

## **ABSTRACT**

DOLCOS, SANDA MONICA. *Managing Life and Work Demands: The Impact of Organizational Support on Work-Family Conflict in Public and Private Sectors.* (Under the direction of Dennis M. Daley, PhD.).

Various workforce and societal changes have made the issue of work-family conflict relevant for employees and organizations alike. The increasing pressures for attracting and retaining talented employees have forced many public and private organizations to develop formal family friendly policies aimed at providing employees with resources to balance their work and family responsibilities. However, the effects of implementing such formal policies are not clearly established. These formal supports are often underutilized and, even when employees use them, they may not always have the intended consequences. It has been suggested that informal workplace characteristics, such as supervisor support and a supportive work-family culture, may be as important as, or even more important than, the simple provision of formal benefits. Prior research on family-friendly policies and cultures and their effects on employees' attitudes and behaviors is limited in that it has focused almost exclusively on the experiences of individuals employed in private sector organizations, with the effects on public sector employees being largely unknown. Thus, the aim of this dissertation was to address this gap by examining and comparing work-family relationships between employees working in the public and the private sectors of the economy. This study uses data from the Families and Work Institute's 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce, and employs institutional theory, ecological systems theory, role theory, and social exchange theory to investigate how formal support, informal support, and work characteristics may affect employees' work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover

intentions. The main objectives of this study were centered on practical concerns, as our investigation seeks to impact public sector's ability to recruit, motivate, and retain qualified employees.

On the whole, the findings of this study suggest both similarities and differences between public and private sector organizations with respect to the constructs measured. Contrary to our expectations and the institutional theory, there were no significant differences in the provision of formal supports between the two sectors. However, consistent with the institutional theory, the results confirmed that public sector employees enjoy higher levels of informal support and HR practices than their private sector counterparts. This study also supports the idea of social exchange between employees and their employers related to work-family issues. By revealing the key role played by the informal support in all three outcomes of interest for this study (i.e., work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions), our findings suggest the importance for organizations to assist their employees in maintaining good work and family relationships. Therefore, both public and private organizations seeking to help their employees manage work and family responsibilities will benefit from knowing employees' perceptions of formal support, informal support, and work characteristics, along with their specific impact on employees' work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions.

**MANAGING LIFE AND WORK DEMANDS: THE IMPACT OF  
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT IN PUBLIC AND  
PRIVATE SECTORS**

**By  
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## **DEDICATION**

In memory of my mother, Elena Cengher, who encouraged me throughout my education.

With love for my husband Florin and son Alex, as well as for my daughter Larissa, whose anticipated arrival greatly motivated me.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, work and family domains have been considered as mutually exclusive - men were the hunters who brought home the bacon and women gathered and took care of family needs. Organizations had little concern with the negative consequences of work and family interference on their employees or on their organization.

More recently, a variety of workforce and societal changes have led to increased attention to work and family issues among employers. Public and private organizations are increasingly seeking to help their employees balance their work and family responsibilities in an effort to increase their recruitment and retention, while improving individual performance and job-related attitudes (Walton, 1985; Morris et al., 1993). Many employers now provide formal work-family supports, such as child-care and elder care resource and referral services, flexible scheduling, and telecommuting options. However, the effects of implementing such formal policies are not clearly established. These formal supports are often underutilized and, even when employees use them, they may not always have the intended consequences (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). It has been suggested that informal workplace characteristics, such as supervisor support and a supportive work-family culture, may be as important as or even more important than the simple provision of formal benefits.

Prior research on family-friendly policies and cultures and their effects on employees' attitudes and behaviors is limited in that it has focused almost exclusively on individuals employed in private sector organizations, with the effects on public sector employees being largely unknown. Thus, the aim of this dissertation is to address this gap by examining and comparing work-family relationships between public and private sector employees.

The 21st century is witnessing unprecedented changes in work and family relations, which affect both public and private sectors. There is an increased interest in balancing work and family life. The number of women in the workforce has increased tremendously and will continue to rise at a high rate. From 1970 to 2002, the participation rate of women in the labor force increased from 43.3% to 59.6% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that the number of women in the workforce will continue to increase and that by 2008 women will represent 48% of the labor force, as compared to 46% in 1998. As women become more and more educated and are offered increasing equity in employment opportunities, the number of dual career couples in the workforce has increased significantly (Lewis, 2002). The 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW) found that 78% of the married employees were members of dual career couples (Bond et al., 2002). From 1970 to 2002, the participation rate of married women with pre-schooled children more than doubled, from 30.3% to 62.7% (US Bureau of Census, 2003). Married women with children have also increased their hours of work substantially—from 869 hours in 1979 to an average of 1,255 hours annually in 2000, an increase that is equivalent to working ten additional weeks at full-time hours (Mishel, Bernstein, & Boushey 2003).

Other factors contributing to these changes include increased participation by single parents, prolonged workforce participation, and changes in work and life attitudes. The decline in the rate of marriages and increase in the rate of divorce have led to a greater participation by single parents with young children in the workforce. The 1997 NSCW (Bond et al., 1998) found that 20% of all employees with children were single parents (with only 27% being men). As a result of increased longevity, the American population tends to remain longer in the workforce. This leads to an increased number of employees caring for elderly

parents or relatives and of employees in the “sandwich generation”, who have responsibilities for both child and elder care. Finally, important changes in the attitudes and values of employees have occurred. The new generation of American working parents has different values and attitudes toward work than previous generations. For instance, younger men assume greater responsibility for family work, including childcare and household chores, than their parents did (Bond et al., 2002).

These dramatic changes in the composition of the workforce have altered profoundly the relationship between work and family domains, making it more difficult for employees to balance their work and family demands. The issues associated with balancing work and family are very important to individuals, the organizations that employ them, the families that they care for, and the governments that are concerned with their citizens’ well being and health. A family-friendly workplace helps employers attract and retain a dedicated workforce. Studies have shown that family friendly programs are associated with a reduction in absenteeism, lower rates of turnover/increased retention, greater job satisfaction, and increases in productivity (Durst, 1999; Friedman, 2001). Unfortunately, evidence suggests that both governments and employers have been slow to respond to the changing social and economic pressures on employees and their families (Scott, 2000).

Government, as legislator and policy maker, has reacted cautiously to the changing workforce. Although the United States has some national policies, such as the Family and Medical Leave Act’s mandating unpaid leaves, it lags behind other advanced industrial countries, such as some European countries and Canada, in terms of paid maternity and parental leaves, reduced work time policies, quality child care and preschools (Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Heyman et al, 2004; Kossek 2005). Private sector corporations, especially

those in the Fortune 500, have adopted policies and programs to help their employees deal with the increasing requirements of work and home. Concerns regarding the ability of public sector organizations to recruit and retain qualified employees have been raised since 1989. The increasing competition for employees pushes issues of work-family balance onto the agenda of public organizations searching for ways to recruit and retain the best employees. The U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Work/Life Programs Center has provided leadership in developing work and family policies and has offered guidance, information, and technical assistance to agencies. To help employees meet family responsibilities, the Center encourages the use of alternative work schedules, telecommuting, leave programs, part-time employment and job sharing, Employee Assistance Programs, child care centers, and resource and referral services for child and elder care.

However, an increased government role runs counter to the United States' dominant cultural values of individualism and minimalist employer or governmental intrusion into individuals' private lives. Therefore, the individuals and their families remain seen as primarily responsible for balancing work and family (Parasuraman, 1997). Since the work-family problems experienced by employees can have a negative impact on employees and their families, employers, and on the society as a whole, all of these constituents have a stake in this issue. "The responsibility for developing and implementing effective ways of managing work-family conflict is therefore a shared one" (Parasuraman, 1997, p.5).

In spite of these trends, there is little understanding on how the ability to balance work and family life varies across the two sectors. While it is known that provision of family-friendly policies may vary by sector of employment (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995), it is not clear how these policies affect the direction and magnitude of

conflict, satisfaction, etc. Such information is necessary for policy makers and employers who are responsible for designing appropriate interventions as well as for the employees who are deciding which sector to choose.

## **I. Overview of Work-Family Conflict**

Work-family conflict is defined as “a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p.77). For employees with dependent care responsibilities, the task is in finding and maintaining a workable and acceptable combination of these often conflicting work and family domains. Thus, the psychological experience of ‘conflict’ is influenced by the level of demands individuals are confronted with at work and home, the meanings they attach to their participation in the work-family system, and by the resources available and their ability to use them to handle these demands (Saltzein, Ting, & Saltzein, 2001; Felstead, Jewson, Phizaclea, & Walters, 2002).

The increasing pressures for attracting and retaining talented employees have led many public and private organizations to develop family-friendly policies and programs aimed at providing employees with resources to balance their work and family responsibilities. They may be seen as “any benefit, working condition, or personnel policy that has been shown empirically to decrease job-family conflicts among employed parents” (Glass & Fujimoto, 1995, p. 382). Flexible scheduling, child/elder-care provisions, and condensed workweeks are common examples of such programs. Researchers, however, have begun to question the usefulness of family-friendly programs. Recent evidence shows that simple implementation of formal family- friendly policies and practices is not enough to

create a family-friendly environment (Allen, 2001; Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999; Lewis, 1997; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). It is suggested that other informal workplace characteristics, such as support from supervisors and coworkers, as well as the general supportiveness of the work-family culture among co-workers, may be even more important. Organizational culture regarding work-family issues has been defined as the “shared assumptions, beliefs, and values regarding the extent to which an organization supports and values the integration of employees’ work and family lives” (Thompson et al., 1999). However, these factors have received less attention in the public sector literature (but see Saltzstein et al., 2001). To our knowledge no previous studies have directly compared the formal and informal work-family support and their impact on work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions between the public and the private sector in the U.S.

The public sector is confronted with even more pressing challenges than the private sector to strike a balance between work and family responsibilities because the public sector labor force is predominantly female. According to Guy (1993, p.279), “women’s share of the federal workforce increased faster than women’s share of the private sector work force between 1976 and 1990”. Since many women are the primary family care takers, they want jobs offering them the opportunity to balance their work and family responsibilities. Nielsen, Simonsen & Verner (2004) talk about a segregation of the labor market into a family-friendly (i.e., public) and a non-family-friendly (private) sector, arguing that women self-select into sectors depending on institutional constraints, preferences for family-friendly working conditions and expected wage differences. In a study of Danish individuals ages 15–74, the authors found a severe penalty after birth-related leave in the non-family friendly sector and that women who would be affected by this penalty self-select into the family-friendly sector.

Martino-Golden (2005) also argues that many women in the U.S. choose to work for the Federal government because they perceive it to be more family-friendly than other alternatives. They even move from the private sector after becoming mothers to benefit from the family-friendly advantages provided by the federal government.

To increase their recruitment and retention success, employers must determine what people want most from their jobs and create a work environment that keeps their employees satisfied. Currently, many public sector organizations are focusing on strategies intended to enhance employees' work-family balance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Although much is known about the mechanisms of work-family conflict and job satisfaction in private sector organizations, less is known about how aspects of the public sector work environment, formal and informal work-family support, and their subsequent influence on important characteristics of employees' jobs, affect work-family balance, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions.

## **II. Purpose of the Study**

The main goal of the present study is to examine the role played by the sector of employment in the work-family conflict and their consequences on job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Mainly drawing on ecological systems theory, role theory, and social exchange theory, this study compares the availability of family-friendly policies, supportive work-family cultures, and job and work context characteristics in the two sectors and examine whether their impact on work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions varies according to the sector of employment.

Work-family conflict is important for individuals and their families, as well as for the organizations that employ them. Studies have shown that work-family conflict is associated



with work-related, nonwork-related, and stress-related deleterious outcomes (Allen, 2000). Work-family conflict has been shown to affect important organizational outcomes, such as job satisfaction (Netemeyer et al., 1996), organizational commitment (Wiley, 1987), employee turnover (Netemeyer et al., 1996), absenteeism and tardiness (Goff, Mount, & Jamison, 1990; Hammer, Bauer, & Grandey, 2003; Thomas & Ganster, 1995), and job performance (Aryee, 1992; Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Kossek, Colquitt, & Noe, 2001; Wayne, Musisca, & Fleeson, 2004). Additionally, work-family conflict is associated with distress/burnout (Frone et al., 1992; Frone et al., 1997; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999), decreased psychological health (Frone et al., 1995; Frone, M.R., 2000; Major, Klein, & Ehrhart, 2002; Kinnunen & Mauno, 1988; Frone, M.R., 2003), and alcohol abuse (Frone, M.R., 2000; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992).

The importance of examining job satisfaction and turnover intentions stems from concern for the organizational consequences that are hypothesized to result from job satisfaction and turnover. Research has shown that job satisfaction is related to motivation, citizenship behavior, withdrawal cognitions and behaviors, and organizational commitment (Kinicki et al., 2002). As a result of increased competition for employee talent and greater investment in employee development, turnover has become more costly, making employees' job satisfaction and commitment a critical human resource issue (Cliffe, 1998). Although some organizational turnover is unavoidable, and may even be desirable, voluntary turnover is difficult to predict and can reduce the overall effectiveness of an organization (Smith & Brough, 2003). Turnover intentions are extremely important because replacing an employee can cost at least 150% of the employee's annual salary (Bliss, 2001; Curtis & Wright, 2001).

According to Pekala (2001), the U.S. companies spend more than 140 billion every year in recruiting, training, and administrative costs to replace employees who decide to leave.

### **III. Significance of the Study**

This study is important for the following four main reasons. First, it identifies the prevalence of certain types of support policies in the public and the private sectors. Although previous studies have shown positive effects associated with the availability of family-friendly benefits, there is no empirical research evaluating how the availability of specific components of such benefit packages differ between the public and the private sector. Also, previous authors have identified sector of employment as a factor affecting the adoption of family-friendly policies (Goodstein, 1994), but there are no studies comparing the incidence to which the availability of the various types of family-friendly policies differs among the two sectors. Thus, it is important to know if the public and private sectors differ in terms of their preferences for adopting certain types of support policies.

Second, this study provides information about the work-family culture in public and private sectors that allows identification of specific components of the work-family culture that work best for each sector. This is an important issue, as recent research shows that it is not enough to adopt formal family-friendly policies and practices in order to create a family-friendly workplace (Allen, 2001; Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999; Lewis, 1997; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). For instance, the fear of negative career consequences may prevent employees from taking advantage of these formal policies and practices (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). Thus, it is important to identify the elements of work-family cultures that allow employees to take full advantage of the family-friendly policies, without fearing eventual negative consequences.

Third, the present study examines the job and work context characteristics and identifies their specific impact on the outcomes of interest in the two sectors. Overall, little evidence is available concerning the relationship between the work characteristics and employees' ability to balance work and family life (Berg et al., 2003). Although it is known that the work context and the job characteristics differ between the two sectors (Wright 2001), it is not clear how the job and work context affect work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions in the two sectors. Thus, by investigating these issues, the present study will fill this gap in the work-family literature.

Finally, this study also investigates sector-based differences in the level of job satisfaction, work-family conflict, and turnover intentions, and determines what factors (i.e., formal and informal support, job and work context) are better predictors of these outcomes of interest in the public and private sectors. Research comparing the work-related attitudes and behaviors (e.g., job satisfaction, motivation, organizational commitment) of employees working for public and private organizations reports mixed results, as some, for example, identify higher levels of job satisfaction in the public sector (Crewson, 1995; DeSantis & Durst, 1996), whereas other report higher levels of job satisfaction in the private sector (Khojasteh, 1993). Investigation of these issues is important, as differences between the two sectors should be taken into account in developing management strategies that work best for each sector.

#### **IV. Overview of the Study**

This study consists of four additional chapters. Chapter II reviews the theoretical perspectives employed in this study, namely ecological systems theory, role theory, and social exchange theory. This chapter also summarizes research in the areas of work-family

conflict, adoption of family-friendly policies by organizations, work-family culture, job and work context characteristics, and their impact on the three outcomes of interest for our study (i.e., work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions). Chapter III describes the methodology used in the present investigation, and the chapter includes the following three sections: (1) description of the subject sample, the survey procedures, and the data screening methods, (2) a summary of the research questions and hypotheses, and (3) description of the specific analytic tools employed to test the hypotheses. Chapter IV presents the results of this study, and comprises the following four sections: (1) description of sample demographics, with differences between the two sectors, (2) discussion of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis results, (3) the results of the Structural Equation Model testing, separately for the measurement and for the structural models, and (4) the results of the mediator analyses. Finally, Chapter V provides a discussion of the findings and their theoretical and practical implications, and includes the following four sections: (1) discussion of the specific research questions and goals of the study outlined in Chapter II, (2) a summary of the study's contribution to the literature, along with the practical implications for both public and private sectors, (3) discussion of the limitations of the study, and (4) directions for future research.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter presents the theoretical and empirical foundation that supports this study. It consists of seven sections. The first section reviews the theoretical perspectives employed in this study: the ecological systems theory, the role theory and the social exchange theory. The second section describes our outcomes of interest (i.e., work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions) and summarizes research in these areas. The third section summarizes the literature on family-friendly policies, presenting their antecedents, outcomes, and shortcomings. The fourth section presents the literature on informal, social network supports (i.e., supervisor and coworker support, work-family culture, and work-hours culture), along with their antecedents and outcomes. The fifth section summarizes the literature on job and work context characteristics. The sixth section addresses the mediator role of work-family conflict and job satisfaction. Finally, the seventh section discusses the role of the sector of employment in the relationship between the antecedent variables and our outcomes of interest.

