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Legal Design and the Change of Narratives in Brazilian Law

Diseño legal y el cambio de narrativas en la legislación brasileña

Abstract. The 4.0 revolution brings significant changes to the normative world, considering that it makes enormous transformations in the *statu quo*. Consequently, the Law is impelled to accompany such changes, observing new post-modern phenomena, as well as co-creating new ways of thinking and providing access to justice. Thus, Legal Design emerges as an instrument of empowerment and a mechanism for social emancipation, in view of its impetus to create desirable futures for users of the legal system. The aim of this article is to present the nuances of Legal Design as an emancipatory mechanism, approaching the practical experience developed in the Legal Design Laboratory at University of São Paulo (USP), whose focus is on vulnerable populations. The adopted methodology was bibliographic review and exploratory based on case studies, in order to present and discuss the theme from a global south bias. The primary intent is to present the Legal Design as an instrument of social emancipation.

Keywords: Legal Design, emancipatory design, access to justice

Resumen. La revolución 4.0 trae cambios significativos al mundo normativo, considerando que hace enormes transformaciones en el *statu quo*. En consecuencia, el Derecho se ve impulsado a acompañar dichos cambios, observando nuevos fenómenos posmodernos, así como cocreando nuevas formas de pensar y brindando acceso a la justicia. De este modo, el Diseño Legal surge como un instrumento de empoderamiento y un mecanismo de emancipación social, en vista de su ímpetu para crear futuros deseables para los usuarios del sistema legal. El objetivo de este artículo es presentar los matices del Diseño Legal como mecanismo emancipatorio, acercándonos a la experiencia práctica desarrollada en el Laboratorio de Diseño Legal de la Universidad de São Paulo (USP), cuyo foco está en poblaciones vulnerables. La metodología adoptada fue la revisión bibliográfica y exploratoria basada en estudios de casos, con el fin de presentar y discutir el tema desde un sesgo del sur global. La intención principal es presentar el Diseño Legal como un instrumento de emancipación social.

Palabras clave: Diseño Legal, diseño emancipatorio, acceso a la justicia

1. The concept of design comes from the Latin *designare*, whose meaning is to mark, plan, imagine. Based on this assumption, we can state that design is an ingenious process that deals with the construction of services and products through an innovative and creative perspective.

Introduction

Legal Design has been increasing in popularity in Brazil. Although the reasons it has spread so quickly is still unknown, it is suggested that difficulties regarding the Brazilian law accessibility might be involved. Considering that, the opportunity to make it more user-friendly made Legal Design attractive for most jurists.

The reception of Legal Design in Brazil took place mostly in the corporate world, such as companies and legal techs that quickly embraced the methodology, investing on it to work in the legal field. Despite it, the purpose of this article is to describe the experience of Legal Design in the academic environment.

This paper seeks to bring Legal Design into the perspective of human rights and the rights guaranteed for vulnerable social groups. In this work, a brief overview of Legal Design and its trajectory in Brazil was performed. Also, some concepts of Design are introduced, mainly considering the Brazilian and the global South perspectives, as a way of a new approach to Legal Design.

Finally, the experience of the first university Laboratory of Legal Design in Brazil is explained. It aims to demonstrate the vastness of Design movements as a way of studying and experimentation. Furthermore, this article also pursues to create new narratives in law by giving voice to minority groups and exercising creativity in legal education.

Legal Design: A Variable Concept

In the beginning, Design[1] was limited to aesthetics, making up a material and tangible understanding of things. Over time, it began to be perceived beyond this reductionist vision, experiencing a creation of processes and products that deal with immaterial and intangible goods.

