses: Ensure sectors of the economy and civil society integrate design into their business and organisational practices to unlock innovation, competitiveness and progress.
- Business-ready design practitioners: Establish an enabling environment that supports a thriving design ecosystem and a competitive design industry.
- Design in the public sector: Ensure the transformation of a public sector into one that embraces design and design-thinking methodology in policy formation and practical implementation across all spheres and tiers of government.
- Involve citizens: create public awareness and appreciation as to the value of design in every aspect of people's lives, towards socio-economic upliftment and a better quality of life for all.

The strategy called for a design institute to play a central role in co-ordination and facilitation of the strategy. The CCDI, although focused primarily on the craft sector, was asked to assume the coordinating role (WC Government 2012). To date the region is the only province in South Africa to have formalized a Design Strategy.

There is an articulation through Cape Town's Arts, Culture and Creative Industry Policy (ACCIP) to support the Design Strategy as 'a mechanism for ensuring the long-term legacy benefits' of the Design Capital 2104 designation (CCT 2014). Moreover, the ACCIP looked to further the aims of the Design Strategy by creating 'an enabling environment and a connected design ecosystem, through supporting, promoting and developing the sector, with a specific focus on supporting and promoting design in Cape Town'.

Status of Design in South Africa

South Africa has an established regulatory framework for the design industry, and more broadly the CCI sector. The 1993 Designs Act registration of designs relates to the appearance of a product, such as shape, configuration, or pattern. Designs protect the aesthetic qualities of a product and give their owners the exclusive right to manufacture, use, and sell the design for a certain period.

To be eligible for design protection, a design must be new and not purely functional. Design protection is registered for 15 years, with the possibility for renewal for another five years, and 10 years in the case of functional designs. The difference in the duration of protect reflects the higher degree of 'inventiveness' according to an aesthetic as opposed to a functional design (Alberts 2008).

This is well below the period of protection that a design protected under the terms of the Copyright Act would enjoy. The Design Act also provides for criminal sanctions for the infringement of a registered design (Alberts 2008). A particular design may be eligible for protection in terms of the Trade Marks Act 194 of 1993 if, inter alia, it is of a distinctive nature. Furthermore, the Copyright Act of 1978, may protect a particular design such for example, a piece of jewellery (Seruwagi 2024). The Patents Act of 1978 is also of relevance.

Patents

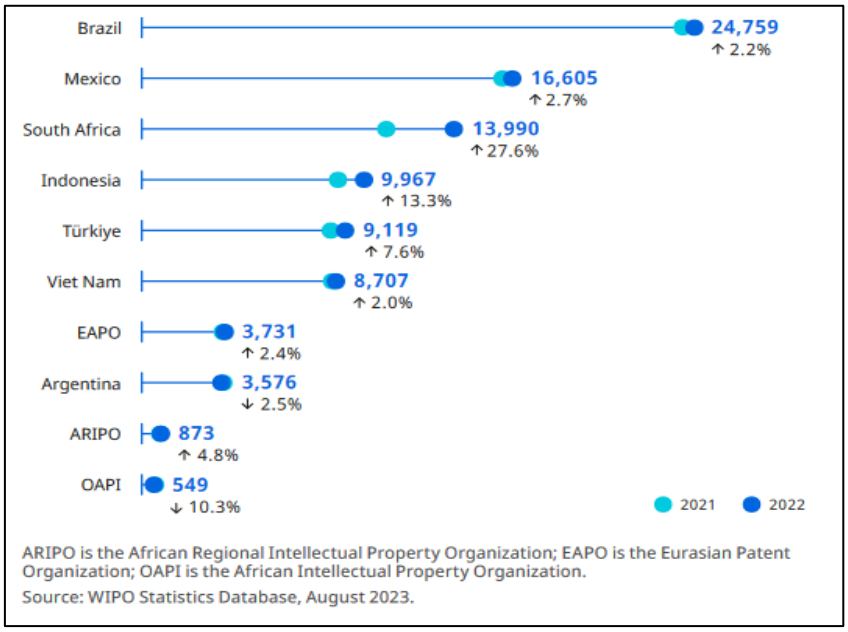
Patents are an indicator of design activity in a country. The earliest patent approved in South Africa was in 1913. In recent years there has been significant growth in patent applications, although most applications are from foreign IP holders rather than South Africans. Some 46 legal firms handled 46 264 patent filings from 2018 to 2022. An estimated 72% of filings originated from overseas, which leaves South African legal firms with patent practices reliant on international clients and foreign partnerships (Patent Pilot 2024).

Most applications were from the United States at 7 941 cases, followed by China (3 744 cases), and Germany (2 353). Other foreign applications came from the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, and Switzerland. During the five-year period, South African firms sent 422 cases to the United States, 275 to Great Britain, and 250 to Australia, which is 2% of the number of inward patents. This is an indication that South Africa has become a net importer of intellectual capital (IP). (Patent-Pilot 2024)

More recently, South African patent filings grew by 73% over between 2020-2022 with 35% of South African patents now being filed through the GlobalIPCo online system (with S&Z as its South African agent). Nearly 14 000 patents were filed 2023, with less than 50% coming from domestic sources.

Researchers Ulrich Schmoch and Anastassios Pouris (2021) found that increasing the number of Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) applications by South African entities would support faster economic growth. The recommendation is that the targeted increase in PCT applications should be linked to a coordinated technological strategy. ‘From a mid- and long-term perspective on exports, this implies a focus on a small number of technologies in the beginning with a gradual extension’, they state. Design and innovation drives should be focused initially on import substitution (ibid.).

Statistics released by the World Intellectual Property Organization shows that Brazil (24 759), Mexico (16 605) and South Africa (13 990) recorded over 13 000 patent applications in 2022. Non-resident filings were the primary contributor to total growth. (World Intellectual Property Organization, 2023)



(WIPO, 2023)

Figure 2: Patent Applications of Selected Low- and Middle-Income Countries, 2022.

Stimulating and Supporting a Design Culture

South Africa is positioned 35th out of 114 countries in the 2023 World Design Rankings. Top ranked is China, followed by the United States, Japan and Italy (WDR, 2023). The World Design Award is open to both concept-stage and realized work from all entities in all countries in all disciplines. There is a compelling case for South Africa to establish a design council modelled on global best practices.

Mathieu Albrand, associate director of global innovation at the McCann Worldgroup, stresses the importance of Africa of utilizing and developing endogenous design talent and resources:

> The day that Africa as a continent starts to design for its internal population, a whole new range of products and services will be opened to the world. The introduction of new, 'designed for Africa, by Africa' products and services will create a host of new jobs and industries, allowing people to explore design and its universal language of connecting people by improving experience (Albrand, 2017).

Public Private Partnerships and the CCI Sector with Reference to the Design Economy

Globally one finds an increased recourse to partnerships and cooperative approaches to governing and leveraging resources for the CCI sector, including the design economy (Snowball et al 2025 forthcoming). This includes the imperative of locating and mobilizing funding.

Among the more formal aspects of such trends is the increased use of Public Private Partnerships (PPP), and the growing sophistication and broader base of PPPs. Within and without the CCI sector there is an increasing involvement of non-business and non-state actors and the accessing of more varied kinds of funding (Haines & Gouws et al 2023). More recent

variants of national design promotion policies are considering newer modes of PPPs for the construction of institutional structures and capacity, including national design councils and coordination agencies.

A PPP is defined as a contract between a public-sector institution and a private party, where the private party performs a function that is usually provided by the public-sector and/or uses state property in terms of the PPP agreement. Most of the project risk (technical, financial and operational) is transferred to the private party. The public sector pays for a full set of services, including new infrastructure, maintenance and facilities management, through monthly or annual payments. In a traditional government project, the public sector pays for the capital and operating costs and carries the risks of cost overruns and late delivery. Another benefit of a PPP s that it leverages private sector skills.

Internationally, PPPs are becoming more sophisticated in their makeup and functioning and utilizing differing kinds of finance. Also, there is a growing recourse to the third sector, as opposed to a dual public-private arrangement. One relevant international development is the growing emphasis on partnerships for public purpose, the new PPPs.

With the increasing global, regional and national crises and concomitant social inequalities, working conditions and employment, there is more awareness in policy circles of the need for new approaches. The emphasis on these new PPPs is on multilateral relationships that can underpin long-term, sustainable and systemic impact. These are less constrained by private finance contracts or cost-reduction priorities focussing rather on meaningful partnerships with a diversity of stakeholders (Karboul, Gustafsson-Wright & McCabe 2021).

By looking to exploit different sets of expertise from government departments, private sector firms, educational institutions and donor agencies, these new PPPs can provide the innovative approaches and mechanisms and develop collaboration to address challenges that state resources and competing priorities find it difficult to address. This allows such PPPs to build capacity, strengthen quality, enhance equity and home in on emerging and poorly financed CCI enterprises and projects with a distinct public goods profile (Karboul, Gustafsson-Wright & McCabe 2021).

A further significant trend is the use of blended finance in new PPP arrangements. In general, blended finance entails the use of capital from public and/or philanthropic sources to boost private sector investment to make up for any funding shortfalls to realize sustainable development.

This type of financing is often invaluable in high-risk environments where pioneering private investments can bring important benefits to society – such as creating new products, services and markets and developing new technologies – but where these initial investors may need a temporary incentive to mitigate the costs and risks inherent in these markets (IFC 2021).

Government has stressed that the recovery and reconstruction of the South African economy requires strong public private partnerships. An enabling environment is created by government through (i) responsible and accountable leadership and alignment within the public sector; and (ii) a clear and transparent policy framework. Given the pressure on the South African fiscus new inter-agency and PPP initiatives are gaining interest among national departments such as the DTIC and DSAC.

Thus, for sustainability and buy-in from the private and public sectors in the South African context, a catalytic and coordinating body for the design economy, such as a National Design Council, should be financed through a combination of government grant funding and private sector contributions.

Investec states:

> By channelling the resources and expertise of diverse stakeholders to efficiently address public needs, these emerging public-private partnerships (PPPs) are proving a gamechanger in addressing the country's many developmental and infrastructure challenges"

There is international motivation for private sector involvement in PPPs in national design economies. For example, a 2010 review of the impact of the British Design Council found that there was a consistent link between the use of design and improved business performance across key measures including turnover, profit and market share.

A Forrester Research Consulting study conducted in 2016 found that design-led companies in the United States, France, the United Kingdom Germany, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Japan reported a 41% higher market share than those not led by design. Design-led companies had a 46% overall competitive advantage, 50% more loyal customers and 70% provided digital experiences which were better than those of their competitors.

A 2007 study by the UK Design Council found that, for every £100 a 'design-alert' business spent on design, turnover increased by £22 512. A later report by the Design Council found that in 2019 the design economy contributed £97.4bn in gross value added (GVA) to the UK economy, or around 5% of total UK GVA. This was close to the combined value of the hospitality and real-estate sectors. The design economy grew at twice the rate of the UK economy between 2010 and 2019.

Institutional and Associational Aspects of the Design Sector in South Africa

There is currently no unifying design body in South Africa. The design field in South Africa has significant potential and opportunities for growth both domestic and globally, but resourcing and integration of the sector remains a challenge. At present there is no accepted common vision for the promotion and support of design across the differing disciplines and on a cross-disciplinary basis.

It is therefore imperative that a unifying body be established to create and nurture an appreciation and culture of design in all sectors.

Design Institute of South Africa (DI/DISA)

The Design Institute of South Africa (1965) was part of the first wave design councils and similar agencies established in the late 1950s and 1960s by Commonwealth countries notably Australia (1958), New Zealand (1965), Canada (1961) and India (1961) all of which were influenced significantly by UK's Council of Industrial Design (COID) set up in 1944. In the South African case, although the links with the Commonwealth were diluted somewhat with the

advent of the Republic of South Africa in 1961 under the National Party government, the links with COID were maintained with several British designers and advisers working for DISA well into the 1970s (Campbell 2009)

Founded in 1965, the Design Institute (DI) was established in 1965 with aim of stimulating 'the development of the manufacturing industry in South Africa through engineering and product design' (SABS 2019; SABG 2005). It was the sole designated National Design Promotion agency in the country and maintained this mandate throughout its lifespan (PMG 2019). The DI's focus was on the integration and promotion of design within the manufacturing and industrial base of South Africa and helping enhance national competitiveness internationally for South African produced products. The national Treasury funded the Desing Institute during its formative years during which time it functioned as an autonomous organization reporting directly to the Ministry of Trade and Industry (ICOD 2008). In 1972 it the Institute became a promotion member of the International Council of Societies of Industrial Designers (DISA 2024), and later a promotional member of International Council of Design Associations (ibid).

During the earlier decades there was a working relationship between DISA, the country's first industrial design academic programme based in the SAJ campus in downtown Johannesburg, where there was at the time a concentration of light industry, and the manufacturing sector of South Africa. With the drift of manufacturing out of South Africa's inner-city spaces, and the beginnings of a long-term deindustrialization of South Africa, newer socio-political and economic imperatives impacted on the design field (Campbell 2009). In turn the DI began expanding its activities to look for a more developmental and inclusive approach to design promotion (Campbell 2009; Sauthoff 2003). In retrospect, such reorientation may not have helped the case of the DI, nor served the country's interest. It may have made sense to retain and reinforce design links with industry for a more inclusive industrial strategy as was the case with the East Asian economies in the regard to national design promotion in the late 20th and early 21st century (Haines et.al 2019).

In 1972 the Design Institute was incorporated into the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) through an amendment of the Standards Act. However, it still reported to the Minister of Trade and Industry. In 1993 the amendment with reference to the Design Institute was surprisingly omitted in the Standards Act 29 (SA Govt. 1993). This left the Design Institute with no legislative protection (ICOD 2008).

Since the later 1990s the future role and activities of the DI has been the subject of a variety of discussions and strategy exercises taking local and international factors into consideration. These deliberations led to two consecutive surveys. Firstly, in 2001 the Bentley West consultancy reviewed the roles and functions of the Design Institute. The subsequent report in early 2002 evaluated the need for design promotion in the country, the funding and resourcing requirements, and the staff competencies for a restructured institute. The SABS executive team resolved that design promotion was not the core business of the Bureau, and thus the DI should be relocated. This was in line with the findings of the Bentley West report (ICOD 2008).