### **I. Primary Theoretical Perspectives**

Our understanding of the relationships between organizational support (i.e., formal and informal) and the work-family interface emerges from the complementary contribution of three theoretical perspectives: (1) the ecological system theory, (2) the role theory, and (3) the social exchange theory. Together, these theories provide a general framework for developing a model of work-family conflict and for testing the relationship among different individual and organizational outcomes (e.g., work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions).

The ecological systems theory provides a comprehensive view of the work-family interface. By focusing on individuals in both their work and family roles, it enables an integrative understanding of the dynamic relationships between work and family. The role theory offers a good understanding of the basic processes that are behind the work-family interface, by explaining how an individual perceives processes both in the work and in the home domains. The social exchange perspective allows an in depth understanding of the work roles, by studying the social exchange relationships between employees and organizations. Thus, this theory provides a better understanding of the way formal and informal work-family support contribute to important individual and organizational outcomes, such as work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. The following section describes these theories, along with their implication for the current research.

### The Ecological Systems Theory

Emphasizing the lack of an integrative theoretical framework for the study of work-family interface, several authors have advocated the application of the general systems theory to work-family research (e.g., Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002; Voydanoff, 2002). Inspired by principles of the general systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1950), the ecological systems theory suggests that the work-family experience is a joint function of context, process, individual, and time characteristics (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Individual characteristics refer to gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, income, etc. The time characteristics refer in general to employee's life stage and the age of their children.

The context consists of interrelated structures and processes among three systems (i.e., micro-, meso-, and macrosystem), which differ in their immediacy to the individual.

The microsystem is the most proximal system to the individual, and the most relevant microsystems for the study of work and family are the home and the workplace. According to the ecological systems theory, the work and family microsystems interact with each other through permeable boundaries to create the work-family mesosystem. Thus, this is a bidirectional relationship in which work affects family and vice versa. The ecological systems theory also posits that the interactions between work, family, and individual characteristics may be facilitative or conflictual, with each work, family, or individual characteristic having additive or interactive effects on the work-family mesosystem (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Hill, 2005). According to the ecological systems theory, the micro- and the mesosystems are influenced by the larger macrosystem in which they are embedded. The macrosystem includes shared belief systems, social and economic resources, opportunity structures, hazards, and patterns of social interaction (Voydanoff, 2002).

The processes refer to the interaction between individuals and their environments, other employees, and/or symbols that create or influence outcomes (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). Important processes include the ways in which work and family affect each other (e.g., work-family conflict or positive spillover), the interaction between individuals and their coworkers and supervisors, etc.

In light of the systems theory, the work-family interface can be examined at two conceptual levels (Hammer, Colton, Caubet, & Brockwood, 2002). At the first level, studies can focus on both the work and the family systems as part of a larger life system. At the second level, studies can look either at the work or at the family systems separately by focusing on the subsystem that comprises them (e.g., supervisor-employee dyad, employee-coworker relationships, marital dyad).

The present study focuses on the individuals in their work and family roles, and on the interactions with their supervisors, coworkers, and the organization as a whole, leading to perceptions of work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. It uses ecological systems theory to examine the interface between work and family, viewing work and family microsystems as comprising a larger mesosystem. The context in which individuals' work-family experience takes place is the organization.

### The Role Theory

The role theory has dominated the work-family research. This theory proposes that organizations (e.g., work or family) may be viewed as role systems where the relationships between people are maintained by expectations that have been developed by roles (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). A role is a set of activities or behaviors that others expect an individual to perform (Kahn et al., 1964). As mentioned earlier, roles make up part of the microsystem level of the ecological system theory. Role theory assumes that both work and family domains entail multiple roles, each of which place demands on individuals.

Responsibilities from different domains compete for limited amounts of time, physical energy, and psychological resources (i.e., scarcity hypothesis; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Small & Riley, 1990). For instance, contradictory expectations within a role can create intra-role conflict or role ambiguity. Having multiple roles makes it impossible for the individual to meet all the expectations of these roles because the expectations inevitably will conflict in some way (Goode, 1960). This type of conflict has been called interrole conflict (Kahn et al., 1964). However, several studies have found that multiple roles do not have a detrimental, but rather a beneficial effect (i.e., enhancement hypothesis; Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Kirchmeyer, 1992; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). In contrast to the scarcity hypothesis,



the enhancement hypothesis argues that the more roles one occupies, the more resources one has and the more opportunity for energy to be recharged through enhanced self-esteem (Marks, 1977). Research has found that these two hypotheses are not mutually exclusive, and that both demands and resources spill over from one role to another (Barnett & Marshall, 1993). In a study of a sample of business professionals, Friedman & Greenhaus (2000) found that work and family are both “allies” and “enemies”, in that resources and emotions can be shared across domains, but they also can be depleted by an overly demanding role.

Other terms that have been used synonymously with role conflict and enhancement are negative and positive spillover. Spillover has been described as a mechanism by which work and personal life are linked (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000), in that positive or negative characteristics or experiences in one domain can generate similarities in the other domain. Although several mechanisms have been proposed that explain work and family linkages (i.e., spillover, compensation, segmentation, and resource drain), the spillover mechanism has received the most attention. Studies have shown that positive mood spills over from family to work, and negative mood (e.g., fatigue and distress) spills over in both directions (Williams & Alliger, 1994). Moreover, spillover may directly affect health outcomes. Hammer et al. (2002) have found in a longitudinal study that increases in positive spillover over time were associated with lower levels of depression.

A more recent theory that builds upon the role theory and fits nicely within the ecological system framework is the border theory (Campbell Clark, 2000). This theory introduces a theoretical framework linking the concept of organizational culture and the work-family interface. According to the border theory, each of our roles take place within a specific domain, and these domains are separated by physical, temporal, or psychological

borders. Employees are seen as “border-crossers”, moving continuously back and forth between their work and family lives. According to this theory, the flexibility and permeability of the boundaries between employees’ work and family lives will affect the level of integration and conflict between these domains. Boundaries that are flexible and permeable facilitate integration between work and family domains, but also create work-family conflict. When these domains are segmented, transitions are more difficult, but work-family conflict is less likely to occur. However, when borders are changed, similar changes need to be made to the domain’s culture and values.

The current study focuses on individuals in their work and family roles. Specifically, the present study investigates the ways in which organizations influence the borders between the work and the family domains, through flexible policies or improved relationships between supervisors, coworkers, and employees.

### **The Social Exchange Theory**

According to this theory, social interactions depend on the benefits and costs involved in the exchange. The employment relationship can be characterized as consisting of social and/or economic exchanges (Aryee et al., 2002). According to Blau (1964), social exchanges are voluntary actions, which may be initiated by an organization’s treatment of its employees, with the expectation that such treatment will eventually be reciprocated. Settoon, Bennett, & Liden (1996) define them as: “positive, beneficial actions directed at employee by the organization and/or its representative contribute to the establishment of high quality exchange relationships that create obligations for employees to reciprocate in positive, beneficial ways” (1996, p.219). Molm (1997) explains social exchange as a process through which actors obtain valued resources through reciprocal interactions with others.

At the organizational level, social exchange theory describes the relationship between employee and employer as actors who engage in exchange transactions over time to create an exchange relation (Sinclair, Hannigan, & Tetrick, 1995; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996). An exchange relationship can be developed between the employee and the organization as a whole, in situations in which the organization acts as a single entity in offering support policies. In such situations an exchange of commitments takes place, with the employee committing to work hard and to be loyal to the organization and the organization committing to support employees (Sinclair et al., 1995; Armeli, Einsenberger, Fasolo, & Lynch, 1998).

Exchange relationships can also be developed between an employee and his/her supervisor, with the employee committing to work hard for the supervisor, and the supervisor committing to support the employee (by providing work-family support). Shanock & Einsenberger (2006) found that favorable exchanges between an employee and an organization may lead to good treatment of supervisors, subordinates, and coworkers, depending on employee's level in the organization and his/her type of job. Exchange relationships can also be developed between coworkers - some authors have suggested that employees at virtually any level of the organization may reciprocate perceived organizational support by aiding coworkers (e.g., Lynch et al., 1999; Wayne et al., 1997) or supervisors (e.g., Lynch et al., 1999). The nature and strength of obligation felt through a social exchange relationship depend on the quality of the relationship between the actors in the exchange (Van Dyne et al., 1994; Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986).

Work-family resources can enhance workers' perceptions of organizational support (Grover & Crooker, 1995), and high levels of perceived support can, in turn, create obligations within individuals to repay the organization (Settoon et al., 1996, p.220). It is

important to note that resources can have different values from actor to actor and from interaction to interaction (Molm, 1997), as well as to a single actor at different points in times. As Gouldner (1960) pointed out, although the norm of reciprocity is universal, it is not unconditional. Even though a resource is generally valued, if an actor perceives that it does not need the resource, the resource will not have sufficient value to engage an exchange behavior. In order for the exchange to occur, the actors need to have a mutual dependence in obtaining valued resources (Molm, 1997). Therefore, the obligations engendered by work-family benefits depend on how much employees value them (Lambert, 2000). For example, studies (Sinclair et al., 1995) have found that provision of family-friendly benefits was related to increased affective commitment, intention to stay with the organization, and perceived organizational support, while provision of health benefits was only related to intention to stay with the organization and continuance commitment.

The current study examines three levels of social exchange, by investigating exchange relationships among employees and a) the organization, b) their immediate supervisors, and c) their coworkers. Because it allows consideration of multiple interactions simultaneously, the social exchange theory, along with the ecological system theory, enable a better understanding not only of the global exchange relationship between employees and the organization, but also of the more focused, dyadic relationships between employees and their supervisors and coworkers.

The purpose of the current study is to compare organizations from public and private sectors in terms of work-family support and work characteristics, and to determine how these variables influence the direction and level of the work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. An integration of the ecological systems theory, role, and social

exchange theories is used to explain these processes; the ecological systems theory provides a framework for the other two theories. This approach provides a comprehensive view of the work and family domains, by conceiving the work-family interface as a joint function of context, process, and individual. The role theory provides the foundation for understanding the basic processes behind the work and family interface. The comprehensive nature of the role theory makes it a valuable framework for studying the work-family interface. Finally, the social exchange theory is used to understand the effects of providing formal and informal work-family support on employees' ability to balance work and family responsibilities. Together, these three theories create a comprehensive framework that describes the context and the processes underlying work-family conflict, and their influence on job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

## **II. Outcomes of Interest**

### Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is an attitudinal variable that reflects how people feel about their jobs overall, as well as about various specific aspects of their jobs. Defined usually as “a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experience” (Locke, 1976), job satisfaction is an interaction between what employees want from their jobs and what they feel they receive. Spector (1997) defines it more simply as “...the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs”. Hackman & Oldham (1975) proposed that positive personal outcomes, such as high worker satisfaction, occur under three conditions: 1) experienced meaningfulness of work; 2) experienced responsibility for outcomes of the work; 3) knowledge of the actual results of the work activities.

According to the role theory, the expected relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction is that as work-family conflict increases, job satisfaction decreases (Kahn et al., 1964). Indeed, several studies found that work-family conflict is related to lower job satisfaction (Bedeian et al., 1988; Burke & Greenglass, 1999; Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001; Carlson & Perrewe, 1999). Also, a study examining the relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction (both global and facet satisfaction) found that work-family conflict related significantly to both types of job satisfaction, and the relation was significantly stronger to composite job satisfaction than to global satisfaction (Bruck, Allen, & Spector, 2002). However, there is evidence that this effect is differently influenced by factors such as type of conflict and gender. Bruck et al. (2002) also found that out of the three forms of conflict assessed simultaneously (time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based), the behavior-based was the only form of conflict significantly related to job satisfaction. There is also a debate about how the two directions of work-family conflict (work-to-family and family-to-work) predict job satisfaction, and the role that gender plays in this relationship. While some studies have shown that the relationship between global work-family conflict and job satisfaction is stronger for women than for men (Bruck et al, 2002; Greenglass, Pantony, & Burke, 1988; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998), other studies have not found any gender differences in the relationship between work-family conflict and work outcomes (Frone et al., 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1992).

Social exchange theory can explain the relationship between availability and utilization of family-friendly workplace supports and job satisfaction (Sinclair, Hannigan, & Tetrick, 1995), in such that perceived support satisfies the socio-emotional needs of the employees by increasing performance-reward expectancies and signaling the availability of

aid when needed (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). This is consistent with psychological contract theory (Rousseau, 1995) and perceived organizational support theory (e.g., Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002), which argue that employees who feel that the organization is involved in a positive social exchange will in turn have more positive attitudes toward the organization, such as increased job satisfaction (e.g., Judge, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1994).

This idea is also supported by empirical studies (Behson, 2005; Sahibzada, Hammer, & Neal, 2005). Behson (2005) found that organizations that support environments that allow employees discretion and autonomy in how they get their work done, encourage supervisors to be supportive of work–family issues, and do not penalize employees for devoting attention to family benefit more from increased employee satisfaction. Sahibzada, Hammer, & Neal (2005), examined whether work-family role combinations (i.e., work and elder care, work and child care, work and elder care and child care) and work-family culture significantly moderate the relationship between availability of workplace supports and job satisfaction. This study found that the relationship between availability of workplace supports and job satisfaction varied depending on the type of work-family role combinations and levels of work-family culture. Specifically, it reported a significant relationship for the elder care work-family role combination- higher levels of workplace supports in unsupportive work-family cultures were associated with the greatest levels of job satisfaction. Finally, this study also found that a supportive work-family culture and an increase in workplace supports decreased slightly job satisfaction for the elder care work-family role combination.

### Turnover intentions

Turnover intention represents an employee’s desire to leave the organization. It is a “conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization” (Tett & Meyer, 1993, p.

262). Turnover intention differs from turnover – it is actually more meaningful because many employees have the intent to quit but do not do so because the circumstance do not allow them to quit or because they have a fear of leaving. Turnover intention is a step that occurs immediately before an individual leaves an organization. Employee turnover has long been a concern of employers because of its link to behaviors such as attendance, turnover, and organizational citizenship (Schalk & Freese, 1997). However, it has become a critical issue for organizations in recent years as increased competition for employee talent and greater investment in employee development have made turnover more costly, making the retention of employees an acute human resource concern (Cliffe, 1998). Employers are searching for different approaches to promote loyalty (Hiltrop, 1995) and many have come to see family-friendly policies as an important retention strategy.

Social exchange theory suggests that perceived support is seen as indicating organization's commitment to the employee, which in turn creates an obligation within the employee to care about the organization and reciprocate with increased loyalty (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Previous studies (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Rhoades et al., 2001) further argued that employees tend to reciprocate the organization's support with higher commitment, in an attempt to help maintain their self-image, avoid the stigma associated with violation of the reciprocity norm, and encourage future favorable treatment from the organization. On the other hand, lack of support might make the employees feel that organizational resources are inadequate to deal with work issues intruding into the home, with possible negative consequence on their decision to stay with the organization.



## The Work-Family Conflict

Most work-family research has focused on the conflict caused by participation in multiple roles. As individuals have a finite amount of energy, involvement in multiple roles and the demands of these roles reduce available resources (Becker, 1985). Work-family conflict is defined as “a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. That is, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p.77). This definition implies a bidirectional dimension to work-family conflict (Frone et al., 1992; Frone et al., 1997), and thus, work-family conflict could originate in either domain: work can interfere with family responsibilities (work-to-family conflict) and/or family can interfere with work responsibilities (family-to-work conflict) (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). Research has shown that work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict are related but distinct concepts that have independent antecedents and outcomes (Frone et al, 1992; Frone et al, 1997).

*Work-to-family conflict* occurs when involvement in a work-related activity interferes with participation in a competing family activity (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). This type of conflict may be influenced by lack of support from management and coworkers, limited job autonomy, increased job demands and overload, inflexible working schedules, and increased number of hours worked (Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001). *Family-to-work conflict* occurs when involvement in a family activity interferes with participation in a work activity (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). This type of conflict may be affected by several factors such having a working partner, spousal support, equity in the division of labor at home, adequacy

of child care or eldercare provisions, gender and marital status of the person working, impairment level of adult-care recipients, and age of dependent children (Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001).

