ADAPTATIONS OF STRATEGIC DESIGN ASPECTS TO GENDER ISSUES PROVIDED FOR IN THE SDGS: A CASE STUDY ON A DISSERTATION FOCUSED ON PRODUCTIVE AUTONOMY

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Abstract: The book's chapter approaches a question from a master's dissertation, which is defined as "Was the adaptation of aspects of strategic design sufficient for it to be used in a gender question in the case's study?". This study refers to the dissertation "Strategic Design in Social Innovation for Social Business: Recommendations for the Organizational Planning of the Vila Torres Mothers' Club - Curitiba/PR", developed between 2022 and 2024 in co-creation with the Vila Torres Union Mothers' Club in Curitiba. The aim is to analyze whether the adaptations made to the Strategic Design were sufficient to achieve the Mothers' Club's Productive Autonomy, based on the criteria of UN Sustainable Development Goal 5 - Gender Equality. The methodology adopted is a case study, in which sections are presented to understand the adaptations made and the conclusions drawn from these applications, identifying if these paths were in line with what is recommended in the SDGs. As a result, it can be seen that despite addressing and directing a path that would make it possible to integrate the two concepts, it is still contradictory to relate the concepts without creating a hierarchical practice that masks the real need for gender equity. The complexities and contradictions that have arisen from observing the process of connecting the two terms are highlighted. The suggestion is an approach centered on valuing strategic decisions, creating a direct relationship between Strategic Design and Gender Issues, guided by the criteria of the SDGs.

Keywords: Gender Issues; Strategic Design; Sustainable Development Goals.

ADAPTAÇÕES DOS ASPECTOS DO DESIGN ESTRATÉGICO PARA QUESTÕES DE GÊNERO PREVISTAS NOS ODS: UM ESTUDO DE CASO SOBRE UMA DISSERTAÇÃO FOCADA NA AUTONOMIA PRODUTIVA

Resumo: O capítulo do livro aborda uma questão de uma dissertação de mestrado, definida como "A adaptação dos aspectos do design estratégico foi suficiente para ser utilizada em uma questão de gênero no estudo de caso?". Este estudo refere-se à dissertação "Design Estratégico em Inovação Social para Negócios Sociais: Recomendações para o Planejamento Organizacional do Clube das Mães Vila Torres - Curitiba/PR", desenvolvida entre 2022 e 2024 em cocriação com o Clube de Mães União Vila Torres em Curitiba. O objetivo é analisar se as adaptações feitas ao Design Estratégico foram suficientes para alcançar a Autonomia Produtiva do Clube das Mães, com base nos critérios do Objetivo de Desenvolvimento Sustentável 5 da ONU - Igualdade de Gênero. A metodologia adotada é um estudo de caso, no qual se apresentam seções para compreender as adaptações realizadas e as conclusões tiradas dessas aplicações, identificando se esses caminhos estavam alinhados com o que é recomendado nos ODS. Como resultado, pode-se observar que, apesar de abordar e direcionar um caminho que possibilitaria integrar os dois conceitos, ainda é contraditório relacionar os conceitos sem criar uma prática hierárquica que mascara a real necessidade de equidade de gênero. As complexidades e contradições que surgiram da observação do processo de conexão entre os dois termos são destacadas. A sugestão é uma abordagem centrada na valorização das decisões estratégicas, criando uma relação direta entre o Design Estratégico e as Questões de Gênero, guiada pelos critérios dos ODS.

Palavras-chave: Questões de Gênero; Design Estratégico; Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável.