The idea that design only alludes to the beautiful is simplistic and excludes its true nature, considering that it is a problem-solving approach. For the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design (ICSID, 1969, as cited in Mozota, 2003):

> Design is a creative activity whose aim is to establish the multifaceted qualities of objects, processes, services, and their systems in complete life cycles. Therefore, design is the central factor in the innovative humanization of technologies and the crucial factor in cultural and economic exchange. (p. 3)

That said, as a result of postmodern phenomena a deduction emerges that makes an admirable syllogism: it is necessary to apply the principles and design insights to the legal world —we mean, experimenting with design as a disruptive mechanism on legal dilemmas in order to support solutions effectively. Also, design is a mentality, as well as a process, and a way of performing a certain task through the prism of its gears. Thus:

2. Revolution 4.0, also called the Fourth Industrial Revolution, concerns the dematerialization of reallity, that is, a more accentuated digitalization process of this reallity, dealing with the use of AI and robotics, among other disruptive technologies in everyday life.

Design seeks to discover and assess structural, organizational, functional, expressive, and economic relationships, with the task of: promoting global sustainability and environmental protection (ethical and global); to offer benefits and freedom to the entire human community (social ethics); support cultural diversity despite the globalization of the world; provide products, services, and systems in ways that are expressive (semiotic) and coherent (aesthetic) with their own complexity. (Mozota et al., 2011, p. 16)

Thereby, in line with the symptoms of the 4.0 Revolution[2], the legal system is prompted to follow the imminent changes and redirect its positivist projection through another bias. Thus, it comes up against an irremediable development in the face of post-modernity: it is necessary to innovate within the legal system, in order to accompany such significant changes. Ana Holtz and Zavaglia and Holtz (2021) said:

If the Material Law is adapting to these new demands arising from the use of automation, artificial intelligence, and big data analysis in the daily life of society, and if automation and data science techniques are helping us to optimize the production of goods and services and how to understand and solve our daily problems, it is certain that the use of the most advanced design techniques are also helping to find new ways of solving legal problems and placing the human being at the center of this entire movement. (p. 15)

In view of the coexistence between these two different worlds, Legal Design breaks out, giving rise to a new narrative about legal services and products. According to Margareth Hagan, in her open publication *Law By Design* (2021), Legal Design is "the application of human-centered design to the world of law, to make legal systems and services more human-centered, usable and satisfying" (https:lawbydesign.co/legal-design/).

Legal Design is, therefore, a methodology which understands that the center of judicial practice is neither the lawyers nor the system itself, but the people. Thus, the focus is on transforming legal practice by placing the user at the center of the process (Pereira & Monteiro, 2019, par. 39).

Hence, it is surprising how strongly this mindset has practical effects about legal issues, considering that it brings to light design principles for the resolution of constant vicissitudes in the forensic universe, as follows:

By creating empathy, prototyping, and conducting quick tests, it is possible to reach ideas that bring value to all stakeholders, and which could hardly be reached with only traditional working methods. The objective is greater transparency in information and services, which then become visually understandable and, above all, useful beyond the courts and in the daily lives of citizens. (Pereira & Monteiro, 2019, par. 45)

Accordingly, it is a mechanics of thought, whose purpose is to transform the legal system to be more navigable, inclusive, and user-centered. It concerns a change in the status quo, providing a paradigm shift in relation to the modus operandi in which the legal system is conditioned.

3. The etymology of the word *desire*, whose meaning is: to follow the stars attentively, to be fixed on your dream (Origem da Palavra, n.d.). Retrieved December 5, 2024, from https://origemdapalavra.com.br/palavras/desiderato/.

The objective of Legal Design is to promote a human-centered approach, foster innovation, whether through technology or creative exploration of the issue —implementing new services, products, documents, policies, and narratives— in order to implement a systemic change in the legal order, given that:

> Legal design therefore challenges professionals in the field to improve the way they relate to customers and deliver their services, with the aim of improving experience, understanding levels and, ultimately, empowering users. Although there is still a natural resistance on the part of more conservative professionals to greater transparency in legal services, for fear of greater vulnerability, exposure to criticism and possible difficulty in retaining clients, this is an inevitable trend. (Pereira & Monteiro, 2019, par. 44)

Thus, the Legal Design encompasses from cognition, observing the problem in question, that is, analyzing the legal proceedings, contracts, and other legal documents, to then define what are the appropriate tools, as well as investigating which are the best paths to be tracked until reaching the prototype and the tests necessary to safeguard its effectiveness (Zavaglia & Holtz, 2021).