Although the work-family construct may be conceptualized bi-directional (i.e., from work to family and vice versa), I chose to examine only conflict stemming from work because previous models and research suggest that demands and resources at work are more likely to be related to work-to-family experiences (Frone, 1997; Voydanoff, 2002). Moreover, understanding the work-to-family interface may have greater practical significance because research indicated that the family domain is more permeable than the work domain, thus making work more likely to impact family than the reverse (Eagle, Miles, & Icenogle, 1997).

Greenhaus & Beutell (1985) identified three sources of inter-role conflict in the work-family interchange: time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behavior-based conflict. The *time-based conflict* occurs when demands in one domain are difficult to fulfill because of the time spent in the other domain. It reflects that time is a limited resource, that is, time spent in paid work is not available for family activities. In the United States time is disproportionately spent on work-related matters compared to time spent with family. Time-based demands include the amount of time in paid work, for example the number of work hours and the conditions under which time is spent, such as being required to work extra hours without notice, shift work, and overnight travel. The *strain-based conflict* occurs when strain (e.g., dissatisfaction, tensions, anxiety, and fatigue) in one domain interferes with normal responsibilities and relationships in the other domain. Strain reduces personal resources (e.g., energy and physical or mental capacity) needed for role performance (Pleck,

Staines, & Lang, 1980). Finally, the *behavior-based conflict* occurs when behaviors developed in one domain are incompatible with role demands in the other, and the person is unable to adjust his or her behavior when moving between domains. For example, a confrontational approach appropriate for solving work problems may be used inappropriately to solve family problems (Eckenrode & Gore, 1990; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

According to the role theory, the resources provided within one role enable employees to be more available to people in the other role, to become more competent in the other role, and to experience greater satisfaction in the other role. Since they facilitate work-family integration, the availability of resources is critical. From an employment perspective, work-family resources refer to the following three main domains (Kossek, 2005; Kossek & Friede, 2006): 1) Formal human resource policies and practices, 2) Informal organizational culture, and 3) Job and work context characteristics. Below, I will describe these resources and review the existing literature on their antecedents and consequences.

### **III. Formal Support Policies**

In an effort to help their employees better manage their work and family responsibilities, many organizations have implemented family-friendly programs. Broadly defined, family-friendly programs are programs designed to alleviate individual conflict between work and family (Arthur & Cook, 2003). They may be seen as “any benefit, working condition, or personnel policy that has been shown empirically to decrease job-family conflicts among employed parents” (Glass & Fujimoto, 1995, p. 382).

There are two types of formal organizational support policies usually adopted by employers to reduce work-family conflict: (a) policies designed to provide care services (dependent care policies), and (b) policies designed to create more flexible work

arrangements. Dependent care policies allow employees with care giving responsibilities to focus on doing their job while they are at work by assisting them with home activities. The most common practices include referral services to help employees locate day care and elder care providers, on-site or subsidized dependent care, after-school programs, and emergency backup care arrangements. Greater flexibility in scheduling work activities gives employees more control over work time through paid leaves or flexibility in terms of when or where they work (den Dulk et al., 2001), helping them to balance family care, personal, and home responsibilities. The most common practices include telecommuting, flextime, compressed work week, reduced work hours in the current job, job sharing, paid vacations, parental leaves, and paid family and medical leaves. While these policies can be useful for all employees, they are more important for the employees with responsibility for the care of children or elderly family members.

### **Types of Formal Support Policies**

*Dependent care supports.* Dependent care policies are designed to assist employees in caring for children or aging relatives. Most common practices include child care and eldercare services, as follows:

- On-site child care allows employers to design schedules that conform to work demands, with hours that can accommodate all shifts and capacity adjustable to meet variable demand (when schools are closed and the office is open) (Friedman, 2001).
- Other child care assistance- assistance with child care other than providing on-site child care. This includes off-site child care provided or subsidized by the employer, or any assistance with child care such as referral services.

- Elder care- assistance with elder care including any of the following: consultation and referral services or subsidies to help with the costs of elder care.

Dependent care benefits may enable employees to find high quality dependent care, thus allowing them to focus on their jobs while at work, with positive consequences on the quantity and quality of their work. For instance, policies that assist employees with child care or provide emergency back-up care when employees are confronted with child care problems are expected to reduce absenteeism and increase productivity. It has been shown that on-site child care allows employers to design schedules that conform to work demands, with hours that can accommodate all shifts and capacity adjustable to meet variable demands (e.g., when schools closed and the office is open) (Friedman, 2001). A survey conducted in 1998 by the Families and Work Institute at 1,057 companies and non-profit organizations with 100 or more employees (Galinsky & Bond 1998) found that 36% of companies provided child care information and referral services, 23% of companies provided elder care resource and referral services, 9% provided child care at or near the worksite, and 5% provided child care subsidies (Galinsky & Bond 1998).

*Flexible work arrangements.* Greater flexibility in scheduling work activities helps employees balance family care, personal, and home responsibilities. The most common practices include flextime, telecommuting, compressed workweek, reduced work hours in the current job, job sharing, and part-time work.

- Flexible starting and quitting times (flextime) – is an arrangement that allows employees to choose the time they start and end their workday on an individual but consistent schedule, while working full-time.

- Telecommuting- is the option for employees to do some or all of their work from home or a satellite office.
- Compressed work week- means working full-time but fewer than five days a week. For example, working four 10-hour days a week, or working 80 hours in nine days over a two-week period.
- Job sharing\_– is an arrangement where two or more employees are responsible for handling a single full-time job (Morgan & Tucker, 1991).
- Part-time work – is an arrangement in which employees work less than the standard forty-hours per week.

Many of these programs are becoming increasingly available. The SHRM 2003 Benefits Survey by the Society for Human Resource Management found that the top five family-friendly benefits offered are:

- Dependent care flexible spending accounts (71% of respondents)
- Flextime (55% of respondents)
- Family leave above required leave of Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) (39% of respondents)
- Telecommuting on a part-time basis (34% of respondents)
- Compressed workweeks (31% of respondents).

In the private sector, for instance, 43% of the employees in 2003 had access to some form of flextime, compared to 29% of employees 10 years before (Bond et al., 2003).

Similarly, the availability of these programs has also significantly increased in the public sector. While a GAO report from 1992 found the federal government lagging behind the private sector (US GAO 1992), a more recent OPM report (OPM 1998) found that workplace

policies such as flexible work schedules and part-time employment were available in most public sector agencies.

However, flexible schedules are not available to all employees, as studies show a considerable variation by gender, marital status (Sharpe, Hermsen, & Billings, 2002; McCrate, 2002; Galinsky & Bond, 1998), race (Golden, 2001), and occupation and job status (Golden, 2001; Beers, 2000; Presser, 1999). For instance, it has been reported that men, married workers, white, and more educated employees tend to have more access to family-friendly jobs (Golden, 2001; McCrate, 2002). In addition, studies show differences between the public and private sector: Berman, Bowman, West, & Van Wart (2006) argue that formal flextime programs are more prevalent in the public than in the private sector.

### **Why Employers adopt Family-Friendly Policies**

Family-friendly policies are becoming more and more important for employees. Given competitive labor markets, organizations need to include such options in their compensation packages. The Family Research Council (Washington, DC, 1996) reported that 35% of workers with children would be willing to change jobs to receive flexible scheduling around their home concerns (Rogers, 2001). Moreover, Ted Childs, the vice-president of global workforce diversity for IBM, said that a 1996 survey found that the company's top performers considered work-family programs as more important than any other employment consideration, including compensation and salary (Grimsley, 1997). Bender et al.(2005) examined job satisfaction and showed that US workers are willing to trade off earnings for family-friendly practices.

As family-friendly policies are becoming more valuable for employees, the percentage of employers offering them continues to increase. Organizations use family-

friendly programs to address a series of business needs: attract new employees, retain employees, reduce employee stress, and increase employee productivity (Sutton & Noe, 2005). Employee attraction starts from the assumption that family-friendly programs may help enhance organization's image for prospective applicants (Mitchell, Holtom, & Lee, 2002). Those applicants who desire family-friendly environments will be more attracted to organizations offering these options, this way extending the size of the applicant pool (Arthur & Cook, 2003).

Retention seems to become a more important reason for employers to adopt family-friendly policies than recruitment. A study conducted in 2002 by Bright Horizons Family Solutions and William Mercer, Inc. (the BHFS/Mercer study), asked companies with more than 500 employees the reasons for adopting work-family policies. 71% of the responding companies reported retention as their main reason, while recruitment was the main reason for only 47% of these companies (Friedman, 2001; Lippman, 2001). Organizations that employ individuals with generalizable skills are more and more concerned about retaining their employees, because employees with generalizable skills can move easily to other organizations (Coff, 1997; Konrad & Mangel, 2000). In addition, employers are concerned with the risk of losing highly productive employees. There seems to be a trend among employees, especially among those with higher education, to begin their families later, in their thirties or forties, when they reach the peak of their productivity level (Konrad & Mangel, 2000). Thus, organizations must develop programs to respond to family needs or risk to lose highly productive employees.

There are two main theoretical perspectives regarding the adoption of family-friendly practices: the *rational choice perspective* and the *institutional theory perspective*. The



*rational choice perspective* emphasizes efficiency arguments (i.e., the business case) to explain adoption of practices in terms of a cost-benefit calculus (Perry-Jenkins, Repetti & Crouter, 2000). Osterman (1995) argues that work-life balance policies may help employers in their efforts to recruit and retain valuable employees, may reduce lateness and unplanned absences, and may encourage employees to put forth discretionary effort beyond what is required in their job descriptions. Drawing on social exchange theory, Konrad & Mangel (2000) argue that work-life balance initiatives can increase employee effort even when they are not tailored to individual employee contributions.

The *institutional theory perspective* emphasizes the institutional pressures that influence organizations to respond similarly to their environments (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In this view, organizations adopt various innovative practices for reasons other than economic efficiency. It seems that once certain workplace policies have become widely established in a particular organizational field, other organizations will undergo institutional pressures to respond similarly to their environments (Glass & Estes, 1997). DiMaggio & Powell (1983) have identified three types of pressures: normative, mimetic, and coercive pressures.

Normative pressures suggest that family-friendly programs are adopted as a result of internal groups' pressure. Mimetic pressures suggest that organizations adopt work-family arrangements to imitate the actions of a leading competitor they perceive as more legitimate and successful. Coercive pressures refer to political pressures such as state regulations or societal expectations (den Dulk, 2001). This type of pressure suggests that organizations adopt family-friendly policies because they have to comply with the law or because they are sensitive to societal expectations. For example, the Family Medical Leave Act requires

employers to offer unpaid leave. As a result, organizations are forced to develop programs to comply with the law.

Variability among companies in the adoption of these policies is explained by differences in the visibility of the companies and in the extent to which social legitimacy matters to them. Public sector and large private sector organizations, being more visible, are most likely to develop policies as a result of their concern about their public image.

Goodstein (1994) argues that responsiveness to institutional expectations depends on both the strength of institutional pressures and on economic or other strategic business or technical factors, such as the need to retain skilled staff and the perceived costs and benefits of introducing work-family arrangements. The strength of institutional pressure, as well as the costs and benefits of work-family arrangements, depend on organizational characteristics, such as *sector of employment* and *workforce characteristics* (e.g., gender) (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995). According to den Dulk (2001), “by specifying relevant institutional conditions and organizational characteristics, it is possible to explain why some organizations develop work-family arrangements and others do not” (p. 72).

*Sector of employment.* The adoption of family-friendly arrangements is influenced by the fact that an employer is a public or a private sector organization. Public sector organizations were early innovators in work-family accommodations and continue to promote work-family initiatives (Goodstein, 1994; Kamerman & Kahn, 1987). The federal government adopted flextime policies in 1974, being the first major organization to do so (Fernandez, 1986). Many states, such as California, Michigan, and New York have introduced important initiatives to encourage public sector child care support for state employees and to increase states’ role in developing socially responsive policies (Goodstein,

1994; Hayghe, 1988). Public organizations are more visible and more likely to be evaluated according to governmental standards and norms, especially when government wants to set an example. They are sometimes required to execute government policy, which creates normative pressure on public organizations to conform (Den Dulk, 2001). Federal, state, and local governments can use their power to authorize or legitimate policies and structures (Goodstein, 1994; Scott, 1987) that other organization from the public sector will adopt. Scott suggests that subordinate organizations conforming to the influence of the state are “not compelled to conform but voluntarily seek out the attention and approval of the authorizing agent” (Scott, 1987, p. 502).

Family-friendly workplace policies have also been promoted as a way of attaining greater gender equity in the workplace (Gornick & Meyer, 2003). Because of the characteristics of the public sector labor force, which is predominantly female, the public sector is faced with even more pressing challenges to help their employees balance their work and family responsibilities. Since many women are the primary family care taker, they want jobs offering them the opportunity to balance their work and family responsibilities. Nielsen, Simonsen, & Verner (2004), starting from the assumption that there is a segregation of the labor market into a family-friendly (i.e., public) and a non-family-friendly (private) sector, argue that women self-select into sectors depending on institutional constraints, preferences for family-friendly working conditions, and expected wage differences. In a study of 22 mothers working in the professional ranks of the federal career civil service, Martino-Golden (2005) found that most of these women chose to work for the federal government because they perceived it to be more family-friendly than other alternatives.

Some of them moved from the private sector after becoming mothers to benefit from the family-friendly advantages provided by the federal government.

Because of its visibility and higher normative pressures, as well as its higher dependence on female employees, we expect the public sector to provide more family-friendly benefits than its private sector counterpart.

*H1a: Formal work-family support will be higher in the female-dominated public sector than in the private sector.*

*H1b: Public sector organizations provide more dependent care benefits than private sector organizations.*

*H1c: Public sector organizations provide more flexible work arrangements than private sector organizations.*

*Characteristics of the workforce: number of females in the workforce.* One important characteristic that affects the adoption of family-friendly policies is the number of females in the workforce. Family-friendly policies influence whether mothers remain at their jobs after childbirth (Aryee et al., 1998; Scandura & Lankau, 1997), can reduce turnover because it makes it easier for mothers with young children to continue working, can reduce absenteeism related to caring responsibilities because mothers can attend better to their children needs, and can increase productivity because they may enable employees to find good quality daycare and to concentrate better on their work, thus maximizing the quality and the amount of their work. As a result, organizations that depend on women to a higher degree are more likely to use family-friendly employment policies for recruitment and retention purposes (Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Guthrie & Roth, 1999).

However, findings on the influence due to the proportion of women in the workforce are mixed. While this factor was associated by some studies with the likelihood of adopting flexible work arrangements and work–family policies such as child care (Auerbach, 1990; Bardoel et al., 1998; Glass & Fujimoto, 1995; Goodstein, 1994), this relationship was not found to matter in other studies (Ingram & Simons, 1995; Morgan & Milliken, 1992). These contradictory findings may be related to the position held by women in organizations, as evidence indicates that organizations with a relatively large proportion of women in managerial positions seem to provide work–family arrangements more often than organizations where women’s employment consists mainly of lower skilled jobs (Glass & Fujimoto, 1995; Ingram & Simons, 1995).

The role theory suggests that men and women differ in the amount of time and energy allocated to the dual demands of work and family roles (Gerson, 1993; Gutek et al., 1991; Pleck et al., 1980). Women are more likely to be more involved in caring tasks than men are, thus the effects of work-family arrangements on absenteeism, productivity, and turnover can be significant in organizations with a large number of female employees. Based on the role theory, I expect that organizations with a large number of female employees are more likely to implement family-friendly policies and to develop family-friendly cultures to support their use.

*H2a: Informal work-family support will be higher in the female-dominated public sector than in the private sector.*

*H2b: Perceptions of supervisor support for work-family issues will be higher in the public than in the private sector.*

H2c: *Perceptions of coworker support for work-family issues will be higher in the public than in the private sector.*

H2d: *Perceptions of a supportive work-family culture will be higher in the public than in the private sector.*

H2e: *Perceptions of a supportive working-hours culture will be higher in the public than in the private sector.*

According to the institutional theory, since public sector organizations are more visible within the public area (Dobbin, Edelman, Meyer, Scott, & Swidler, 1988), they are also more likely to display good organizational citizenship by developing employment practices that treat workers holistically and equitably (Kalleberg et al., 2006). This may lead them to adopt high performance practices such as skill enhancement that provide for growth and self-actualization (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Public sector employees may also be especially likely to demand such employment practices (Kalleberg et al., 2006). DiMaggio & Anheier (1990) suggest that employees of not for profit organizations may also place higher priority on job quality than those of for-profit organizations.

Positive work characteristics are more compatible with humanistic work orientations, which I expect to be more common in public organizations.