At a 2002 National Advisory Council workshop on design of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) it was agreed that (i) a comprehensive national policy on design in South Africa was vital; (ii) that an independent national promotional body governed by design stakeholders should be established; and (iii) that it should build on the activities and experiences of the SABS Design Institute. Among the key recommendations of the NACI report

was that there is real need for the promotion of design in South Africa which would contribute to the competitiveness of South Africa (ICOD 2008)

The Report stressed that DISA had a range of strengths and a range of accomplishment. A repositioning of the Institute was advised, enabling it to play a more central role in national industrial and economic development. Continued state funding was recommended, with the condition that there was a clear plan to reduce government funding through a progressive scaling up of private sector contributions. Notwithstanding these developments, there was a reversal of the 2002 SABS decision in 2005 with the DI remaining as a component of the SABS. No explanation was forthcoming for the reversal of the decision (ICOD 2008).

By the end of the 2000s the DI remained the only dedicated state vehicle tasked with the promotion of design in South Africa. It was also, notwithstanding resource shortages, the only centre where design-related data could be sourced (ICOD 2008). In 2007-8 the DI headed up the Africa aspect of a world survey of design and design activities under the auspices of the Internation Council of Design with an aim to generate statistical data on the South African design sector (SABS 2009). The ICOD report noted that the DI was 'under-resourced by comparative international standards for national design promotion agencies' (ibid.). Furthermore, it was found that DI at the time was focused primarily on developing the industrial design and education sectors, with other design sector essentially 'looking after themselves' with little in the way of institutional support from government (ibid.)

To find more traction commercially and within national policy circles, a new DI Group Manager, Gavin Mageni, was appointed in June 2014 (Bizcommunity 2013). Coming from a corporate background rather than a design-oriented one, his vision for the DI was 'to create a one-stop-design-hub by providing a solution-enabling environment to those who have difficulty finding the appropriate channels to put their ideas into practice'. He also emphasized that 'design and innovation should be used to respond to current and future technological, economic and social demands and should act as the catalyst to meaningfully overcome the national challenges of high unemployment, poverty and inequality (ibid.).

The SABS Annual Report of 2013/14 (SABS 2014) noted the accomplishment of the DI being mentioned in the IPAP 2013/14 report for its role in the design aspect of a furniture manufacturing initiative (SABS 2014). In retrospect, the seemingly infrequent appearance of the Design Institute in DTI activities at the time suggests its underuse and under-funding by the Ministry in terms of the Institute's involvement in manufacturing and industrial development promotion in South Africa.

The DI in the mid and late 2010s moved more directly into new product development initiatives with SMEs (PMG 2015). In addition, it developed a new focal area, that of young and emerging 'innovation industrialists', a large portion of which were based in schools. The aim declared the DISA director at a 2015 DTI Portfolio Committee was to 'create 'a "Silicon Valley" for Africans, by Africans'. The initiative was wide-ranging and included mentoring and coaching, business modes development, the assessment of ideas and technical specification, prototype testing, and even market research (PMG 2015). The DI was also called in to assist the SABS with some of the latter's non-core business.

A central discussion point of the 2015 Committee meeting was whether the DI should remain located within the SABS or moved to another national department such as Science and

Technology. The question of whether there was sufficient synergy between the SABS and its unit, the DI. The SABS response was that the DI was rightly positioned in the SABS as the latter covered a range of industries not only science and technology. It also emphasized that more funding was required for the DI to have a 'deeper impact' (PMG 2015).

The SABS 2018/9-2020/1 Corporate Plan confirms the expansion of the DI's brief to 'the promotion of design and innovation as key strategic capabilities for the socio-economic development of South Africa' (SABS 2019). Its activities in the 3-year planning period would be to ensure the sustainability of this set of aims by 'leveraging excellent achievements' in a list of outputs that included the following:

- Developing local and global reach through impact programmes.
- Acquiring world-class design centre status that can compete with global counterparts.
- Becoming a hub for skills transfer to previously disadvantaged designers.

Specific programme objectives included:

- Continuing with the implementation of the Design and Innovation Entrepreneurship Programme and rural schools design clinics of Transnet.
- Establishing the Job Fund's Design and Innovation Acceleration Programme.
- Launching the Fund's Design and Innovation Accelerator Hub.

In addition, the Desing Institute was to reposition itself 'to have a greater impact on its intended core area of driving industrial design' (SABS 2019). While not a profit centre, the DI was expected to be a self-funded body via its commercial activities (ibid.). By 2018, Gavin Mageni had left the Institute, with Adrienne Viljoen returning to organization in the capacity of Acting Head.

By the early 2020s the DI appears to have broadened its conception of design and its organizational purpose declaring on its webpage that:

> The SABS Design Institute is dedicated to human-centred design, which has the potential to stimulate growth in South Africa's manufacturing industry. Focusing on the country's design capabilities, it has become an agent for change and facilitated valuable socio-economic development. The Institute translates research & development and invention into sustainable economic opportunities, while creating a general awareness of design (DESI 2024)

By the end of the decade, governance and fiscal management dysfunctionalities at the SABS came to light. In June 2018, Trade and Industry minister Rob Davies announced the immediate removal the SABS Board. A few months after the Executive Management of the Bureau suffered a similar fate, with the body placed under administration. A trio of DTI officials were seconded for the task (SABS 2023). The Auditor General also reported that his inability to 'obtain sufficient and appropriate audit evidence to provide a basis for an audit opinion' (Cited in Ensor 2018). In 2020 the Acting CEO of the SABS resigned after reputed difference of opinion with the Director General of the DTIC (Cokayne 2020).

Such developments appear to have affected the functioning and funding of the Design Institute during the 2018-2021 period. And rather than reposition the DTIC decided in effect the DI should

wind down its activities. A significant body of work and achievements are part of an under-rated legacy in the design economy, the CCI sector, and the national economy more generally.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed select and strategic policy developments in South Africa regarding the cultural and creative economy, with reference to the design sector. The chapter tracks the institutional stream of cultural policy from the mid-1990s through to the present under the differing iterations of the Ministry of Arts and Culture, namely DCAST (until 2002); DAC (till 2019); and then the current day DSAC. DSAC and its agencies. Its collaboration with cognate departments, primarily the DTI/DTIC, on joint or parallel programmes and initiatives on the creative economy and the CCIs (including the design and creative services components), is also considered. The interplay of these agencies and national economic and development strategy such as GEAR, the NGP, the NDP and the Reimagined Industrial Strategy (and its associated Masterplans) were examined.

Although mentioned there is relative lack of engagement with the design economy by DAC and the DTI in later 1990s, and the 2000s. In the 2010s there are internal efforts to formalize a national design strategy and related action plans and a formal commissioned study on aspects of the design economy value chain.

These efforts are somewhat tangential in relation to the operations and fortunes of the Design Institute of South Africa which was established in 1965 with reporting lines to the Ministry of Trade and Industries. It was shifted to the SABS in 1972 and became in effect an underfunded and under-resourced unit of the Bureau. It appears to have been somewhat marginalized and inadequately networked with DAC and DTI policies and the implementation thereof. It was wound down in the early 2020s.

The chapter then compactly assesses the institutional and association landscape of the South African design sector, and considers select challenges.

Chapter 6: Overview of Design Activities in South Africa

Introduction

This chapter thoroughly examines the employment patterns in the design industry of South Africa by looking at the quantity and characteristics of designers and considering the empowerment dynamics, in the field as a whole. Utilizing information from the Quarterly Labour Force Surveys in South Africa spanning from 2008 to 2023 provides a perspective on how designer employment has changed over time in response, to economic and social changes. During this time frame, in South Africa's economy there were achievements that mirror the overall shifts in industry needs and technological progress while highlighting the increasing relevance of design, in different sectors.

Initially, the chapter focusses on how the number of designers has evolved over time. Economic aspects, like the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak are taken into account when assessing the employment of designers in this timeframe The significant fluctuations and recoveries offer insights into the sectors ability to endure and adjust.

Consideration is then given to the makeup of designers from 2016, to 2023, and the changes in representation across different racial categories over time. Changes in the makeup of designers highlights a push to broaden the industry's diversity and strengthen empowerment by offering opportunities that mirror the fabric of South African society. The chapter concludes by discussing empowerment programmes in this field.

Perspectives provided on employment trends changes, in demographics and the empowerment landscape, within the South African design sector paints a picture of a sector that is constantly changing and growing.

Employment

Number of designers

Based on the quarterly data from the South African Quarterly Labour Force Surveys, the dataset provides a quarterly breakdown of the number of designers in South Africa from 2008 to 2023. Observing this data across time, there is a clear variation in the count of designers, showing both growth trends and some periods of decline. In the earlier years, from 2008 to around 2012, the number of designers fluctuated within a relatively narrow range, typically between 50,000 and 70,000. This period seems to represent a more stable phase, potentially reflecting a steady demand for design services in the economy.

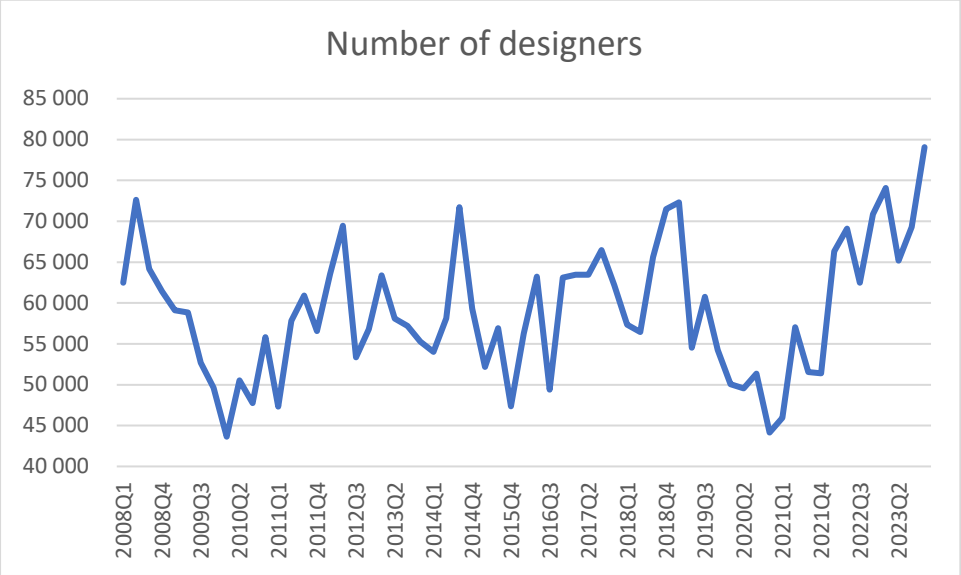


Figure 3. Number of Designers in South Africa from 2008 to 2023. Source: Own calculations based on Stats SA's Quarterly Labour Force Surveys

From 2013 onwards, the data begins to show a slight upward trend in the overall numbers, with the count of designers more frequently reaching or surpassing the 60,000 mark in each quarter. This increase could be indicative of growing recognition and demand for design roles across various industries, possibly driven by an expanding South African economy during these years. In particular, around 2017 and 2018, the numbers consistently reach higher levels, with quarterly counts often above 60,000, and in some cases, nearing 70,000. This period likely reflects a broader economic environment where creative and design services saw greater integration into business practices, especially as companies increasingly invested in digital presence and branding.

A noticeable peak appears in more recent years, especially in 2022 and 2023, where the numbers rise even further, reaching a high of approximately 79,000 in the last quarter of 2023. This growth may suggest a continued expansion in the field of design, possibly fueled by advancements in digital technology and the rising importance of creative industries. The role of designers might have expanded beyond traditional fields, incorporating areas such as digital product design, user experience (UX) design, and other tech-driven design disciplines, which have gained prominence globally and likely influenced South Africa's market as well.

Overall, the dataset reveals a marginal upward trajectory over time, with occasional fluctuations that may reflect economic conditions and sectoral changes in demand for design expertise. The recent high numbers hint at a positive outlook for the design industry in South Africa, suggesting an ongoing expansion that aligns with global trends in the creative and digital sectors. This growth trend could present further opportunities for employment and professional development within the design industry as more businesses prioritize visual and user-centred design.

An important aspect to consider is that external shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, might have impacted the quarterly figures for designers, especially around 2020, when many sectors faced disruptions. Notably, in 2020, the Q2 and Q4 values are relatively low, possibly reflecting

the impact of lockdowns and economic slowdown, as companies and clients reduced their need for design services due to uncertainties or budget cuts.

There are some noticeable trends and possible seasonal patterns. Each quarter shows fluctuations in the total number of designers, with certain quarters displaying higher counts than others, which could hint at seasonal influences in the demand or availability of designers. For instance, Q4 values in several years, such as 2018, 2019, 2022, and 2023, are generally higher than those in preceding quarters. This pattern may indicate a seasonal demand for designers towards the end of the year, possibly due to increased activity in industries that rely on design services, such as retail, marketing, or event planning, as they prepare for end-of-year campaigns and celebrations.

Empowerment

Empowerment in South Africa's design industry is vital for fostering diversity, innovation, and cultural representation. Given the country’s complex history, it is essential to create opportunities for underrepresented groups to access the resources, education, and platforms needed to thrive in design. Empowering designers from diverse backgrounds enriches the industry by bringing unique perspectives and narratives that reflect South Africa's multifaceted society. This inclusivity not only strengthens the industry but also ensures that South African design authentically represents and serves its people, contributing to economic growth and social cohesion. Through skills development, mentorship, and support for emerging talent, the design sector can become a model of empowerment and equity in South Africa’s creative economy.

The graph below represents the racial composition of designers across quarters from 2016 to 2023. Examining this distribution reveals shifts in the representation of different racial groups over time. African/Black designers constitute a significant portion of the designer workforce, generally maintaining a presence between 40% and 54%. The percentage fluctuates over the years, peaking around 2023 with 54% in Q4 but also dipping to its lowest in 2021 at 32% in Q4. These fluctuations suggest a varied and dynamic participation of Black designers, with an overall trend of increased representation in recent years.

