

Social enterprises are gaining importance due to increasing environmental and social issues as a business model that promotes alternative development in line with sustainability values (Elkington, 1997). Moreover, the social enterprise model has made their way into a competitive landscape, thanks to the attachment to social values and ability to adapt to emerging social hardships, whereby they have often been able to anticipate the response even before public institutions (Defourny & Nyssens, 2013). In this continuous work of development and adaptation, designing an appropriate organization is crucial to sustaining the firm throughout its life cycle (Parrish, 2010).

Recently, it has emerged that organizational practices are essential precisely to enable the social enterprise to scale its business and combine different competencies and stakeholders (Liu & Ko, 2012). However, on the contrary, as some studies show, it can happen that in the attempt to apply managerial practices typical of the for-profit world to these enterprises, the results are either unsuccessful or end up degenerating the social model towards the opposite paradigm, i.e., the for-profit one (Imperatori & Ruta, 2015).

Given the combination of two aspects, economic and social, the reality of the social enterprise is complex and uneven within the internal organizational framework, contributing to a climate of conflict between the two (Greenwood et al., 2011; Pache & Santos, 2010).

With these assumptions in mind, this research faced the problem of organizational implementation in social enterprises, explicitly focusing on maintaining a balance between social mission and economic profits. The aim was to consider how Systemic Design can sustain organizational implementation and strategies definition by the co-participatory processes. The research starts from the awareness of two main peculiarities related to social enterprise. First, these enterprises adopt different organizational forms internally and externally to the social enterprise (Battilana et al., 2014). The second is the context, characterized by different expectations and motivations of the stakeholders gravitating to the enterprise ecosystem (Di Domenico et al., 2009). Based on these premises, the research questions in the described context are as follows:

- Can Systemic Design support organizational implementation in social enterprises?
- What aspects a systemic organizational change need to consider to sustain social enterprises in maintaining social mission at the center of business?
- What added value can Systemic Social Design tools provide to organizational issues?

The methodology to answer the questions involves a literature review to understand which disciplines to date have dealt with organizational issues in the context of social enterprises. It is evident that there need to be more applications in the social field for organizational problems, and there is a need for tools specifically designed for these enterprises that can help them develop their activities and business. From these results, a scoping study is conducted to identify the best theories and approaches to change that can integrate with Systemic Design and direct the design of tools. The study of theories leads to the definition of an interdisciplinary theoretical framework on which the author develops guidelines for applying Systemic Design to the organizational sphere. In parallel, a series of design toolkits are analyzed to understand which aspects need to be sufficiently covered and which the new tools should integrate. The systemic tools (Systo) specifically designed for social enterprises are intended to help them carry out a self-assessment to identify the main elements to intervene to implement change, both at a structural and

managerial level. The primary intent of Systo is to be a means by which the people who constitute the enterprise directly take part in decisions on its evolution, thus keeping the principles of democratic governance and participatory processes at the core of the model. Since social enterprises can be distinguished based on the legislative context in which they operate, the process of validating the tools involves three different contexts: China, where social enterprise as a model began to be recognized in 2015; Denmark as the European country that has recognized legal status; and finally, Italy as the country where social enterprise is legally recognized and has its statute. In each context, at least two enterprises are involved with which to test the Systo, with at least one workshop in which six participants compile the tools. Thanks to the workshops, data is collected on how people interact with the tools and feedback for implementations.

The workshops were held remotely (China) and in person (Denmark and Italy). Each company was asked to make a fact-finding call and, throughout semi-interviews, frame the main critical issues and development intentions to select the relevant tools to be administered. During the workshop, the designer performs a dual function. On the one hand, she assumes the role of mediator between the participants to direct their reasoning and contributions toward what the tool requires. On the other hand, she also plays the role of facilitator for the tools, where they must clarify their intent and what information to include. The seven workshops resulted in evidence that the tools, as designed, adapt to different contexts and can be understood by a broad target group of users. Indeed, during the workshops, the user groups were varied and involved both members of management and operational levels.