H3a: *Public sector organizations will be more likely to provide positive work characteristics than private sector organizations.*

H3b: *Public sector organizations will be more likely to provide growth opportunities than private sector organizations.*

Greater performance pressures on private sector organizations may make them more likely to give their employees higher levels of autonomy. Thus, I hypothesize that:

H3c: *Public sector organizations will be less likely to provide high levels of autonomy than private sector organizations.*

#### Costs and Benefits of Family-Friendly Practices

The two types of family-friendly policies adopted by organizations to help employees manage work and family responsibilities (i.e., dependent care benefits and flexible work arrangements) differ in terms of their organizational and financial costs and benefits. The literature on family-friendly programs suggests that the extent to which providing family friendly assistance (i.e., assistance magnitude) is a burden to the organization in terms of monetary cost, time, or inconvenience has a very strong impact on image cost, fairness, compliance expectations, and appropriateness (Galinsky, Friedman, & Hernandez, 1991; Kingston, 1990; Neal et al., 1993). Assistance of greater magnitude is more likely to be perceived by employees as inappropriate, thereby having a negative influence on employees' perceptions of appropriateness and compliance (Veiga et al., 2004). As a result, employee's fear of resentment and perceived image cost for using the available benefits is likely to be higher (Cleveland, Barnes-Farrell, & Katz., 1997).

Dependent care benefits allow the organization to maintain its traditional schedules and processes despite changes in the demographic characteristics of its workforce. These benefits have substantial administrative and financial costs, but they do not require changes in work schedules, production processes or supervisory structures (Appelbaum et al., 2005). For instance, provision of on-site day care is very expensive and tends to serve only a limited number of employees (Glass & Estes, 1997; Erler, 2000). In contrast, flexible work arrangements usually involve less financial costs for employers, but they may impose other kinds of costs on the organization by requiring changes in the organization of work,

increasing managers' responsibility for coordinating work, and reducing supervisors' ability to use face time to monitor work effort (Beinecke, 1994; Glass & Estes, 1997; Brannen & Lewis, 2000; Appelbaum et al., 2005).

When providing family-friendly policies, organizations weigh costs against the benefits. Companies with high turnover pay a high price. It has been estimated, for example, that the costs of replacing professional employees can be up to five times the employees' annual salary (Vanderkolk & Young, 1991). These costs do not include indirect costs associated with lost human capital (human knowledge and future potential) and social capital (employee networks, team work and morale) in areas with high turnover. Employee retention helps the company contain the costs associated with identifying, recruiting, retaining and moving talent.

### **Outcomes of Family-friendly benefits**

Previous research suggests that providing family leave policies has benefits for organizations as well as employees. Adoption of the two main types of family-friendly benefits is usually justified by the following anticipated benefits: improved recruitment and retention, greater individual productivity, more positive attitudes and behaviors (Appelbaum et al., 2005).

*Recruitment and retention.* Most of the research has shown that both dependent care benefits and flexible work arrangements seem to improve recruitment and retention (Christensen & Staines, 1990; Kossek & Nichol, 1992; Groover & Crooker, 1995; Aryee et al., 1998; Almer & Kaplan, 2002; Youngblood & Chambers-Cook, 1984), although there also are studies that found little evidence for such a positive effect (Hennessey, 1989; Sloan & Costello, 1989; Dalton & Mesch, 1990). Kossek & Nichols (1992) compared users and



nonusers of quality, employer-subsidized, on-site child care and found that users were much less likely to turnover and more likely to return from maternity leave within a few months. Grover & Crooker (1995) found that people are more attached to organizations that offer family-friendly policies, regardless of the extent to which they might benefit personally from these policies. An excellent example of the effects of employer family-friendly policies on retention is provided by Aetna Life & Casualty. Before 1988 this organization had a 23% turnover rate among those who took family leave, especially among high-potential professional women. However, as a result of modifying company's policy to allow part-time return after family leave, they cut attrition by more than 50%, which resulted in an 88-91% retention rate of leave-takers and more than \$ 1 million in annual savings (Johnson, 1995).

*Organizational Performance.* In a study examining share price reactions to 231 work-family human resource policies adopted by Fortune 500 companies (and announced in the Wall Street Journal between 1971 and 1996), Arthur & Cook (2004) found abnormal stock market returns for large US firms associated with their announcements introducing family-friendly practices. Other studies also confirmed the positive impact of family-friendly policies on organizational performance by showing that family-friendly practices are associated with an improved perception of firm performance (Perry-Smith & Blum, 2001), and that these benefits increased organizational productivity (Konrad & Mangel, 2000).

*Individual Productivity.* The evidence from research investigating the relationship between child care policies and employee performance is not conclusive. For instance, while it has been shown that enrollment in a day care center was associated with decreased absenteeism and turnover rates, the enrollment was not related with job performance (Milkovich & Gomez, 1976). The job performance was not found to be related to the on-site

child care, either (Kossek & Nichol, 1992). It has been suggested that the relationship between child care benefits and performance might depend on the nature and quality of the child care arrangements, and on the informal work-family culture of the organization (Kossek, Colquitt, & Noe 2001).

*Absenteeism.* Several studies found no relationship between on-site child care and absenteeism (Youngblood & Chambers-Cook, 1984; Goff et al., 1990; Kossek & Nichol, 1992). However, Goff, Mount & Jamison (1990) found that satisfaction with child care arrangements was related to reduced work-family conflict and lower levels of absenteeism.

*Positive attitudes and behaviors.* Availability of formal support has been found to increase job satisfaction (Bond et al., 2002; Scandura & Lankau, 1997), organizational commitment (Bond et al., 2002; Scandura & Lankau, 1997; Sinclair et al., 1995; Groover & Crooker, 1995), employee loyalty (Roehling et al., 2001), life satisfaction (Bond et al., 2002). For example, Grover & Crooker (1995) found that employees who had access to family-friendly policies showed significantly lower intention to quit and greater organizational commitment. Also, Scandura & Lankau (1997) showed that women perceiving their organizations as offering flexible working hours reported higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction than women who did not.

The social exchange theory can explain the relationship between availability or utilization of family-friendly workplace supports and job related attitudes, such as job satisfaction. By offering family-friendly workplace supports, organizations demonstrate their commitment to the well-being of their employees. This, in turn, is expected to create more positive attitudes toward the organization, such as increased job satisfaction (e.g., Judge,

Boudreau, & Bretz, 1994), and to reduce employees' desire to leave the organization. Hence, I derived the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4:

H4a: *Provision of formal support will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H4b: *Provision of dependent care benefits will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H4c: *Provision of flexible work arrangements will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

Hypothesis 5:

H5a: *Provision of formal support will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

H5b: *Provision of dependent care benefits will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

H5c: *Provision of flexible work arrangements will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

*Work-family conflict.* Although dependent care assistance does not seem to have a strong effect on employee work-family conflict (T. D. Allen, 2001; Hammer et al., 2005; Thomas & Ganster, 1995), it has been suggested that employer-supported child care is directly related to lower levels of work-family conflict (Goff, Mount, & Jamison, 1990). Flexible work arrangements have also been found to decrease the level of work-family conflict (Hammer, Allen, & Grigsby, 1997; Shinn, Wong, Simko, & Ortiz-Torres, 1989;

Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Moreover, there is consensus among researchers that employees are better able to manage the incompatible demands of work and family when the timing of work is flexible (Christensen & Staines, 1990; Galinsky & Stein, 1990).

In accordance with the role theory, since dependent care benefits reduce the stress of dealing simultaneously with work and family responsibilities, I expect them to decrease the level of work-family conflict. Also, based on the social exchange theory and on previous empirical findings (Scandura & Lankau, 1997), I expect employees to perceive an organization's provision of dependent care benefits as an indication of its care and concern for the well-being of its employees, and thus to experience lower levels of interrole conflict.

Hypothesis 6:

H6a: *Provision of formal support will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H6b: *Provision of dependent care benefits will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H6c: *Provision of flexible work arrangements will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

### **Shortcomings of the family-friendly programs**

Although the provision of family-friendly benefits is on the rise, several deficiencies and limitations in the way these benefits are designed and implemented still exist. Because they do not reflect an organization's culture or change fundamentally supervisors' behavior, frequently such formal policies do not have the expected outcomes. Friedman (2001) criticized the existing family-friendly policies and practices, arguing that the majority of U.S. employers have not responded to the needs of working parents. They typically lack data on

the demographics of the people they employ and are unfamiliar with the responses that would be appropriate for their employees. Also, many companies outsource work-family policies to benefit consultants, which may result in work-family issues becoming more disconnected from the mainstream human resource strategy. Moreover, access to family-friendly policies is in general unequally distributed among employees, as professional, technical, and managerial employees are more likely to have access to formal support policies, such as flexible schedules and dependent care support (Glass & Fujimoto, 1995; Osterman, 1995; Appelbaum & Golden, 2002). Finally, a major limitation of the existing research examining the factors associated with the adoption of family-friendly policies and programs has been the tendency to focus on formal policy rather than informal practice. Frequently, employees, especially men, do not feel entitled to benefit from some provisions, or they are afraid that doing so would have negative consequences on their careers. Also, provisions are often seen as favors rather than entitlements (Robertson Cooper Limited, 2002). In sum, there is a growing consensus that the availability of family-friendly policies alone is not necessarily indicative of their use in practice (e.g., Cooper, Lewis, Smithson, & Dyer, 2001; Lewis et al., 2002; Rapoport, Bailyn, Fletcher, & Pruitt, 2002). This issue will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

To summarize, it is apparent that, as the percentage of people juggling work and family responsibilities is increasing, many public and private organizations have been offering dependent care supports and flexible work arrangements. Companies' decision to adopt these policies is influenced by rational choice arguments (recruitment, retention, etc), and/or by differences in their visibility. Public organizations and organizations employing a large number of women are most probable to adopt these policies, which in turn have

important benefits for organizations and their employees. Family-friendly policies increase recruitment and retention, job and life satisfaction, organizational commitment and loyalty, and reduce work-family conflict and absenteeism. However, simple provision of these policies may not be enough, as their actual implementation rests on informal work-family support, which seems to be as important or even more important.

#### **IV. Informal Organizational Support**

Recent research suggests that the informal support (i.e., supervisor support and the general supportiveness of the work-family culture) is a crucial variable for integrating work and family responsibilities. In fact, evidence show that informal support contributes more than formal support to achieving work-family balance and job satisfaction (Kinnunen et al., 2005; Allen, 2001; Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999; Lewis, 1997; Thompson et al., 1999).

The notion of informal support is circumscribed by the more general concept of social support, which defined as “information leading a subject to believe that he is cared for and loved, that he is esteemed and valued, and that he belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation” (Cobb, 1976, p.300). The literature on the effects of social support identifies two competing models: the direct effect hypothesis and the buffering effects hypothesis (Frone et al., 1995; Smith et al., 2002). The direct effect hypothesis states that social support has direct beneficial effects on work and health outcomes (Smith et al., 2002; Taylor & Aspinwall, 1996). The buffering effect hypothesis states that social support leads to more positive outcomes only under high levels of stress (Smith et al., 2002; Taylor & Aspinwall, 1996; Stroebe & Stroebe, 1996). Thus, social support moderates the relationship between stress and outcomes.

Social organizational support is related to the broader concept of organizational culture, which is defined as “a pattern of basic assumptions- invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration- that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein 1992, p.9). In Schein’s view, “failure to understand how culture works is just as dangerous in the organizational world as failing to understand gravity and the atmosphere in the physical/biological world” (p.48).

A number of authors have indicated the importance of organizational culture for the work-and family domains. Friedman (1990) mentions the need for a strong organizational culture, considering that policies or programs “are not going to have their desired effects if they are implemented in a culture hostile to families” (p.86). Thompson et al. (1999) suggest that an organization’s culture also contains subcultures centered around specific issues, such as work-family integration, and that employees’ perceptions regarding the supportiveness of the work-family subculture may affect employees’ willingness to request assistance. Lobel & Kossek (1996) suggest that the organizational benefits of family-friendly practices will never be fully realized unless organizations’ cultures support their use. Finally, Finkel, Olswang, & She (1994) and Judiesch & Lyness (1999) emphasize how culture shapes normative assessments regarding the appropriateness of program participation and related personal cost, such as fewer promotions and salary increase, that may reflect important image costs.

Although previous studies have associated the implementation of formal workplace supports with positive outcomes, there is also evidence that an unsupportive organizational culture may undermine the effectiveness of such programs (Thompson, Thomas, & Maier,

1992). A significant number of barriers to work-family balance have been identified within the organizational cultures. For instance, certain aspects of an organization's culture, such as the assumption that long hours of face time reflect employees' commitment and productivity, can co-exist with the formal provisions of work-family support (Baylin, 1993; Cooper et al., 2001; Lewis et al., 2002). Also, organizations have been historically designed for married men with homemaker wives. Moreover, many managers still link career advancement to long working hours, evening and weekend work, extensive travel, and frequent relocations. Perlow (1995) conducted a study of engineers and identified three barriers that prevent work-family policy effectiveness. The first barrier is the view that one must be "physically seen" at work to be considered as working. Thus, working at home or a compressed workweek is seen negatively. The second barrier is that one must work extended hours at the workplace in order to be considered committed to the organization. The third barrier is that work should be seen as one's priority.

Kossek, Colquitt, & Noe (2001), in a study of employees of a public university, examined the effects of a climate for sharing concerns and a climate for making sacrifices on work and family outcomes. They found that a climate of making sacrifices, in which employees are expected to restructure family to accommodate work and to leave family concerns at home while at work, is problematic for employees trying to balance work and family demands. In these organizations, even though formal policies are provided, cultural norms and expectations prevent employees from using them.

Saltzstein et al., (2001), in a study of federal government employees, found that organizations with unsupportive cultures, managers or supervisors may discourage the use of family-friendly supports and may penalize employees for using them. Supervisors can



undermine family-friendly programs by “failing to make employees aware of programs, by routinely denying requests to utilize programs, or most significantly by continuing to participate in and support traditional cultures that emphasize and reward the single-minded pursuit of work goals to the exclusion of personal life” (p.464).

According to the social exchange theory, by offering informal work-family supports, organizations demonstrate their commitment to the well-being of their employees. I expect this, in turn, to create more positive attitudes toward the organization, such as increased job satisfaction, and to reduce turnover intentions. Also, since informal supports reduce the stress of dealing simultaneously with work and family responsibilities, I expect them to decrease the level of work-family conflict.

Hypothesis 7:

*H7a: Provision of informal support will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

*H7b: Provision of informal support will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

*H7c: Provision of informal support will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

#### Measures of Informal Work-Family Support

Work-family culture has been operationalized in different ways. Some researchers have included both formal (e.g., actual benefits offered, degree of schedule flexibility) and informal (e.g., perceptions of support) elements in their measures (e.g., Clark, 2001; Warren & Johnson, 1995). Others have included only informal or intangible aspects of culture or climate (e.g., Allen, 2001; Kossek et al., 2001; Thompson et al., 1999). A search of the

literature revealed the following five different multidimensional measures of work-family culture, which are presented chronologically, below.

The first scale was developed by Thompson et al. (1999), who identified three factors associated with work-family culture: managerial support, perceived career consequences for using work-family benefits, and organizational time demands. *Managerial support* refers to the extent to which managers are supporting, and are sensitive to, employees' family needs. The *perceived career consequences* refer to employees' anticipation of positive or negative consequences of using work-family benefits. *Organizational time demands* refer to organizational norms and expectations about the number of hours employees are expected to work and about employees' use of time (whether they are expected to take work at home).

The second measure was developed by Kossek et al., (2001), who distinguished between a *climate for sharing family concerns* and a *climate for sacrificing family for work*. These authors found that the climate for sharing family concerns was positively related to employees' work performance and well-being, whereas the climate for sacrificing family for work was negatively related to well-being and positively related to work-family conflict.

The third measure was developed by Clark (2001) and includes the following three aspects: *temporal flexibility*, *operational flexibility*, and *supportive supervision*. *Temporal flexibility* is defined as the ability to have discretion in one's work schedule, *operational flexibility* is defined by Bailyn (1997) as control over the conditions of work, and *supportive supervision* refers to supervisors' support for individuals with family responsibilities.

The fourth scale, developed by Allen (2001), measures organizational culture by examining *Family Supportive Organization Perceptions* (FSOP), which concentrates specifically on global employee perceptions of the extent to which their organization is

family-supportive. This author criticizes previous studies that have linked the global supportiveness of organizations with managerial or supervisor support (e.g., Thompson et al., 1999), considering that these two are different concepts, and that they should be kept separate. She does not include managerial or supervisor support in this scale, but rather measures this aspect by using a separate scale.

The fifth measure of work-family culture was developed by Haas et al. (2002) and measures culture both at the company and at the work group level. In their study, these authors used the term organizational culture instead of using the concept of work-family culture. Three of the most important scales concerned with culture at the company level are *masculine ethic*, *caring ethic*, and *equal employment opportunity*. *Masculine ethic* refers to cultural aspects that may hinder employees from combining successfully work and family responsibilities, *caring ethic* provides employees with better options to combine their work and family demands, and *equal employment opportunity* ethic refers to an organization's commitment to improve the position of women and show that an organization values women's work.