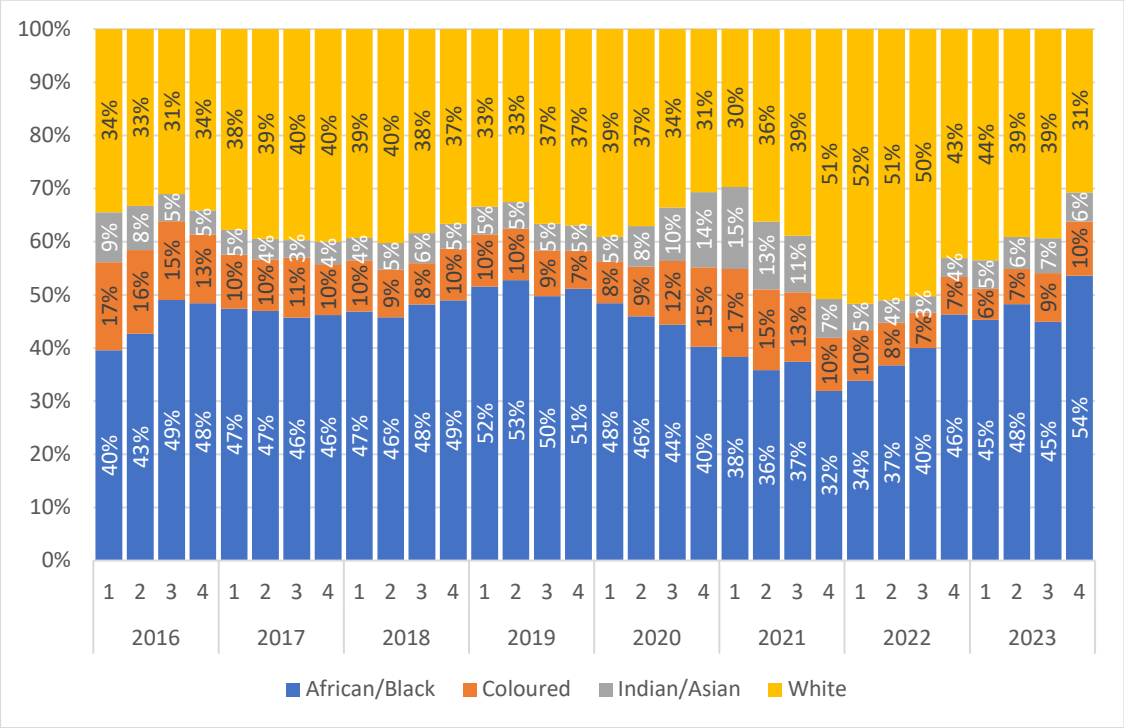


Figure 4: Proportion of Designers by Race from 2016 to 2023

Coloured designers consistently represent a smaller share of the designer workforce, generally hovering between 7% and 17%. This group experiences minor fluctuations but remains relatively stable, with a slight increase in the latter half of the period, particularly in 2021 and 2022, where their representation reaches up to 17%. This consistency in representation may indicate a stable yet limited engagement of Coloured individuals in design roles.

Indian/Asian designers form the smallest racial group within the designer workforce, with percentages typically ranging between 3% and 15%. The data shows a modest increase from 2020 to 2021, where their representation briefly rises to 14% and 15%, indicating a potential rise in interest or opportunity within this demographic during this period. However, this increase does not sustain over time, and the percentage returns to single digits in subsequent quarters.

White designers initially hold a considerable share of the workforce, especially from 2016 to 2020, where their representation often reaches around 40%. However, a noticeable decrease occurs from 2021, with significant dips in 2022 and 2023. By Q4 of 2023, White designers represent only 31% of the workforce. This decline may indicate a shift in the demographic makeup of the design industry, potentially due to increased diversity and inclusion efforts within the sector.

The data demonstrates a clear trend towards increased racial diversity among designers over the years. While White designers dominated the early part of the dataset, African/Black designers have become more prominent, particularly in recent years. This shift highlights a changing landscape within the design industry, where opportunities may be expanding to previously underrepresented groups, fostering a more inclusive environment for all racial demographics.

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated the employment patterns and evolving demographics within South Africa's design sector, reflecting a steady increase in the number of designers and a growing emphasis on diversity and inclusivity. The rise in designer employment, coupled with the sector's resilience amid economic fluctuations, underscores the expanding role of design as a valuable contributor to economic and cultural development. Demographic shifts reveal a positive trend towards greater racial diversity, with African/Black designers and other underrepresented groups taking on a more prominent role. These changes suggest that empowerment initiatives focused on inclusivity, skills development, and mentorship are gradually reshaping the sector.

The potential establishment of a National Design Council could play a pivotal role in accelerating these trends, fostering a unified approach to addressing the sector's needs, and promoting equitable access to opportunities across all demographic groups. Such a council could drive further support for emerging designers, advocate for policy initiatives that protect and promote the profession, and help solidify design as a central pillar of South Africa's creative economy. By guiding the industry towards sustained growth, innovation, and social cohesion, a National Design Council would be instrumental in creating a more inclusive, resilient, and impactful design landscape in South Africa.

Chapter 7: Strategic Interviews and Focus Group Findings

Introduction

This chapter reviews the seven in-depth interviews, and two mini-focus interviews conducted with representatives of the design industry. The interviews and mini-focus groups were shaped by a semi-structured schedule of questions which started with respondents describing their roles within the design sector. The interviews then focussed on the following themes:

Theme 1: Defining the Design Sector and Professions

Respondents were asked to share their views on which sectors and occupations form part of the design sector, which SETAs they align with, and examples of existing design councils locally and internationally that could serve as models for South Africa.

Theme 2: State of the Design Economy

The interviews explored respondents' assessments of the design economy, both nationally and regionally.

Theme 3: Institutional and Associational Coverage

Respondents were asked to comment on the existence and effectiveness of institutional or associational support for different design sub-sectors.

Theme 4: Intellectual Property and Professional Support

Here respondents explored the concept of intellectual property rights and shared their views about whether there is sufficient protection for designers and how this issue impacts the sector.

Theme 5: Education and Professional Development

The quality of design education in South Africa was examined, strengths and challenges were identified, and recommendations made.

Theme 6: Envisioning a National Design Council

Respondents discussed the concept of an NDC, including whether they were in favour of such an organisation and how it could promote and coordinate design efforts in South Africa.

The purpose of conducting interviews in this study, was to gather information about the experiences, perspectives, and opinions of participants.

Most of the interviews were conducted in person while three were done via Zoom. Each respondent signed a consent form before participating in the interview to indicate that they understood the nature of the study and that they agreed to participate voluntarily in the interview. The consent form provided information about the study, its purpose and the procedures involved, as well as the respondent’s rights, including the right to terminate the interview at any stage. The anonymity of the respondent was discussed and assured.

The interviews were generally between 30 and 120 minutes, and were recorded. Transcripts were produced and archived. Summaries of all interviews have also been produced and archived. The schedule for the interviews can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

The respondents constituted a diverse, informed group with a rich set of relevant experience and provided the interviewer with a wealth of information, insight, and enhanced understanding of the complexities of work in the design sector.

This chapter will describe the insights and recommendations shared by respondents and place them in the context of what a NDC could achieve. It seeks to provide details on the themes identified and highlight ways in which the proposed council could support the growth of various fields within the design sector.

Respondents Roles and Experience in the Design Sector

Of the eleven respondents, six are based in Gauteng, four in the Western Cape and one in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Respondents represent a broad range of sub-divisions within the design sector. These include fashion design, industrial design, graphic design, interior decorating and architecture, multimedia and digital design, branding and visual communication. Together they reflect significant experience within these sectors and, by sharing their perspectives, they have been able to highlight challenges and opportunities in the possibility of establishing a National Design Council.

Respondent 1 states that she “consider[s] myself a graphic design historian. I come from a dual major background, painting and graphic design”. She is a seasoned academic and is an active participant in a number of design-related bodies. She has also been “involved in the whole transition of education and digitisation of graphic design”.

Respondent 2’s “base discipline is fashion design... I've been in design education since 1988”. Over 30 years, she has moved from traditional, vocational teaching to a more interdisciplinary approach. During this period, she has promoted the possibilities of aligning South African design education with international benchmark standards.

Respondent 3 is a qualified interior architect, with a Masters in interior design. She serves as a board member of the African Institute of the Interior Design Professions (IID), chairing the education committee. With her experience in teaching and leadership, she has contributed to various national design strategy groups.

While Respondent 4 does not have a formal qualification in design, she has worked in this field, alongside “interior designers, interior decorators, interior architects and corporate members”. Respondent 4 has a comprehensive understanding of design education and, in the interview, she emphasised that design sub-divisions are evolving and that the curriculum needs to be updated to reflect this.

Respondents 5 and 6 are government officials, who contribute to their division’s strategic planning. They are interested in the historical context of design institutions and policies in South Africa. They have had engagements on the issue of the role that design can play in economic growth, and the possibility of establishing public-private partnerships to promote innovation in design.

Respondent 7 is a prominent leader in South Africa's design sector. He is the founder and leader of a design organisation which serves as both a "think tank and a do tank". Respondent 7 comments: "So we've always said, What's the point of harnessing ideas if you don't convert them? So we did not ever want to be a talk shop. So we were the progenitors of, like, something like 200 projects." He argues that his organisation "became the de facto National Design Council and the National Design platform" in South Africa. This experience has led him to become an advocate for establishment of public-private partnerships and leveraging existing systems to enhance the design sector's impact.

Respondent 8 is manager of a craft and design organisation. She has developed strategies to promote professionalism in this sector and highlights the need to integrate craft and design into the South African policy landscape. Respondent 8 offers valuable insight into the challenges facing this sub-division of the design sector, including the skills gap that needs to be addressed.

Respondent 9 was originally trained in mechanical engineering and thereafter worked in the private sector. He explains that he had "been in the private sector my whole life as a as a designer, really product designer, and got quite frustrated about 20 years later ... with the lack of design maturity ... or understanding the value of design." He is now based in academia and leads a unit which focusses on design thinking, and introducing the concept of design-led thinking to people from all walks of life. Respondent 9 provides an economic development viewpoint, underscoring the potential for integrating design into broader industrial strategies.

Respondent 10 has extensive experience across the private sector, civil society, and both national and local government. Presently, he is employed in a local government department focused on economic development. This role emphasizes the removal of constraints and the unlocking of opportunities to stimulate employment growth in high-performing sectors within the metro, including the CCI sector. The respondent recognises the potential of creative initiatives to enhance the city's reputation as a vibrant hub for tourism and business.

Respondent 11 is a registered professional architect with extensive experience in architectural design, urban design, and sustainable development. He engaged in interdisciplinary design education, merging industrial design, architecture, and interior design to foster cross-disciplinary collaboration. His insights highlight the intersection of creativity, functionality, and sustainability in modern design practices.

These respondents together showcase a comprehensive range of expertise from academia, industry leadership, government, and design education. They emphasise the need for strategic collaboration, structured policy, robust institutional frameworks, and continuous professional development to support and elevate South Africa's design sector.

Themes Identified by Respondents

Theme 1: Defining the Design Sector and Professions

The respondents provided diverse insights into the design sector, illustrating the complexity and interdisciplinary nature of design professions. While describing the design sector as in South Africa as vast and multifaceted, the respondents indicated that it is essential that the sector be defined not only for policy purposes, but also for professional recognition and support. Respondent 3 noted that many practitioners, particularly in informal sectors, do not have formal qualifications. This gap affects how these sub-sectors are valued within the broader industry,

impacting both professional legitimacy and access to resources. A unified definition and framework could help in developing support structures that reflect the sector's true scope and potential

Sectors and Occupations in the Design Sector

A broad range of professions were identified within the design sector, including graphic design, industrial design, interior design, fashion design, architectural design, multimedia, and user-oriented systems design. For example, Ms. Ilse Prinsloo stated that the following be included, "jewellery design, multimedia. And with that, I also include branding and then graphics ... because I refer to it as communication design" Respondent 2 provides more detail about design sectors:

> design falls in between art and design .... And then you have more the product design kind of area which is, which could include jewellery design, because it is an end product, but product design, we refer to as industrial design. So it is very much the design of any kind of product from any kind of material, then ... fashion and textiles [are] seen as its own. ... And then obviously the multimedia graphic design cohort animation, ..., and then design, also within interior and architecture. So more towards the built environment. So that is a major area within design.

Respondent 9 highlighted how the design sector extends into disciplines like product design, business processes, and even civic design:

> So for me, that the sort of the design economy stretches from your traditional design disciplines, be it architecture engineering to degree, graphic design, product design, all the way through to those that are designing new business processes for companies, there's all a creative all of those. The whole spectrum embraces some sort of creative capacity or some creative competency.

While respondents touched on the expanding scope of design, with newer areas like service design and gaming design being mentioned, Respondent 7 described the design sector as follows:

> and I asserted that every one of those [sustainable development goals] are a design problem. And it's a very, very important thing to assert, because what we are saying is design is not something handmade into consumption or to add lipstick to something or to make something look better. Design can be the fulcrum, the centrepiece upon which we really start to reimagine our circumstance, where we start to look at, okay, could we design to end poverty? Could we design for gender equality? Could we design for better life on land? Could we design for better infrastructure development?

Respondent 2 echoed this sentiment, stating: "Our design is about problem solving"

Alignment with SETAs

The alignment of design professions with Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) appeared fragmented. Respondent 8 remarked on the lack of effective engagement with SETAs, noting gaps in accredited training and skills development. Similarly, Respondent 2 observed that the Department of Higher Education's categorization complicates integration, with disciplines like architecture often siloed away from other design fields. The respondent states:

“So architecture falls in a different set of category for us. So although it is design, and there is a very strong element of design, it is seen in more in the built environment side”.

