ESTRATÉGIA EM PROJETOS: UMA ANÁLISE NA PERSPECTIVA DOS ESTUDOS DE PROJETOS

STRATEGY IN PROJECTS: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PROJECT STUDIES

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Objetivo do estudo

O gerenciamento de projetos tradicional muitas vezes não consegue vincular a estratégia aos projetos de forma eficaz, causando insatisfação. Este trabalho visa definir abordagens estratégicas, abordando lacunas nas práticas atuais e delineando direções futuras em estudos de estratégia de projetos.

Relevância/originalidade

Este artigo é relevante ao oferecer uma visão abrangente das estratégias em projetos, definindo temas-chave como governança, engajamento de stakeholders, alinhamento estratégico e inovação. Amplia o framework de Geraldi e Söderlund (2018), contribuindo teoricamente e praticamente para o campo.

Metodologia/abordagem

O estudo compreende duas partes: primeiramente, uma análise bibliométrica mapeia temas de pesquisa em estratégias de projetos; segundo, os artigos são categorizados com base em Geraldi e Söderlund (2018), definindo níveis e tipos de pesquisa em Estratégia em Estudos de Projetos.

Principais resultados

A análise bibliométrica identificou governança, envolvimento das partes interessadas, alinhamento estratégico e inovação como temas principais. A categorização de Geraldi e Söderlund (2018) ressaltou diversas perspectivas, evolução de campo, lacunas e direções de pesquisas futuras na estratégia de projetos.

Contribuições teóricas/metodológicas

Expande a estrutura dos Estudos em Projetos, mapea o a pesquisa sobre estratégia de projetos de forma abrangente, liga a teoria à prática em gerenciamento de projetos, enfatizando temas como governança, envolvimento das partes interessadas, alinhamento estratégico e inovação.

Contribuições sociais/para a gestão

O artigo contribui para decisões estratégicas, práticas de gerenciamento de projetos e cultura de alinhamento estratégico, mapeando o cenário estratégico em estudos de projetos.

Palavras-chave: Gestão de Projetos, Estratégica em Projetos, Estudos em Projetos, Estratpegia em Projetos, Gestão Estratégica de Projetos

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Study purpose
Traditional project management often fails to link strategy to projects effectively, causing dissatisfaction. This work aims to define strategic approaches, addressing gaps in current practices and outlining future directions in project strategy studies.

Relevance / originality
This article is relevant by providing a comprehensive view of project strategies, defining key themes such as governance, stakeholder engagement, strategic alignment, and innovation. It expands on Geraldi and Söderlund's (2018) framework, contributing both theoretically and practically to the field.

Methodology / approach
The study comprises two parts: first, a bibliometric analysis maps research themes in project strategies; second, articles are categorized based on Geraldi and Söderlund (2018), defining levels and types of research in Strategy in Project Studies.

Main results
Bibliometric analysis identified governance, stakeholder engagement, strategic alignment, and innovation as key themes, revealing clusters: Project Strategies in Dynamic Contexts and Strategic Projects with Organizational Alignment Categorization per Geraldi and Söderlund (2018) underscored diverse perspectives, field evolution, gaps, and future research directions

Theoretical / methodological contributions
Our study expands Geraldi and Söderlund's (2018) framework, mapping project strategy research comprehensively. It links theory to practice in project management, emphasizing governance, stakeholder engagement, strategic alignment, and innovation. Identifying key gaps, it sets a research agenda for advancing project strategy.

Social / management contributions
The article contributes to strategic decisions, project management practices and strategic alignment culture, mapping the strategy landscape in project studies.

Keywords: Project management, Strategy Project Research, Strategy in Project Studies, Strategy in Projects, Strategic Project Management

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1. INTRODUCTION

The traditional focus on single projects within companies has limited the ability to address the complexities of modern project environments. There is a growing dissatisfaction with traditional project management practices, as they often fail to connect strategy to projects effectively (Morris & Geraldi, 2011). This gap highlights the need for a more strategic approach, integrating broader organizational strategies and treating projects as dynamic spaces for real strategic activity (Blomquist et al., 2010; Geraldi & Söderlund, 2016). The objective of this work is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape and future directions of strategy in project studies, as well as to define what constitutes strategy in projects.

Geraldi and Söderlund (2016) identifies various schools of thought and emphasizes the diversity of research perspectives and the field's evolution. They categorize project management into seven predominant schools: Optimization, Critical Success Factor, Contingency, Behavioral, Transaction Cost, Marketing, and Decision. These schools focus on different aspects such as planning techniques, success factors, organizational design, governance, project formation, and actor interactions, fostering new developments and opportunities for cross-fertilization (Geraldi & Söderlund, 2016, 2018).

Advancements in project research now encompass multi-projects, interorganizational aspects, and project-based organizations at various levels of analysis. This shift reflects a broader understanding of projects as part of a larger ecosystem, termed "Project Ecology" (Grabher, 2004). These studies explore sociological, economic, and participatory dimensions, examining the interplay between projects and their environments, pointing to new paths for interdisciplinary research (Söderlund, 2004).