ADAPTACIONES DE LOS ASPECTOS DEL DISEÑO ESTRATÉGICO A LAS CUESTIONES DE GÉNERO PREVISTAS EN LOS ODS: UN ESTUDIO DE CASO SOBRE UNA DISERTACIÓN CENTRADA EN LA AUTONOMÍA PRODUCTIVA

Resumen: El capítulo del libro aborda una cuestión de una disertación de maestría, definida como "¿Fue suficiente la adaptación de los aspectos del diseño estratégico para ser utilizada en una cuestión de género en el estudio de caso?". Este estudio se refiere a la disertación "Diseño Estratégico en Innovación Social para Negocios Sociales: Recomendaciones para la Planificación Organizacional del Club de Madres Vila Torres - Curitiba/PR", desarrollada entre

2022 y 2024 en cocreación con el Club de Madres Unión Vila Torres en Curitiba. El objetivo es analizar si las adaptaciones realizadas al Diseño Estratégico fueron suficientes para lograr la Autonomía Productiva del Club de Madres, basándose en los criterios del Objetivo de Desarrollo Sostenible 5 de la ONU - Igualdad de Género. La metodología adoptada es un estudio de caso, en el que se presentan secciones para comprender las adaptaciones realizadas y las conclusiones extraídas de estas aplicaciones, identificando si estos caminos estaban alineados con lo recomendado en los ODS. Como resultado, se puede ver que a pesar de abordar y dirigir un camino que posibilitaría integrar los dos conceptos, todavía es contradictorio cómo relacionar los conceptos sin crear una práctica jerárquica que enmascara la necesidad real de equidad de género. Se destacan las complejidades y contradicciones que surgieron al observar el proceso de conexión de los dos términos. La sugerencia es un enfoque centrado en valorar las decisiones estratégicas, creando una relación directa entre el Diseño Estratégico y las Cuestiones de Género, guiada por los criterios de los ODS.

Palabras clave: Cuestiones de Género; Diseño Estratégico; Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible.

1.   Introduction

In order to achieve this chapter's objective of analyzing whether the adaptations made to Strategic Design were sufficient to cover gender issues, based on the criteria of the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 5 - Gender Equality, it is necessary to present the definitions of Strategic Design, as well as a presentation of the gender issues set out in SDG 5.

As presented in the dissertation, and also following what is presented in the theoretical framework, "Strategic Design is a design activity whose object is the interface in which an organization presents itself to the market and to society" (Zurlo, 1999). This includes that "the aim is to design the interface capable of converging the point of view of all the actors involved" (Freire, 2021, p.9). In addition, to identify the need to analyze new perspectives, the authors themselves argue that "in contemporary times, complex thinking and value co-production

networks are the starting points for formulating organizational strategies, and therefore need to be defined in the light of other concepts that are not associated with the logic of competition and war" (Freire, 2021 apud Zurlo, 1999).

And, in order to connect the collective of the dissertation whose procedure is the object of study in this chapter, design strategies are involved in new perspectives on gender issues. In this case, it's talking about the issues set out in the Sustainable Development Goals (UN, 2021). In this sense, SDG 5, which deals with Gender Equality, is based on a central objective of "achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls" (Global Goals, 2024).

For the introduction, it is important to explain the dissertation selected as the case study. Carried out from 2022 to 2024, the master's dissertation entitled "Strategic Design in Social Innovation for Social Business: Recommendations for the Organizational Planning of the Vila Torres Mothers' Club - Curitiba/PR" addressed the insertion of Strategic Design in the project organization phase of the Club in question (Barbosa, 2024). This collective was selected through a social demand from the community itself, which ended up triggering an action-research project to create a guide with planning guidelines.

The name given to the organization is due to the strong presence of women in the Vila Torres neighborhood, who come together to make the improvements they feel are necessary. The club "aims to fight for community interests and develop charitable programs with residents" (Curitiba City Hall, 2019). As this is an organization with a greater number of women in both leadership positions and as participants, gender issues were relevant to the organizing process, and it was essential to observe and take these aspects into account when constructing the work.

In the development of the research, some key concepts were identified, including 'Strategic Design' (Bittencourt & Freire, 2020; Freire, 2021), which seemed relevant in view of the focus on organizational planning. In this text, the intent is to deepen the discussion on this concept, with gender issues in mind. The reason

for this discussion is due to the fact that this concept underwent adaptations throughout the process to make it suitable for the research objective, mainly because the theoretical framework was mostly corporate and did not reflect on the personal and inherent aspects of communities.

