Master Thesis

MSc. Social Policy and Social Interventions

Social innovations, collaboration and social justice in human services organizations of post-recession California

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Abstract

The Great Recession generated economical instability, which brought to major budget cuts in the public sector. Human services organization were negatively affected by the recession, as the need for social services was increasing and the resources available were limited. The situation forced the human service agencies to think differently, change in order to meet the social needs. This thesis aims at investigating how such agencies successfully innovate to fulfil social demands, and how these social innovations enhanced the capabilities of the community. Thirteen leaders from five Californian human services organizations counties were interviewed and the transcripts were then analysed with a qualitative approach. Both inductive as well as deductive codings were used for the analysis. The importance of fundings and collaboration, among others, arises. Future research is still needed though, as this is a relatively new field.

Introduction

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change." - Charles Darwin

After the Great Recession in 2008, the financial crisis was spreading on a global level. Among others, the crisis brought around opportunities for change. The Great Recession seemed to be a call for change on different levels of society, including systems and organizations. How do social services organizations survive such struggling times? The answer is innovating. Finding new ways of administrating, financing, managing and competing within this shaken global economy. Throughout the last two decades, scholars have been attempting to learn more about the complex theme of innovation. The post-industrial society has seen five important processes that affect innovation, which are the knowledge economy, new social risks, pressures on budgets, the changing forms of governance and information and communication technology (ICT) (Sirovàtka, 2014). We live in a changing environment with new challenges, resulting in an increasing demand for new ways of thinking, developing and organizing the public sector (Christensen & Laegreid, 2007).

This thesis will treat innovation in human services organizations, whose goal is to provide efficient services to meet human needs through an interdisciplinary knowledge base, preventing and solving problems and committing to improving the quality of life of service populations[1]. Thus, it appears that developing responses to social problems is a primary mandate of human services organizations, or social services agencies, whose general values are: service, social justice, dignity of the person, human relationships, integrity and competence (Sirovàtka, 2014). Unfortunately, these organizations find themselves in

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1   http://www.nationalhumanservices.org/what-is-human-services

increasingly difficult financial situations (Berzin, 2015), where payments are lowered and contracts with partners are cancelled, leading to reduced human and financial capital (Never & DeLeon, 2014). Human services organizations must now embrace the innovation mindset to respond to funding shortages and other contextual shifts (Jaskyte & Dressler, 2005) and must consider innovative strategies against the complex social and economical problems.

Innovation is a complex topic due to its multidisciplinary aspect. Literature about innovation thus far has focused on definitions and a typology of this theme. Innovations that entail a social aspect or want to address a social issue are referred to as *social innovations*. Given that this paper treats human services organizations, where social outcomes (e.g. equity, social justice,etc..) are the end goal, social innovation will be taken as focus. Based on the literature (Anheier and Leat, 2006; Hubert, 2010; Cnaan & Vinokur-Kaplan, 2015), social innovation in this thesis will be defined as: "An idea, method, practice or object that is perceived as a new. These are responses to pressing issues that affect society and aim at creating solutions to social problems that are more effective, efficient and sustainable. Furthermore, social innovation gathers new ideas to meet social needs and create new collaborations.".

Social (human) services organizations innovate in order to meet new or better meet existing social needs. They also focus on empowering people and increasing social capital (Sirovàtka, 2014). Although the twin pressure - greater challenges and less resources - linked to the recession may hinder the development of new approaches, Harris (2009) believes radical innovation is needed. This view complies with other scholars who also claim innovation is part of this society living in an era of rapid change, where citizens' expectations rise, together with new social problems (e.g. youth unemployment, migration..) and more limited resources (Bonoli, 2006; Cnaan et al., 2015; Sørensen, 2012). . Governance innovations, a dimension of innovation according to Hartley (2005), try to solve this paradox through the re-configuration of production, financing, and decision-making. This reshapes the system that determines what gets produced, fundings and values used to guide process of social production (Moore & Harteley, 2008). A specific social goal is the aim of this reshaping process. This shows a link between social and governance innovations. Moreover, the greatest potential in social innovation in human services is expected to be created in welfare and governance systems, as systematic changes are crucial in empowering grass-root capabilities of individuals and groups.

