

**WORK-LIFE BALANCE:
IS THE SOCIAL ECONOMY SECTOR MORE SUPPORTIVE
OR
DOES DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT MAKE A DIFFERENCE ?**

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Abstract: This research compares perceived organizational support to work-life balance measures and policies in the social economy sector with various work environments in order to determine whether a democratic management environment may be more favourable to work life balance, and therefore offer a more sustainable form of employment. It does appear that the social mission and its impact on the organisational context can be more supportive of its workers in a perspective of work-life balance. More specifically, our paper asks the question whether the social economy sector, with its explicit mission and management approach (self-ruled decision-making process) might have an influence on organizational support to work-life balance (WLB) and thus reduce the perception of WLB-related difficulties.

We studied the social economy sector in Québec and compared findings with three other sectors in the public service that also have a public service mission but not the same management mode or philosophy: a metropolitan police service, social work and nursing, all in the same city.

Our research identifies many significant differences between the four sectors, apparently owing to the characteristics of the social economy sector. In addition to our quantitative research (about 800 respondents in all, 400 in the social economy sector), we conducted interviews (36) in the social economy sector and results confirm that the specificity of this sector, i.e., mission, philosophy and management mode, appear to explain the overriding concern for WLB in the social economy sector.

Keywords: organization of daily life, organisational support, work-family conflict, work-life balance, social economy sector,