Its nuances consist of remaking the positivist logic, refuting the plastered dogmatics and supporting the user's empowerment, as well as alleviating the use of legalese. That is, Legal Design is a tool to solve legal problems.

Therefore, Margareth Hagan (2021) says:

> Design offers methods and priorities to transform the legal sector, to make legal outcomes more aligned with those its users desire, and to create ambitious new visions for how legal services can be provided. A design approach to legal services puts people and their contexts as the focus, questions how their status quo could be improved, and then considers the potential of technology as an intervention. (https://lawbydesign.co/legal-design/)

Let's imagine that Legal Design is a universe composed of three elements of different natures. As we enter this world, we realize that Law is the most imperative raw material; design is the transforming substance of this raw material; technology is the tool for optimizing this process.

That said, Legal Design is a tripod that deals with the resolution of legal problems, through principles, and methodologies, whose purpose is to optimize the process, prioritizing the user experience. Legal Design is an intersection of areas, that is, it uses design principles and the technology tools of the legal universe.

In sum, Legal Design comes from a paucity resigned by Law, as a product of its time, in innovating and proposing creative solutions. It pertains to coming up with a new *desideratum*[3] in order to remodel the user experience ahead of the journey waged with the legal system.

4. Among his numerous works, two reference books are: Freire, P. (2011). *La educación como práctica de la libertad* and Freire, P. (2015). *Pedagogía del oprimido.*

Design as a Collaborative Process of Emancipation

Brazil is a country molded on a patriarchal colonial structure. The country has a high rate of inequality and several fundamental rights problems. The main issues that need to be solved include precisely access to justice and human rights' guarantee.

Design as a process of focusing on problem solving based on human needs introduces a possibility to give a voice to people who have their rights constantly violated. In fact, this is probably the greatest advantage that Design can bring to Law.

Design as a tool for reducing inequalities and solving social problems has already been designated as Design for Social Innovation. According to Manzini (2015), Design for Social Innovation is what a design expert can do to promote social change and sustainable development. In this process, designers, and design schools are seen as agents of change, mainly due to the contact with local communities and the support that designers can provide for new initiatives.

It is important to point out that Design for Social Innovation is a movement that seeks collaboration and listening from agents as transformers, without hierarchy between designers and users. At this point, Design for Social Innovation is very similar to the pedagogy guided by Paulo Freire[4]. Particularly, some theorists also designated it as Emancipatory Design.

Paulo Freire was a pedagogue born in the Northeast of Brazil, in the 1960s that developed an innovative methodology for teaching adults. His methodology became famous, precisely for its critical ability to read the world and transform it, and for its dialogic process of theory and action. The most important point of his pedagogy was to see the learner as the protagonist of his own transformation, similarly to Participatory and Emancipatory Design, in which there is a collective engagement for the learning process.

Considering that, to achieve social innovation it is necessary to have a dialogue where minorities address their particularities related to the object, being able to act autonomously. In this way, it is possible to redesign, dispute new spaces, and contribute in changing the reality that was previously denied to this group (Serpa et al., 2020). It is a process in which more voices can be brought in, and other narratives can be heard, especially in Law. As Serpa et al. (2020) says, "Design, through its interventionist artifacts, individual facilitators and collective empowerment, providing a concrete starting point for dialogue, stimulating reflection and enabling the construction of a tangible graphic narrative that can express collective constructed knowledge" (p. 173).

This form of intervention in society must be guided in two ways (Mazarotto, 2020): horizontal, where there are no hierarchies between designers and users; and empowering, following the line that subjects with critical conscience can continue the transformation of their realities.