Challenges in Defining the Sector

A recurring theme was the difficulty in delineating the boundaries of the design sector. Respondent 8 pointed out that design is in everything which complicates the establishment of institutions:

I think that's been the conundrum, in a way, that is that has got in the way of the establishment of design institutions in South Africa is like where to draw, where to draw the line or the boundaries.

Respondent 11 echoed this sentiment, describing design as integral to all aspects of life, from product creation to urban planning:

> [Everything] we do is design, actually, if you think of life, you design your drive to work, or you redesign what you're going to be doing at home, your meal that you eat, or whatever. So it's such a broad thing, I believe, but it's that fills every part of everyone's life, every day and I don't think people realize it how important it is.

The respondents unanimously recognized the importance of a cohesive strategy to define and support the design sector in South Africa. They emphasized that such an effort must address the interdisciplinary nature of design, integrate with educational and training structures, and draw inspiration from successful international models. These steps are seen as vital for harnessing the economic and cultural potential of the sector.

Theme 2: State of the Design Economy

The design economy plays a crucial role in shaping innovative and sustainable development. In their interviews the respondents highlighted the sector's significant yet underutilized potential to drive economic development and innovation. Respondent 2 noted that “a focus on design is absolutely critical. And for us it's critical that that is pulled forward into everything, and that ... design’s value gets recognized.”

Strengths and Contributions of the Design Economy

Respondent 11 highlighted the role of design in sustainable development, noting examples of projects that repurpose existing structures to address environmental and social challenges.

Respondent 10 described how the design sector was benefitting the economy in Cape Town:

> So I would say definitely the game in industry is very strong in Cape Town. ... They've worked a bit on the gaming side of things. ... Obviously, the animation studios are linked to the film industry. We've got some amazing animation studios here. ... So there's a lot of great design happening in that space. Obviously, you know about the Craft and Design sector as well. ... some of the industries which we really excel in is, for instance, the boat building industry. Now that, and not a lot of people know that, but we [are] actually the largest exporter of catamarans in the world as a city. ... There's a bit of an aerospace cluster as well

Several respondents emphasized the intrinsic value of the design economy in encouraging innovation and addressing socio-economic challenges. Respondent 4 articulated this, noting, "Now, there's so many other industries that make use of designers just because of the way they think and their mindset is generally problem solving, so they are used within companies for not marketing, but strategy, critical thinking." Respondent 7 also highlighted the role of events like Design Indaba in showcasing the sector's vibrancy, calling it a platform to "conscientize people about creativity and design".

Challenges in the Design Economy

Respondent 7 observed that despite South Africa producing high-calibre designers, there is a lack of critical mass to drive large-scale industry growth. This issue is compounded by resource limitations and inadequate funding mechanisms, which impede consistent economic development:

> I think if I had to encapsulate it, it's a story of exceptionalism. So the one hand, we can talk to outriders who are doing world class stuff, but they're few and far between. It's spotty. If you talk about architects, I can probably name you five practices in a country of 60 odd million people. If you talk about jewellery designs, you want to name three, yeah, if you talk about graphic designers, I can name 10 ... Our biggest problem is that we haven't built critical mass.

A key challenge in our manufacturing and design sector was noted by Respondent 1:

> So, I think that the, the best example I can give, but that it's a terrible example. When has South Africa actually done the best in design and manufacturing ...? So, what enabled that?

A further challenge identified was how to anchor regional design strategies to a national strategy for coherence and alignment. Respondent 9 noted past initiatives by government that explored creative industries as economic drivers but lacked sustained impact:

> I think the provinces can create local, regional design strategies ... because I think each region is very different. Each region has different design capacity and capability and design assets [but], if you hook it off, is it at national level?

The interviews also noted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. While Respondent 1 commented that "I think it took a hit with COVID. I do know of a couple of people who closed down their business or scaled down", Ms Ilse Prinsloo discussed how the pandemic opened opportunities for global collaboration through remote work, allowing South African designers to engage in international projects.

The underfunding of this sector was also acknowledged as a challenge by respondents, with Respondent 9 stating that he thinks "South Africa does need one to educate business, governments, and public on what design really is and its value towards economic growth and economic value".

Opportunities for Growth and Development

Despite these challenges, the respondents were optimistic about the sector's potential. The design field is increasingly embracing opportunities for growth and development through

enhanced collaboration and engagement. As Respondent 4 noted, "I do see a lot more collaboration within our industry, or industry support environment and being willing to sit down and have conversations of how to work together. And I think that's a positive that I've seen, because when I started, I didn't see any of that, and now I do see a lot more engagement." This growing trend of collaboration paves the way for knowledge-sharing, innovative partnerships, and a stronger collective voice, positioning the industry to tackle emerging challenges and expand its influence in new ways.

Respondent 10 argues that the design sector will have the ability to "harness enormous diverse influences and come up with something that is quite unique for the world…specific designs that are uniquely South African."

Respondent 7 spoke about the transformative power of design. He highlighted the example of Apple, explaining, "Design is what drove the transformation of Apple from being a middling, underperforming company with a market share of less than 5%… [to become] a trillion-dollar company." He contends that by establishing a NDC, and structuring it so that it amplifies design's potential to transform businesses, it can unlock the *"X factor"* needed to elevate South Africa's design sector into a driver of economic and cultural innovation.

Several respondents suggested that a National Design Council could help strengthen the impact of the design section. Respondent 10 stated: "It's about trying to say, where's the world going over the next 20 to 30 years?… So I think that's what a kind of National Design Council should do too, not just concentrate on our current capabilities. But so how does that help us to leverage the future and push into those scenarios?"

Respondent 8 called for a stronger emphasis on cross-sectoral collaboration, suggesting that ""In the last decade or so, this idea of design unlocking sort of innovation, cross-sectorally… it's a complex area, because design is in everything." She also stressed: "What's valuable about [design thinking] is how you can use that and innovative thinking to rethink solutions and problems in other sectors."

The interviews revealed a complex yet promising state of the design economy in South Africa. While the sector faces significant challenges, it also holds immense potential as a driver of innovation and economic growth.

Theme 3: Institutional and Associational Coverage

"The existence of Think for me, will always stand out as an example of how important that [association] was, and how the absence of that is actually felt" Respondent 1

One of the strongest themes that emerged was the inadequacy of current institutional and associational support. While architecture and industrial design have established associations, other fields such as multimedia, fashion, and crafts face significant gaps in representation and support

Existing Institutions and Associations

There are practitioners in some design sectors that are legally required to be registered: "you have to be registered if you put a plan into municipality or do anything architectural, or work in architectural office, you have to be registered with the council" (Respondent 11). However,

respondents consistently stated that many of the institutions and associations representing other components of the design sector are fragmented and often lack comprehensive coverage.

It was noted that there was a South African National Design Institute, based on the British model, and that its closure left a void in coordinated support for designers across sub-sectors. Respondent 9 highlights this significant gap in South Africa's institutional landscape for design, emphasizing the absence of a central body, such as a Design Council, to support, coordinate, and advocate for the sector.

> There was Open Design, which is initiative we started with the City of Cape Town, which was a like a design conference every year. But there's no central body, not even national level or provincial level that we really align ourselves to

While associations have been established, most have closed for a variety of reasons. Respondent 1 comments that one graphic design association "which was a lovely organization, which did wonderful work ... but then folded, because, you know, ... there's always money issues".

This means that currently there is an absence of influential institutions or representative bodies that can advocate for the needs of designers

Challenges of Institutional Coverage

Respondent 9 referenced historical efforts like the Design Indaba and Open Design, which promoted design but cannot do the work of a permanent institution capable of driving sector strategy or policy. He stressed the need for a Design Council to promote the value of design, integrate design education into curricula, and foster cross-sector collaboration.

Respondent 8 points out that establishing cohesive design institutions is complex due to the broad scope of design, which spans various sub-sectors and disciplines. Respondent 10 echoed that concern, noting that establishing of associations

> needs to come from the industries themselves. So they need to kind of identify themselves, that they want to group into an ecosystem, and look at, you know, what can be done to support that. So I think there is always opportunities there, but, you know, it obviously takes a bit of work, and how you start to cluster those associations and ecosystems is, I think the real difficulty around that, because the guys are always so busy with their own stuff.

Recommendations for Improvement

"I would love to see another Think, another organization. So, I think there should be another body, that's like Think, that represents graphic design at least." Respondent 1

The interviews highlight both the existence and the limitations of current institutional and associational coverage in South Africa's design sector. Respondents called for the establishment of a National Design Council to unify efforts, strengthen institutional support, and advocate for the sector at large. This coordinated approach is seen as essential for unlocking the full economic and social value of design in South Africa.

Theme 4: Intellectual Property and Professional Support

A concern expressed by respondents was the inadequate protection of intellectual property for designers in South Africa. Many highlighted how this undermines both the creative and economic potential of the sector.

> We need to protect ourselves. I'm not sure where that debate is at the moment. ... but clearly it's an issue that we do need to get right in terms of if we're going to both protect our industry, attract international talent, share as well, and be able to kind of set ourselves up for the future (Respondent 10).

State of Intellectual Property Protection

“IP is such a difficult thing” stated Respondent 1, “because very little is so absolutely unique, I guess. Because people borrow and they trace from things, and then pick things up, and, and so on.” Respondent 1 goes on to explain:

> To have it adequately protected, you need lawyers, and that is as simple as, as that. And, without the lawyers, you're not adequately protected.

But many practitioners have difficulty in understanding the nature and concept of intellectual property (IP). Respondent 8 explained that many designers she has worked with do not know how to begin the process of protecting their work, and that there is a real gap in terms of accessible, affordable designer-friendly information about intellectual property:

> Often we're working in the area with people who are making products. So the argument [practitioners have] is you just got to keep innovating, and people are going to copy you. It costs a lot to go and register your IP. Just stay ahead of them and build your brand.

Intellectual property protection presents varying challenges across design disciplines. Respondent 2 commented that while industrial and graphic design benefit from clearer processes and institutional support, areas such as fashion and jewellery design have greater difficulties in securing these rights. Respondent 2 explained that Institutions like the University of Johannesburg can play a critical role in supporting intellectual property protection, particularly for concrete outputs, and can build entrepreneurship by helping young designers establish businesses and safeguard their innovations:

> In other disciplines, such as industrial design, particularly, they [can] come up with a product which can be copyrights, and then UJ steps in as well and helps there. And the reason for that is in any institution is the intellectual property the academic intellectual property remains the property of the university, but UJ is quite keen to also, obviously help young entrepreneurs, so they would also help set up a business.

A further example of the uneven levels of IP protection was provided by Respondent 9 who pointed to the publishing industry's mature IP structure, which provides strong protections like royalties, as a model to emulate. In contrast, Respondent 9 explained that many designers focus on quickly developing and selling their products rather than investing heavily in protecting their ideas because of the time and the prohibitive costs involved:

> [the publishing industry are] very mature in the IP space there. But when it comes to the design world, it's very, I think, very misunderstood, and even to the point where, yeah, I

> think IP is a bit of a funny thing now, because nowadays it's just speed to market, you know, ... so and the cost to protect IP just becomes enormous. I think generally people don't bother protecting IP as much as they should.

The respondents highlighted the lack of enforcement as a significant issue. Respondent 9 noted that many clients, including large retailers, often do not respect IP rights, leading to situations where designers' concepts are replicated without proper credit or compensation. Respondent 7 mentioned that many young creatives face exploitation and emphasized the need for better awareness and support systems around IP rights.

Support and Resources

This example provided by Respondent 4 summarised the need for practitioners in the design sector to be "informed, educated and protected":

> speaking for our industry, we do see a problem there. But I know in design, especially with, you know, the plagiarism from other countries that is huge, we see a huge problem with that. But even as a matter of fact, I had an example this week of a young designer who posted some of his projects on social media, and then somebody actually took that and shared it as their own. So yeah, I think we need to be informed, educated and protected.

Respondents also emphasized how emerging designers, and marginalized groups need to be protected. Respondent 2 highlighted this in her statement: "you start supporting the young designer as well, and the small business entrepreneur ... [and] that there is how you also grow the design economy."

Respondents consistently highlighted that while intellectual property is central to the design economy, South Africa's current systems fail to adequately protect designers. The consequences of weak IP protection extend beyond individual designers to the broader design economy. This gap not only jeopardizes individual livelihoods but also hinders the sector's growth and innovation.

Theme 5: Education and Professional Development

In the interviews, respondents highlighted the role of education in equipping designers with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in a rapidly evolving sector. Respondent 10 noted: "skills is a major issue for [high growth industries]. They need to know that [there are] skills pipelines in place."

Strengths of Design Education

Respondents consistently pointed out the strengths of design education in South Africa, particularly its capacity to produce skilled individuals in fields such as graphic design, fashion design, and multimedia. Respondent 2 reflected on the evolution of design education, noting her own transition from a vocational focus in fashion to a more interdisciplinary approach that integrates both theory and practice. She stated:

> So my own experience in design, having moved from a very vocational base to more of bringing the discipline of fashion more in line with the bigger design thinking around

> theory as well as practice. And slowly, I've kind of moved away from only fashion to much more interdisciplinary work.

Expanding on the idea of innovation in design education, Respondent 9 noted how institutions like the Hass Plattner d-school at UCT are encouraging new ways of thinking. He explained their approach:

> Look at design as a from a cognitive perspective, way of thinking, way of being, the way you show up to a problem, and that's kind of the space that we're operating in, is teaching the mindsets behind design, and that everybody has a has a role to play in creating something new, and we teach them how to work in this multi-disciplinary team.

Respondent 1 argued that the quality of design education in South Africa is generally good. She pointed out that private institutions, especially in fields such as graphic design and fashion, excel and help offset the challenges faced by public institutions. She highlighted the contributions of dedicated individuals within the sector. Additionally, she emphasized that South African design students are able to create competitive portfolios, with some achieving international recognition and acceptance into prestigious institutions.

> I think the privates are doing pretty good job ... I think that there's quite a lot of privates that have come up, especially graphic design, fashion, and so on. I think it's, it's, it's good, because, you know, the publics can't cope with that. I think there are a lot, passionate, dedicated individuals, to be honest. Portfolios seem to be quite competitive. Many of our students get jobs, also internationally.