In summary, several key features of work-family culture can be identified in the above mentioned measures of work-family culture. First, work-family supportiveness (organizational, managers and supervisors, or coworkers) was the most often used measure, being included, in one form or another, in every measure. Second, the level of involvement expected by an organization from its employees, in terms of psychological identification or time commitment, was included in three of the measures. Third, job control or flexibility was included in two of the scales, while career consequences associated with the utilization of formal work-family support was assessed only in one measure. Fourth, the work-family

culture has been operationalized primarily at the level of behavioral norms and expectations prevailing in organizations (Kinnunen et al., 2005).

### **Types of Informal Support**

For the purpose of this study, I considered the definition and the measure of work-family culture developed by Thompson et al. (1999) as the most appropriate. In addition to the three measures of work-family culture used by these authors (i.e., *managerial/supervisor support*, *career consequences*, and *organizational time demands*), I also included in this study *coworker support*. The existing literature on these four aspects of informal organizational support is reviewed below.

*Supervisor support.* Previous research shows that the most important component of the family culture is a supportive supervisor (Clark, 2001; Galinsky, Bond, & Friedman, 1993; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Thompson et al., 1999; Warren & Johnson, 1995). Supervisors are seen as “agents of the organization, having responsibility for directing and evaluating subordinates’ performance, employees view their supervisor’s favorable or unfavorable orientation toward them as indicative of the organization’s support” (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Supervisors play an important role in the effectiveness of work-family policies, because they may encourage or discourage employees from using these programs. Previous research has found that supervisor support for family has positive outcomes for employees and organizations, in both private and public sectors. In the private sector, for instance, Repetti & Cosmas (1991) examined the effects of supervisor and coworker support on job satisfaction among 299 non-managerial employees from two banks, and found that supervisor support was related to job satisfaction, above and beyond coworker support. Also,

Goff et al. (1990), in a study of employer-supported child care, found that supervisor support was related to lower work-family conflict and to reduced absenteeism. Thomas & Ganster (1995), in a study of health professionals with children under 16, found that supervisor support was directly related to increased job satisfaction, and indirectly related to depression and somatic complaints, decreasing depression and somatic complaints through increased perceived control and decreased work-family conflict. Frone et al. (1997) found that instrumental supervisor support was negatively related to work distress or dissatisfaction and work overload and positively related to work time commitment. Thus, supervisor support had important direct effects on organizational outcomes and indirect effects on work-family conflict.

These findings from private organization were confirmed in studies on public organizations (Ezra & Deckman, 1996; Brough & Pears, 2004) and by mixed studies (i.e., including data from both sectors) (Mauno et al., 2005; Bond et al., 2002; Thompson et al., 2005). Ezra & Deckman (1996) found that perceptions of supervisor understanding or support of Federal employees were related to increased satisfaction with work-family balance only among fathers. Also, Brough & Pears (2004), in a study of public sector human services workers, examined the influence of both practical and emotional supervisor and coworker support on job satisfaction and work well-being, and found that practical supervisor support had greater positive impact on job satisfaction than supervisor emotional support. However, no evidence of a similar relationship was demonstrated for work well-being.

Mauno et al. (2005b), in a study of individuals from four public and private organizations in Finland, found that public sector men perceived their managers as more supportive with respect to work-family requirements than public sector women, whereas in

the private sector the women perceived their managers as being more supportive compared to men. Also, in a study using the 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce, Bond et al. (2002) found that supervisor support for work-family issues was related to increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and life satisfaction and to decreased work-family interference, negative spillover from work to family, and mental health problems. Using the same data set, Thompson et al. (2005) found that supervisor support was positively related to job, family, and life satisfaction, and negatively related to stress, intentions to quit, and work-family conflict. They also found that supervisor support was related to positive spillover between job and home.

In summary, the extant literature clearly suggests that supervisors who support work-family policies contribute to increased job satisfaction (Bond et al., 2002; Repetti & Cosmas, 1991; Saltzsein et al., 2001; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Allen, 2001), career satisfaction (Aryee & Luk, 1996), organizational commitment (Allen, 2001; Bond et al., 2002), satisfaction with work-family balance (Ezra & Deckman, 1996; Saltzsein et al., 2001), and organizational citizenship behavior (Clark, 2001), and to decreased work-family conflict (Anderson et al., 2002; Bond et al., 2002; Frone et al., 1997; Goff et al., 1990; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Carlson & Perrewe, 1999), absenteeism (Goff et al., 1990), work distress (Frone et al., 1997), and depression (Thomas & Ganster, 1995), less intention to quit (Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999).

These findings are consistent with the role theory. Because supervisor support assists employees in managing work and family demands, and thus reduces role strain (and also the work-family conflict), one may expect that enhanced supervisor support would increase employee job satisfaction, commitment, and loyalty. As agents of the organization,

employees tend to view their supervisors' favorable or unfavorable treatment of them as indicative of the organization's support. Thus, the social exchange perspective would also predict that employees who receive informal support from their supervisors would reciprocate with increased job satisfaction and reduced turnover intentions (Sinclair et al., 1995; Judge, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1994; Wayne, Shore & Liden, 1997).

Hypothesis 8:

H8a: *Provision of supervisor support will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H8b: *Provision of supervisor support will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H8c: *Provision of supervisor support will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

*Coworker support.* There is very little research on coworker support, and most of this research focuses on the relationship between general coworker social support and general outcomes. The social system of an organization is comprised of employees interacting with each other, and thus we cannot understand an organization's work-family support culture if we do not acknowledge the importance of employees' interactions with one another, and that these relationships comprise social capital. In this context, this scarcity of research on coworker support is surprising.

The few studies investigating this issue found that coworkers and supervisors affect employees' ability to integrate work and family demands. It is difficult, however, to determine the effects of coworker vs. supervisor because in some studies these items were either combined into a single measure or were combined with other constructs, such as job

satisfaction. Glass & Riley (1998) examined employee retention following childbirth. They interviewed employed pregnant women at three different points in time (last trimester of pregnancy, 6 months, and 12 months postpartum) and found that coworker/supervisor support was related to decreased turnover following childbirth. However, because they did not measure coworker and supervisor support separately, these findings are difficult to interpret. Frone (1997), on the other hand, studied instrumental coworker support separately and found a clear negative relationship with work-family conflict. Ducharme & Martin (2000) also investigated coworker support and found that both affective and instrumental coworker support were related to increased job satisfaction, with instrumental support being a stronger predictor. Moreover, Beehr, Jex, Stacy, & Murray (2000) examined four dimensions of coworker support (i.e., global functional coworker support, communication about positive issues at work, communication about negative issues at work, and communication about non-work issues), and found that global coworker support was related to decreased depression, and communication about positive issues was related to decreased depression and frustration. Also, communication about negative issues at work was related to increased depression and frustration. Finally, Brough & Pears (2004), in a study of public sector human services workers examining the influence of both practical and emotional supervisor and coworker support on job satisfaction and work well-being, found that perceived supervisor support determined higher levels of job satisfaction than coworker support.

In summary, coworker support has been shown to increase job satisfaction (Ducharme & Martin, 2000; Jones & Butler, 1980), job performance (Beehr et al., 2000), job involvement (Jones & Butler, 1980), psychological well-being (Beehr et al., 2000), and to



decrease turnover (Glass & Riley, 1998; Jones & Butler, 1980). In addition, coworker support has also been found to reduce the role conflict (Jones & Butler, 1980), which is consistent with the role theory perspective. As mentioned earlier, reciprocity is a basic principle of social exchange, and thus I may predict that employees who receive informal support from their coworkers would reciprocate by increased levels of job satisfaction and decreased work-family conflict and turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 9:

H9a: *Provision of coworker support will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H9b: *Provision of coworker support will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H9c: *Provision of coworker support will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

The *work-family culture* (i.e., perceived career consequences) refers to employees' anticipation of positive or negative consequences of using work-family benefits. It has been suggested that participation in family-friendly arrangements reduces employees' "face time" at work, which may affect their career development and promotions, as they will be less visible at work (Baylin, 1993). Employees participating in work-family programs may be seen as less committed to their organizations (Allen, 2001; Rodgers, 1992), which may also damage their career progress. Fear of negative career consequences is cited often as a major barrier that prevents people from using flexible work arrangements (Galinsky & Bond, 1998; Thompson et al., 1999; Cohen & Single, 2001; Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002), and that

employees' willingness to use formal supports may be affected by both perceived and actual limitations (Wagner & Hunt, 1994).

Galinsky & Bond (1998) found differences in the perceptions of employers and employees regarding employees' ability to use alternative work arrangements and leave policies without negative consequences on their chances for advancement or promotion. Only 10% of the surveyed company representatives said that benefit use would jeopardize employee advancement, whereas 40% of the employees surveyed in the 1997 NSCW felt that use of alternative work arrangements or leave for family reasons would jeopardize their chances for advancement (Galinsky & Bond, 1998). Thompson et al., (1999) examined whether a supportive work-family culture was associated with greater benefit utilization and work-family conflict. They found that, in addition to the impact of work-family benefit availability, negative career consequences associated with the use of family-friendly benefits were related to higher levels of work-family conflict. Cohen & Single (2001) examined perceptions about the effects of using alternative work arrangements among 107 employees and managers from two locations of a large multinational accounting firm. These authors presented employees scenarios profiling a "manager" and asked them to answer questions about the likelihood of advancement and voluntary and involuntary turnover of the manager. They found that those employees who were presented as using alternative work arrangements in the scenarios were perceived as less likely to advance and more likely to leave their jobs. The conclusion of this study was that firms may offer alternative work arrangements, but the necessary supportive culture that allows use of such arrangements may be lacking. Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly (2002), using data from the 1997 National Study of the Changing Workforce, found that employees who expected negative career consequences for putting

their family needs first were more likely to report work-to-family conflict. Concerns related to negative career consequences had also a direct effect on job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Finally, Mauno et al., (2005b), in a study of individuals from four public and private organizations in Finland, found that public sector employees experienced less frequently negative career consequences related to the use of family-friendly benefits than their private sector counterparts.

In summary, studies have shown that employees' anticipation of negative consequences for using family-friendly benefits prevent employees from using them (Galinsky & Bond, 1998; Thompson et al., 1999; Cohen & Single, 2001; Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2002), and contribute to increased work-family conflict (Thompson et al., 1999; Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002) and turnover intentions (Cohen & Single, 2001).

According to the role theory perspective, perceived negative career consequences are likely to increase role conflict and create a negative reaction to the work environment. Based on the social exchange theory, I expect that the negative reactions would decrease employee job satisfaction and the desire to stay with the organization.

Hypothesis 10:

H10a: *Work-family culture will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H10b: *Work-family culture will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H10c: *Work-family culture will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

*The work-hours culture.* This dimension refers to organizational norms and expectations about the number of hours employees are expected to work and about employees' use of time (whether they are expected to take work at home). Organizations demand employees to demonstrate commitment by working long hours and by making work the central focus of their lives (Fried, 1998; Schor, 1991), creating what Fried (1998) called an "overtime culture" (p. 39). According to Blair-Loy & Wharton (2002), this can create a vicious circle in which the long hours worked make the work-family policies necessary, but the employees are reluctant to use them because of anticipated negative consequences. As a result, work-family conflict is likely to occur (Frone et al., 1997).

Research has shown that working long hours has implications for employee health and well-being (Sparks, Cooper, Fried, & Shiron, 1997), as well as for their ability to balance work and family demands. Thompson et al. (1999) found that employees who perceived heavy organizational time demands were more likely to report higher levels of work-family conflict. Major, Klein, & Ehrhart (2002), in a study of employees of a Fortune 500 company, found that organizational norms for how much time should be spent at work were predictive of hours worked, which, in turn, were related to work-family conflict. Also, work-time was related to psychological distress (e.g., depression) indirectly, through its effect on work-family conflict. Brett & Stroh (2003) investigated why some managers work extreme hours, defined as 61 or more hours per week, and found that employees who worked the longest hours felt the most alienated from their families.

In a research with software and product development engineers, Perlow (2001) found a widespread perception that long working hours were required in order to keep the company competitive. Engineers who prioritized work differently, leaving at 5 PM every day, often

suffered from negative career consequences (Perlow, 1997), reinforcing further the culture of work over family. The study also found that the type of coordination among group members (e.g., managerial-centered vs. team-centered) affected the number of hours worked as well as their schedule flexibility. The type of coordination also affected the degree to which employees could substitute for each other, enhancing schedule flexibility (Perlow, 2001). Thus, the type of coordination and substitutability may affect directly the culture of overwork and the ability to use flexible work arrangements.

In summary, high organizational time demands have been associated with work-family conflict (Thompson et al., 1999; Major, Klein, & Ehrhart, 2002), alienation (Brett & Stroh, 2003), and health problems (Sparks, Cooper, Fried, & Shiron, 1997; Major, Klein, & Ehrhart, 2002).

An unsupportive work hours culture exacerbate the difficulties of integrating work and family responsibilities, thus increasing the likelihood of role conflict and creating a negative reaction to the work environment that decreases employees' satisfaction and desire to stay with the organization, which is consistent with the role theory perspective. Also, according to the social exchange perspective, employees who perceive an unsupportive work-hours culture would feel neglected and not taken care of by the organization, and would reciprocate with decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 11:

H11a: *A supportive work-hours culture will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H11b: *A supportive work-hours culture will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H11c: *A supportive work-hours culture will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

### **Antecedents of a Family-Friendly Culture**

A critical issue to address here is why some organizations decide to be responsive to work-family issues by providing supportive programs and creating supportive cultures, while others do not. It is also important to know why there are so wide discrepancies between subunits within organizations (e.g., some but not all employees have access to family-friendly benefits, some but not others are penalized for taking advantage of such policies and programs, etc.). Thompson, Andreassi, & Prottas (2005) identified possible structural antecedents at the job level (both job characteristics and job demands), work-group level, and organizational level. At the job level, because performance criteria for managerial and professional jobs are often ambiguous (Baylin, 1993), managers use “face time” or visibility at work as a measure of successful performance. This may create a culture where “being there” is more important than the actual work productivity (Baylin, 1993).

At the group level, Thompson (1967) suggested that two types of task interdependence, pooled and sequential interdependence may be relevant to understanding which jobs can be modified to support greater work-family balance. Task interdependence among geographically dispersed employees may require greater amounts of business travel, which has negative influences for employers and their families (Westman, 2003), or the need to work late hours to be able communicate electronically (via video-conferencing, email, phone) among multiple time zones. Perlow (2001) also identified other group-level antecedents: type of work coordination among group members (e.g., managerial-centered vs. team-centered), and substitutability of employees. At the organization level, Thompson,

Andreassi, & Prottas (2005) also identified type of industry (e.g., service vs. manufacturing), production technology (e.g., batch-process vs. continuous-process manufacturing), and sector of employment (whether the organization is public vs. private sector) as antecedents of a supportive work-family culture.

### *Outcomes of Work-Family Culture*

*Outcomes for the usage of family-friendly benefits.* Researchers have investigated the relationship between work-family culture and the extent to which the employees use the available family-friendly benefits. Thompson et al. (1999) found that employees were more likely to use family-friendly benefits when they perceived their organizations and their supervisors as providing a family-supportive work environment. Allen (2001) found that employees who reported favorable Family Supportive Organization Perceptions also reported greater use of flexible work-family arrangements (e.g., flextime, compressed work-week, part-time work). Haas et al. (2002) found that organizational cultures showing high caring and low masculine ethic increased fathers' participation in parental leave.

Blair-Loy & Wharton (2002) studied possible contextual factors that may influence the use of family-friendly benefits, by examining whether the existence of powerful supervisors and powerful coworkers would increase the use of family-friendly policies. They found that the amount of power of employee's coworkers and supervisors (contextual variables) affected the use of flexible policies (e.g., flextime, telecommuting). However, the use of care-related benefits (e.g., day care and paid/unpaid leave) was influenced solely by individual factors, with women, single individuals, and those with dependent care responsibilities more likely to use family-care policies.

Other research has also found that usage of family-friendly benefits is affected by employees' individual factors. Employees who are women, married, or have children living at home are more likely to use work-family arrangements (Thompson et al., 1999; Dikkers et al., 2004). Secret (2000) suggested that specific family problems (e.g., child care problems, family-related crisis) were responsible for women's usage of parental leave.

Use of family-friendly benefits is also affected by the type of organization. Mauno et al. (2005b), in a study of four organizations in Finland, found that policy use was associated with lower career consequences in the female-dominated public sector than in the male-dominated private sector. Dikkers et al. (2004), in a study of Dutch employees of a financial consultancy firm and a manufacturing company, found that the culture differed between the two male-dominated organizations: it was perceived as more supportive but at the same time as more constraining in the consultancy firm than in the manufacturing company.