In summary, this chapter is due to the fact that this debate did not exist within the dissertation, so a limitation of the study was the failure to define specific criteria to assess whether the adaptations to the concept of Strategic Design were sufficient to deal with the gender issues observed. To create these criteria, One of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (2021) was used, which serve as a global metric for the actions that are taken on the proposed themes, and which was also cited as a benchmark for all the master's research carried out.) The following table shows the goals derived from SDG 5, which were also selected according to their relevance to the application in the dissertation:

Table 1 – Target to SDG 5 - Gender Equality

TARGET 5.1	End discrimination against woman and girls
TARGET 5.4	Value unpaid care and promote shared domestic responsibilities
TARGET 5.5	Ensure full participation in leadership and decision-making
TARGET 5.8	Promote empowerment of women through technology

Source: globalgoals.org (2024)

In explanation, the targets that are not present in the table above, such as 5.2, 5.3, 5.6, 5.7 and 5.9, are not related to the topic of the dissertation.

In addition to these targets in relation to SDG 5, the website Globalgoals.org (2024) also defines actions to be taken, such as expressing support for equal pay for equal work, because women earn 10 to 30 percent less than men for the same work. They also recommend that people be aware of gender stereotypes in order to recognize, avoid and educate others about them. It also suggests

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making sure that some role models or mentors are women. In addition, they address the topic of sharing the workload at home, as sharing domestic responsibilities ensures that the workload doesn't fall to just one person and instills in children the value of gender equality and essential life skills.

Therefore, in order for these goals to be well-established criteria for analysis and the creation of a debate on the subject, this book chapter is divided into stages to meet the proposed objective. It begins with a categorization of excerpts from the dissertation in order to identify the adaptations made. Next, a discussion is presented on the degrees of difficulty in relation to the adherence of these adaptations to serving as a connection between strategic design and gender issues. It culminates in a summary of the main adaptations identified in the master's research and how they connect with some of the SDG 5 targets, using a table. Finally, the complexities and contradictions that emerged when observing the process of connecting the two terms listed are highlighted.

2. Methodology

This article adopts a case study methodology (Santos, 2018), using the case of the dissertation done by the author in the UFPR Graduate Program in Design. Therefore, the study was selected in order to carry out a critical, qualitative analysis and provide a detailed review of how the dissertation defends the adjustments made to the concepts of strategic design so that gender issues could be included. Data analysis was carried out in a systematic and rigorous way (Marconi & Lakatos, 2017), involving categorizing the adaptations, interpreting the choices made to take gender issues into account and synthesizing the information obtained, identifying whether these paths were in line with what is recommended in SDG 5, in order to check whether the goals were reasonably addressed in the work.

3. Context

In the theoretical foundation of the master's project, some authors who are highlighted make the connection between Strategic Design and social issues, but who mostly go down the Codesign path due to practices that require the highlighting of social markers, and especially bringing the actors themselves into the dialog (Saggese; Marini; Lorenzo; Simões; Cancela, 2018). Such as Bittencourt and Freire (2020), who address Strategic Design focused on Community-Centered Design, both developing Management By Mandalas in a theoretical-methodological proposal for codesign processes. Also in the work of Ferretti (2015), with the theme "Strategic design and artisan communities: co-design for social transformation", being a dissertation focused on this. Also, the Strategic Design approach, but focused on Social Innovation practices, defended by Freire (2021), which was the closest definition found by the dissertation author in naming the subchapter on this subject, Strategic Design in Social Innovation (Barbosa, 2024). Without addressing a direct relationship between design strategies and gender issues.

However, even with authors who manage to create this relationship between the main concept and community issues, there is no evidence in the dissertation text that shows this design term involved with gender issues directly. There is only an insertion and mediation of Codesign with collaborative practices in the realization of tools already pre-selected (Barbosa, 2024). Above all, this generates theoretical contradictions in the practical approaches of the master's project.