In certain design sectors, curricula taught adheres strictly to required guidelines so that students can obtain accredited qualifications, recognised locally and internationally. This is particularly true in fields such as architecture. As Respondent 11 explains, "And so any students at a university that is accredited locally and mostly internationally, would have to follow guidelines for what you get taught at academic institution in architecture." These guidelines help maintain the quality and relevance of education, preparing graduates to meet professional and industry requirements effectively.

Together, these factors—interdisciplinary innovation, institutional excellence, and adherence to quality standards—highlight the robustness of South Africa's design education system and its capacity to prepare graduates for the demands of the professional landscape.

Challenges in Education in the Design Sector

The challenges facing education in the design sector are multifaceted, spanning issues of accreditation, alignment with industry needs, curriculum relevance, and funding. While Respondent 11 emphasized the importance of accredited learning programmes, Respondent 4 highlighted the problem of institutions which are not accredited, undermining the credibility of design qualifications: "And we do have a lot of those, because they will then say to the public, oh, you can come and do X amount of modules two minutes, you can receive a diploma." This creates an uneven playing field and raises concerns about the quality of education in the sector.

Respondent 4 also argues that design education should be incorporated into primary school education, saying:

> I think the problem is that we don't introduce it early enough. It should be introduced to primary school, ECD, primary school, high school, because of who we are, because we are who we are as a country, we our curriculum should be more entrepreneurial and practical.

The cost of accessing education institutions presents a barrier for many young designers in South Africa. Respondent 8 noted, “So there's a lot of private institutions, but apparently that are quite expensive. So there's, there's probably an issue around access, access to education, for design, education.” This financial disparity limits opportunities for students from underprivileged backgrounds, creating inequality in access to quality design education and the resources necessary to succeed in the field.

Another pressing issue is the difficulty of aligning education with industry needs, particularly in bridging the gap between academic curricula and the evolving demands of the design sector. Several respondents expressed concerns about mismatches between design education and industry needs, indicating that while more graduates are being produced in certain fields, other areas remain underdeveloped. This was described by Respondent 8: “there's a lot happening in fashion design. But ... how many fashion designers ... can our economy sustain? Do we need more industrial designers? ... So it feels, for me, like a big area of mismatch”

Respondent 9 raises further critical concerns, noting that “if I look at the design curriculum coming out of China and what they're doing in China and Singapore, I would say we way behind the curve.” He goes on to explain that “we still teach people how to become designers and not how to think like a designer.”:

> I think we're trying to teach people to be a designer, and I would make the assumption that ... we're not teaching critical thinking, we're not teaching creativity, communication, collaboration, which are like fundamental tenets of design

A further challenge in education in the design sector, is the need to be able to quickly adapt the curriculum to help prepare learners for the future world of work, particularly in terms of artificial intelligence and sustainability. Respondent 8 highlights this concern, questioning whether current systems are addressing these critical areas:

> So are we thinking about AI? Are we thinking about sustainability issues? You know, how are we preparing people for the future? Are they, are the gaps, sort of skills, gaps in in different industries and different sectors that we could be addressing so, so I think then, in a way, that the starting point for me would be, do we even know what's going on? And if you don't know what's going on, and you don't know what the needs are.

Finally, funding remains a perennial challenge for education institutions in the design sector. Respondent 8 highlighted the strain this places on organizations, noting:

> I think if the question is about, is there sufficient support for institutions, even an organization like ours, 90% of my work is about funding. Okay? And having to sort of adapt the work organization and the strategy depending on where the funding might be, instead of actually being able to say, this is this is the role of organization, this is what we want to do, and this is our five year plan to do it.

Recommendations for Strengthening Education and Professional Development

To address the challenges in aligning education with professional development and industry demands, respondents proposed several strategic solutions. The establishment of a "Capstone College." was an innovative suggestion by Respondent 7. This institution could help bridge the gap between academic education and the practical demands of the design sector, acting as a type of finishing school for design graduates. As Respondent 7 explained,

> The pivot is always going to be education. And we really, really need to do that. If I was an eccentric billionaire in South Africa, what I would do is that I would create that Capstone College. I would go to the either the Royal College of Art or Design Academy in Eindhoven, and say to them, can we do a sister school here.

Another recommendation centred on the need to include aspects of design thinking into the curricula of different disciplines. Respondent 9 emphasized that design education should not just aim to train professional designers but should encourage individuals to adopt a design mindset. He stated, "So we're not trying to teach professional designers here. We try to teach people to see the world through a design lens." Creativity and innovative thinking could be stimulated in learners in schools and higher education institutions if a design perspective was incorporated into the different subjects. In this way, learners could practice addressing complex real-world challenges in various fields.

Strategic investment in education was also highlighted as critical for strengthening the design sector. Respondent 10 pointed to the success of countries like South Korea, where investment in education has led to high skill levels and attracted global companies. Reflecting on this, he noted, "And I think really, what's made the difference in South Korea has been their education and has been their high skills level. That's helped to attract companies, particularly in the design space." Greater investment in South African education could similarly position the country as a hub for design talent.

Respondent 9 also emphasised the role of education as a driver of economic growth, highlighting the importance of producing graduates who meet the needs of industry. He explained, "Definitely education. I think you want to have good talent coming out of universities that companies can hire. I think it's the demand side from companies wanting and demanding good design. I mean, what drives the need for design is ultimately demand of economic growth as well." Aligning education with the demands of the economy could boost both the design sector and broader economic development.

Finally, respondents emphasized the importance of recognizing the value of design education. Respondent 4 argued that design education should be acknowledged as a critical and respected field of study. She stated, "I do think that we need to give it the acknowledgement, as other countries do, the value that it is and how important it is, and that when your kid is inclined to do something that is in design, doesn't mean they [are] less than or more stupid." Changing societal perceptions of design education could encourage young people to pursue careers in the field, and in so doing, strengthen the sector.

Theme 6: Envisioning a National Design Council

There was strong support among respondents for the establishment of a NDC in South Africa. Respondent 7 stated that a NDC "vital", because it could "be a space where we could compare

and contrast what is best practice around the world". He went on to indicate that a NDC could be a "kind of watchdog as well as agitator as well as promoter and advocate for the kind of design industry we want to see". Respondent 7 argued that too much in the design sector is "done by reflex and on the fly', and a NDC could help put "serious ... intellect behind us".

There was agreement among respondents about the need to establish a National Design Council which could act as a central, coordinating body for the sector. Respondent 9 expressed this in his interview:

> Well, I really do think we need a Design Council in this country which [can] start to build a bit of strategy on how to support [and] promote the value of design. ... [and] start talking about design as a way of creating change makers and as a driver of innovation.

Respondent 4 noted that "we need a collective voice that protects our industry and can promote what our industry does to inform the public." Respondent 1 supported this view, explaining that a NDC could serve as a platform not only for providing representation but also for driving effective policy-making. Reflecting on the critical role of policy, she remarked,

> But then I realized, well, that's where it all starts, is it not! And that's not on anyone's radar, as far as I know. It's about who are the policy writers, who writes these policies, and how does that feed into representative organizations! And, in the absence of representative organizations, what are we losing? What can't happen? And I can imagine one of those are things like policy development.

Approaches to Establishing a National Design Council

In his interview, Respondent 7 spoke about his vision for a streamlined, action-oriented, and partnership-driven NDC, with a strong focus on learning from successful international models, leveraging commissioning power, and promoting a business-oriented approach to design as a transformative tool for societal and economic challenges. He argued that the NDC should adopt a public-private partnership model, drawing on global best practices and embracing a business-oriented approach to establish its impact and sustainability. He emphasized that design should be treated as an industry, explaining, "It needs patronage, but to start to really assert of design being an industry unto itself. It needs to have the character of how you would look at mining and the Chamber of Mines."

Both Respondent 2 and Respondent 9 agree that a public-private partnership model would be the most effective structure for an NDC. Respondent 2 stated: "I think it can't be either private or government led. It needs to be a combination of the two" While Respondent 9 indicated: "I'm a great fan of public-private nowadays. ... I think the state needs to give it runway, but it needs a careful balance so that it doesn't get overtaken by either." Respondent 9 went on to stress that "I think it needs to be positioned very carefully. ... It's something which draws on expertise from all these different type of sectors."

Respondent 1, Respondent 2 and Respondent 9 all refer to the UK Design Council as an existing council that can provide guidelines for a South African Design Council. Respondent 2 said that the UK Design Council was a "strong body" that could be considered as "a very good example to use". also recommends the UK Design Council. Respondent 1 also mentions the:

> Australian Graphic Design Council. They, they had a nice code of ethics, which I think is really needed in our country. And a decolonial Code of Ethics that's tailored to our specific context, I think would be very important. They just seemed to have, ... moved a lot more into the practical teaching.

In her interview, Respondent 2 indicated that a NDC "needs to be representative and visionary of all design that happens both and in our country. Specifically, it has to look at the informal sector as well". This is echoed by Respondent 1 who argued that

> it will have to be representative. So, it will be interesting to see how one determines that. It would obviously, broadly have to look at the interests of the parties that it represents. I think it should possibly act as a nodal connection point between all the different stakeholders.

Respondent 9 stated that the NDC should be collaborative and integrated into the larger economic and innovation ecosystem, with a strong focus on advocacy and strategic leadership:

It needs to operate at a national level. I guess it needs to be positioned, whatever it's mandated. It needs to be physical, geographic location needs to be the one which makes the most sense. So I would say lot of the big corporates are up there. And the government departments, national government departments

Challenges and Concerns

The respondents shared a number of challenges and concerns about establishing a National Design Council (NDC) in South Africa, Respondent 4 explained that it was essential to take care in setting up the proposed NDC:

> So I think we open ourselves up to disputes so easily because of lack of structure, and instead of starting and going right, if you want to receive funding, these are the things that need to be in place for you to even have a seat at the table. Because then you know the accountability is there, and there's less risk of the challenges

Another critical concern expressed was the need to balance public and private sector influence. While a public-private partnership model was widely supported, Respondent 9 cautioned, "It needs a careful balance so that it doesn't get overtaken by either," and Respondent 7 added, that it should "not be unwieldy", where big corporations squeeze out the voices of smaller players.

A further concern discussed was the risk of fragmentation and infighting which have derailed institutions and associations in the past, as Respondent 1 noted, "there was these talks about this kind of thing, the need for it. I don't know if people just got tired of trying, or whether there was infighting."

Respondent 4 warned about that a Design Council regulated by government could risk prioritizing politics over the needs of the industry, cautioning that "because when you've seen something that is regulated by government, what I've seen by other bodies that are statutory... It becomes, sometimes more about the politics than about the industry."

Defining the council's scope and mandate is also essential. Respondent 11's remarks in his interview should be carefully considered. While he acknowledged that establishing a design institute would be "a nice idea," he emphasized the importance of understanding the legal distinction between a council and an institute. Respondent 11 explained that a council is typically a statutory body or public entity, created under an Act of Parliament, to regulate and protect public interests, giving an example, "One is the council, South African Council of Architectural Profession, and that registers. You have to be registered if you put a plan into a municipality or do anything architectural." By contrast, an institute is a voluntary organization focused on supporting its members. Respondent 11 highlighted potential challenges, noting, that the establishment of a council could tread "on a few toes of the institutes a bit, and take away perhaps some of the stuff that they could do."

Proposed Roles and Functions of an NDC

In terms of proposed roles and function of the NDC, the respondents highlighted its potential to advance the design sector while addressing systemic challenges. A central theme was the need for the NDC to act as a collaborative and representative body. Respondent 1 noted that the council should "act as a nodal connection point between all the different stakeholders in some way" ensuring it represents diverse interests across the design sector. Similarly, Respondent 2 stressed the importance of inclusivity, stating, "It needs to be representative and visionary of all design that happens both formally and informally in our country." Respondent 7 argued that the council could help shift public perception of design, moving beyond outdated stereotypes, adding, *"All too often we just think that design is somebody that can draw. That needs to be fixed."

Several respondents pointed out the potential of the NDC's to provide leadership and strategic direction. Respondent 7 described the need as urgent, stating, "South Africa is bereft of a National Design Council, which leaves a gap in coordination, advocacy, and representation for the sector". Other respondents highlighted the importance of advocacy and policy development as key functions of the NDC. Respondent 1 remarked, "Policy... that's where it all starts, is it not!" She emphasized the need for representative organizations to drive meaningful policy change. Respondent 9 echoed this sentiment, saying that the council should focus on "lobbying government... getting government to understand the value of design," which he described as a "huge, huge, huge need."

Promotion and education were also identified as critical functions of the NDC. Respondent 2 noted that a "Design Council as a strategy for South Africa is really important" because it can "drive in and support and infuse ... exposure to our young designers. Because if you start doing that, then, then you really start driving the design economy." Respondent 2 also explained that:

I think that a role of a Design Council very definitely is to really, not only support ... education [but also] to drive very specific research projects around things, because if you start doing that, then your education becomes more meaningful and more impactful.

The respondents shared actionable insights for establishing an effective and impactful NDC:

1. Inclusive Representation

"It will have to be representative. So, it will be interesting to see how one determines that. It would obviously, broadly have to look at the interests of the parties that it represents." – Respondent 1

"We need a collective voice that protects our industry and can promote what our industry does to inform the public." – Respondent 4

2. A Clear Mandate

“You know what might be of value ... , how do we collaborate and how do we work together? How do we feed into each other's industries, and have an understanding of that? So I think that multidisciplinary approach could add a lot of value.” – Respondent 4

“Package it, if it is to be a council, that it doesn't usurp any of the other stuff, and it's a leader in its own right.” – Respondent 11

3. Coordination and Advocacy

“So I do think it's about bringing together those that are already operating in the space, those that have a huge interest in seeing design and innovation being kind of fore fronted, and then kind of moulding that together with government leverage.” – Respondent 10

"Lobbying government is the big one, getting government to understand the value of design. Huge, huge, huge need." – Respondent 9

4. Capacity Building and Support for Designers

“I think it is [to] provide training, especially for in policies, in contracts, the business component is key, ... it's, how do I handle my finances, all our contacts? How do I implement them” – Respondent 4

“And we need to start to create that, that Knowledge Hub and that base that we start to do both online and physical.” – Respondent 7

“If what you wanted to build is the sort of professionalization of the professions, then you might want some statutory, regulatory aspect to it." – Respondent 8

“if we there was, like, a monthly newsletter or quarterly publication that will distribute this type of information, that would be really good.” – Respondent 1

5. Promotion of Design as a Strategic Resource

“National Design Council would have to play a big role in that space. Is about saying, what are the skills needed of design, you know, where's the trends going? Where's the technology going? Where's that happening, and do we have the right pipelines of skilled people to be able to support that, that level of design in these different industries going forward?" – Respondent 10

6. Strengthening International Linkages

“There needs to be a space where we could compare and contrast. We what is best practice around the world." – Respondent 7

General Observations and Suggestions

The strategic interviews revealed several overarching observations and valuable suggestions that extend beyond the specific themes already identified.