The emancipatory process, as stated by Paulo Freire, must follow the change "with" people and not just "for" them. The aim is always to overcome society's oppressions and not reproduce them. The expansion of Design's vision, as something transformative, enables to create more liberating places (Mazarotto, 2020).

The same critical view that Paulo Freire guides in his methodology must also be considered in Design. Design, when viewed as a structuring force of reality, and as a political nature, places itself as an object for reflection about the perpetuation of power relations in society. Consequently, questions such as who serves the product, what qualifies a user or how is participation in Design have a crucial place in this process.

The politicization of Design has already been raised by Dunne and Raby (2001) when they stated that all Designs are ideological, based on values and on a specific worldview of reality. Both authors brought a reflection about how designers saw their own position and how associations saw their role with product relations.

As Paulo Freire understood, education must be done with the political dismemberment of our practices, just as it must be done in the entire design process. It is important to understand how our design concepts and choices impact or perpetuate oppressive relationships. Furthermore, it is important to remember who our design serves and for what purpose (Serpa & Mazarotto, 2021).

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In this perspective of critical reflection, the place where this Design is applied must also be considered. Brazil, as a Latin American country, has a colonial history that directly impacts the problems that need to be solved. Design emerged in a European industrial context, which was consolidated with technological development. Consequently, design adaptation to the context of an underdeveloped country occurs with difficulties (Abdala & Siqueira, 2019).

For this reason, scholars have proposed changing the traditional hegemonic bases of knowledge by creating decolonial thinking, which influenced and created the Decolonial Design movement. In this context, there is a redefinition of imagination's basic principles, such as valuing collaboration over competition, autonomy and self-management, democratization of the economy and technology, and valuing diversity (Abdala & Siqueira, 2019).

This movement links with the understanding that all sets of practices are supported by ideologies. Decolonial thinking walks in the search for a solution for more egalitarian worlds and for more sustainable civilization models.

Moreover, as stated by Escobar (2017), the notion of a Design for a Global South is quite practical and straightforward: each community must practice design for itself. This is how the community appropriates its own resources and can take action to change norms and traditions and provide the creation of new practices.

Allied to decolonial thinking, Escobar (2017) understands that communities must embrace their ancestry to create new futures. A pluriverse design is also advocated and does not present dualistic principles, such as the separation of humans and non-humans, person and community, and knowledge and being.

Since human beings are normally creative and are constantly developing solutions, building artifacts and dialoguing between different media and communities, they are naturally a designer. Design can serve as an interlocutory tool for collective decisions and social transformation and is starting from it that rescuing plural visions is possible (Abdala & Siqueira, 2019).

The Legal Design Lab from University of São Paulo

Linking the dialogue of Law with different Design's: Participatory Design, Design for Social Innovation, Emancipatory Design, Decolonial Design, Human-Centered Design and Design Thinking, the Legal Design Laboratory from University of São Paulo (USP) tries to structure itself and to create its own Legal Design movement.

Founded in 2020, as an extension of the USP, the Legal Design Lab arises from the need to discuss Legal Design in Brazil under the perspective of access to justice for minority groups.

From the beginning, its role was to use the tools that design provides, in terms of empathy and the needs of users, to give a voice to the groups that have their rights most violated. Thus, Legal Design was seen as a way to solve a problem that has been discussed for a long time by law students and jurists: the understanding of users and the improvement of communication between these agents.

In addition, it becomes a tool for a better understanding of the law applicability issues and access to justice in a broad, and not just a procedural manner. Hence, it is understood that the guarantee of rights is something that crosses several areas and social problems, not only related to jurists themselves. Since this is little addressed in law schools, the Lab proposes itself as an activity that seeks interdisciplinarity.

The Lab has become a way for law students to explore their creativity and carry out concrete practices that goes beyond the abstraction that law students are used to. In addition, as a university extension practice, the Lab is a place for experimenting methodologies, as well as techniques and inventions. It is a comfortable space for creation, without judgment.