*Outcomes for well-being: Attitudes and Behaviors.* The perception of a supportive work-family culture has been associated with important work outcomes and employee attitudes and behaviors. Perceptions of a supportive work-family culture have been shown to decrease negative work-related outcomes such as work strain (Warren & Johnson, 1995), work-family conflict (Allen, 2001; Anderson et al., 2002; Colton et al., 2000), and turnover intentions (Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999). Both Allen (2001) and Thompson et al. (1999) found that these relationships held after controlling for benefit availability, thus confirming the notion that a supportive culture has an influence on employee attitudes above and beyond simply offering work-family benefits. In addition, studies have shown that perceptions of a supportive work environment are associated with positive attitudes such as job satisfaction (Allen, 2001; Mauno et al., 2005b), organizational commitment (Allen, 2001;



Lyness, Thompson, Francesco, & Judiesch, 1999; Thompson et al., 1999; Dikkers et al., 2004), and work-family balance (Dikkers et al., 2004; Mauno et al., 2005b; Thompson et al., 1999).

To summarize the findings concerning the effect of types of informal support, the available evidence suggests that although an increased number of organizations have implemented formal work-family policies, they are often underutilized in the absence of informal support, and thus they may not always have their intended consequences for individuals or organizations. Formal policy use may be left to supervisor discretion or it may be counteracted by negative attitudes of superiors and coworkers and nonsupportive informal work environments, such as long working hour cultures. However, the available evidence also shows that when the four types of informal work-family support discussed above are present, they decrease work-family role conflict and increase job satisfaction, loyalty and commitment, which is consistent both with the role theory and the social exchange perspectives.

## **V. Job Characteristics and the Work Context**

Job characteristics have long been theorized as providing resources that may positively affect employees, helping them to effectively manage the inherent demands of work (Karasek, 1979). Recently, authors started arguing that job characteristics (e.g., authority, variety) create positive effects in the form of motivation, energy, new skills, or attitudes that can facilitate functioning in other life domains such as in the family (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Geurts & Demerouti, 2003). For example, Berg, Kalleberg, & Appelbaum (2003) argue that employees' ability to balance their work and family demands depends on the characteristics of the jobs and workplaces: work experiences that affect the

quality of employees' life may affect their psychological well-being at home and their ability to address non-work demands. They assert that meaningful and challenging work, which offers employees opportunities to use their skills and to make decisions that affect their work routines, may have a positive influence on employees' perception of an organization as family friendly. Berg et al. (2003) assume that individual and family characteristics influence people's decision to join particular kinds of organizations and jobs, and some types of jobs and workplaces make it more or less likely for employees to fulfill both their work and family responsibilities.

Work characteristics such as job autonomy and growth opportunities provide resources that may create positive effects in the form of motivation, new skills or attitudes, enabling employees to balance more effectively their work and family responsibilities. Thus, I expect them to increase job satisfaction and employees' desire to stay with the organization, and to reduce work-family conflict.

Hypothesis 12:

H12a: *Work characteristics will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H12b: *Work characteristics will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H12c: *Work characteristics will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

However, there is no empirical evidence that the macro-level changes related to family structure have a differential effect on public versus private sector employees. What do vary between the public and the private sectors are the job characteristics and the work

demands. “If sector differences (in job satisfaction) exist, they should be at least partially attributable to specific sector differences in work context and job characteristics” (Wright 2003, p.72). Job characteristics (both perceived and objective) affect employees’ level of control when confronted with conflicting role pressures, and thus the level of work-family conflict and job satisfaction. The characteristics of the work context have important influences on these job characteristics and attitudes. Thus, of particular interest for the present study are those job and work context characteristics that presumably distinguish between the public and the private sectors: job autonomy and growth opportunities.

*Autonomy/Perceived job control* is defined as “the degree to which the job provides substantial freedom, independence, and discretion to the individual, and discretion to the individual in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures to be used in carrying it out” (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1992, p.178). Karasek (1990) studied the effects of autonomy on employees’ health over a thirty-year period and found that increased employee participation reduced psychological strain resulting from stressful events and stress-related physical illness. Consistent with Karasek’s findings, other studies found that the amount of control employees perceive to have in their work environment can reduce their experience of work-related stress (Ganster & Fusilier, 1989). It has also been shown that autonomy is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction (Clark, 2001; Kackman & Oldham, 1976; Parasuraman & Alutto, 1984). Batt & Valcour (2003) assert that, by extension, autonomy should increase employees’ ability to control decisions over when, where, and how to integrate work and family responsibilities. However, they found no relationship between autonomy and a two-item measure of work-family conflict. Grzywacz & Marks (2000) found that decision latitude on job, a concept similar to job autonomy, was strongly related to positive work-to-family

and family-to-work spillover. Voydanoff (2004) found that autonomy was related to work-family facilitation. Research has also demonstrated that autonomy increases perceived control over work demands (Parasuraman & Alutto, 1981, 1984), allows employees to organize their jobs in a way that reduces work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Kopelman, 1981; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1986), and reduces the likelihood of quitting their current employment (Hom & Griffeth, 1995).

Perceived job control may create the belief that one can exert some influence over the environment either directly or indirectly. Thus, the environment may become less threatening (Ganster & Fusilier, 1989), which results in less perceived role conflict, regardless of the actual interference (Theorell, 2003). Based on the social exchange perspective, it is reasonable to expect that employees who have discretion over the way they perform their jobs would consider this autonomy as an indication of organization's trust and care, signaling organization's intention to establish a social exchange relationship with its employees. Thus, I predict that job autonomy would lead to positive reactions from employees, concretized in increased job satisfaction and a reduced desire to leave.

Hypothesis 13:

H13a: *Job autonomy will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H13b: *Job autonomy will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H13c: *Job autonomy will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

*Growth opportunities* are related to worker's perceptions of opportunities offered by their organization for career development, training, and general skill development (Wright, 2003). They are designed typically to induce motivation and attachment to the organization. Previous studies have shown that growth opportunities improve organizational productivity directly by increasing employees' ability to perform their jobs (Budd & Broad, 1996), and influence employee satisfaction by reducing work-stress or dissatisfaction as a result of eliminating/reducing skill-related impediments to job performance (Wright, 2003). However, few studies have examined the link between growth opportunities and other HR practices and work-family outcomes. Batt & Valcour (2003) examined the relationship between human resources practices and work-family conflict and turnover intentions, and found that career-development benefits had no impact on work-family conflict, but they were associated with an increased probability of turnover.

Growth opportunities that suggest investment in employees and recognize employee contributions indicate that the organization is supportive of the employee and is seeking to establish or continue a social exchange relationship with employees (Eisenberger et al., 1986). According to the social exchange perspective and the norm of reciprocity, people tend to feel obligated to help those who have helped them (Gouldner, 1960), and in an organizational setting (Scholl, 1981; Shore & Wayne, 1993), to repay benefits and opportunities offered by the organization. Thus, I predict that employees would repay the organization by developing positive attitudes and behaviors, such as increased job satisfaction and affective commitment, and reduced turnover intentions. Also, I expect that growth opportunities would increase employees' ability to perform their jobs and their sense of self-efficacy, with positive consequences on their ability to balance work and family roles.

Hypothesis 14:

H14a: *Growth opportunities will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H14b: *Growth opportunities will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H14c: *Growth opportunities will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

In summary, job and work context characteristics, such as job autonomy and growth opportunities, provide resources that may create positive effects in the form of motivation, energy, new skills or attitudes, which enable employees to effectively manage the inherent demands of work and family domains. They have been shown to increase job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors, and to reduce work-family conflict and turnover intentions, which is consistent with the role theory and the social exchange perspective.

## **VI. The Mediator Role of Work-Family Conflict and Job Satisfaction**

Although, as described earlier, previous studies have shown direct relationships between the three forms of organizational support employed in this study and individual and organizational outcomes, insufficient attention has been given to the mechanisms that may explain these relationships. Many studies do not include mediating mechanisms and those that do only consider one mediating mechanism in their models.

The consideration of work-family conflict as a linking mechanism is based on the role theory, which suggests that the work-family interface may result in varying degrees of work-family conflict, which in turn is associated with either role strain or role ease (Voydanoff,

2002). A number of studies identified a general mediating role of work-family conflict in the relationship between the work-family interface and outcomes such as job satisfaction and psychological well-being (Bedeian, Burke, & Moffett, 1988; Burke, 1988; Higgins, Duxbury, & Irving, 1992; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Weigel, Weigel, Berger, Cook, & DelCampo, 1995; but also see Kopelman, Greenhaus, & Connelly, 1983). Moreover, relevant to the present study, some studies (Peeters, Montgomery, & Schaufely, 2003; Mauno, Kinnunen, & Pyykko, 2005; Thomas & Ganster, 1995) have specifically shown that work-family conflict partially mediated the association between supervisor support and a supportive work-family culture and job satisfaction. Thus, I hypothesize that work-family support reduces work-family conflict, which in turn increases job satisfaction and the desire to stay with the organization.

Hypothesis 15: *Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between formal support/informal support/work characteristics and job satisfaction.*

Hypothesis 16: *Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between formal support/informal support/work characteristics and turnover intentions.*

The consideration of job satisfaction as a linking mechanism is based on the social exchange theory. According to this theory, because perceived work-family support is expected to create feelings of obligation to support organizational goals, I might expect high levels of formal and informal support and positive work characteristics to lower turnover intentions (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 1990; Wayne et al., 1997). The norm of reciprocity indicates that people tend to feel obligated to help those who have helped them in an organizational setting (Scholl, 1981), and to repay benefits and opportunities offered by the organization, possibly by staying with the organization. Thus, I hypothesize that job

satisfaction will mediate the relationship between provision of these supports and turnover intentions:

Hypothesis 17: *Job satisfaction will mediate the relationship between formal support/ informal support/ work characteristics and turnover intentions.*

## **VII. Sector of Employment**

Finally, this study also investigates whether there are sector-based differences in the pattern of relationships among the variables in the model and in the levels of work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Knowing what specific factors are more important for public vs. private sector employees' job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and their ability to balance work and family responsibilities is critical, as differences between the two sectors should be taken into account in developing management strategies that work best for each sector.

Research comparing work-related attitudes and behaviors (e.g., job satisfaction, motivation, organizational commitment) of employees working for public and private organizations reports mixed results. While there is an abundance of studies investigating work-family conflict in the private sector, there is a lack of empirical studies comparing levels and predictors of work-family conflict between public and private sector employees. To our knowledge, there is no study comparing the level of work-family conflict between the two sectors. This is unfortunate since inattention to differences between the public and the private sectors can lead to overgeneralization in organization theory (Meyer 1979, 1982).

The institutional theory suggests that public sector organizations offer more formal and informal supports than their private sector counterparts. Thus, given that these resources are critical for employees' ability to manage their work and family responsibilities, as



suggested by the role theory, I expect that public sector employees experience lower levels of work-family conflict.

Hypothesis 18: *Work-family conflict will be lower in the public than in the private sector.*

While previous research did not find a direct relationship between sector of employment and job satisfaction, an implicit assumption that sector differences in the characteristics of the employees and work environment are important in influencing job attitudes such as job satisfaction seems to exist in the literature (Rainey, 1989; Wright, 2001). Although empirical studies have showed sector differences in job satisfaction (Wright, 2001), the direction of these differences has varied. While studies using global measures of job satisfaction have tended to show that public employees are in general either more satisfied (DeSantis & Durst, 1996; Maidani, 1991; Steel & Warner, 1990) or at least as satisfied (Emmert & Taher, 1992; Gabris & Simo, 1995; Lewis, 1991) as private sector employees, other studies report higher levels of job satisfaction in the private sector (Khojasteh, 1993).

Based on the institutional theory, I expect public sector organizations to provide more formal and informal support, and corollary I expect them to increase their employees' job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 19: *Job satisfaction will be higher in the public than in the private sector.*

Empirical studies that have directly compared turnover intentions between the two sectors are lacking. In line with the role and social exchange theories, I expect that organizational support decreases work-family conflict and increases job satisfaction, with positive effects on turnover intentions. Therefore, given that based on the institutional theory

I expect higher levels of support in the public than in the private sector, I predict lower levels of turnover intentions in the public than in the private sector.

Hypothesis 20: *Turnover intentions will be lower in the public than in the private sector.*

## **Chapter Summary**

Public and private organizations are increasingly seeking to help their employees balance their work and family responsibilities in an effort to increase their recruitment and retention, while improving individual performance and job-related attitudes (Walton, 1985; Morris et al., 1993). Prior research on the effects of family-friendly policies and cultures on employees' attitudes and behaviors is limited in that it has focused almost exclusively on the experiences of individuals employed in large businesses and other private sector organizations, with the effects on public sector employees being largely unknown.

Thus, the aim of this dissertation is to address this gap by examining work-family relationships among men and women who work in the public sector, and comparing them to those working in the private sector. Specifically, the current study examines and compares formal and informal work-family support, as well as work characteristics, between organizations from the public and the private sectors, and seeks to determine how these variables influence work-family conflict and the direction and level of job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Direct effects of formal and informal work-family supports and work characteristics on the outcomes of work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions are examined. In addition, mediating mechanisms (i.e., the indirect effects through work-family conflict and job satisfaction) that may explain these relationships are also explored. An integration of ecological systems theory, social exchange theory, and role

theory are used to explain these processes. These three theories complement each other, and create a comprehensive framework that describes the context and the processes underlying work-family conflict and their influence on job satisfaction and turnover intentions.

This study focuses on conflict stemming from work, for two reasons. First, work demands and resources are more likely to be related to work-to-family experiences (Frone, 1997; Voydanoff, 2002). Second, understanding the work-to-family interface may have greater practical significance because research indicated that the family domain is more permeable than the work domain, making work more likely to impact family than the reverse (Eagle, Miles, and Icenogle, 1997).

The level of conflict experienced by an employee depends on the demands and the resources available to fulfill them. This study examines the role of three main domains of work-family resources: formal work-family support, informal work-family support, and job and work context characteristics. Formal work-family supports, in the form of dependent care benefits and flexible work arrangements, have been implemented by many public and private organizations and have shown positive effects for both employees and employers. However, in many situations, the informal culture hinders their utilization. Policy use may be left to supervisor discretion or it may be counteracted by negative attitudes of superiors and coworkers and nonsupportive informal work environments, such as long working hours cultures and negative career consequences. Thus, it seems that the informal culture is as important as, or even more important than, the simple provision of benefits. In addition, job and work context characteristics such as job autonomy and growth opportunities provide resources that may create positive effects in the form of motivation, energy, new skills or

attitudes, which enable employees to effectively manage the inherent demands of work and family domains.

Thus, by looking simultaneously at these three resource domains from the perspectives of systems, role, and social exchange theories, I can attain a comprehensive picture of the intricate world of work and its relationships with employees' family life.

## CHAPTER III: METHODS

This chapter describes the methodology used in the present investigation. The chapter includes the following three sections: (1) description of the subject sample, the survey procedures and the data screening methods, (2) summary of the research questions and hypotheses, and (3) description of the specific analytic tools employed to test the study hypotheses.

### **I. Participants**

This study uses data from the 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW), a telephone survey conducted by Harris Interactive, Inc., for the Families and Work Institute (Bond et al., 2003). Survey participants were chosen from a regionally stratified unclustered random probability sample. All participants met the following eligibility criteria: (1) worked at a paid job or operated an income producing business, (2) were 18 years or older, (3) were in the civilian labor force, (4) resided in the contiguous 48 states, and (5) lived in a non-institutional residence (i.e., household) with a telephone. In households with more than one eligible person, one was selected randomly to be interviewed.

The total sample interviewed consisted of 2,810 wage and salaried employees who work for someone else (i.e., public, private, and the non-profit sector employees), 179 employed persons who operate their own incorporated business and, therefore, work for themselves and 515 self-employed workers who do not have incorporated business. Only public and private sector employees are included in this study (N = 2,660). The public sector includes 717 employees working in public schools and state colleges/universities, as well as federal, state, and local government employees. The private sector includes 1,943 employees working for private for-profit businesses.

Between October 2002 and June 2003, professional interviewers from Harris Interactive, Inc., conducted a survey (averaging 45 minutes in length) of a nationally representative sample of 3,504 adults employed in the civilian United States labor force, using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system. Calls were made to a regionally stratified unclustered random probability sample generated by random-digit-dialing. As necessary, 30 or more calls were made per telephone number to determine eligibility and to complete interviews (Bond et al., 2003). Interviewees were offered cash honoraria of \$25 as incentives.

A total of 28,000 telephone numbers were called, of which 3,578 were considered eligible households, and 3,504 interviews were completed. The response rate was 98% for households determined to have an eligible respondent.