The context of this thesis combines a vast organizational problem (reduced resources) with a large social justice problem, namely increased public need for social services[2]. This situation led the human services organizations to find new ways to meet the increased needs of the population with drastically reduced funding. This offers insight in how organizations combined process, managerial and social innovations to expand their ability to enhance the capabilities of the public they are serving. In the view of all the innovation literature analysed, the purpose of this thesis is to shed light on the effectivity of social

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2   http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2012/12/state-local-budgets-gordon

innovations in human services organizations. The literature on innovations in the public sector has been discussing extensively definitions and differences with the private sector, but a lot is still to be researched on what makes the social innovations effective for meeting the human services organizations goals. Therefore, this paper will look at elements that characterise successful social innovations. Given the rich literature on the topic, one element influencing innovation has been chosen for observation in this thesis: collaboration. Moreover, to understand how innovations can spread to other organizations or regions, and how people adopt innovations, the study will also further look at elements of diffusion of innovation. Lastly, since social justice is one of the values of social services, this aspect will also be studied in connection to human services innovations, seen as creation of opportunities to enhance the community.

Theoretical exploration

Collaborative Governance

The complexity of human service organizations is given by the fact that they are embedded in society, providing benefits and services but also creating collective rules and purposes, such as fighting poverty or lowering crime (Hartley, 2005). As previously mentioned, governance innovations are important for innovative human services organizations and collaboration seems to be a common new governance approach within the public sector. According to Gray (1989) collaboration is the process by which two or more actors manage the differences constructively in order to define common issues and find joint solutions.

There is evidence that collaboration can spur public innovation (Bommert, 2010), while also strengthening all its stages (Eggers & Singh, 2009; Sørensen & Torfing, 2011). This is because it brings together different sectors, groups and individuals (Moore & Hartley, 2008; Sørensen & Torfing, 2011) and the framing of complex problems is improved when actors have different experiences and knowledge (Hartley, 2013). Indeed, innovation is most often a result of interaction between actors from different levels and organizations. For instance, studies towards 'New Governance' emphasise involvement of a broader society in governing (Rhodes, 1992; Pierre & Pieters, 2000) and respondents of Berzin's (2015) study commented on the collaborative nature of innovation in their organization and linked their definitions to 'co-creation' and 'partnerships', citing collaboration as critical element to social innovation as well.

Furthermore, social innovations in human services organizations can be enhanced by gathering different actors in collaborative processes (Gray, 1989; Roberts & Brodley, 1991), as literature shows that the implementation of innovation is facilitated by joint ownerships (Sørensen, 2012; Sørensen & Torfing, 2011). The institutional design may vary in accordance with the problem at hand and the range of actors involved (Eggers& Singh, 2009), it could be through inter-organizational networks, governance networks or public-private partnerships. Innovation through networks of professionals and managers is a potent form of

innovation especially for the diffusion of it, which requires local adaption (Hartley, 2005).

This governance theory shows that collaboration might be key for successful innovations in the public sector. It is important to explore further whether and how human services organizations used collaboration to enhance their services delivery and investigate further on the role of collaboration in innovating human services organizations. Overall, collaboration could help making a social innovation sustainable and successful, which is a central aspect to this research.

Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Diffusion of innovation is a theory developed by Rogers (2003), which focuses on how information is shared within and across social groups, explaining how an idea spreads through a specific population. The end results is that people adopt a new idea or behaviour[3]. Greenhalgh (2004) and Rogers (2003) further distinguishes 'diffusion' from 'dissemination', the first one being the process by which the innovation is communicated through certain channels among the social system (unplanned) and the latter being the formal and planned process of spreading the innovation using, for instance, opinion experts.

Following Rogers (2003) an innovation has four levels of influence throughout the diffusion process: the innovation level, the individual level, the organizational and the environmental level. Given that this thesis is looking at organizations that are trying to survive new external pressures and a changing environment, these two levels seem more relatable to the research here conducted and will be discussed in more detail.

At the organizational level, interesting for human services organizations, Rogers (2003) identifies the innovativeness of an organization as influenced by leader's openness to change, the openness of the system as a whole and the internal characteristics of the organization (e.g. size, resources, complexity..). Innovativeness of leadership and top management support is positively associated with innovation adoption (Bradford & Florin, 2003; Cooper & Zmud, 1990) but not distinctly correlated with the extent of adoption (Thong, 1999).