Traditional project management practices are no longer suited to current challenges, calling for a more strategic approach (Morris & Geraldi, 2011). Scholars advocate for a continual rethinking of connecting strategy to projects (Blomquist et al., 2010; Geraldi & Söderlund, 2016). Despite established practices, significant improvements have not been observed, emphasizing the need for continual refinement in project management to advance strategic objectives (Young et al., 2012).

Strategic project management requires teams to be aware of business aspects and company strategy alongside traditional project objectives, highlighting the role of strategic thinking in successful project management (Patanakul & Shenhar, 2012). Projects are often seen as venues for applying organizational strategy, treated as stable entities rather than dynamic spaces for real strategic activity. They are viewed as vehicles for achieving strategic objectives and delivering value through products and services (Morris & Pinto, 2004; Shenhar, 2004; Morris & Jamieson, 2005; Young et al., 2012; Lundin et al., 2015; Shenhar & Dvir, 2007).

Thus, this study conducted a bibliographic coupling bibliometric analysis to map the current research landscape and identify key themes, aspects, and factors in project strategies. This analysis revealed themes such as governance, stakeholder engagement, strategic alignment, and innovation, leading to two clusters: Project Strategies in Dynamic Contexts and Strategic Projects and Organizational Alignment. Based on these findings, we propose a future research agenda that explores these themes further, addressing gaps in the current literature and providing clearer directions for future research in project strategy. Our contributions extend the framework proposed by Geraldi and Söderlund (2018), offering a comprehensive mapping of

the current research landscape and bridging the gap between theoretical concepts and practical applications in project management.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Geraldi and Söderlund (2018) propose an analytical framework that integrates various research approaches and perspectives, addressing the diverse and evolving nature of project studies. This framework, based on Habermas's Theory of Constitutive Knowledge-Interests, categorizes project studies into three types: Type 1 - technical interest; Type 2 – understanding interest; Type 3 – emancipatory interest. It promotes academic reflexivity and cross-fertilization among different research interests, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of project studies (Geraldi & Söderlund, 2016, 2018).

Type 1 is based on the positivistic research paradigm and focuses on instrumental and objective knowledge. Research in the project studies tries to add some contributions to existing topics in projects and looks for causal explanations. Generally, this type of study is presented in the literature as projects-as plans (Packendorf, 1995) or associated with the optimisation school (Söderlund, 2011).

Type 2 is associated with the interpretivism research paradigm, where the first aim is to understand the nature and dynamics of social systems. In that scope, projects are seen as intriguing phenomena or contexts to be understood and a means to contribute to theories in organisation and general management. The interest is in understanding the characteristics of projects and their contributions to creativity, learning and innovation.

Type 3 focuses on transformational change through reflection rooted in language and discourse analysis. Projects are considered contemporary phenomena able to transform organisations and society. Project studies of Type 3 are built on both Type 1 and Type 2 research since they are engaged in project practices and their contexts. Through deconstructing and problematising, they contribute to new paradigmatic ways and have an active role in the development of society and the impact of projects.

In conceiving the analytical framework, Geraldi and Söderlund (2018) also include levels of investigation in projects, spanning macro, meso, and micro studies. The idea behind multilevel theorization is to encompass the current diversity of the field. These levels do not function distinctly but rather as a continuum from the micro level, focusing on individuals, to the macro level, exploring projects in society.

Studies at the macro project level involve portfolio and program management, strategy, project society, corporate change, project ecologies, organizational development and innovation, capabilities, learning between projects, and learning scenarios. Mesoprojects explore studies at the project level, constituting a significant portion of the current theorization base. Microproject studies address individual-level concerns in projects, such as people in projects, groups and teams.

The framework identifies nine possible combinations between research levels (macro, meso, micro) and types (Type 1, Type 2, Type 3), providing a comprehensive tool for understanding and comparing past and current research (Geraldi & Söderlund, 2018). For example, at the macro level, Type 1 research aims to predict and improve project-based enterprises, while Type 3 research challenges and impacts our understanding of projects in organizations and society. This categorization helps identify trends and research focuses, facilitating debate and expanding discussions in the field. Table 1 explains the nine possible combinations between research levels and types in projects, illustrating the interconnections through the contributions resulting from each combination.

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Table 1. Levels and Types of Research in Project Studies: A Reference Framework.

Level/Type	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3
Level 3: society/organization	Predict and improve project-based enterprises/organizations with multiple projects. Contribution to project studies.	Understand the context and its relationship with projects, such as tensions and relationships between temporary and permanent organizations.	Challenge and impact our understanding of projects in organizations and society.
Level 2: project	Predict and improve project management processes. Contribution to project studies.	Understand temporary modes of organization and project behavior.	Challenge and impact our understanding of projects and temporary organizations.
Level 1: individual/team	Predict and improve individual and social behavior.	Understand individual and social behavior.	Challenge and impact our understanding of individual and social behavior.