Initiated by the Families and Work Institute, the National Studies resume the effort begun in 1977 by the Quality of Employment Survey to collect regularly data about workers' lives on and off the job. The NSCW surveys representative samples of the United State's labor force every five years. The first survey was conducted in 1992, the second in 1997, and the last one in 2002. These data sets offer researchers important opportunities to test hypotheses and conduct powerful analyses. Findings from these three surveys have been released through media coverage and presentations to audiences of private and public sector decision makers (NSCW, 2004), as well as published in prestigious academic journals and books. The studies based on the NSCW data examine in general the correlates of work-family interference, spillover, job satisfaction, commitment, retention, loyalty, and well-being (Thompson et al., 2005; Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Roehling, Roehling, & Moen, 2001). Some of the studies also examine diversity, in terms of gender, ethnicity,

family circumstances, positions in organizational hierarchies, etc (Winslow, 2005; Nomaguchi, Milkie, & Bianchi, 2005; Roehling, Hernandez Jarvis, & Swope, 2005). The NSCW data have also been used for testing previous theories and models (Behnson, 2002) and for creating and testing new integrative models of the work-family interface (Voydanoff, 2002).

## **Measures**

Work-family researchers have recently begun to recognize that, in addition to the formal work-family support, the informal support and the work characteristics can have a significant impact on the ability of workers to balance their work and family lives. Using data from the 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce, this study examines the effect of formal and informal work-family supports, and work characteristics, on employees' work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. All the items used in the 2002 National Study of the Changing Workforce survey have been developed by the Families and Work Institute in collaboration with experts in the field or have been drawn from preexisting scales (Bond et al., 2003). The scales used to measure the variables of interest for this study were taken from the literature or were adapted from existing scales developed by the Families and Work Institute.

## **Dependent variables**

*Work-family conflict* is the mean response to five items

(1): "How often have you not had enough time for your family or other important people in your life because of your job?",

(2) "How often have you not had the energy to do things with your family or other important people in your life because of your job?",

(3) “How often has work kept you from doing as good a job at home as you could?”,

4) “How often have you not been in as good a mood as you would like to be at home because of your job?”, and

(5) “How often has your job kept you from concentrating on important things in your family or personal life”.

Items were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 = Very often and 5 = Never. Items were reverse coded so that higher scores represent higher levels of conflict. A 3-level scale was created, with 1 = Low, 2 = Medium, and 3 = High. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  for this scale was .87. This five-item work-family conflict scale is similar to the negative spillover scale developed by the Families and Work Institute (Bond et al., 2003).

*Job satisfaction* is the mean of two items:

(1) “All in all, how satisfied are you with your job?”, which used a 4-point scale, ranging from 1 = Very satisfied to 4 = Not satisfied at all, and

(2) “Knowing what you know now, if you had to decide all over again whether to take the job you now have, what would you decide?”, which used a 3-point scale: 1 = take same job again without hesitation, 3 = definitely not take same job.

The items were reverse coded so that higher scores represent higher levels of job satisfaction. A 3-level scale was created, with 1 = Low, 2 = Medium, and 3 = High. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  for the job satisfaction scale was .67. This is slightly below the recommended cut-off score of .70. While still used in this study, it



may fail to adequately measure the construct, which may result in statistical insignificance in some cases. This two-item scale is similar to the job satisfaction scale developed by the Families and Work Institute (Bond et al., 2003).

*Turnover Intention* is measured by one item:

(1) “Taking everything into consideration, how likely is it that you will make a genuine effort to find a new job with another employer within the next year?” “

This item was rated on a 3-point scale ranging from 1 = Very likely to 3 = Not at all likely. The item was reverse scored so that a higher score represents greater likelihood to look for a new job.

## **Independent variables**

### 1). Formal organizational work-family support

The availability of two types of family-friendly benefits was assessed: (1) dependent care benefits and (2) flexible work arrangements. Following Thomas & Ganster’s suggestion (Thomas & Ganster, 1995), I measured benefit availability instead of usage because availability communicates to all employees that the organization cares about their well-being. Also, measuring usage might create reverse causality because those employees with the most demanding family situations may be more likely to use the existing benefits (Batt & Valcour, 2003).

*Dependent care benefits* was assessed using the following five items:

(1) “Does your organization have a program or service that helps employees find child care if they need it?”,

(2) “Does your organization have a program that helps employees get information about elder care or find services for elderly relatives if they need them?”,

(3) Does your organization operate or sponsor a child care center for the children of employees at or near your location?”,

(4) “Does your organization provide employees with any direct financial assistance for child care - that is, vouchers, cash, or scholarships?”,

(5) “Does your organization have a program that allows employees to put part of their income before taxes in an account that can be used to pay for child care or other dependent care?”.

Benefit availability was rated on a yes/no scale, where 1 = yes and 2 = no. Items were recoded so that higher scores represent greater benefit availability. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  for this scale was .75. This scale was adapted from the dependent benefits scale developed by the Families and Work Institute (Bond et al., 2003).

*Flexible work arrangements* availability was initially measured by the following eight items:

(1) “How hard is it for you to take time off during your work day to take care of personal or family matters?”,

(2) “Can you choose your own starting and quitting times within some range of hours?”,

(3) “Can you change your starting and quitting times on a daily basis or must you stick to the times you choose?”,

- (4) “Are employees in your organization allowed to work a compressed workweek?”,
- (5) “Do you ever work regular paid hours at home?”,
- (6) “Overall, how much control would you say you have in scheduling your work hours”.
- (7) “Is your schedule perfect for you, okay but could be better, not very good, or not at all what you want?”
- (8) “Could you arrange to work part-time in your current position if you wanted to?”

The items were reversed coded and dichotomized. Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  for the flexibility scale was .65. Based on the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, the last two items were dropped. The new 6 item scale had an  $\alpha$  value of .67 and showed adequate fit to the data. The flexibility scale was adapted from the flexible work arrangements scale developed by the Families and Work Institute (Bond et al., 2003).

## 2). Informal organizational work-family support.

Four aspects of informal organizational support were assessed: supportive work-family culture, supervisor support, coworker support, and working hours culture. Each of the first three support scales (i.e., supportive work-family culture, supervisor and coworker support) were measured on a 4-point Likert scale that ranged from 1= Strongly agree to 4 = Strongly disagree.

*Supportive work-family culture* is the mean of the following four items:

- (1) “There is an unwritten rule at my place of employment that you can't take care of family needs on company time”,

(2) “At my place of employment, employees who put their family or personal needs ahead of their jobs are not looked on favorably”,

(3) “If you have a problem managing your work and family responsibilities, the attitude at my place of employment is: "You made your bed, now lie in it!",

(4) “At my place of employment, employees have to choose between advancing in their jobs or devoting attention to their family or personal lives”,

A 3-level scale was created, with 1 = Low, 2 = Medium, and 3 = High. The  $\alpha$  coefficient for this scale is .71, which is similar in content to the career consequences factor of Thompson et al.’s (1999) work-family culture scale.

*Supervisor support* was assessed by 5 items, as follows:

(1) “My supervisor or manager is fair and doesn’t show favoritism in responding to employees’ personal or family needs”,

(2) “My supervisor or manager accommodates me when I have family or personal business to take care of”,

(3) “My supervisor or manager is understanding when I talk about personal or family issues that affect my work”,

(4) “I feel comfortable bringing up personal or family issues with my supervisor or manager”,

(5) “My supervisor or manager really cares about the effects that work demands have on my personal and family life”.

The scores were reverse coded so that higher scores represent more supportive supervisors. A 3-level scale was created, with 1 = Low, 2 = Medium, and 3 = High.

The  $\alpha$  coefficient for this scale was .87. This scale is similar in content to the supervisory support factor of Thompson et al.'s (1999) work-family culture scale.

*Coworker support* was measured by the following three items:

- (1) "I feel I am really a part of the group of people I work with",
- (2) "I have the support from coworkers that I need to do a good job",
- (3) "I have support from coworkers that helps me to manage my work and personal or family life".

The scores were reverse coded so that higher scores represent more supportive coworkers. The  $\alpha$  coefficient for this scale was .75. This scale is similar to the coworker relations scale used by the Families and Work Institute (Bond et al., 2003).

*Working hours culture* was measured by 3 items:

- (1) "How often do you do any paid or unpaid work at home that is part of your job?",
- (2) "Employees where I work are often expected to take work home during non-work hours and/or non-work days",
- (3) "How often do coworkers, supervisors, managers, customers, or clients contact you about work-related matters outside normal work hours? Include telephone, cell phone, beeper and pager calls, as well as faxes and email that you have to respond to",

Higher scores reflect a more supportive working hours culture. The  $\alpha$  coefficient for this scale was .67. This value is slightly below the recommended cut-off score of .70. While still used in this study, it may fail to

adequately measure the construct, which may result in statistical insignificance in some cases. This scale was adapted from the organizational time demands scale developed by Thompson et al. (1999).

### 3) Work characteristics

*Job Autonomy* was measured by three items, as follows:

- (1) “I have the freedom to decide what I do on my job”,
- (2) “It is basically my own responsibility to decide how my job gets done”,
- (3) “I have a lot of say about what happens in my job”,

Items were measured on a 4-point Likert scale that ranged from 1= Strongly agree to 4 = Strongly disagree. They were reverse scored so that higher scores represent higher levels of autonomy. A 3-level scale was created, with 1 = Low, 2 = Medium, and 3 = High. The  $\alpha$  coefficient for this scale was .70. This scale is similar to the job autonomy scale used by Thompson & Prottas (2005).

*Growth opportunities* was assessed by the following three items:

- (1) “My job requires that I keep learning new things”,
- (2) “My job requires that I be creative”,
- (3) “My job lets me use my skills and abilities”.

Answers ranged from 1= Strongly agree to 4 = Strongly disagree. The items were reverse scored so that higher scores represent higher levels of growth opportunities. A 3-level scale was created, with 1 = Low, 2 = Medium, and 3 = High. The  $\alpha$  coefficient for this scale was .64. This value is slightly below the recommended cut-off score of .70, which may affect statistical significance in some cases. This scale

was adapted from the intrinsic rewards scale used by Berg, Kalleberg, & Appelbaum (2003).

### **Tests of Assumptions and Multicollinearity**

Data screening methods were used to determine the accuracy of the data, examine missing values, and identify outliers. The variables were tested for meeting the univariate assumptions and lack of multicollinearity among the variables.

#### Missing Values

The distribution of missing values was assessed using SPSS 14.0 Missing Value Analysis. The examination of the missing value patterns showed a number of cases with  $p(2\text{-tail}) \leq .05$ . This test indicates that these cases were not missing at random; that is, missing cases in the row variable are significantly correlated with the column variable and thus are not missing at random. Since some cases were not missing at random imputation of values was used.

The Expected Maximization (EM) imputation was used to apply maximum likelihood estimation for imputing missing data values. Maximum likelihood estimation is preferred to regression and other imputation methods since it makes fewer demands of the data in terms of statistical assumptions and is generally considered superior to imputation by multiple regression (Garson, 2006).

#### Outliers

The variables were screened for outliers. Two different methods were used to identify outliers. First, normal probability plots were visually examined to spot univariate outliers. In addition, cases falling outside the range ( $Q1 - 1.5 * IQR$ ,  $Q3 + 1.5 * IQR$ ) were identified as outliers. A number of cases in the data set were determined to be outliers.

### Normal distribution

Most of the variables included in this study are continuous or dichotomous. To be included into the structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses, continuous variables should meet the assumption of normality, and thus the variables were analyzed for meeting the normality assumptions, as follows. The skewness and kurtosis analysis was conducted using a z distribution and a z score. Tabachnick & Fidell (2001) and Garson (2006) suggest that values of skewness and kurtosis should be within the 2 to -2 range when the data are normally distributed. The frequency distribution showed that all scales had skewness and kurtosis within the  $\pm 2$  range.

For dichotomous variables a different selection process is applied to determine whether or not they can be included into the correlation/regression analyses. Literature on methodology (Tabachnik & Fidel, 2001) suggests deleting dichotomous variables with the split 90-10 or more from the correlation/regression analyses because the correlation coefficients between these and other variables are truncated and scores for cases in the smaller category are more influential than scores in the category with the majority of cases. All the dichotomies in this study are in the normal range.

### Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity is redundancy among the independent variables, an unacceptably high level of intercorrelation among the independents (above .90), such that the effects of the independents cannot be separated (they are measuring the same phenomenon). I tested for multicollinearity using the Variance inflation factor (VIF). None of the variables have values above the cutoff of 4.0 (Garson, 2006). I also examined the collinearity diagnostic table in



regression. None of the condition indexes were greater than 30, indicating that multicollinearity is not a problem.

## **II. Research Questions and Hypotheses**

I. The first research question proposes to investigate whether the formal and informal organizational supports, as well as the job and work context characteristics, vary according to public vs. private sector of employment.

According to the institutional theory, the adoption of formal family-friendly support is influenced by organizations' visibility and the number of females they employ. As public sector organizations are more visible than private sector organizations, I expect them to be more likely to develop policies as a result of their concern about their public image. Family-friendly policies have also been developed as a way of attaining greater gender equity in the workplace (Gornick & Meyer, 2003). As the public sector workforce is predominantly female, public sector organizations are facing more pressing challenges than the private sector to help their employees balance their work and family demands. Since public organizations depend on women to a higher degree than private sector organizations, I expect them to be more likely to implement family-friendly policies and to develop family-friendly cultures to support their use.

Hypothesis 1:

*H1a: Formal work-family support will be higher in the female-dominated public sector than in the private sector.*

*H1b: Public sector organizations provide more dependent care benefits than private sector organizations.*

H1c: *Public sector organizations provide more flexible work arrangements than private sector organizations.*

Hypothesis 2:

H2a: *Informal work-family support will be higher in the female-dominated public sector than in the private sector.*

H2b: *Perceptions of supervisor support for work-family issues will be higher in the public than in the private sector.*

H2c: *Perceptions of coworker support for work-family issues will be higher in the public than in the private sector.*

H2d: *Perceptions of a supportive work-family culture will be higher in the public than in the private sector.*

H2e: *Perceptions of a supportive working-hours culture will be higher in the public than in the private sector.*

Since public sector organizations are more visible they are also more likely to display good organizational citizenship by offering their employees more growth opportunities than private sector organizations. On the other hand, I expect that the greater performance pressures on private sector organizations would make them more likely to give their employees higher levels of autonomy than public sector organizations.

Hypothesis 3:

H3a: *Public sector organizations will be more likely to provide positive work characteristics than private sector organizations.*

H3b: *Public sector organizations will be more likely to provide growth opportunities than private sector organizations.*

H3c: *Public sector organizations will be less likely to provide high levels of autonomy than private sector organizations.*

To test hypotheses 1-3 concerning the variation in the perceived formal support, informal support, and work characteristics according to the sector of employment, a combination of the t-test for equality of means and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) multigroup testing was used. First, a t-test for the equality of means was done using SPSS 14.0 to test the hypotheses related to sector based differences in the levels of formal support, informal support, and work characteristics. Second, invariance testing using AMOS 6.0 was conducted to determine whether the levels of the constructs in our model differed according to the sector of employment.

II. The second research question investigates the impact of formal and informal support, as well as job and work context characteristics, on work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions.

According to the social exchange theory, by offering formal and informal work-family supports, organizations demonstrate their commitment to the well-being of their employees. I expect this, in turn, to create more positive attitudes toward the organization, such as increased job satisfaction, and to bolster employees' desire to stay with the organization. Also, since formal and informal supports reduce the stress of dealing simultaneously with work and family responsibilities, I expect them to decrease the level of work-family conflict. Work characteristics such as job autonomy and growth opportunities provide resources that may create positive effects in the form of motivation, new skills or attitudes, enabling employees to balance more effectively their work and family

responsibilities. Thus, I expect them to increase job satisfaction and employees' desire to stay with the organization, and to reduce work-family conflict.

Hypothesis 4:

H4a: *Provision of formal support will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H4b: *Provision of dependent care benefits will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H4c: *Provision of flexible work arrangements will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

Hypothesis 5:

H5a: *Provision of formal support will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

H5b: *Provision of dependent care benefits will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

H5c: *Provision of flexible work arrangements will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

Hypothesis 6:

H6a: *Provision of formal support will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H6b: *Provision of dependent care benefits will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H6c: *Provision of flexible work arrangements will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

Hypothesis 7:

H7a: *Provision of informal support will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H7b: *Provision of informal support will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H7c: *Provision of informal support will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

Hypothesis 8:

H8a: *Provision of supervisor support will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H8b: *Provision of supervisor support will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H8c: *Provision of supervisor support will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

Hypothesis 9:

H9a: *Provision of coworker support will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H9b: *Provision of coworker support will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H9c: *Provision of coworker support will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

Hypothesis 10:

H10a: *Work-family culture will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H10b: *Work-family culture will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H10c: *Work-family culture will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

Hypothesis 11:

H11a: *Work-hours culture will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H11b: *Work-hours culture will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H11c: *Work-hours culture will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

Hypothesis 12:

H12a: *Work characteristics will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H12b: *Work characteristics will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H12c: *Work characteristics will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

Hypothesis 13:

H13a: *Job autonomy will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H13b: *Job autonomy will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H13c: *Job autonomy will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

Hypothesis 14:

H14a: *Growth opportunities will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors.*

H14b: *Growth opportunities will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors.*

H14c: *Growth opportunities will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors.*

Hypotheses 4-14, which examine the direct effects of formal and informal work-family support, as well as of work characteristics, on work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions in the public and the private sectors, were tested using SEM and multiple regression. Once the hypothesized model for both sectors was determined to have a good fit, the analysis of the model focused on the hypothesized relations, that is the parameter values (i.e., path coefficients) referred to as the gamma and beta weights in SEM. The parameter values are measures of the relationships between any two constructs in the model (i.e.,

hypotheses). If the measure is significant at  $p < 0.05$ , the hypothesized relationship is supported. However, direction of the parameter value (i.e., +/-) also needs to be considered (Hu, Bentler, & Hoyle, 1995). These statistically significant parameter values were used to analyze the differences between the public and the private sector groups.