Each laboratory cycle aims to solve a problem of a social and practical nature, seeking to reach vulnerable groups, using Design. For this, we seek to adopt the most diverse team possible, from the point of view of ethnic-racial, gender, class, and areas of knowledge.

The Legal Design Lab at the USP, in its initial cycles, tackled extremely socially relevant issues by applying innovative methodologies to solve

complex problems. Using Legal Design as the main tool, the Lab focused on creating accessible and functional user-centered solutions that could contribute to social inclusion and the improvement of public services. The topics addressed throughout the cycles involved domestic violence, access to public healthcare by the LGBTQ+ population, and the enforcement of legislation regarding the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous culture in public schools.

In the first cycle of the Lab, in 2020, the focus was on the issue of domestic violence, resulting in the creation of two distinct prototypes with complementary approaches. The Legal Design methodology allowed participants to develop solutions tailored to vulnerable groups, considering their specific needs and providing practical and innovative responses.

The first prototype was centered on a technological solution for adult women who are victims of domestic violence. The proposal consisted of creating a chatbot, a digital tool programmed to interact directly with victims, offering essential legal information in a clear, accessible, and rapid manner. Through this chatbot, victims could be informed about their legal rights, receive guidance on the steps to take in cases of violence, and be referred to protection and support services such as the Public Defender's Office and other support networks.

This solution arose from the realization that many women in situations of domestic violence do not have easy access to information about their rights and the services available to help them. Therefore, the chatbot sought to simplify the process of seeking help, promoting the autonomy of these women through a direct and practical information channel.

The second prototype took an educational approach and was aimed at tackling sexual violence against children and adolescents, especially underage girls. Data analysis, carried out by the Lab, revealed that most victims of sexual violence belonged to this age group, demonstrating the urgency of preventive and educational interventions. The proposal involved creating a continuous cycle of information and training between public defenders and community leaders, with the aim of strengthening the local protection network. These community leaders would be trained to identify signs of sexual abuse and guide victims and their families through the legal and social procedures to follow.

The ongoing training of community leaders was designed to turn the community, as a whole, into an active partner in combating sexual violence, facilitating the early recognition of abuse signs and enabling swift and effective actions. Including the community in this process reflects the perception that formal protection networks, although essential, often need the support of society to become more effective in preventing and combating violence.

Both prototypes were presented to specialized units of the Public Defender's Office and to innovation experts in the public sector, allowing students to receive crucial feedback for improving the proposals and validating their

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applicability in real-world contexts. These interactions also opened the possibility for the public authorities to implement the projects, if they were interested in further developing the solutions.

In the second cycle, in 2021, the scope of the topics was expanded, encompassing access to public healthcare by the LGBTQ+ population and the enforcement of legislation on the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous culture in public schools. In both cases, the teams used Legal Design to investigate the issues and propose innovative solutions that could be practically applied.

The first group, focused on LGBTQ+ health, investigated the difficulties faced by trans and cross-dresser individuals in accessing public health services. Discrimination, inadequate service, and a lack of information about the rights of this population were recurring problems. The proposed solution involved creating a specific section in the portals and applications of the Unified Health System (SUS), exclusively for trans and cross-dresser individuals (Figures 1 and 2). This section would serve as a direct channel to provide detailed information about the National LGBTQ+ Comprehensive Health Policy, connect users with specialized professionals and health services tailored to this population, and offer a step-by-step guide to accessing care through SUS, making the process clearer and answering questions.
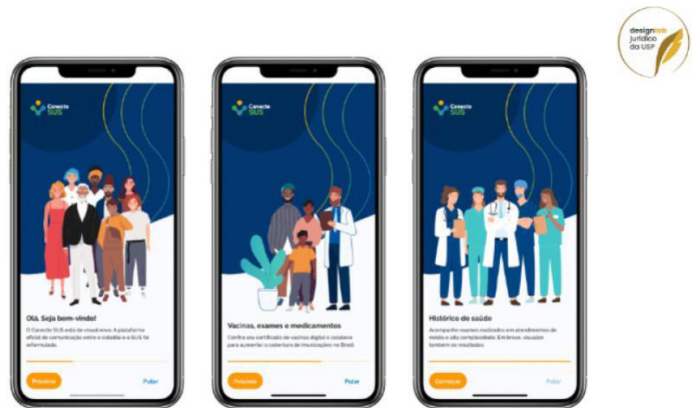
Figure 1