Source: Geraldi &Söderlund (2018).

The framework proposed by Geraldi and Söderlund (2018) aids in understanding, comparing, and differentiating past and current research in project studies. By crossing research categories, levels, and types, it serves as a tool to inspire and drive potential research avenues. Building on this background, this study adopts a structured analytical approach to investigate the integration of strategy within Project Studies. The focus is on examining the various analytical levels and types of research to understand their impact on strategic project management. The following section details the method used to categorize and analyze the selected articles.

3. METHOD

We conducted a literature review to synthesize and critically evaluate the existing research on the topic. This method involves a structured approach to identifying, selecting and analyzing relevant studies to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge. Literature reviews are particularly effective in identifying patterns, gaps, and future research directions within a field (Tranfield, Denyer, & Smart, 2003). By using predefined criteria and a transparent process, this method minimizes biases and enhances the reliability and validity of the findings (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007).

In this case, the method involves two phases. The first phase comprises a coupling bibliometric analysis, and the second phase is dedicated to the article analysis and categorisation based on the framework of Geraldi and Söderlund (2018).

Bibliometric coupling is a measure of similarity based on the frequency with which two documents share at least one reference (Serra Guerrazzi, & Scaciotta, 2018). The higher the number of references shared by two documents, the greater the similarity between them (Vogel & Güttel, 2013). It is a good technique to detect tendencies and paths in a given field or topic, as well as for suggesting new research questions.

3.1 Data Collection Procedures

In the bibliometric study, data were collected from the Scopus database, focusing on three of the main journals in the field: International Journal of Project Management (IJPM), Project Management Journal (PMJ), and International Journal of Managing Projects In Business (IJMPB). The keyword or string used was "strateg*" in the Topic field of the database to select the articles. The asterisk (*) is a truncation character that allows for the inclusion of

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variations of words beginning with "strateg," such as "strategy" and "strategies". The inclusion criteria were "Business, management and accounting," with a time frame from 2018 to 2022.

This specific query identified 170 articles related to strategies, published between 2018 and 2022, specifically in the three project management journals mentioned, within the field of business management. Subsequently, after downloading the data file from the Scopus database in ".RIS" format, the data analysis and processing began.

For the bibliographic analysis, the software Bibexcel was used. For conducting the bibliometric pairing studies and the statistical analyses, namely the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), the methodological guidelines of Serra, Guerrazzi, and Scaciotta (2018) and Serra and Moutinho (2018) were followed. The process involved standardizing the references in the ".OUT" file (generated by Bibexcel). After standardizing and correcting the base file, it was possible to extract the ".MA2" file from Bibexcel. This procedure generated a cooccurrence matrix of 170x170, and a cut-off was established, excluding documents with a low number of links, resulting in a similarity matrix of 49x49 (with 11 links and 49 nodes), which was used as the input base in the SPSS program for the statistical analyses.

3.2 Analysis Procedure

Following the bibliometric results, the articles for each factor were identified and described based on their main theories and concepts, conclusions, theoretical contributions, practical implications, and suggested research agendas. Each article was individually examined to identify similarities and connections between the phenomena studied in the respective factors. Subsequently, the articles were collectively analyzed within their respective clusters. The factor and cluster analyses allowed for the identification of dynamics and trends in the field of strategic project studies.

After understanding the characteristics of the clusters and their factors, a detailed framing of each article was conducted based on the framework of Geraldi & Söderlund (2018). To gain a deeper understanding of the levels and types of project studies, the articles were plotted on the Strategic Project Studies Matrix. This matrix, composed of nine quadrants, enabled the mapping of studies in two axes by strategic depth (Project Strategy, Strategic Project Management, and Project Management) and organizational perspective (intra, inter, and extra-organizational). The detailed framing also helped identify research gaps that future studies can explore.

Consequently, by comparing the Factor Network and the Strategic Project Studies Matrix, similarities were detected between the structures, allowing for further connections between the studies on project strategy. These relations identified the main strategic challenges for each axis and how they are interconnected.

The quantitative and qualitative analyses performed provided a detailed understanding of the positioning of Strategic Project Studies. By identifying the main trends and challenges in each axis of the Strategic Project Studies Matrix, the research contributes to a better understanding of the theoretical aspects of project strategy in the field. Moreover, it highlights the importance of studies that address the practical challenges of implementing project strategy in real and complex contexts.Parte superior do formulárioParte inferior do formulário

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

To map the current research landscape on project studies, the results of the EFA are summarized in Figure 1. The factors obtained are interpreted through the description of the theories and concepts addressed in the analyzed articles. For this presentation, the common