Every organization works within a certain environment. The last level of influence, the environment, discusses the fact that radial personal networks are more open to an individual's environment and are therefore more important for the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1995). When the network surrounding the individual is more diverse and open, this will be more likely to be innovative. Another author who looked at the environment level mentioned here is Demanpour (2009), who claims that organizations innovate because of the pressures from the external environment, looking at organizations as open systems which adapt and

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3   http://sphweb.bumc.bu.edu/otlt/MPH-Modules/SB/SB721-Models/SB721-Models4.html

change in order to function more effectively.

Diffusion of innovations recognises three key players- a champion, an opinion leader and a change agent. The champion is a person with strong influence and who stands behind innovation. The opinion leader has the power to influence those around him or her and is important for the diffusion of an innovation in a social system. The change agent actively seeks to influence other members of the system about the innovation adoption, as a matter of fact this role is now formally created to assist the adoption process. To be clearer one can compare this to movie making. The director is the champion, he is the mind behind the innovation (movie) and has enough influence to create a group of people to work with him. The opinion leader is the actor, with appealing personality and a higher status and can easily create trends and helps making the innovation (movie) known. The change agent can be seen as the promotion team for the movie, who makes sure that the movie will be shown in cinemas and the name circulates around Hollywood. The change agent, promotional team, actively influences from within the system for the adoption.

Theories of innovation diffusion conceptualize the transfer and uptake of an innovation to move from the top down, and then laterally, transferred through the influence of social networks (Rogers, 2003). Innovation processes are 'bottom-up' and 'sideways-in', but also top-down, as middle line managers can innovate as well (Hartley, 2005; Borins, 2002). This is important when looking at the diffusion of innovations, including those in human services organizations.

This paper seeks to investigate not only the implementation of the innovations but also their diffusion and adoption. This is important for the applicability of such innovations, adapting them to their context, in other human services organizations facing similar challenges.

Capability Approach

Social justice, as mentioned before, is a core value of social work (Reamer, 2000) and has guided social workers to re-look at the compelling social issues of the times and to fix those communal problems (Patti, 2000; Schorr, 1997). The capability approach is a social justice theory, which was first articulated by the Indian economist Amartya Sen in the 80s. This theory is relevant in association with social innovations, as these generally aim at solving social problems and fulfilling social needs. In the context of this paper, social justice is at the core of social services, thus human services organizations can be seen as actors in creating the right capabilities for the community through social and intra-organization innovations (e.g. governance innovation).

The Capability approach focuses upon the moral significance of individuals' capability of achieving the kind of lives they have reason to value (Wells, n.d). The quality of life that individuals are actually able

to achieve is key to the capability approach and is analysed in terms of 'Functionings' and 'Capabilities' (Sen, 1993). The first term refers to the states of 'being and doing', for instance having shelter and being nourished, being educated, traveling or voting. Anything one can be or do as person is a functioning, that means the term refers to states and activities. The second term, 'Capabilities' are one's opportunity to attain functionings. Thus, traveling is a functioning (doing), but whether one has the real opportunity to travel is the corresponding capability. The distinction between functionings and capabilities is between the accomplished and the effectively feasible.[4] In order to evaluate how people are performing in capability, scholars found necessary to determine which functionings matter for a good life and how much. Sen (2004) is not prone to listing fixed capabilities but he suggests a case of sub-set of crucial capabilities associated with basic needs such as education, health, nutrition and shelter (up to minimal adequate levels). According to Sen (2004) many capabilities will vary with social circumstances, while others less (e.g. adequate nourishment). This theory has been criticised by Rawls, as he notes that liberals focus on the fair allocation of resources because it respects the individual's right to pursue their own conception of good life. To this criticism Sen points out the heterogeneity in people's abilities to convert the same resources into relevant functionings (Wells, n.d).

For this paper, the capability approach can be used to define social justice, one of the human services organizations goals. It is also possible to see the relation between the organizations and their ability to enhance the opportunities of the target group to achieve certain functionings.

Given the existing literature on innovations and the theoretical framework derived from previous studies and reviews, the following research question emerges:

'*How did human services organizations successfully implement and diffuse social innovations to meet increased social needs and enhance community capabilities after the Great Recession?*

What factors of organization and environment, regarding development and diffusion of these innovations, contributed to their success or failure? How is collaboration impacting the innovation process? How did the innovations enhance the capabilities of the community?'