In this subchapter, it is also possible to select some passages that mark the conflict between the need to analyze the daily lives of the women in the Club in order to define strategies, but at the same time a scope that takes account of this social sphere, as in the case of Strategic Design in the dissertation, it is stated that "using it together with the collective, so that the women appropriate these theories and adapt them to their daily lives, is what justifies this subchapter and

its rationale. Strategic design is used to bring new opportunities for entrepreneurship and long-term income generation to the CMUVT" (Barbosa, 2024, p.57). However, the daily life of the women in the Mothers' Club has more needs prioritized than entrepreneurship and generating income, so much so that throughout the dissertation itself the author states that the production of knowledge and mutual aid are priorities for the collective. Therefore, there is a divergence of meaning and paths to be taken, because while the strategy is proposed as something that the women can use in their daily lives, the theoretical background influences a use directed towards entrepreneurship.

In addition to the aforementioned excerpt, there is also the following "co-creation, within this concept of design, manages to relate in such a way as to unite the points of the research being carried out, both in the joining of theories and in the application of the method and participation of the collective" (Barbosa, 2024, p.58), which confirms the use of collaboration as a way of adapting practices. This is in line with the theoretical framework, which suggests "associating this practice with codesign, as it is a human-centered design process" (Freire, 2021).

However, during the process of writing the dissertation, some divergences in direction began to emerge when following the theoretical framework. This is because it becomes a path that leads to other design practices, starting from Strategic Design, in a sphere of Social Innovation, involved with Codesign, in order to reach a point of convergence where there are debates for reflection and understanding of gender issues. This can lead to confusion, as has already been said about strategies having a more corporate referential, codesign being a more community-based process, while Social Innovation tries to guide questions about gender inequality.

4. Development

When looking at the dissertation, it can be seen that there was a conflict in relation to the attempt to integrate the concepts identified as relevant and the tools, because the theorizing manages to show how much involving the community is relevant to the journey, see the practices that are addressed by inserting Design into the sphere of Social Innovation (Freire, 2021). However, the tools that are the most common and usual in strategic practice end up being superficial in relation to people's day-to-day questions, as they focus more on the strategic sphere of the environment in which they intend to interfere.

In this case, the tools AEIOU, SWOT Analysis, Canvas Business and Card Sorting (Barbosa, 2024) were selected for application in the dissertation, with the purpose of "identifying, mapping, categorizing and organizing the club's activities, actions and attitudes" (Barbosa, 2024, p 83). The tools are aimed at Strategic Design processes, but have been adapted because they do not include debates on gender issues. These adaptations were made from the moment of selection, first organizing the order in which it would make sense for the women of the Mothers' Club (Barbosa, 2024). Next, it started with questionnaires and collective interviews, precisely so that it could adjust which questions would be addressed when filling out the tools.

In the AEIOU tool, which analyzes Activity, Space, Interactions, Objects and Users, normally used by companies, it was adapted to include phrases from both the internal and external aspects of the Club, in order to observe in a more macro way the environment that the group reaches, both among the women and also the influences on their daily lives. As an example, which interactions, but in the social aspect, occur in the collective and also in the women's daily lives. In the SWOT analysis tool, the aspects of strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities were always directed towards problems more in personal life than in life within the organization, for example, a threat is the school vacations that affect the mothers' daily participation in the Club's activities (Barbosa, 2024). In other words, the first two tools

ended up having more adaptations in the debate than in the execution process.

However, the same can't be said for the Canvas Business tool, which was necessary because it had more aspects to analyze, such as the Club's infrastructure conditions, but other aspects were considered at a superficial level for discussion, because it is extremely business-oriented, such as revenue sources and customer segments. As for Card Sorting, so that it could have a collaborative and co-creation aspect, the open type was selected to be used with the women, due to the fact that they could be free to create their own ideas about the process. One of the main observations was that they chose to draw pictures because they didn't want to use terms and concepts to define the process (Barbosa, 2024).

Finally, the table below shows the adaptations made, in general, to the Strategic Design processes so that they could address gender issues. The goals of these adaptations are identified. The following table is provided for visualization:

In notion, the goals with numbers that are not shown in the table above, such as 5.2, 5.3, 5.6, 5.7 and 5.9, are not related to the topic of the dissertation.