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concerns and interests among the articles were investigated, as well as their general conclusions, to identify the similarities between the phenomena studied in the different factors.
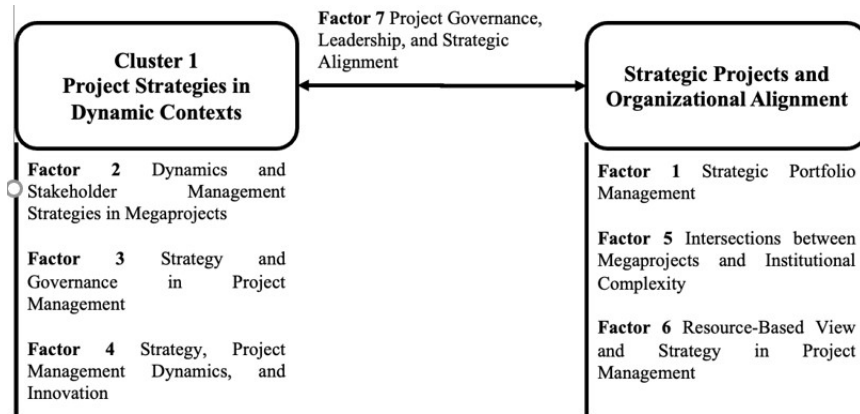
Figure 1. Actual research of Strategy in Projects.

The results of the EFA led us to identify two clusters. Cluster 1 (Project Strategies in Dynamic Contexts) includes factors 2, 3 and 4, which reveals a thematic convergence around the strategic integration of project management practices within the broader context of organizational and social objectives. Its key aspects are associated with governance and stakeholder engagement, innovation and multidisciplinary approaches, where comprehensive strategies include stakeholders, governance and innovation. It encompasses strategic innovation to manage projects with a broader social impact and integrate project management with governance and stakeholders' needs.

Cluster 2 (Strategic Projects and Organizational Aligment) comprises factors 1, 5 and 6, and it shows a thematic convergence around strategic execution in project management frameworks. The key aspects are related to the strategic alignment, resource-based view and the complexities of resource management, namely in the scope of large projects. In this cluster, an internal vision focused on the organization predominates, which deems the internal strategic execution, leverage of internal resources and aligning projects with organizational goals.

Together, the two clusters present a comprehensive perspective on strategic studies in project management. Cluster 1 expands the view of project strategies to include external factors such as social strategies and governance, while Cluster 2 focuses on internal strategic execution and resource optimization within an organization.

Factor 7 **(**Project Governance, Leadership, and Strategic Alignment) bridges the two clusters by examining the influence of project governance, leadership, and strategic alignment on project success. It highlights the fundamental role of project governance in aligning projects with organizational objectives and the impact of exploratory leadership, which can negatively moderate this relationship.

Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of key aspects, themes, and research questions within the realm of project strategy and organizational alignment. Each cluster encompasses multiple factors that delve into specific areas of interest, exploring both external and internal strategic considerations. The research indicates that the success of organizational strategies through projects relies on a cohesive approach that integrates external strategies with internal resource management. The subsequent sections will offer a detailed examination of both clusters and the respective factors, highlighting their significance and the insights they provide into the strategic dimensions of project management.

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Table 2. Summary of Key Aspects and Themes in Strategy in Project Clusters Actual and Future Research.

Cluster	Key Aspects	Themes	Research Questi
Cluster 1 **Project Strategies in Dynamic Contexts**	**Governance and Stakeholder Engagement**: Emphasizing the role of external stakeholders and governance structures. **Innovation**: Placing adaptive and forward-looking approaches at the forefront. **Multidisciplinary Approach**: Comprehensive strategy including stakeholder, governance, and innovation.	Managing projects as endeavors with broader social impacts. Integrating project management with governance structures and stakeholder needs. Emphasizing strategic thinking and innovation.	**Factor 2** 1. How do power dynamics among extern megaprojects? 2. What strategies are most effective in m engagement throughout the project lifecyc 3. How does the inclusion of local commu performance and social acceptance of meg 4. What role does social media play in ma infrastructure projects? **Factor 3** 1. How does project governance align pro goals? 2. What are the key factors that influence public sector projects? 3. How do stakeholder relationships affec 4. How can strategic planning for public s governmental objectives? **Factor 4** 1. How does the trend of projectification i 2. What is the role of innovation in achiev management? 3. How do longitudinal interdependencies of organizational strategy? How can organizations balance exploratio foster innovation and strategic alignment?
Cluster 2 **Strategic Projects and Organizational Alignment**	**Strategic Alignment**: Ensuring project portfolios align with organizational strategy and decision-making. **Resource-Based View (RBV)**: Focusing on	Internal strategic execution and resource optimization. Leveraging internal resources for competitive advantage.	**Factor 1** 1. How does Project Portfolio Manageme different sectors? 2. What impact do agile practices have on strategic portfolios? 3. How do visualizations aid in portfolio c organizational strategy? 4. What is the role of external partners in portfolios?