Methodology

The data used for this study are interviews collected by the Mack Research Centre of the Social Welfare School University of California Berkeley. The data was collected by the research group in 2013 from March through June. Interviews, as a qualitative method, capture a more detailed description of the experiences and strategies. Hence, a qualitative approach is the best fit, as it is possible to understand and discuss the

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4 http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/capability-approach/#FunCap

strategies behind the decisions regarding organizational innovations and their evaluation. Thus, also the evaluation of the innovations were discussed to see their sustainability in these case studies. Moreover, the interviews were semi-structured in order to give room to observations of the respondents.

From the original set of human services organizations (HSO) from eleven counties, five from the Bay Area were chosen for this thesis: Napa, Sonoma, San Francisco, San Mateo, Marin. These counties differ in size and poverty levels, Marin being the richest of them followed by San Mateo, San Francisco, Napa and Sonoma. Within each HSO two to five interviews lasting between thirty and sixty minutes were conducted with higher level leaders (senior staff such as executive directors), who were selected because of their understanding of all the factors that went into the strategies decision making process. In total 46 interviews were conducted. Interviews topics involve: innovative strategies, change in service delivery, implementation issues, mission and guiding values. Topics discussed are set in the post Great Recession (2008-2013) time, when human services organizations had to cope with budget cuts and increased social needs. Topics for the interviews were chosen by the research group in collaboration with the leaders of the county agencies, because the latter were interested in capturing how the recession impact on their agencies. For the purpose of this study a subset of thirteen interviews was selected, in which active levels of innovations affecting social services were discussed. These interviews focused on the innovation process and the ways organizations engaged in social innovation.

The semi-structured interview enable the analysis to also include an evaluation of what worked or not. Even though the interviews are one-sided (leader only, no users), it is possible to code whether, according to the leaders, the HSO social innovations during the hard times managed to enhanced the community capabilities or not.

The transcribed interviews were analysed through independent inductive and deductive coding (Figure 1), using the programme Dedoose for assistance. Themes of the inductive coding were defined beforehand based on literature: collaboration, organizational openness to change, pressures external environment, key players, impact on capabilities. The deductive coding gives the freedom to also investigate something not mentioned in the theory yet. For instance, a social innovation created by the organization might be created through an organizational change in our case, thus through the interviews one can look at the organizational changes or factors that affected the social services delivery and their performance. The coding tree is shown in the Appendix.

Inductive	Deductive
Collaboration	Budget
Key Actors	Communication
Openness to change	Service changes
Impact on capabilities	Mission

Figure 1. Inductive and Deductive codings

Results

The different county Human Services Agencies offer similar programs to their communities. The Human Services Agency based in Sonoma is offering programs to serve job seekers, employers adults, children, teens, families, veterans, people with disabilities and the elderly. They provide eligible residents with job training, support veterans, help foster children and keep adults safe. A big project that arose from the recession is the Upstream Investments one, which is a policy sponsored by the Sonoma County Board and seeks to eliminate poverty in the county, ensuring equal opportunities in health and education. The Health and Human service agency in Napa, among others, is also offering homeless, drug, child welfare, employment and health services. The county worked a lot on management collaboration to go through the recession. Human Service Agency in San Mateo delivers employment services, children and public assistance programs (e.g. homelessness). Human Service Agency in Marin provide services in public assistance (e.g. CalWORKs), children and family, employment, and ageing services such as 'Healthy housing program'. Human Service Agency in San Francisco also provides 'Ageing and Adult' services, along with protected (e.g. public guardian) and IHSS services. With the advent of the recession, among others, they implemented a ten year Alzheimer's strategic plan, which runs still nowadays. The code 'service and program changes' shows the social innovations in these agencies.

Service and program changes

A lot of program restructuring happened for most of the agencies. How to make the most of the resources, handle the caseloads and deliver good services? Social innovations developed from this dilemma.

In Napa they eliminated the individual provider network and they: "[...]brought more counselling services in house. [...] We scheduled staff for specific days to focus on welfare to work activities, to ensure that they kept up with the clients and tried to help increase the work participation rate, which inched up a little, a few percentage points, not hugely though.". Another service change in the same agency was the shared caseloads. Instead of receiving, as worker, single caseloads they decided to: "Then the other way of doing it is you are on a team, a team of six people, say, that's responsible for 4000 cases. And so when a renewal comes up, it pops to the top of the queue, and the next available worker takes it. And you do as much as you can at the

time; you send stuff off to the client saying, "Here are the following things we need to finish your case." When that stuff comes in, the next available worker picks up that tape.".