Prototype of the app with information about the LGBTQ+ population's rights to health in the SUS

Note: Developed by the authors.

Figure 2

Prototype of the website with information about the LGBTQ+ population's rights to health in the SUS

Note: Developed by the authors.

Moreover, the system would include a feedback mechanism and an interactive chat, allowing users to submit their feedback and promoting a more humanized approach to healthcare. This proposal aimed to ensure that the care provided to the trans population would be inclusive and specialized, while also creating a discrimination-free health environment. The central focus of this solution was on humanizing care, improving communication between users and the health system, and training professionals to address the specific needs of this population.

The work developed by the group that addressed the implementation of legislation on the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous culture in public schools revealed not only the challenges faced in the educational field but also the deep structural issues that permeate the Brazilian educational system.

During the research process, it was found that despite the existence of laws requiring the inclusion of these cultures in the school curriculum, their implementation remains extremely limited. Many teachers and schools lack the necessary resources or specific training to effectively teach these subjects, resulting in sporadic implementation that often depends on the personal interest of certain educators.

This finding highlighted the invisibility of racial and cultural issues in educational institutions, which still face barriers to integrating Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous history and culture into the daily classroom routine. Furthermore, the lack of appropriate teaching materials to address these topics in an inclusive and interdisciplinary manner also contributes to the difficulty in implementing the law.

Given this scenario, the Lab's group proposed a practical and accessible solution: the development of a playful teaching material that could be used by teachers in the classroom (Figure 3). This material was designed to be applied in an interdisciplinary way, allowing teachers from various disciplines to use it in their lessons regardless of their area of expertise. The proposal was to create a manual composed of stories, games, and facts about Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous cultures, presented in an accessible and engaging way for students.

Figure 3

Prototype of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous Educational Material for Public Schools

Note: Developed by the authors.

The uniqueness of this proposal lay in its inclusive and practical nature. The material was designed based on the real difficulties faced by teachers, which were identified through interviews and anonymous surveys. The creation of content that could be easily used by teachers sought to bring the topic closer to the school reality, while also empowering teachers by providing them with tools to address racial and cultural issues consistently and effectively. The material, in addition to being digital and accessible, aimed not only to comply with the law but also to value and promote the richness of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous cultures, fostering an interdisciplinary vision that could be applied to the teaching of various subjects.

Although the group faced challenges in finding teachers and students with in-depth knowledge of the topic, the interviews conducted revealed an interest in working on these issues. However, the lack of guidance and resources limited practical application. Thus, the creation of specific teaching materials designed to facilitate the teaching of these cultures was a crucial solution to assist teachers, democratizing access to content and promoting more inclusive and plural education.

This proposal was presented to public education specialists with the aim not only of receiving feedback but also of opening the possibility for the implementation of the material in schools. However, the group halted the process at the prototyping stage, as continuing the proposal would require more robust support from the public sector. Nevertheless, the work developed brought to light the structural issues within the educational system and paved the way for future initiatives aimed at including Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous cultures in the school curriculum.

The unique aspect of this material proposed by the group lies not only in its content but also in how it was conceived. Shaped by the experiences and challenges reported by the teachers themselves, it was designed to be accessible and easily applicable in daily school life, addressing the urgent need for teaching materials that facilitate the instruction of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous cultures in an interdisciplinary way.