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	optimizing internal capabilities and resources. **Complexities of Resource Management**: Addressing the challenges of managing resources in large-scale projects.	Aligning projects with organizational objectives and strategic goals.	**Factor 5** 1. How do external actors influence the st... edge megaprojects? 2. What strategies can manage the institut... Partnerships (PPPs)? 3. How do institutional entrepreneurs res... megaprojects? 4. What are the implications of institution... megaprojects? **Factor 6** 1. How do project management assets inf... performance? 2. What is the relationship between projec... project outcomes? 3. How can organizations leverage their p... competitive advantage? 4. How does aligning project managemen... impact overall strategic success?
Integrated Perspective	**External and Internal Strategic Integration**: Combining dynamic contexts and social considerations with internal strategic alignment and resource management. **Synergy Between Clusters**: Effective project strategy requires leadership that integrates governance and stakeholder engagement with internal resources and strategies.	Holistic approach to project management. Linking external factors with internal execution for unified strategic success. Ensuring projects align with broader organizational and social objectives.	**Factor 7** 1. How does project governance ensure th... strategic objectives? 2. In what ways does exploratory leadersh... governance and project success? 3. What are the main challenges in implem... in interorganizational contexts? 4. How can collaboration between academ... governance and strategic alignment?

5. DISCUSSIONS

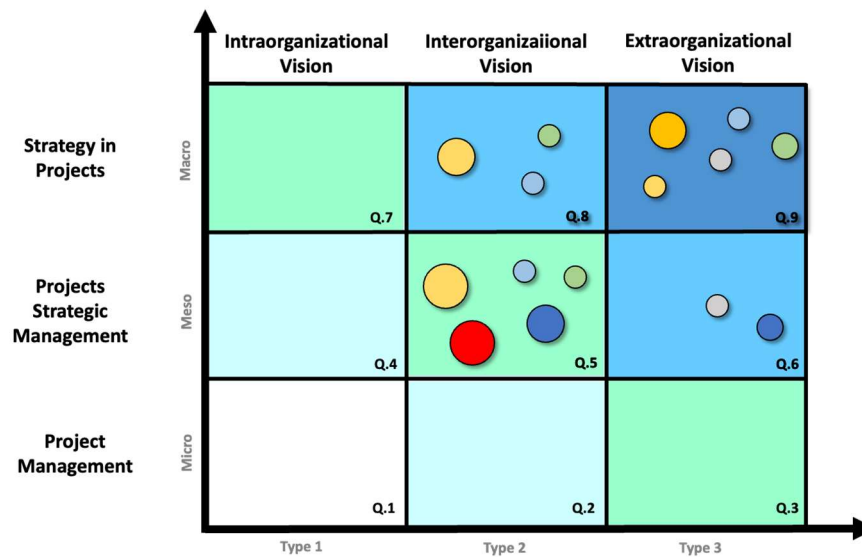## 5.1 Strategy in Project Studies

The first part of our findings was dedicated to what is studied on strategy in projects. We highlight the interplay between project management practices, governance, stakeholder engagement, and resource optimization through the integration of various factors. This second part of our findings aims categorizing and analyzing the identified themes within the structured theoretical framework of Geraldi and Söderlund (2018), by mapping the articles into the Strategic Project Studies Matrix and examining their distribution among different levels and types of research.

Initially, we categorized the forty-two articles within the reference framework of Geraldi and Söderlund (2018) to identify the types and levels of research they represent and understand their evolution and trends. Next, we plotted the articles in the Strategic Project Studies Matrix for quadrant analysis. Mapping the Project Strategy articles into the framework revealed their division between the Macro (45%) and Meso (55%) levels. We found a higher concentration in Type 2 studies (62%) and fewer in Type 3 studies (38%), with no representation at the Micro level (0%) or in Type 1 (0%). The identified factors were dispersed among the levels and types, except for Factors 5 and 6, which were classified as Meso level Type 2 studies and as Macro level Type 3 studies, respectively.

The gap in Level 1 and Type 1 articles results from the sample defined in the bibliometric search, which selected articles addressing the complexity of strategic studies. These micro-level, functionalist-type studies focus on the behaviors of individuals and teams. Therefore, they are deeply rooted in technical human interest, primarily focusing on operational processes rather than strategic issues.

5.2 Strategic Project Studies Matrix

We designed the Strategic Project Studies Matrix (Figure 2) based on the analytical framework of Geraldi and Söderlund (2018) to facilitate the visualization of articles and help understand the positioning of strategy in projects. The columns of the matrix represent the organizational perspective, considering the internal aspects of the organization, organizational interactions, and extra-organizational contexts. The rows of the matrix reflect the strategy applied to projects. The structure of the Matrix is divided into nine quadrants, characterizing the intersection between organizational and strategic perspectives in projects.

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Figure 2. Matrix of Strategic Studies in Projects – by Factors
Source: The authors.
Notes: Factor 1 (yellow), Factor 5 (orange), Factor 6 (red), Factor 2 (green), Factor 3 (light blue), Factor 4 (dark blue), and Factor 7 (gray). The circles indicate the factors by color, and the size of circles represents the number of articles per factor.