Marin agency leader sees as main change the pace of their services: "I think what really changed over that time was how quickly we can do things, how quickly we can provide services, whether or not we would continue to meet all the regulatory requirements and we could, you know.".

One of Sonoma interviewees was talking about a centre for abused children which was at risk of closure but they: "[...] used the budget crisis to really take another look and say, wait a second, this is supposed to be a multi-disciplinary partnership, and it starts to feel like as a human services department, we are left running this program. And so we re-energized that. So as part of that, we have decided to move the Redwood Children's Center to the Family Justice Center. So we've got a Family Justice Center in Santa Rosa that has been open for about a year, year and a half, and we are moving, next month, the Redwood Children's Center will be at the Family Justice Center. The original impetus for that was the budget cut discussion".

In San Francisco they developed a revenue strategy to advance a team of social workers and clinicians who: "[...] try to get single adults who are currently on GA, General Assistance on to SSI, we funded SSI and that was an investment because it's more staff and the idea was we would… certainly we would provide these services for anyone who we felt was eligible whereas before we [crosstalk] the subjects with the staffing. It was [crosstalk] we did a financial model and started to invest this much in year one, in year-two[…]".
Always in San Francisco, they created a: "[...]service center modelled to in food stamps which I think is now 5 years old. Again, sort of large growing case load, no administrative relieve in the state, you know county doing business inquiries, very minimal number of new staff here so change of business process to manage a larger workload.".

Another interviewee from Sonoma agency thought of introducing a new nutrition program: " And I had this idea from experience I had years ago that, you know, a really good soup and salad can be a great meal at a home. And why not try, you know, like instead of having a regular Saturday program, why not do something like that or maybe we can take general fund money and give people money to do a program what wasn't really the federal program. And we were partially successful with that but mostly people baulked and wouldn't do it. But it did set up a dialogue with our providers around trying to think about doing programs different than we've been doing them. So we did end up taking about half a million dollars out of that program and we did it in lots of different ways. But we really were attempting to be as creative as we could without losing a meal. And we did, in the end we cut a half a million dollars and we did not lose a meal."

In regards of mental health services, Sonoma could take advantage of a contracting situation with different providers in the community, as one of the leaders there tells: "[...] We had almost 200 contracts for

providers, and we have had to strategize differently and that has actually been helpful with mental health because they now assess all our kids at our emergency shelter, and they are also assessing kids who are already in the system, and so if there are services that they can provide through MediCal, they are doing that now, whereas they weren't before.".

In San Mateo, the agency has: "[...] contracts about a day worker program, we oversee some children's funds, we do some funding streams and initiative to support children and families, we have a fatherhood collaborative that supports engagements between fathers, male figures in children's lives, there's a board of… advisory board and then the other piece that oversee is the parole reentry, you know the new AB109 fully incarcerated individuals returning from state prisons back to local counties or who are incarcerated locally.".

Overall, all these are social innovations, as the changes are new, solve social issues and meet social needs and use collaboration. It is possible to recognise that the majority was successful, as the interviewees had time to see results since implementation.

Collaboration

Collaboration is described as a process by which two or more actors manage the differences constructively in order to define common issues and find joint solutions (Gray, 1995).
Every county collaborated while innovating to get out of the crisis period. Whether through collaboration management, contracting or collaborative budget, collaboration is mentioned in almost all interviews and is considered positive. One of the interviewees in Napa confirmed that they have been:

> "[..] implementing true collaborative management model throughout the agency in a really serious way and not a touchy-feely kind of collaborative management, but shared power and decision making, clear lines of responsibility and accountability, but real power sharing because we really think that that works better."

The results of collaboration appear to be positive in all interviews, for instance at the HSO in Napa they thought that including staff helped creating a: "[...] great revenue projects that we wouldn't necessarily have thought of that really helped.".

Community partners are also important for the HSOs, and are part of the strategic plan that promote collaboration with community stakeholders. In Sonoma one of the interviewed leaders mentioned that they started a discussion about funding but after seeing they did not save that much they simply "[...] ask others to contribute more". Another Sonoma interviewee recognised that to start the youth employment program again

during budget cuts, made them: "[...] reach out to unlikely partners to create not only a program for kids, but a program that was meaningful.". When talking about their biggest change, the Upstream Investments, Sonoma agency interviewee said: "[...] basically it's this concept of Upstream that everyone is engaged with at the county level and then bringing in our community partners to also commit to.". San Francisco HSO leaders also confirm that: "The other thing that strategic planning does is it introduces people to each other that don't know each other but aught to. Our strategic planning is not just about us as a department, it's always with community providers. [...]".