An important aspect of the adaptation of Strategic Design in the work listed was the insertion of a central seminar, as shown in the table, at the end of each tool so that there could be a deepening and identification of gaps (Barbosa, 2024). The path chosen, which was then verified by the way in which the practice is conducted in the dissertation, involved codesign to serve as a beacon for adapting Strategic Design and making reflections on gender issues emerge in the proposed debates. In other words, no concepts were identified in the dissertation that create this direct relationship, and there is also a lack of tools that critically observe gender issues.

Table 2 – Identification of adaptations in line with SDG 5 targets

Adaptations made	Resultados gerados	Target
An initial central seminar was held, together with a questionnaire and interview to contextualize the women's daily lives.	The Club's productive autonomy is addressed, so during the seminars, there are debates and reflections on discrimination against women and girls. It shows how actions to promote autonomy can influence the reduction of discrimination.	5.1
Adapting design tools based on the pillars that were fundamental to their lives. Not only was the Club's day-to-day life addressed, but they were also encouraged to consider their personal, domestic, work, community and collective daily lives.	When creating an organizational plan for the Mothers' Club, the women also made connections with their domestic activities. Points such as work, overload, motherhood, marriage, among others, were brought up as aspects of debate, so that they suggested that the same planning they were doing throughout the tools could be applied in their daily lives to organize themselves.	5.4
The entire decision-making process for the order in which the tools would be applied, the work schedule, the participants and other relevant processes was co-created with the women of the Mothers' Club.	Full and effective participation in decision-making was achieved, and during the course of the dissertation their opinions on the project were always checked and validated. The whole process was therefore centered on the women of the Club.	5.5
The process of deciding and applying the tools, as well as being for leadership, also served to present facilitating technologies that can be used later by the collective.	As presented in the dissertation, the women were able to absorb the concepts of the tools and also have the freedom to adapt them. Therefore, it was evident that there was an intention and a result that the women had the autonomy to be able to reuse the tools later if they wanted to.	5.8

Source: Author (2024)

5. Conclusion

The investigation into the adaptation of aspects of strategic design for gender sensitivity in the context of the Vila Torres Mothers' Club revealed both significant advances and challenges. The adaptations made included the active and inclusive participation of women, the promotion of productive autonomy for organizational planning, and adjustments to the structure for egalitarian practices that are adaptable to the different scenarios and contexts that women face.

By looking at the authors and projects, it can be said that Strategic Design has crossed the boundaries of the corporate world and reached new ecosystems and purposes by relating to collaborative practices. It can see the practice of using Design Management in communities to interact in strategic processes, approaches that are made in order to understand and encourage Social Innovation, but as long as they are involved in the Codesign process. This is because there is still a conceptual gap as to how Strategic Design can directly reach this sphere, without needing other design terms.

As observed in the case study, the adaptations proved insufficient to completely eliminate unintentional hierarchies and fully address the need for gender equity. This is mainly due to an excess of other design terms that make it difficult to directly relate strategies to social issues, creating a nebulous path for researchers. This excess is still necessary in order to debate this issue, which creates contradictions and at the same time indirect relationships between the concepts selected by the scientists who choose to address this issue. Even if Strategic Design can be involved in co-creation with the community, as in the case of the selected study, it is still restricted to conceptual debates and tool adaptations. This is because these tools often don't converge with the social reality experienced by that group, they don't predict day-to-day life in a real way.

These adaptations, even if they are made in the most collaborative way possible, as in the case of this dissertation, still don't exclude

the fact that the principles, purposes and origins of these tools come from a totally different scenario. They don't cover the more subjective and critical sphere of community experience, and don't bring these questions to the surface for the actors involved. This highlights the need for more reflective conceptualizations of Strategic Design in relation to gender issues, as well as concerns about social markers. It is crucial to value the decisions emerging from the strategic process and ensure that they are aligned with the criteria of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this way, it is possible to create an environment where strategic design practices can reflect and respond to the needs and realities of communities, promoting meaningful and sustainable social change.

6.   Acknowledgments

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