Moreover, the material sought to overcome the traditional fragmented and isolated approach to these topics by integrating them fluidly into the teaching of other subjects such as history, geography, literature, and even science. This interdisciplinary approach allows students to gain a broader and deeper understanding of the contributions of these cultures to the formation of the country.

Another significant feature of the material is its digital and accessible format, developed with the aim of democratizing its use by any teacher, regardless of location or the resources available at the school. The proposal also valued an engaging and didactic language, with playful elements such as games and stories that capture students' attention, making it easier to understand and spark interest in the topic.

The creation of a tool that not only educates but also engages and empowers both teachers and students reflects a conscious effort to

overcome traditional barriers to teaching racial and cultural topics, promoting more inclusive education that aligns with the contemporary needs of Brazilian society.

Both in the first and second cycles, the Legal Design Lab faced significant challenges due to the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited in-person meetings and hindered direct interaction between participants and the target audiences. However, these limitations were overcome through the use of online co-creation platforms and interactive digital tools. These platforms allowed teams to work collaboratively in real-time, organizing ideas, visualizing workflows, and developing solutions in a structured manner.

Videoconferencing played an essential role in continuing discussions and collective brainstorming, enabling idea exchange and frequent meetings even remotely. Additionally, the use of shared documents and presentations facilitated the collaborative construction process, ensuring that all participants could actively contribute to the development of the proposed solutions.

These digital tools not only compensated for the lack of face-to-face interactions but also expanded the possibilities for collaboration, providing an innovative and productive work environment. The adaptation to the virtual context demonstrated the Lab's flexibility, allowing it to maintain its collaborative essence and commitment to creating innovative and inclusive solutions, even amid the challenges imposed by the pandemic.

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The cycles of the USP's Legal Design Lab were marked by innovation, collaboration, and a constant search for practical solutions to complex social issues. Legal Design proved to be a powerful tool not only for developing functional prototypes but also for promoting a shift in perspective on how the law can be applied more accessible and inclusively.

The success of the Legal Design Lab goes beyond the prototyping phase. More than just generating ideas, it provided practical and innovative training to its participants, enabling them to develop user-centered solutions by applying design as an instrument of social transformation. Although the proposals did not immediately advance to implementation, the potential for continuity is real, with great possibilities of being adopted by public institutions and specialized sectors.

Conclusion

We know that Legal Design is an essential art for Law 4.0, since it prescribes a new model of Justice, taking into account that its gears are inexcusable for the construction of a more human, intelligent, and productive positivist order.

This intersection between the areas of design, technology, and law, result in a relentless combination to reach the distant horizon that is justice. Through the Legal Design mindset, repetitive, i.e. non-human, tasks are automated; legal documents become understandable; new forms of dispute resolution

emerge, as well as new services and/or products are created in order to provide access to justice.

However, it is necessary to question which paths and tools are adequate to carry out this search for access to justice, from cognition to de facto jurisdiction. It is essential to observe the navigability of these users before the legal system.

Thus, Legal Design in Brazil urgently needs in-depth debates aimed at deepening social structures, the microphysics of power and the gears of a more critical design. The experiences of The Legal Design Lab from USP reinforces the Legal Design's capacity as a catalyst for change, demonstrating that with the proper support, its ideas can be transformed into concrete public policies, positively impacting the lives of thousands of people. The Lab not only contributed to the academic development of the students but also laid the foundation for innovative solutions within the Brazilian legal and social landscape, standing out as a transformative initiative with the potential for far-reaching impact.

But it's important to take in consideration that in order to achieve social emancipation, a more attentive approach to affections and politics is essential, considering the persevering circumstances that prevent the creation of empowerment narratives, and which are the circumscribed elements that preserve this *statu quo*.

For, if we question the origins, that is, if we ask the proper questions, we will be able, in this way, to build answers based on the ultimate yearning for emancipation.

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Conflict of interest
The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Declaration of authorship
Mariana Costa-Oliveira-Morais: conceptualization, investigation, methodology, project administration, supervision, writing – original draft, review & editing.
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