Human services organizations create partnerships with external entities through contracting as well. The Napa county agency really values such relationships, as one of the leaders claimed: "So this effort has not only helped groups but all the CBOs, the cities, the towns. Transportation is participating, and law enforcement is participating, fire, all the planning departments, all of those groups are in this. [...] So it was really important to us the whole time to maintain really good working relationship with our CBOs and part of that is not cutting their contract, not putting them out of business in order to stay afloat.".

Key roles

The key roles are the ones mentioned in the theory by Rogers: the champion, the opinion leader, the change agent. From this sample of interviews, supervisors and managers seem play the key roles of champion.

One of the leaders in Sonoma stated: "I'm actually rather pleased with this, and I speak with some authority because as the assistant director, I was the one doing all these cuts and working with all of the organizations, so I have intimate first-hand knowledge of this process we went through.". The roles of opinion leader or change agent were not recognised in this sample.

Openness to change

Openness to change refers to support and acceptance of innovations from the organization's surrounding environment (e.g. board, management). As Rogers (2004) mentions, leader's and system openness to innovation is key in order for the latter to grow. Leaders in human services organizations have to answer to a county support Board, thus their openness is important. In Sonoma, a leader explains:

 "I think that the other thing, just to say that we actually have always felt very supported by our board, and so typically what has happened was in the budget cycle, we would identify things that we would have to cut. So for example closing the Redwood Children's Center or closing our Voluntary Family Maintenance Program. It would go through all sorts of proposals and modifications and then go to the board and then almost invariably, the board of supervisors would restore children's services. So it was rare that we would get to the end of the line and yes that we would have to close Voluntary Family Maintenance. We didn't have to do that. But we proposed it in our budget documentation. So we were fortunate in that respect,

because I've talked to colleagues where the county isn't even actually paying its match. We've always had, before realignment, a board of supervisors that over matched significantly for children's services and adults."

At the agency in Napa, one interviewee revealed that their Board is always interested in what they are doing and the members go over to the agency and talk and sit with them on commissions, informational committees: "It isn't that they are disconnected from what we are doing.". Although support and openness are necessary for innovations, it is important to keep a margin of "strategic room to work", as another Napa leader mentions, for how to allocate money for instance.

Impact on capabilities

Enhancing capabilities means improving the opportunity for the targeted population to achieve functionings (being or doing). The goal to fulfil the community needs was key in all agencies' strategies, and is mentioned by their leaders as part of their mission and guidance in the innovation process. One of the leaders in the agency in San Francisco disclosed: "[...] the cuts were so deep was that we were trying in every way possible to preserve what we call basic human needs and continue to provide for basic human needs which we defined internally as housing, food, so housing or shelter.".

Sonoma county distinguished itself from the other four, for its Upstream Investments policy aims at: "[...] investing in evidence-based practices on the community level and coordinating on the community level to address upstream issues." This policy aims at lowering crime rates and poverty, which ultimately would give more opportunities to the Sonoma communities.

In San Francisco, one of the interviewee at the agency claimed "[...]a gain moving beyond our mandates to become an agency that really serves low-income people not by category but low income people that needs help and [crosstalk] welfare side who are in help, who need help. More prevention work, more post-aid work, more outreach and recruitment, you know more outreach.".

These agencies are working towards enhancing the capabilities of their communities, they maintain the goal in their strategies. Nevertheless, it seems that only Sonoma actually implemented a socially innovative policy tackling the matter. The other counties are still grounded from the economical situation.

Certain thematics have appeared in several interviews, which suggest that the following deductive themes are significant mentions.

Budget

Funds and budget strategies are key to survival of the service organization but also of the innovation itself. Without certain funds or money, some innovations would have not taken place. The paradox of the relation

between limited resources and innovation arises here. The five counties of the human services agencies of this study are among the richest in California, as one of the agency leaders in Napa says: "So they rolled into the recession with healthy county reserves, and they were very, very careful about fiscal stuff all through the recession. And it's a really very conservative county on how it manages its money, and it has a little bit more of it than many counties […] My sense was other parts of the department may have been going through cuts during that time but our situation was unique [...] the county never cut our county general fund during recession.". Napa county agreed with the agency that if they would not ask for more money they would not cut them off, so everyone worked within certain parameters and that is how the agency went through all the changes and recession without major losses.

