

COOP
DESIGN
RESEARCH

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M SC.
PROGRAM

DESIGN KNOWLEDGE(S)

REFLECTIONS ON DECOLONIZING DESIGN, LOOKING
AT THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS IN THE CONSTRUCTION
OF DESIGN KNOWLEDGE IN URUGUAY

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to understand the role of institutions in the formation of design knowledge in Uruguay. By approaching the Centre of Industrial Design's foundation from a decolonial **worldview**, this thesis explores the relation between Uruguay's current dominant design discourse and the notion of 'design for development'.

The study is an invitation to look further into how design has played a role in countries of the global south (such as Uruguay), related to economic and social structures rather than those of academic disciplines. Current global south design discourses stress the importance of broadening perspectives to address the complexity of design education problems from the stance that it is normal to approach content as a means of "customizing" studies through the implementation of localized curricula. This thesis presents a decolonial design stance as a means of understanding that institutional structures have the same importance as the content, attempting to answer the question.

Bringing a case study that is attached to personal experience required the use of a methodology that could benefit from it, therefore critical discourse analysis (CDA) was presented to me, as a researcher, as a way of positioning myself inside the problem addressed, taking a stance defined as a **worldview**. The **worldview** chosen for this research was **decoloniality**.

The conclusion I reached was in regard to the importance of re-**reading** history by means of critically addressing the different discursive formations design has worked on. This involved understanding the mixture of social and political structures that surround current dominant design discourse in Uruguay.

Analyzing the discourse in which this educational institution is embedded and being able to entangle the political intentions which had been pursued, allowed me to see how certain social and political power structures remain modern/colonial in nature, positioning Uruguayan culture(s) and people(s) in a dependent relationship with Europe.