Quadrants 8 and 9 include studies of "Project Strategy", whose orientation encompasses interconnected elements and situations outside the organization (Interorganizational and Extraorganizational). "Strategic Project Management," represented in Quadrants Q5 and Q6, includes research that aims to manage project performance strategically. Quadrants Q1, Q2, and Q3 represent "Project Management" studies focused on developing and improving project management techniques and routines. Quadrants Q4 and Q7 encompass intraorganizational research involving the skills and competencies of project managers, team and group performance, learning, cooperation, organizational culture, planning, processes, and internal routines. However, notice that the bibliometric sample did not identify studies in these frameworks.

5.3 Strategy in Extra-organizational Projects (Q9)

This dimension investigates supra-organizational and social environments, considering the contexts involving projects. It analyzes the omnipresence of projects in society and their institutional and social implications, investigating approaches to transforming the status quo. The studies transcend the boundaries of organizational project execution, discussing the importance of aligning megaproject objectives with the expectations of society and the local community, highlighting the need for more ethical, sustainable, and socially responsible projects (Di Maddaloni & Davis, 2018).

Authors explore decision-making in public organizations, emphasizing how political factors and subjective criteria play a significant role. They highlight the importance of transparency in public governance and the challenges of assessing risks in public programs with multiple objectives (Maceta & Berssaneti, 2020).

Investigations discuss governance practices and power strategies in managing external stakeholders in megaprojects (Ninan et al., 2019b). They emphasize the need for a more comprehensive approach since project governance theories transcend financial approaches and include human aspects especially in megaproject environments (Derakhshan et al., 2019).

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Authors explore the concept of project networks, where multiple organizations collaborate to achieve their strategic aspirations through a complex project, analyzing how these interorganizational projects affect strategic alignment (Laurila & Ahola, 2021; Haniff & Galloway, 2022). They address institutional complexity as a dynamic reality that evolves over time, influenced by the specific project context. How the presence of multiple institutional logics creates significant challenges is emphasized (Mahalingam, 2022; Matinheikki et al., 2021). Projects are pointed as a flexible way to handle these institutional complexities, clarifying how different institutional logics can coexist and influence organizational behavior (Winch & Maytorena-Sanchez, 2020).

Finally, literature provides a comprehensive view of the evolution of the Project Management discipline, highlighting its ongoing importance, identifying challenges and opportunities, and rethinking the current state of the discipline. Researchers are encouraged to explore progressive theoretical approaches and new perspectives and methodologies (Hansen & Svejvig, 2022).

5.4 Strategy in Interorganizational Projects (Q8)

This quadrant perceives organizational strategy through a macrosocial lens, understanding the dynamics of contexts and their relation to projects, such as tensions and relationships between temporary and permanent organizations, corporate change, and project ecologies.

Studies in this quadrant address issues showing how the external context, especially external partners, actively shape a company's project portfolio. They challenge the idea that project portfolios (or megaprojects) are directly tied to external stakeholders and demonstrate the influence of an external partner on the strategic direction of the portfolio (Vedel & Geraldi, 2020; Ninan et al., 2019a). To this end, they examine project governance, highlighting the need to consider interorganizational relationships and external stakeholders (Martinsuo & Ahola, 2022).

The social impacts and political implications of megaprojects and the influence of social media are discussed with the aim of understanding how social media impacts and influences the decision-making process (Lobo & Abid, 2020). The need to adopt a situational understanding of portfolio success considering the specific expectations of stakeholders and the individual strategies of organizations are assessed (Martinsuo & Geraldi, 2020).

Investigations also aim at the strategic management of public construction portfolios, providing practical guidelines for these organizations (Beste & Klakegg, 2022). They investigate how to improve decision quality in public projects and emphasize the need for a strategic perspective in the early stages of projects (Volden & Andersen, 2018). Furthermore, strategic and external perspectives of governance to achieve more effective and legitimate results in public projects are also discussed (Volden, 2019).

5.5 Strategic Management of Extraorganizational Projects (Q6)

In this dimension, studies discuss the project society and projects as a fundamental unit of economic and social action from a perspective beyond the organization. They involve critical studies of projects including governance, power, interorganizational relationships, and decision-making. These studies address innovation, learning between projects, and learning scenarios. Researchers aim to explain how multinational companies organize and manage their innovation processes in a global context, emphasizing the fundamental role of project management in integrating local and global knowledge in the innovation process (Midler, 2019a).

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Articles in this dimension develop studies on projectification, emphasizing the importance of understanding its implications in contemporary organizations (Maylor & Turkulainen, 2019). They present projectification as an organizational trend and discuss the importance of knowledge integration and organizational learning. Additionally, they identify the characteristics of processes and organizations essential for value creation during the detailed development phase of projects (Midler, 2019b). These studies aim to develop effective governance plans to ensure the success of IT projects and guide organizations to consider negative leadership styles when evaluating their impact on projects (Zaman et al., 2022). Furthermore, they highlight the importance of aligning projects with strategy, emphasizing th ole of effective project governance on organizational benefits (Musawir et al., 2020).