Another interviewee from the HSO in Napa explains that a good strategy of theirs was collaborative budgeting. This model was an organizational innovation that helped carrying out the social services duties: "[...]one of the things I think that worked the best for us was our collaborative budgeting model [...] And I think after having gone through for a couple of years, we have all concluded that was pretty innovative because it required everybody operating in a different way.".

Notwithstanding the recession created a situation that spur new ways of operating, fundings were still needed and important in order to implement such ideas. Thus, it seems that limited resources cannot be too limited for a successful social innovation to happen.

Communication

In each interview leaders from the different agencies highlighted the importance of communicating the changes the right way. This is important also for the adoption and diffusion of the innovation.

One of Marin agency leaders claims there was a lot of: "[...] back and forth communication, communication up from the supervisors to the managers, discussions at the management team. Some cases I would need to take things to our Division Director, Heather, to say this is what we're thinking we're going to have to do here and can you live with that. Some cases there would need to be some more vetting of that idea at other levels, thinking about audits, thinking about various impacts.". Marin agency also focused on essential services and making sure to deliver those. They also had bi-weekly program meetings with the eligibility staff, which was a primary communication mean.

> "[…] managers meeting with that team and kind of communicating the state of affairs and how we were, you know, doing what we were doing to try to deal with that, relying on them to communicate that, you know, further. But, you know, there were, you know, a number of these meetings on a regular basis where we would be talking about what was happening and, again, the County Administrator would have these meetings across the county and Larry had some all staff meetings."

Interesting for the San Francisco agency, is that the leaders talks about political environment influence, which is linked to the public sector:

> "One, you know as a lens that we could look through to make cuts for me and my deputies but also as political cover and so we get… always… because the way we lay this out to the community and again conscious of our usually political environment, I presented this to my governing [Inaudible 00:33:20] human services communication and public meeting and they really like..."

When analysing the communication of changes, one can see how the diffusion in this sample has not reached outside the organizations. The innovation spreads from the top (managers decisions) to the line staff, working together with the client. These are top-down innovations, not sideways or network ones (Rogers, 1995).

Mission

Mission and values have helped prioritising programs during the strategic planning and changes.

For instance in Marin they had a strong tradition in customer service, as mentioned by one of the interviewed leaders: "And it's something that people really take pride in. And it's been some sort of acknowledgement by other jurisdictions that we were sort of known for this. And so we try to hang on to that tradition and make sure that we were prioritizing that.". San Francisco agency highlights the importance of values as well, as one of the interviewee claims: "But the core values were enormously important I think. It would have been harder, it was hard enough but it would have been harder to do without them.[...] start to think about what's important then you can start figuring out where do you put money.". A colleague at the San Francisco agency stresses further: " One of the things that we did as the budget cuts started to get bigger and bigger, it developed a set of guiding principles.".
So, solid principles,and the values are guidance to what seems a successful innovation.

6. Discussion

This thesis purpose is to contribute to the research field of social innovation, adding knowledge on what factors help an innovation with being successfully implemented and diffused in human services organizations. Moreover, the role of collaboration has been studied further as possible particular influential factor, together with the impact of such innovations on the creation of opportunities to ' be or do' for the community.

Organizational factors such as budget, mission and communication influence the development and diffusion of innovation. After analysing the interviews, it seems clear that without fundings, innovation will not happen, the idea will stay as such. Too limited resources bring to stagnation (Cnaan et al., 2015; Sørensen, 2012). It should be not forgotten, that the human services organizations of the sample used for this study are among the wealthiest in California. Linked to this budget issues is the mission statement. The organizations' principles and mission were important in this sample in order to prioritise programs over others and make final decisions on the allocation of money. Once the budget and mission stages are clear, it is important to communicate the changes to the rest of the organization and this is an important step as people will react to the changes. In this sample there seem to be no real problem in adoption and implementation, once the decision was made, and this might have to do with the fact that the innovations were top-down ones.

Unfortunately, because only leaders were subject to interviews in the study, the diffusion of the innovations towards the actual clients could not be studied or observed, thus more cannot be said on the diffusion process and success.