The systemic approach embedded in the tools is thus able to respond to the specific needs of the context and the actors it interfaces with. Indeed, thanks to the tools, it is possible to share information on work management, the business model, the social value that drives activities, and the expectations and needs of employees. Furthermore, sharing this information within co-participated processes pushes companies towards a transformative innovation of their model, away from overly hierarchical structures in favor of more inclusive forms based on collaboration, relationships, and better use of tangible and intangible resources. The result is to increase awareness among all stakeholders of internal dynamics to identify critical aspects to change or improve the organization in a co-participatory manner. In addition, the enterprise gets an in-depth and inclusive analysis on which it will be possible to structure strategies for growth and innovation.

The pages that follow explain how the research achieves its goals and objectives.

*Objective n°1 – understand if Systemic Design can deal with the organizational process in social enterprises.*

To understand what kind of contribution SD can provide in implementing organizational change within social enterprises, the present work started with a comprehensive literature review to frame the social enterprise model and collected insights on the main approaches to supply organizational change. As an outcome, a frame of reference on managerial and design methods for organizational change was drawn as theoretical background to identify shortcomings and challenges which Systemic Design can tackle a practical implementation. Moreover, the literature review outlined the main challenges tackled by social enterprises that make up an understanding of the leading aspects to analyze with the systemic tools. (chapter 1-2)

*Objective n°2 - understand the full range of aspects to be considered during an organizational analysis and outline elements to include in the systemic tools.*

According to the need for a more holistic and systemic view of organizational changes and to enlarge the area of application of the Systemic Design approach, a scoping study on the organizational change theories that have marked a turning point in the enterprise's conception and dynamics was undertaken. The literature review was based on four main theories and approaches in the managerial field (Table 7, chapter 4). Setting out the theories and the main elements to be considered allowed the designer to define an interdisciplinary theoretical framework to base the development of systemic tools for organizational analysis (Fig.13, chapter 4). Furthermore, a comparative study was conducted between design toolkits and business model canvas dedicated to third-sector organizations. As a result, the designer defined guidelines on which to base the practical design of the tools. Finally, the theoretical framework and guidelines define the main elements the tools should address in analyzing a social enterprise system. The primary outcome of this research was the systemic tools, Systo, created to support participatory processes aimed at organizational improvement and defining strategies that consider the enterprise's and its members' needs (chapter 5)

*Objective n°3 – identify case studies to test systemic tools and understand which added value systemic design approach could provide.*

Systo was assessed through international case studies in Cina, Denmark and Italy, which allowed bridging from interdisciplinary framework and guidelines to concrete co-designing processes aimed at identifying shortcomings in an organization and integrating different perspectives in its development. The systemic tools were tested remotely and in presence mode and delivered materials for analyzing the enterprise's characteristics and providing evidence to co-design new strategies. The five steps of the systemic methodology are integrated with the living tools allowing a holistic approach to the enterprise's assessment (Fig.19 Chapter 5). The shreds of evidence from workshops show a significant interaction among participants that translate into the primary outcome of research: the systemic methodology can deal with organizational analysis and can trigger an innovative approach to the managerial sphere by including details on activities workflow, communicative alignment on enterprise objectives and impact and assumptions on possible changes to undertake, uniting perspectives from different levels of the enterprise and stimulating active participation.

*Objective n°4 – determine the designer's role in undertaking organizational assessment and fostering participated processes.*

On the designer's behalf was compelling to figure out how the designer could assist the enterprise's members in expressing their perspectives on job modalities and internal relationships. The designer led participants in examining enterprise at the organizational, team and individual levels. Following the workshop's insights and people's feedback, the primary evidence about the designer's role concerns the ability to uphold a different leadership attitude. On that behalf, systemic leadership is the paradigm shift supported by the designer who acts as an auditor of the system and tries to eradicate resistance to change. The research outcomes highlight the designer as a mediator between the enterprise and members' needs to stimulate a perspective change and explore new possibilities around organizational implementation. (Chapter 7)