5.6 Strategic Management of Interorganizational Projects (Q5)

This quadrant focuses on the Project and involves studies exploring potential methods for managing projects and their impact on project performance. It investigates projects as forms of organization based on the ideas of temporary organizations, adding a critical dimension to project governance mechanisms, knowledge, power, and relationships.
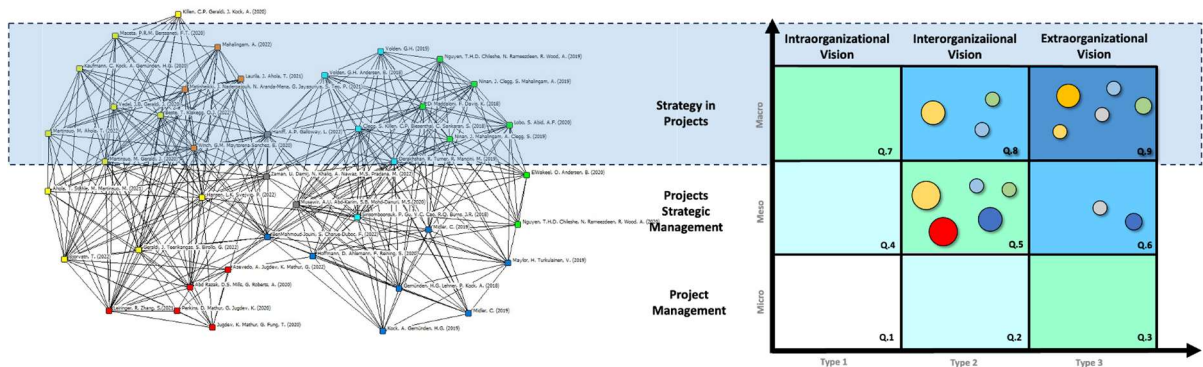
The studies present a diverse range of topics in project management, focusing on ambidexterity and organizational capability (Ben Mahmoud-Jouini & Charue-Duboc, 2022), decision-making in project management (Killen et al., 2020), mergers and acquisitions (Geraldi et al., 2022), and a practice-based approach to investigate public project management (Clegg et al., 2018). Additionally, they describe the factors that affect the choice and combination of influence strategies by stakeholders, and address the dynamics, power, and influence of stakeholders at the project level, explaining how their behavior can influence a project (Nguyen et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2020; ElWakeel & Andersen, 2020).

Through the Resource-Based View, the studies analyze how project assets and performance relate to a company's competitive advantage (Jugdev et al., 2020; Azevedo et al., 2022; Perkins et al., 2020). Other studies investigate agency relationships and agent governance and analyze the business strategies of Project-Based Organizations (PBO) at different phases (Ahola et al., 2021), highlighting the importance of projects to achieve strategic objectives and create competitive advantages (Leiringer & Zhang, 2021). Finally, they focus on the importance of integrating capabilities between strategy teams, project delivery, and operations (Abd Razak et al., 2020).

5.7 Relationship between Factor Network and Strategic Studies in Projects Matrix

The frameworks of the matrix allow us to visualize that strategy in projects can be understood in two ways: as a means of implementing organizational strategy through projects (Strategy in Projects), or as strategic ways of managing project performance and success (Strategic Project Management). In the former, strategic orientations are designed and priority projects are executed to realize the organization's strategic intent. In the latter, tools are implemented in projects to ensure performance, efficiency, and value for the organization.

Another way to analyze the research results is by comparing the positioning of the studies using the Factor Network and the Strategic Project Studies Matrix. When comparing the two structures, we observe a relation between the articles in both frameworks. Practically all the articles in the upper part of the Network correspond to those dealing with "Strategy in Projects," positioned in quadrants 8 and 9 (Figures 2 and 3). Similarly, the quadrants representing "Strategic Project Management" align with other sections of the Factor Network. This comparison highlights the consistency between the two analytical frameworks and reinforces the categorization of the articles based on their strategic focus and impact.

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Figure 2. Relationship between the articles in the Factor Network and the Strategic Studies in Projects Matrix (Strategy in Projects)
Fonte: The authors
Note: The articles by Kaufmann, C., Kock, A., and Gemünden, H.G. (2020) and Clegg, S., Killen, C.P., Biesenthal, C., Sankaran, S. (2018), due to their specific characteristics, are not categorized under Strategy in Projects.
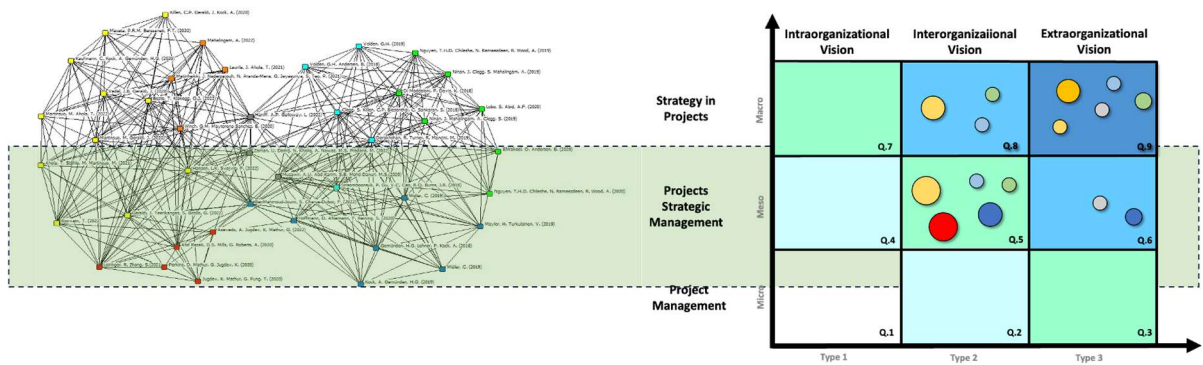
Figure 3. Relationship between the articles in the Factor Network and the Strategic Studies in Projects Matrix (Strategic Project Management)
Source: The authors.
Note: The article by Hansen, L.K. and Svejvig, P. (2022), due to its specific characteristics, is not categorized under Strategic Project Management.