Environmental factors are important too, as the code 'openness to change' shows. The support and openness of managers or Board members towards innovation was a big advantage (Rogers, 2003; Bradford & Florin, 2003), and all five county human services agencies were lucky to have an environment open to change and, in some cases, ready to support financially too. In every environment there are key actors that carry out the actions needed for results, again in this study there could not be a lot of disclosure about the key roles in diffusion of innovation, as from the interviews only champions (leaders) were detectable.

Collaboration can be seen both as organization as well as environmental factor, contributing to success or failure of social innovation. Collaboration is key in all five county agencies, and it takes different forms: collaborative budget, management, contracting/community partnerships, and so on. Several quotes show the positive remarks on adopting collaboration for innovation, showing it worked and people were satisfied. More literature covers collaboration extensively (Bommert, 2010; Eggers & Singh, 2009; Sørensen & Torfing, 2011; Moore & Hartley, 2008), as important for innovation success and sustainability, and this study cannot falsify those hypothesis.

As already discussed, human services organizations value social justice (Sirovàtka, 2014) and aim at creating social outcomes that give equal possibilities of development to everyone in the county. This trait is shown in some of the quotes from the interviews, and especially Sonoma, given it has a policy already implemented. Unfortunately, it is hard to find an adequate answer for how the innovations enhance the capabilities of the community, due to one of the limitations of this study. That is, only interviews with leaders were conducted, not users. Hence, it is hard to make conclusions on whether the social innovations helped and how. The sample used in this thesis is one of rich counties, and people in high positions within the agency. This

limitation can give a biased perspective on the results and needs to be acknowledged before making any conclusion.

Overall, from the results it can be said that to successfully implement and diffuse a social innovation in human services organizations during a critical period, it is important to: have a clear mission and priorities; have fundings and administer the budget well; the environment needs to be supportive for change; collaboration is key; transparent communication about changes is preferred. Altogether, it seems that when human (social) services organizations create social innovations, the ultimate purpose will be to enhance capabilities of the community, as social justice is a core value of this field. Whether they achieve this goal seems harder to measure in this study.

On the other hand, the limitations and answers still to cover lead to possibility for future research. For instance, another study could investigate further whether collaboration spurs innovation or people innovate because they collaborate. Alternatively, one could look into what exactly the margin for limited resources is in order to be able to innovate still. A last idea of future research based on this study would be to make a follow up interview, since time has passed since these interviews were conducted, and see how if the innovations are still running and this time users can be interviewed as well, to check for the impact of those innovations on their capabilities.

Appendix

1. Coding tree

Code	Subcode	Definition
Budget	Funds Collaborative budgeting	The role of money in the crisis and innovation process
Collaboration	Collaborative management Contracting	Ways to innovate using partnerships or joining forces with external organizations or within different levels of HSO
Communication	Communication of changes	How changes were communicated
Impact on Capabilities		How the innovation improved the opportunity of the people to achieve certain activities or states.
Key actors		Champion, opinion leader, change agent
Mission		Values HSO
Openness to change		Environment allowing change
Service and Process innovations	Program restructuring Service changes and strategy	Direct service changes adopted in order to serve the population needs -social innovation

2. Questions

- Intro: Well, there are basically two areas of questions that we're going to be going through this morning. One is around organizational impact of any of the budget cuts that occurred, so that would include things like programmatic changes, service delivery changes, any restructuring that happened as you were managing the reductions in budget. Changes to technology and staffing in terms of numbers of staff, how half the staff were doing what might have been reassigned, but there were reductions in positions, that sort of thing, and then the second section is focusing on the planning and implementation processes. So having a sense of what the - first of all knowing what the overall scope of reductions existed, and then looking at what were the strategies that were used? What kinds of processes were put in place to make the budget cuts actually happened? Who was involved? What kind of prioritization did you have or guiding principles, we're using that kind of thing.

- Were there any programmatic or service delivery changes or changes to the structure of the organization during those difficult budget years when there were reductions?

- What you think were the real innovations that occurred during this time in terms of strategy or approaches that you think are not worthy and/or any lessons learned that you think would be worthwhile to capture so that other counties may… if they are thinking in a certain way, they know what the potential pitfalls are, or the challenges.

- There was a focus of keeping the services going, that was one of your priorities. Were there other guiding values?

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