Several respondents highlighted the need to adapt to global trends and embrace technological advancements, explaining that the world is moving towards digital and systemic design solutions, and South Africa needs to ensure its designers are equipped to compete on this global stage.

One of the most critical points raised by respondents was the need for the NDC to have a clear and unique mandate. It was emphasised that the council should be structured in a way that avoids duplicating the functions of existing organisations, ensuring it acts as a complement to, rather than a replacement for, current bodies. Respondent 9 advocated for the NDC to serve as a coordinating body that enhances the work being done across the sector without replicating it.

Historical and cultural awareness also emerged as an essential aspect for the NDC’s mission. Respondent 1 and Respondent 8 pointed out that acknowledging and building upon South Africa’s rich design heritage would provide a strong foundation for the council's initiatives. Preserving and documenting this history would not only honour past contributions but also instil a sense of pride and continuity within the industry, offering a cultural anchor for future growth.

The respondents highlighted the importance of research and data collection to inform the council’s strategic planning. Respondent 9 noted that a research-driven approach would allow the NDC to accurately identify gaps in the design ecosystem, such as skill shortages and economic needs, thereby creating targeted and effective policies. The emphasis on data and analysis would ensure that initiatives are based on reliable information, fostering a more impactful and sustainable development framework.

Sustainability and long-term planning were also crucial considerations mentioned by respondents. Both Respondent 2 and Respondent 10 suggested that the council should focus on fostering sustainable practices that support long-term growth rather than short-term projects. This forward-thinking approach would align with environmental, social, and economic priorities, embedding sustainability as a core value of the NDCÆs mission.

Strong and strategic leadership was another key recommendation. Respondent 8 stressed that for the NDC to be effective, it must be led by individuals who understand the complexities and nuances of the design industry. Respondent 10 added that the council’s leadership should be proactive and passionate, with the ability to inspire confidence among stakeholders and advocate for the council’s vision and mission.

Transparency and accountability were emphasised by Respondent 4 as vital elements for building trust within the NDC. Ensuring that the council operates transparently would help maintain credibility and foster confidence among its members and stakeholders. Regular reporting and open channels of communication, as mentioned by Respondent 9, would further strengthen the council's accountability and ensure that it remains aligned with its objectives.

Inclusivity was also highlighted as a priority for the council's approach. Respondent 4 stressed the importance of involving voices from various design sub-sectors and marginalised communities in decision-making processes. This inclusive strategy would help ensure that the council reflects the diverse perspectives within the design sector. Respondent 8 reinforced this by advocating for participatory methods that engage a broad range of stakeholders in policy development and program initiatives.

Raising public awareness and advocating for the value of design were pointed out as essential actions for the NDC. Respondent 8 noted that the council should lead campaigns to educate both the public and policymakers about the role and significance of design. Respondent 1 agreed, emphasising that active advocacy could position the design sector as a critical contributor to the country's economic and social development.

Finally, Respondent 10 discussed the need for a flexible and adaptive structure within the NDC. They noted that an adaptable framework would allow the council to respond effectively to shifts and emerging trends within the design industry, ensuring that it remains relevant and capable of addressing future challenges.

These general observations and suggestions reflect a vision for an NDC that not only unifies and coordinates the design sector but also positions itself as a forward-thinking, inclusive, and sustainable body. The insights provided by the respondents offer a roadmap for a council that is rooted in clear leadership, transparency, and proactive engagement, serving as a catalyst for long-term growth and development within South Africa's design landscape.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of insights drawn from key respondents in the South African design sector, whose diverse roles and extensive experiences brought valuable perspectives to the potential establishment of a National Design Council (NDC).

The themes identified from these interviews highlighted areas that an NDC would need to address. Key themes included the necessity for institutional support and representation to unify the fragmented design sector and the importance of public-private partnerships to harness resources and sustain growth. Respondents highlighted the need for strategic policy development, promotion of design education, and skills development to prepare the industry for future challenges. The importance of recognising and supporting all design sub-sectors, adopting multidisciplinary approaches, promoting cultural and economic value, and supporting emerging talent were also prominent. These themes painted a picture of a sector that, while rich in potential, requires cohesive, structured support to thrive.

General observations highlighted the practical elements to be considered in the establishment of an NDC. Respondents stressed the importance of defining clear roles for the council to avoid duplicating the functions of existing organisations. The necessity of research and data collection was emphasised as a means to guide decision-making, identify gaps, and inform policy. Visionary leadership was identified as essential for driving its mission. Transparency, inclusivity, and a participatory approach were noted as important in building trust and maintaining the council's credibility. Respondents also noted the need for an adaptable structure that could respond to changes in the design landscape.

The interviews revealed support for the establishment of a National Design Council as a transformative entity for South Africa's design sector. While challenges such as funding and coordination were acknowledged, the respondents highlighted actionable steps to ensure its success. By promoting design as a strategic resource, supporting designers, and building global linkages, the NDC could enhance the sector's contribution to the economy and society.

Chapter 8: Select Options and Initial Recommendations

Introduction

The report strongly advocates the establishment of a National Design Council (NDC) to promote and coordinate design activities across South Africa to facilitate effective collaboration between government, industry, academia, and civil society.

Design and creativity are recognised as important drivers of economic growth and sustainable job creation. South Africa needs to promote a design culture and support systems in order to reverse deindustrialisation through the development of products and services suitable for local and regional needs and conditions. The impact of climate change adds to the urgency of designing local solutions for unique regional challenges.

Recommendation 1: Policy

While design is mentioned in various official documents, there is no specific policy supporting the sector. A comprehensive design policy is needed to provide a clear framework for integrating design into government initiatives, prioritisation and budgeting.

Policy formulation should include a comprehensive overhaul of IP laws to align with the specific needs of the design sector. The development of a design policy would start with a thorough review of existing policies which relate to design.

Sustainability should be embedded into the design policy, aligning it with social, environmental and economic goals to drive long-term growth and innovation.

Policy on its own simply sets up a framework. Implementation is what delivers results through a clear mandate that aligns with South Africa's economic and social priorities, such as job creation and innovation.

Recommendation 2: Establish a National Design Council

There is strong multi-sectoral support for implementation to be undertaken by a National Design Council (NDC). The objective of establishing the Council is to address the fragmentation of the design sector by offering centralized support, advocacy, and funding for all design sub-sectors.

Successful design councils in countries like China, Australia, Singapore, and the UK will provide valuable insights for establishing and operating a National Design Council in South Africa.

The research identified the need for inclusivity, with the council serving both traditional sectors such as architecture and industrial design, as well as emerging fields such as gaming and service design.

The need was also identified for strong public-private partnerships to support institutional development. Collaboration between government, industry, and academia is essential to build a strong institutional framework.

The following guiding principles emerged from the research:

- Design the NDC's framework to be responsive to trends and shifts in the design industry, maintaining relevance in a fast-evolving sector.
- Ensure the NDC serves diverse voices from various design sub-sectors and marginalized communities, reflecting a broad range of perspectives and interests.
- Use data and research to identify gaps in the design sector, ensuring initiatives are strategic and based on sectoral needs, such as skill shortages.
- Encourage cross-industry and sector joint projects between designers and other sectors, driving innovation through diverse approaches and problem-solving methods.
- Establish industry-led advisory panels to ensure that specific industry insights guide policy development and address sector-specific challenges.
- Organise training programmes and workshops to empower designers with the skills they need to thrive. The training should include courses which equip designers with knowledge about their rights to protect their work more effectively.
- Partner with international design organisations to facilitate knowledge exchange, networking opportunities, and access to global markets.

Recommendation 3: Financial and Infrastructural Support

Many designers struggle with underfunding and limited resources. Increased financial support through grants, subsidies, and tax incentives is needed to support design across all sectors. Access to shared regional workspaces and prototyping laboratories will further foster design innovation and entrepreneurship. These would include reproduction and rapid prototyping facilities, shared workspaces, design studios, and technology hubs.

Further support should be provided through research projects to identify gaps and opportunities and supporting design-led startups.

Recommendation 4: Promotion of Design

A multi-pronged approach is needed to create and nurture a culture of design.

Public awareness should be raised about the importance of design and its role in economic and social development.

South Africa's design heritage should be used to instil national pride and continuity, enriching the sector's cultural impact. A library and showcase of South African design milestones and innovations is needed to preserve and encourage local creativity.

Design thinking is a valuable problem-solving approach that can be applied across various disciplines. Raising awareness and providing training on design thinking can help integrate it into different sectors and promote innovation.

Collaboration between institutes teaching design, design houses and business is essential to drive innovation and competitiveness. This could be facilitated through networking events, mentorship programmes, and collaborative projects. Awareness could be built around a "designed in South Africa" brand to showcase the quality and uniqueness of South African design. This could help boost the local design industry and increase its global competitiveness.

A National Design Awards Programme would recognize and promote innovative designs across industries, strengthening the visibility and competitiveness of South African design on the global stage.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen Education and Professional Development

A more strategic approach to align education, professional development, and industry expectations is needed.

One of the prime outputs of the NDC will be to bridge the gaps between education and professional practice. The NDC would coordinate activities, advocate for curriculum reforms, promote internships, and provide platforms for continuous learning.

Design education in South Africa is heavily skewed towards graphic design. There is a need for broader design education across various disciplines. Integrating design thinking and design principles into the curriculum from an early stage can foster a design culture and equip future generations with essential skills.

This should include practical elements into school and tertiary curricula would expose learners to real-world projects and interdisciplinary teamwork.

Educators, industry leaders, and policymakers should be brought together to create a cohesive framework that supports designers from the classroom to the boardroom. Professional development programmes should focus on both technical and soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and leadership. Support should also be provided for emerging design fields, such as digital, UI/UX, and sustainability-focused innovation.

Professional development and education would be Organise Annual Design Conferences: Host conferences that cover all design disciplines, creating platforms for networking, knowledge exchange, and industry insights.

Recommendation 6: Intellectual Property Support and Protection

A need for affordable legal services was identified. The role of the NDC would be to advocate for IP policy changes and provide direct support to designers. A unified body could amplify the voice of designers and ensure their interests are represented in policymaking.

Pro bono or subsidized legal aid could make IP protection more accessible for emerging designers and startups.

Recommendation 7: Foster Partnerships

The NDC should be a model of how design thrives when there is multi-party collaboration. It should establish public-private partnerships, balancing government stability and resources with industry dynamism to provide sustainable support and funding.

Annual design conferences should cover all design disciplines, creating platforms for networking, knowledge exchange, and industry insights. The NDC should establish a central

repository of design-related projects and achievements to foster collaboration and showcase South African talent nationally and internationally.

It is important to note that these recommendations are based on the provided sources and may require further research and consultation with stakeholders for comprehensive implementation.

Recommendation 8: Pre-Feasibility Study of Envisaged National Design Council

As raised in the interview and focus group material and affirmed by the strong case overall to establish a National Design Council, it is recommended that the next action step be the institution of a Pre-Feasibility Study of the proposed National Design Council.

A pre-feasibility study would function as a preliminary assessment identifying useful and promising idea for an initiative and eschewing options that are costly, ineffective or unattractive. The main purpose of such an exercise would be to provide a more optimal use of time and funds by reducing the options that would have to be covered in feasibility analysis and business development exercises. The implementation of a feasibility study would evaluate the practical and viability aspects of the project in question, and ensure its overall feasibility in technical, legal and economic terms.

Recommendation 9: Design and Development History of the Design Institute of South Africa

The importance of an historical approach to the question of design institution development has been demonstrated in the literature review and policy sections. The paucity of design-related historical work and the need for design history curricula in the HE landscapes in South Africa has been emphasized in the South African literature review. Increasingly in international policy circles the importance of history and place (shaped over time) in policy construction. The case study material shows how history and tradition and the leveraging of a country's design institutional history are indispensable in developing new design organizations and ecosystems. In addition, the associated importance of locating and interpreting archival material provides a range of under-appreciated assets ranging from forgotten Intellectual Property through to the amassing of a more comprehensive and policy-relevant understanding of past design related activities and achievements.

All these considerations inform the recommendation that a History of the Design Institute of South Africa be undertaken. The approach should incorporate methodological principles from the Design History and Development History fields.

The related importance of locating and utilizing the archives of the Design Institute would be invaluable in providing a more informative and compelling historical analysis. In addition, and vitally, the institutional legacy and achievements will likely be incorporated into the new/proposed National Design Council.

Conclusion

The priority is to formulate a comprehensive design policy to provide a clear framework for the integration of design initiatives into government planning and budgeting. Establishing a National Design Council to provide support to the government, private sector and education institutions would be the next step.

The recommendations outlined deal with enabling and growing a design culture in South Africa. The include providing infrastructure and funding, promotion of design, focusing on education and professional development, securing intellectual property rights and fostering partnerships.

It is important to note that these recommendations are based on the provided sources and may require further research and consultation with stakeholders for successful implementation.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The research report has explored the case for the establishment of National Design Council in South Africa. This Council would help with the coordination and development of the design sector; mesh with new and innovative national and sub-national industrial and economic policy and practice; and help build design-rich and sustainable economy on local, continental and international levels.; and expand and enhance South Africa's international competitiveness.