The Factor Network graphically reveals the connections between authors, concepts, and themes present in the set of articles identified in the bibliometric study. The Quadrant represents the same articles categorized by level and type of Project Studies, where the upper quadrants present the strategic vision embedded in projects, and the lower quadrants focus on the strategic execution of projects. Thus, the convergence between the Factor Network and the Strategic Project Quadrants reflects the interconnection between themes, authors, levels, and types of studies in Project Strategy.

6. FINAL REMARKS

The objective of this work is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current landscape and future directions of strategy in project studies, as well as to define what constitutes strategy in projects. In the first part of the study, we conducted a bibliographic coupling bibliometric analysis to map the current research and identify key themes, aspects, and factors. This analysis revealed the prevailing themes in project strategies, such as governance, stakeholder engagement, strategic alignment, and innovation. We identified two

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main clusters: Project Strategies in Dynamic Contexts and Strategic Projects and Organizational Alignment. The former focuses on project strategies in dynamic contexts, emphasizing governance and stakeholder engagement, innovation, and multidisciplinary approaches. The themes in this cluster include managing projects with broader social impacts, integrating project management with governance structures and stakeholder needs, and emphasizing strategic thinking and innovation. The latter, addresses strategic projects and organizational alignment, focusing on strategic alignment, resource-based view (RBV), and competitive advantage. The themes here involve internal strategic execution and resource optimization, leveraging internal resources for competitive advantage, and aligning projects with organizational objectives and strategic goals.

The second part of our work aimed to define and understand what constitutes strategy in project studies. This involved categorizing and analyzing how strategic considerations are integrated into project management practices based on the framework of Geraldi and Söderlund (2018). The findings point out for two main dimensions: internal organizational dynamics and external context and interorganizational dynamics. Internal organizational dynamics include strategic project management at both meso and macro levels, with key factors such as governance, leadership, and strategic alignment playing important roles. External context and interorganizational dynamics cover interorganizational and extra-organizational projects, focusing on stakeholder engagement, innovation, and the broader impacts of projects on society.

Our contributions address both theoretical and practical aspects of strategy in project studies. Through the bibliographic coupling bibliometric study, we provide a comprehensive mapping of the current research landscape in project strategies, which helps to clarify the state of the art in project strategy research and highlights areas for future investigation. Furthermore, we contribute to the theoretical foundation of project strategy as our work extends the framework of Geraldi and Söderlund (2018), which combines levels of analysis and types of research within project studies.

Our study also bridges the gap between theoretical concepts and practical applications in project management. By examining the internal organizational dynamics at both meso and macro levels and the external interorganizational dynamics, we offer insights into how strategic project management operates across different contexts and levels.

The practical contributions focus on enhancing strategic alignment, effective governance, innovation, agility, and managing external contexts. Our study underscores the importance of aligning project goals with organizational objectives and stakeholder interests. Practitioners should foster a culture of innovation and agility, enabling teams to adapt swiftly to dynamic environments and stakeholder needs. Integrating strategic thinking into every phase of project management enhances the likelihood of success. Additionally, managing relationships with external stakeholders and understanding broader social and economic impacts lead to more sustainable project outcomes. Practitioners should establish comprehensive governance frameworks, align projects with strategic goals, encourage innovation and agility, engage stakeholders effectively, and focus on sustainability and social responsibility.

Despite these contributions, our study has limitations that should be acknowledged. The bibliometric analysis was confined to main journals specifically dedicated to project management, which limited the scope of our analysis. Future studies should broaden the scope to include a wider range of journals and interdisciplinary sources to capture a more comprehensive view. Additionally, a need for further empirical research to validate these findings and explore their practical applications in various organizational contexts remains.

Future research agendas should continue to investigate the integration of strategic considerations in project management, particularly focusing on interdisciplinary communication, trust formation among project partners, and the ethical implications of project strategies.Parte superior do formulário

Parte inferior do formulário

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