The mooted National Design Council would foster and coordinate an extensive an extensive and reflexive engagement with the design sector at practitioner, industry, business, and policy levels and provide the means for inter-agency and inter-sectoral dialogue, partnerships and networks. It will also seek to help operationalize for government, business and the third sector, the triad of creativity, innovation and design discourses, as in best international practice.

The Council would advocate and promote a design-driven future for the country and reposition and strategize design to help addressing pressing socio-economic and sustainability challenges. Moreover, the Council would be central to the construction of a more cohesive, dynamic and design-centred economy and associated creative practice in all walks and places of life in the country.

A professional National Design Council is linked with the conceptualization and realization of National Design Policy and the promotion of such a policy. A well-conceived design council would be vital to all aspects of the development of the design economy and its ecosystem/s and the constituent design sectors.

This report is a commissioned report and exploratory in nature. Via an international literature and South African policy review, a compact quantitative study of the South African design sector, and strategic interviews and small focus discussions, it progressively considers the potential for embarking on formal pre-feasibility and feasibility processes regarding the nature and means of forming such a Council. This process would interact with the drafting of a new National Design Policy. Overall, the report should provide the basis for dynamic and influential body industrial, economic and social development in South Africa.

The formalization and institutionalization of the design economy and its sub-sectors in South Africa have been raised on a periodic basis in the post-1994 dispensation, and in instances policy exercises have been initiated. The prime movers have been the current Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture (DSAC), and the DTIC (Department of Trade, Industry & Competition). Indeed, and rather strangely, a national design promotion agency was in fact established in 1965, reporting to the then Minister of Trade and Industries. The rise and fall of this body is discussed and contextualized in Chapter 6. Interestingly, the design sector is one of the key sub-sectors of the Creative and Cultural Industry sector and has seen of late improved collaboration between the two Ministries as evinced in the 2022 Masterplan on Creative Industries in South Africa – one of several Masterplans that have been developed in line with DTIC's 2019 Reimagined Industrial Strategy (DTIC 2019).

Originally most national design councils had a strong industrial design core, and focussed on the enhancement of the design, production and promotion of manufactured goods with a view to strengthening national industrial competitiveness in international markets and encouraging domestic consumption of such goods. This has remained in core element national design

bodies of high performing countries during the second half of the 20th century and after, although the application of design within the economy and society has expanded and evolved. Nowadays, design councils are often multi-faceted with educative, collaboration, advocacy, research, policy development, and advisory aspects informing their structure and functioning. The key aims and objectives of the design councils and similar bodies include supporting business; improving public services; improving the spatial and lifestyle habitat of communities; promoting better design; recognizing design as a creative act and advance design theory and practice; and transferring know-how in the design sectors.

Design skills are in high demand across various industries and professions, from traditional creative fields to emerging tech sectors. Key design professions and specialisms include Graphic and Visual Communication Design; Industrial Design; Fashion Design; Interior Design; Service Design; User Interface and User Experience Design. Architecture and Landscape Architecture and Design, although having their own fields, can also be seen as part of the design economy. Over time as consumer demands and economic systems change so do specialisms with the design field. In practice, however, there are often overlaps and hybrids within the general categories of design.

In recent decades the economic and developmental aspect of design has garnered more attention in policy circles. Historically, design has been supported for its capacity to add value to products and services. This became more imperative with the growth of foreign markets for manufactured goods. And as this study indicates, the increased division of labour under contemporary capitalism has seen design assume new and complex roles. That said, the impact of design actors and agencies on the development trajectory and experience of a country's political economy is still underestimated.

The establishment of the Industrial Council for Design by Churchill's wartime government in 1944 was seen as a vital to the post-war economic reconstruction of Britain. And the UK Design Council (which underwent a few names changes since its inception) as this study underlines, became the touchstone internationally for initiatives to establish national design councils and national design promotion policies. As is shown in subsequent chapter there was a upswell of enthusiasm for national design promotion policies in developed and emerging economies during the 2000s and an accompanying growth in institution and capacity building in the design economies, and even a commodification and diversification of the thinking and praxis of design itself.

This report is divided into 9 linked chapters. The **Executive Summary** outlines key issues in regard to the nature and evolution of design and the design economy, and the raises the question of national design councils (and their equivalents) and with reference to the South Africa experience. Thereafter a chapter outline is provided.

The literature and theory review is presented in two connected chapters – the first chapter focussing on select international material, and the second chapter dealing with South African perspectives. The collective literature review is integral to the central arguments and structuring of the report. Besides the literature and theory review the report contains chapters on the policy and context on international and South African levels respectively.

Chapter one considered select studies of design issues and trends. The analysis points to the ongoing diversification of the fields of design and increased evidence of inter-disciplinary and

collaborative practice. The extensive digitalization of the field was noted as was the increased use of digital techniques and tools. The relationship between environmental sustainability and the application of design for social improvement and an enhanced quality of life was also examined.

The review also highlighted the expansion of the field of design thinking during the 2010s and after. This history of this trend and the diversification and institutionalization of design thinking in the business, public sector and societal fields were among the key issues noted. A certain scepticism about the discourse was also explored.

The relationship between industrialization and design in historical and contemporary settings, with a particular emphasis on the adding of value to products and services, and the shaping national promotion of exported products, is compactly analyzed. The view of some scholars that design has assumed greater prominence under late capitalism is taken into account, as is the related argument that design should consciously look to move beyond the principles and structures of capitalism, to combine design entrepreneurship with social empowerment.

The review has also examined the relationship between design, national competitiveness and the continued emphasis on design-centred industrial and economic policy. The question of national promotion is an associated theme. It is not surprising thus that design has become a strategic imperative for high performing economies and ambitious developing countries. The interplay between design policy and promotion, and innovation policies is also covered.

The question of the growing global concern with environmental sustainability and its impact on the design sectors is a further theme. Other emphases in the relevant scholarship include the invocation of inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches in design work. This is indicative of the complexity of contemporary design applications, and the appeal of a user-centred notion of design.

Design education and its centrality to the building and maintenance of a vibrant design economy. Design education is entwined with the current and emerging design fields and should traverse school to advanced graduate levels. Furthermore, the nurturing of cultural capital in the design sector is essential in responding to growing demands for capable practitioners in the relevant fields and value chains. A related area of interest is the management of design research to ensure that it forms a sympathetic relationship with design practice. Furthermore, there is a need to assess the spread of inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches and perspectives to provide due policy support and resourcing.

The question of managing the design economy is also considered, with the linked design and creative economies requiring robust institutions and associations and higher levels of organizational coordination. These are key considerations for later discussions regarding the nature and workings of national design councils and support institutions, which are certain of the challenges underlined in the policy chapters later in the report. The impact of Artificial Intelligence on the design economy and possible future outcomes is the final theme in this compact international literature review.

Chapter two examines select South African scholarly writings on the design sector with a view to understand the contextual issues and complexities regarding a mooted establishment of a national design council in the country. A particularly interesting study is an analysis of the relative lack of focus on the history of design in South Africa, and the absence of History of

Design courses and/or programmes as formal Higher Education qualifications. The seeming under-appreciation nationally of the history of design endeavours and policy in the country contrasts with deeper understanding of such matters in high performing economies. In addition, a study of the formative role of industrial design education in national design promotion provides particularly useful insights for contemporary design policy formulation. A further interesting area of study was the application of design science research and design thinking to a 'fit-for-purpose' approach to the acquisition and beneficiation of land tenure for all in South Africa (Hull & Whittal 2021)

Chapter 3 outlines the mixed-methods approach used in this study to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a NDC for South Africa. By combining quantitative data from the QLFS with qualitative insights from structured and semi-structured interviews, the research offers a comprehensive view of the current state and potential of the design sector. A systematic desktop review of academic and policy literature established the context for the study and identified key gaps, while thematic analysis of interview responses provided valuable insights into stakeholder experiences and perspectives.

The QLFS data facilitated a longitudinal trend analysis of employment patterns and demographic distributions within the design sector, enhancing the rich qualitative findings. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were upheld throughout the process. Despite challenges such as data limitations, this methodology lays a strong foundation for the study's findings and recommendations.

Chapter four reviews the relevant international and comparative policy implications of the report. The chapter is relatively detailed one. It comprises a general orienting discussion, which is followed by a series of select and regionally organized case studies of national councils, including best practice examples. The institutional makeup of such bodies and their relationship to national design strategies and policies and related networks is considered.

The first part of the chapter is centred on a historical discussion of the institutionalization of the mechanical or applied arts, and the emergence of the design field, and design's intersection with the intellectual and industrial revolutions that shaped modernity. The central role of industrial role in the development and expansion of manufacturing industry and industrialization more generally was examined. This was followed by a compact overview of design movements and the consolidation of the design fields and professions in the 20th century. Select new movements and trends in recent decades, such as the formation of IDEO and commercialization of design thinking, were underlined.

The circumstances and establishment of the Council of Industrial Design in the UK the first modern national design promotion organization, are considered in some detail. The first declared mission of the Council was 'to promote by all practicable means the improvement of design in the products of British industry' (Design Council 2024). COID was later renamed the Design Council. Its work and its role as an exemplar for national councils of design in many other countries is outlined.

This discussion is followed by a sets of case studies organized on a select regional and/or associational criteria. In the first place the experiences of certain countries linked to the British Commonwealth are examined, namely Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and India. All were influenced by example of the UK's Council of Industrial Design. This set of countries could also

have included South Africa, which established a national Design Institute in 1965. However, the South African case is discussed in the following chapter. The Commonwealth link and its residual social capital for the countries concerned is an interesting case and deserves further research attention from a design and development history perspective.

The second set of case studies deals with selected East and Southeastern Asian economies. These are Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, among the world leaders in design-rich manufacturing. Japan's use of local and international design influences to add further value to its established industrial base and its export-oriented manufacturing and associated quality is noted. South Korea has ensured that its CCI sector and the associated design economy are properly articulated. Singapore is known for its impressive economic growth since the 1960s and its rapid progression from a 'developing' to 'developed' economy and has used to design to refashion and internationalize the city state. And the emerging economies of Philippines; Malaysia and Indonesia have shown determination to blend design with national economic and industrial ambition. There are distinct similarities and differences in the institutionalization and promotion of design in these countries but in all instances, there is a determination to consolidate design education at all levels, to embed a design institutional support system, and to leverage design for manufacturing and industrial development.

The third set of select regional studies focusses on the expanded European Union. The EU as an extra-national regional grouping has a long-standing interest in the promotion of CCIs in the region but has perhaps focussed less directly on the design economy within and without national borders. Our review noted that some complacency existed on the part of the more established member states and the EU more generally, regarding the extent of the challenges faced, and the need to develop more systematic and focussed national design policies (e.g Whicher 2017).

Given that the selected economies span northern, southern and eastern European sub-regions there are differences in approach to national design promotion. Also, with the newer EU members in the case of the Eastern European countries, other dynamics are also in play. As one of the global design leaders, Germany's long industrial tradition coupled with its need to re-establish its export industries and improve the image of its products, which came in for criticism in the post-war period, provided the momentum for the relatively early establishment of a design body and institutional support system. France, by contrast has had design-related bodies but moved late regarding the establishment of a formal design body. It was only in 2021 the Council of National Design was established forming part of the country's national design strategy process, with a key objective 'to revitalize industrial production, strengthen the cultural aura of design and promote the emergence of new forms of design' (CND 2024). In addition, presently neither Spain nor Portugal has design councils although the former country is currently exploring a national design strategy. Italy too has a long-standing tradition of design founded on an old city state system and also has no national body.

There are thus differing national cultural histories which come into play as with the Scandinavian countries and the long-term experience of design in their manufacturing process. This is particular the case in Sweden and Denmark which are renowned for their brand of Scandinavian design, but Finland too has shown significant focus and enterprise in establishing its design credentials and the institutional underpinnings. And including Norway, all four countries have a national design coordinating body.

The case of Hungary is interesting as it is one of the examples of former state socialist countries leveraging design as a means of enhancing market-oriented economic and industrial development. Having established a national design council in 2021-2, Hungary was one of 11 EU states identified as having a formal design policy between 2011-2018 (BEDA 2011). An enabling factor is that has a distinct design tradition (DAT 2024), stretching back to the old Austro-Hungarian empire. This in turn illustrates the importance of identifying and invoking design history in the formulation of effective contemporary national design policy.

Chapter five provided an overview of relevant policy developments in South Africa regarding the cultural and creative economy, with reference to the design sector. In the post-1994 period the Department of Arts, Culture and Science looked to create an more inclusive and vibrant notion of the Arts, Culture and Heritage sectors and to development the cultural industries, which were later referred to as the CCIs (cultural and creative industries). And in the 2009 UNESCO Cultural Framework. which was adopted by South African government, the design and creative services was one of six specified domains of the CCI sector.

The White Paper on Arts and Culture (DACST 1996) was for many years the touchstone of national cultural policy. It was produced at time when the 1996 Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy was introduced. Part of the thinking of GEAR was to supplement spending by government department by utilization commercial opportunities and partnerships with the private sector. Thus the White Paper maintained that publicly funded institutions would need to be more commercially driven and structured along business lines through public private partnerships (PPPs). This emphasis on partnerships with the private sector fluctuated over the decades but in recent years it has been re-affirmed.

In the later 1990s and 2000s there was growing interest in South Africa in international best practice in leveraging the power of culture and the creative economy. The UK was prominent in such policy advocacy and its conceptualization and mapping of the creative industries in the 1990s and 2000s impacted on South Africa with a range of projects carried out by government and the British Council.

South Africa too developed momentum in looking to expand, map and promote the CCIs. There were a range of initiatives run by or in collaboration with DACST and later the restructured Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) during this time. These initiatives included the Cultural Industries Growth Strategy (CIGS) in 1997-98 years; sector specific interventions sometimes in tandem with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI); and in 2007-8 a pilot mapping study in conjunction with the British Council.

In these various productions there were usually mention of the design and visual arts; or design and creative services categorization, but there was a lack of detail and an emphasis more generally on the cultural policy more generally and/or the broader category of CCIs or variants thereof. There were efforts during 2000s and after to pursue more actively some form of national design strategy, but as we will discuss later, these efforts were not pursued tangentially and seemingly not during these years, within mainstream cultural policy.

The inception of the Mzanzi Golden Strategy (MGE) in 2011-12 was a significant event within national cultural policy and tied DAC directly to the fostering and promotion of the CCIs. The MGE sought to align the periodic revisions of national industrial policy. The MGE was also informed by the 2010 New Growth Path (NDP) and subsequently the National Development Plan

(NDP), an overarching strategy and manifesto, designed to unite all race, eliminate poverty and reduce inequality. The NDP remained the touchstone for subsequent DAC and cultural policy productions in subsequent years. The MGE provided rather little in the way of detail regarding the design sector. The early reworkings of the original White Paper on Arts and Culture in the 2013-4 years, also lacked specificity.

The Revised White Paper which was finally completed in 2018 and approved by Cabinet and then Parliament in 2019, glosses over efforts within DSAC to develop a national design strategy. The 2022 Masterplan on Creative Industries, a joint DTIC and DSAC initiative, was one of a range of masterplans aligned to the 2019 Reimagined Industrial Strategy. Although design and creative services are noted as one of the six CCI domains, there is no mention of the Design Institute or the question of national design strategy and promotion. These considerations, it would appear, were beyond the scope of the DTI's brief for the Masterplan in question.

During 2012 to 2024 there were efforts to recentre design within DSAC. A National Design Strategy (NDS) was developed during the 2012-14 period, but its status is unclear. The NDS report emphasized the interplay between innovation and design. In a sense this was something of a departure from the linkages between design, product enhancement and the manufacturing process. The NDS was followed by a draft Design Strategy Report in 2015. This was more delivery oriented than the NDS. Interestingly it emphasized the importance of designers within the DCI and sought to reinforce their contribution to economic and industrial development.

Following on the NDS and NDR exercises, DSAC commissioned a study to lay the foundations for a design strategy which in turn would inform a plan of action. A consultancy group was commissioned to draft an evidence-based report on value chain aspects within the textile, graphic, jewellery and ceramic industries that require state intervention and capable of accelerated growth. The relevant report was produced in 2019. Key factors regarding national design promotion in an international and comparative context, are identified. In 2023-4 a working group of academics, design practitioners and other stakeholders was tasked to deliver a position report on the question of national design promotion in the country. The group recommended that consultants be engaged to develop a draft national design strategy, and the project went out for tender in October 2024.

It is also noted that there was relatively little regarding formal policy design promotional activities by state bodies at sub-national levels except for the Western Cape which in 2014 produced a provincial Design Strategy.

The chapter also covers issues such as the regulatory framework for design sector; the question of national and international awards in stimulating local design enterprises. In addition, the question of using new forms of state-approved PPP (public private partnerships) for the institutional capacity building for the design sector is examined in some detail. And international examples of return on investment from the ventures in the design economy are provided. The chapter also examines issues regarding the institutional and associational landscape

A central consideration here is the Design Institute (DI) which was established in 1965 with the main aim of enabling 'the development of the manufacturing industry in South Africa through engineering and product design'. It was in fact the sole designated national design promotion agency in the country and maintained this mandate throughout its lifespan. Reporting to the

Minister of Trade and Industry its focus was on the integration and promotion of design within the manufacturing and broader industrial sectors of the country and helping improve the national competitiveness internationally for South African produced products. It was funded initially by the national Treasury and enjoyed international accreditation with relevant international bodies such as the International Council of Societies of Industrial Designers.

In 1972 it was incorporated as a unit of the South African Bureau of Standards, but still reported directly to the Minister of Trade and Industry. In 1993 an Amendment to the Standards Act of 29 left the DI with no legislative protection. In retrospect, by shifting the Institute to the SABS and was an ill-judged move. Although the SABS fell under the DTI, the Design Institute was under-funded and resourced and effectively marginalized in the major policy initiatives. It nevertheless continued with a variety of programmes to justify its existence. There were efforts in the early 2000s by agencies such as the National Advisory Council to reposition the Institute, in one instance to be located within the national Department of Science and Technology. The SABS while initially in favour of such a move, backtracked on the decision.

In the late 2010s and early 2020s, the fiscal and governance travails of the SABS impacted on the Design Institute and contributed to its demise. Significantly the 2022 Masterplan for Creative Industries – a joint production by DTIC and DSAC – made no reference to the organization in discussing agencies and efforts to boost the institutional framework and resourcing of the CCIs.

The chapter then considers issues and select options for the institutional and associational landscape of the design sector in terms of non-state agencies and actors.

Chapter six provides an analysis of the employment trends and racial composition within South Africa's design industry from 2008 to 2023, based on data from the Quarterly Labour Force Surveys. The findings highlight a gradual growth in the number of designers over time, reflecting increased demand for creative and digital design services. While the workforce fluctuated between 50,000 and 70,000 designers in the earlier years, numbers reached approximately 79,000 by the end of 2023, suggesting robust growth in the sector, particularly in digital and tech-driven design disciplines.

The analysis also explores the impact of external shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, on employment patterns, with significant declines in 2020. Seasonal fluctuations were observed, with higher designer counts in the fourth quarter, likely driven by end-of-year industry demand.

The research also seeks to see how the sector has transformed. The racial composition of designers indicates a trend towards greater inclusivity. African/Black designers have increased their representation from 40%-54% in recent years, while White designers' share has declined from around 40% in earlier periods to 31% by 2023. Coloured and Indian/Asian designers maintain smaller, stable proportions, with some growth observed at specific intervals.

The chapter emphasizes the importance of empowerment in the design industry, particularly for underrepresented groups, to enhance diversity, innovation, and economic inclusion. Skills development, mentorship, and targeted support are identified as critical for fostering a more equitable and representative creative economy in South Africa.

This analysis underscores the evolving dynamics of South Africa's design industry and its growing role within the broader creative economy.

Chapter seven presents the findings of a series of focus interviews with eleven respondents, including design academics, design practitioners, government officials and other industry leaders. In the interviews respondents considered themes such as the definition and scope of the design sector, the state of the design economy, current institutional and profession support, design education, intellectual property rights and the concept of a new NDC.

Respondents pointed out the fragmentation of the field, the need for policy convergence and the absence of structural support for the promotion of the design field and its various branches. The interviews revealed that there is a wide support for the formation of NDC as a central coordinating body. Some of the recommendations made by the respondents included the need for a NDC to promote strategic collaboration, encourage innovation and advocate the value of design across industries. They indicated that, for the NDC to be relevant and sustainable, it should be established as a public-private partnership model, should have strong leadership for the NDC, and should follow the principle of inclusivity. Respondents identified protection of intellectual property, skill gaps and funding as areas that need attention.

This chapter captures the sector's enormous potential to be a catalyst for economic and cultural development. The proposed NDC is pictured as a powerful instrument that can help to overcome structural barriers, improve the quality of design education and professional development, support young designers and place the South African design industry in the forefront of the regional and international markets.

Chapter eight provides a detailed set of recommendations to address the challenges and seize the opportunities available within the South African design industry. The most significant of these suggestions is the creation of a NDC, proposed as a central organisation which will facilitate, encourage and oversee national design across traditional and emerging sectors. A key recommendation is the formulation of a comprehensive national design policy that integrates sustainability while aligning with economic and social priorities. The chapter identifies financial and infrastructural support—such as grants, subsidies, and shared workspaces—as essential for encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship.

The chapter highlights the need to create awareness among the public on the importance of design in the economic and social development. It recommends that the branding products with a "Made in South Africa" logo and the promotion of a National Design Awards Programme. The education and professional development is also identified as an area that requires enhancement with suggestions such as inclusion of design concept in the curriculum, establishing partnerships with industry and accentuating the emerging areas such as digital design. In addition, recommendations are made about the need to deal with the gaps in the intellectual property support and protection, suggesting the provision of legal advice and the advocacy for the policy change.

Finally, the chapter also stresses on the need to promote collaboration between the government, industry and academic institutions to enhance the development of the sector. All these recommendations have been designed to recognize design as a powerful tool for economic growth, technological progress and national identity in South Africa.

Concluding Thoughts

This commissioned report has been an exploratory study of the case for the establishment (or in effect the re-establishment) of a National Design Council in South Africa. Given its

parameters and limitations the report has ranged widely. The literature and theory review chapters demonstrate the advantages of a relationship between national design promotion and the improved international competitiveness of the country in question. The international policy section through a significant variety of case studies and associated international trends has shown the how advanced and high achieving national economies are confronting the challenges regarding the provision of structured and sophisticated institutional interventions. The importance of developing design education and thinking at all levels is also underlined. Related to these interventions is the importance of ensuring that the strategic institutional interventions are accompanied by a thoughtfully constructed, effective and dynamic design ecosystem. Ensuring the design and the broader CCI sectors are duly and productively articulated is also a vital consideration. This means too that inter-governmental cooperation should be utilized and improved. It also highlights the importance of inter-agency collaboration and partnerships in accessing resources and linking design work with the economy and society of the country in question. Overall, with the expansion of the fields of contemporary design economies globally, the need for improved institutional structures and ecosystems are vital in the management, development and formal promotion of design work and outputs. A crucial factor is the need to ensure sustainable funding for such institutional interventions and the selection of appropriate models, with advanced Public Private Partnerships (with non-profit engagement and differing revenue streams) an option well worth consideration. Accompanying such interventions should be an informed engagement of the history of design, the traditions and earlier policy and institutional efforts.

In addition to the linked literature and policy reviews, there are empirically rich strategic interviews and small informal focus group inquiries, has demonstrated the conviction by practitioners, academics working in the design field, design entrepreneurs and design leaders, that there is a compelling case for the establishment of national design promotion body in South Africa. It has also underlined the kinds of challenges and issues related to the institutional and associational landscape of the design economy in South Africa.

The study has also provided a sophisticated quantitative analysis of the employment trends and racial composition within South Africa's design industry from 2008 to 2023, utilizing data from the Quarterly Labour Force Surveys. The findings highlight a gradual growth in the number of designers over time, reflecting increased demand for creative and digital design services. These analyses and developments reaffirm the importance of the establishment of a dynamic and reflexive national design body.

Rounding off the report are a series of policy recommendations based on the analyses above. A pre-feasibility study should precede a business plan for the mooted National Design Council. A separate and detailed history of the Design Institute of South Africa, which would access the Institute's valuable archives, is also highly recommended.

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Appendix 1: Questions for Strategic Interviews

1. Overview of the Research Project

2. Current Details & Experience

3. Questions

- What sectors / occupations do you consider form part of the design sector?
- What SETA is responsible / To which SETA do you belong?
- Are you aware of any Design councils, 1) in South Africa; 2) Africa; 3) Internationally?
- Which is the best example for South Africa to follow?

4. Design Professions

- What is Your Assessment of the State of the Design Economy in South Africa, and more specifically in your Region?
- What design profession/professions are you located within?
- Discuss encouraging developments in your discipline or sub-sector. [Elaborate.]
- What are the problems (if any) in your discipline or sub-sector?
- What general improvements do you think need to be carried out to promote and development your profession and/or sub-sector?
- In your opinion can be done to ameliorate the situation or should it be left to the market to decide?
- If there are options for intervention, what form should they take? What role do you think should government and local business play in this regard?

5. Associational and Institutional Aspects of the South African Design Economy and Community

- Do the design professions and sub-sectors have viable institutional or associational coverage and representation? Elaborate.
- Does your profession and/or design sub-sector have institutional support? Is this support effective or not? Elaborate.
- Is there sufficient protection of the intellectual property rights of artists in your sector, and generally?
- Is there scope for the development of more specific and/or active associations? What in your view should be done?
- Is this situation similar in other design disciplines and sub-sectors?
- What more could be done? By government, business and the design community? Elaborate.
- What kind of [sectoral] programmes would you suggest?

6. The Question of a National Design Council

- Would you be in favour of a National Design Council for South Africa that would help improve the coordination and promotion of design in the country?
- What functions cold such a design council undertake

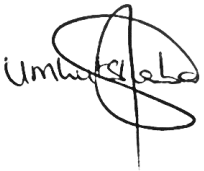
- What can be done to stimulate an endogenous design culture in South Africa
- Are there any overlapping functions or areas of duplication
- What form should such an association assume?
    - A private organisation
    - A state-funded entity?
    - A current State Owned Enterprise that is specifically delegated the task
    - A public-private partnership with a third sector/non-profit aspect?
    - Other form of structure?
- Would you join? What would contribute to such a structure?

7. Any Other Observations and Suggestions? What is the quality of design education in South Africa?

- What design awards are available for South African design professionals. Do these simply recognise achievement or do they stimulate design more generally?
- What are the factors that will influence the sector, and how will this affect any design council?

Appendix 2: Schedule of Interviews

Date	Province	Venue	Designation
2024-10-16	Gauteng	Zoom	Respondent 1
2024-10-17	Gauteng	On-site	Respondent 2
2024-10-17	Gauteng	On-site	Respondent 3
2024-10-17	Gauteng	On-site	Respondent 4
2024-10-18	Gauteng	On-site	Respondent 5
2024-10-18	Gauteng	On-site	Respondent 6
2024-10-23	Western Cape	On-site	Respondent 7
2024-10-23	Western Cape	On-site	Respondent 8
2024-10-24	Western Cape	On-site	Respondent 9
2024-10-29	Western Cape	Zoom	Respondent 10
2024-11-11	Kwa-Zulu Natal	Zoom	Respondent 11

APPROVALS FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN CULTURAL OBSERVATORY – Towards a National Design Council for South Africa **12 December 2024**				
	NAME	**TITLE**	**SIGNATURE**	**DATE**
Approved by:	Ms Unathi Lutshaba	SACO Executive Director		18 December 2024
Approved by:	Dr Mphikeleli Mnguni	DSAC, SACO Project Manager		
Approved by:	Dr Stella (CN) Khumalo	DSAC DDG: Arts, Culture Promotion and Development		