The SEM analysis allowed me to determine the direction and the amplitude of the effect of formal support, informal support, and work characteristics on our outcomes of interest. To further identify how the indicator variables (i.e., scale items) influenced our outcomes, I also conducted hierarchical multiple regression analysis.

III. The third research question investigates the mediator effect of work-family conflict and job satisfaction on the relationships between formal support, informal support, and work characteristics, and turnover intentions.

Availability of work-family supports is likely to reduce work-family conflict among employees, and in turn induce positive work attitudes and behaviors, such as increased job satisfaction and decreased turnover intentions. Previous studies have usually concentrated on the direct links between work-family conflict and outcome variables. However, some authors (Peeters, Montgomery, & Schaufely, 2003; Mauno, Kinnunen, & Pyykko, 2005; Thomas & Ganster, 1995) have shown that work-family conflict partially mediated the association between supervisor support and a supportive work-family culture and job satisfaction. Taking these results into account, I hypothesize that:

H15a: *Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between formal support and job satisfaction.*

H15b: *Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between informal support and job satisfaction.*



H15c: *Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between work characteristics and job satisfaction.*

Based on social exchange theory, because perceived work-family support is expected to create feelings of obligation to support organizational goals, I might expect high levels of formal and informal support and positive work characteristics to lower turnover intentions (e.g., Eisenberger et al., 1990; Wayne et al., 1997). The norm of reciprocity indicates that people tend to feel obligated to help those who have helped them in an organizational setting (Scholl, 1981), and to repay benefits and opportunities offered by the organization. I hypothesize that work-family conflict and job satisfaction will mediate the relationship between provision of these supports and turnover intentions:

H16a: *Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between formal support and turnover intentions.*

H16b: *Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between informal support and turnover intentions.*

H16c: *Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between work characteristics and turnover intentions.*

H17a: *Job satisfaction will mediate the relationship between formal support and turnover intentions.*

H17b: *Job satisfaction will mediate the relationship between informal support and turnover intentions.*

H17c: *Job satisfaction will mediate the relationship between work characteristics and turnover intentions.*

To test hypotheses 15-17, I applied the path multiplication rule (Garson, 2006) and used the path coefficients to decompose correlations in the model into direct and indirect effects, corresponding, of course, to direct and indirect paths reflected in the arrows in the model. However, although SEM provides some insight into mediation, by allowing one to decompose the total effects in a model, the AMOS software does not provide enough detail for a complete assessment of mediation. I complemented the SEM analysis with a four step approach in which several regression analyses are conducted and significance of the coefficients is examined at each step (Baron & Kenny, 1986). I used the Sobel test (1982) to determine whether the changes were statistically significant and therefore indicative of a significant mediating effect.

IV. The fourth research question explores sector based differences in the levels of work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, as well as in the pattern of the relationships between the independent and these three dependent variables.

H18: *Work-family conflict will be lower in the public than in the private sector.*

H19: *Job satisfaction will be higher in the public than in the private sector..*

H20: *Turnover intentions will be lower in the public than in the private sector.*

To test Hypotheses 18-20, SEM multiple-group testing was used. Although not hypothesized, this study also explored sector based differences in the pattern of relationships between the independent and the dependent variables. Multiple-group testing was used to assess whether any of the significant hypothesized relationships in the baseline model is different for the public and the private sector employees. The SEM analysis allowed for determinations of differences in the significant paths between the constructs from a sector

based perspective. The results were compared both to the baseline model representing a “pooled” sample from public and private sector employees and between the two sectors.

### **III. Data Analysis**

This section presents the analytic procedures used to address our research questions and to test the model introduced in the previous section. The study employed several statistical procedures including Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), t-tests for equality of means, structural equation modeling (SEM), and regression. For conducting multiple group comparisons, the SEM modeling process incorporating multi-group comparisons has been used. The data analysis comprises a number of steps that will be outlined in this section of the chapter, and detailed in Chapter IV.

#### **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**

The first step in the data analysis utilized CFA. CFA provides the statistical analysis necessary to determine the reliabilities of each scale item in the measurement of each scale representing the constructs in the theoretical model. Bollen (1989) states that CFA is a better method of analysis than exploratory factor analysis in situations where hypothesis about plausible models exist, as in the case of this study. Additionally, the CFA procedure can identify potential problems with multicollinearity between items within each scale and it can identify scale items that cross-load on other constructs in the model.

Because this study utilizes CFA and SEM techniques, includes some model modification, and compares alternative models, a discussion of the criteria selected to evaluate model fit is presented. Discussing criteria for model fit is important because the degree of fit impacted our decisions about modifying and accepting models during the analyses.

In terms of evaluating and comparing the models, Hatcher (1994) suggests the following criteria: (a) the  $p$  value for the model chi-square test should be non-significant; (b) the chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio should be less than 2; (c) the  $t$  values for each of the factor loading and path coefficients should exceed 1.96 and standardized factor loadings should be nontrivial in size; (d) R-square values should be relatively large; (e) distributions of normalized residuals should be symmetrical and centered on zero; and (f) the model should demonstrate high levels of parsimony and fit as indicated by the fit indices. When appropriate, the chi-square difference test should be used to determine whether the fit of one model is significantly better than another.

There are three categories of fit indices (i.e., absolute fit indices, parsimonious fit indices, and incremental fit indices) through which model fitness assessment can be made.

Absolute fit indices, such as the model Chi-square statistic, improve as the discrepancy between the observed and reduced (co)variances decrease. Low and nonsignificant values of  $\lambda^2$  values are desired (Kline, 1998). These fit indices tend to improve as the complexity of the model increases. The chi-square requires a large sample size ( $n > 200$ ); however, if the sample size is too large, it may falsely inflate the chi-square statistics. Since the  $\lambda^2$  values are over-sensitive to sample size and rely on perfect fit as the standard for comparison, it is suggested that caution should be exercised in using  $\lambda^2$  values to evaluate model fit. Bollen (1989) recommends assessing the chi-square statistics relative to the degrees of freedom in the model when sample size is large. If the chi-square value divided by the degrees of freedom is less than 5, model fit is deemed acceptable.

Parsimonious fit indices, such as the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), take into account not only the overall absolute fit but also the degree of

complexity required to achieve that fit. These indices indicate the best model fit when there is good absolute fit and the models are relatively simple (i.e., have few parameters).

Incremental fit indices, such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), test the fit of the model in relation to a baseline model with fewer parameters.

A variety of fit indices were used in assessing fit for this study, including Likelihood-ratio chi-Square ( $\lambda^2$ ), CFI, and the RMSEA. The CFI compares the hypothesized model with the independence model, providing a measure of complete variation in the data. Originally a value higher than 0.90 was considered as indicating good fit. More recently, Hu & Bentler (1999) suggested a revised cutoff value close to 0.95. RMSEA provides an estimate of the measurement error. Values less than 0.05 indicate good fit, and values as high as 0.08 represent reasonable fit. McCallum et al. (1996) suggested that RMSEA values ranging from 0.08 to 0.10 indicate mediocre fit, and those greater than 0.10 indicates poor fit. Hu and Bentler (1999) suggested the cutoff value of 0.06 as being indicative of good fit. These three fit indices (i.e.,  $\lambda^2$ , CFI, and RMSEA) were used to evaluate each construct used in this study and are reported in Chapter IV.

### **Comparison of the Means of the Constructs between the Two Groups**

In order to compare the importance given to each of the constructs in the model between the two groups, a comparison of the means of each of those constructs must be made. A t-test for the equality of means was done using SPSS 14.0 to test the hypotheses related to sector based differences in the levels of formal support, informal support, and work characteristics. The hypothesized relationships represented by this analysis were H1a, H2a, and H3a.

## **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)**

SEM was used to compare different hypothesized models and determine which one fit the data best. The main task of SEM is “to determine the goodness of fit between the hypothesized model and the sample data” (Byrne, 1994, p. 7). A good fit suggests that the hypothesized relations among constructs are plausible; a bad fit suggests the rejection of the theorized relations among constructs in the model.

A structural equation model normally consists of a measurement model and a structural model. The measurement model defines relations between measured/observed variables (indicators) and the latent/unobserved variables for which they are used as approximations. All latent factors are allowed to co-vary in the measurement model. The structural model (Figure 3.1) specifies the hypothesized causal structure among latent variables which is indicated as a path or arrow connecting the two variables.

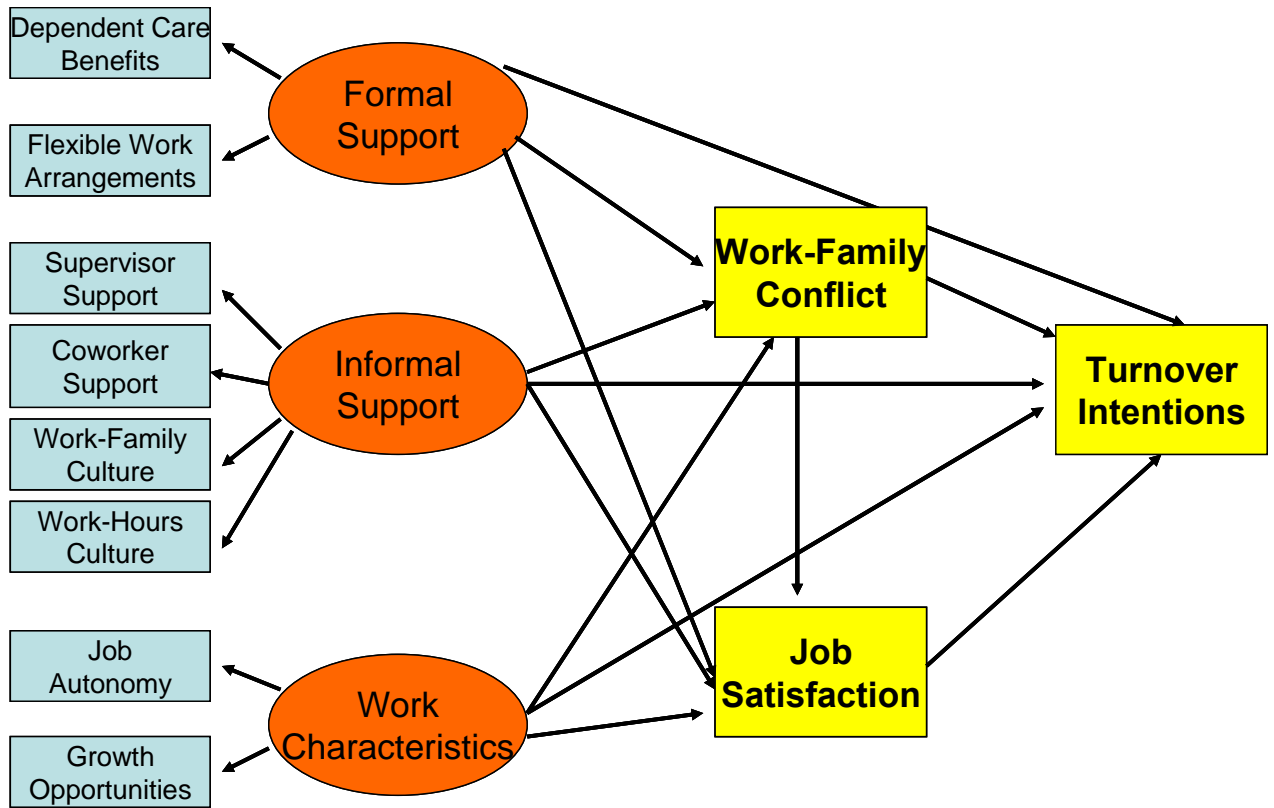
SEM analysis processes include model specification, identification, estimation, assessment of data-model fit, and possible model modification and re-estimation.

### Model Specification

Model specification is the act of stating a model by describing the relationships among the variables that will be analyzed. Our specified model is grounded in a sound theoretical framework regarding the expected relationship between the variables.

### Model Identification

A structural model must be identified before it can be estimated. Identification addresses the issue of whether enough information exists to yield unique parameter estimates. The hypothesized model in this study is an identified structural model and therefore provides a set of unique parameter estimates.



**Figure 3.1** Theoretical Model.

### Model Estimation

For just and over-identified models, parameter estimates can be obtained through estimation methods such as maximum likelihood. This estimation method iteratively minimizes a function of the discrepancy between the observed (co)variances and those reproduced by a substitution of iteratively changing parameter estimates into the model implied relations (Hancock & Mueller, 2001). The maximum likelihood estimation procedure selects parameter estimates so as to maximize the likelihood of the observed data and is robust to violations of normality (Loehlin, 1998). Therefore, all parameter estimations in this study have been conducted using the maximum-likelihood method of estimation.

### Evaluation of Model Fit

Although the estimations minimize the differences between the observed data and the proposed model, the data still may not fit the model on an acceptable level. Statistical tests can be performed to test the fit between the observed data and the hypothesized model.

To evaluate the overall fit of the model I used several criteria. First, individual parameter estimation and associated statistics were scrutinized for substantive and/or statistical impossibilities. Second, multiple overall fit were considered since each was developed for a different purpose and comes with certain disadvantages (Mueller, 1996). Joint criteria for acceptable fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999) have been adopted in this study. This criteria requires a CFI >0.90 together with a RMSEA <0.06.

### Model Modification and Respecification

Once a model has been estimated and its fit tested, the next phase is model modification and respecification, if necessary. New models can be developed as a refinement based on analysis results from the Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test. The models should be retested with the adjustments included and the same steps should be repeated in determining whether or not to add more residual error covariances or paths. After modifications, subsequent fit results may be due to a chance rather than true model improvements. The decision to modify the model should be based on theory. To know when to stop fitting a structural model, the researcher should have 1) a thorough knowledge of the substantive theory, 2) an adequate assessment of statistical criteria based on information pooled from various indices of fit, and 3) a watchful eye on the parsimony of the model (Byrne, 1994).



## Testing for Multi-Group Invariance

To test formally if there was a significant difference between the public and the private sector groups (Research Question 4), multigroup SEM was conducted using AMOS 6.0. In testing for multigroup invariance it is best to follow a logically organized strategy. The procedure for invariance testing involves first testing for measurement invariance between the unconstrained model for all groups combined, then for a model where certain parameters are constrained to be equal between groups (Garson, 2006). It should be noted that Byrne (2001) suggests a number of additional steps that can be constrained in multi-group model comparisons. However, it was felt that the research questions and hypotheses in this study could be tested without taking further steps.

The  $\lambda^2$  difference statistics is used to determine significant differences between the original and the constrained-equal models. A nonsignificant  $\lambda^2$  difference suggests that the model has measurement invariance across groups. Because the  $\lambda^2$  difference tests could be influenced by the large sample sizes (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989), I also considered Cheung and Rensvold's (2002) suggestion that a difference of at least 0.01 in the CFI values would indicate a meaningful change in the model fit for testing measurement invariance.

In testing for multigroup invariance the one-sample models should be tested separately first (Garson, 2006). Separate testing provides information about how consistent the models results are. However, to test for significant differences in the models' parameters between the public and the private sectors, multigroup testing is needed. In testing for group invariance equality constraints are imposed on particular parameters, and thus, the data for both groups must be analyzed simultaneously to obtain efficient estimates (Byrne, 2004;

Bentler, 2004). The fit of this simultaneously estimated model provides the baseline value against which all subsequently specified models are compared (Byrne, 2004).

Once it is known which parameters are group-invariant, these parameters are constrained equal while subsequent tests of the structural parameters are conducted. Thus, their specified equality constraints are maintained, cumulatively, throughout the remainder of the invariance-testing process. As each new set of parameters is tested, those known to be group-invariant are constrained equal. The non-invariant measures are freed of equality constraints. By freeing one measure at a time one can see if non-invariance is related to a particular measure.

Invariance testing usually starts with the arrows in the measurement model (the ones from factors to indicators), and then test the structural arrows linking factors. Following this recommendation (Byrne, 2001; Garson, 2006), a preliminary stage of our analysis involved testing for invariance in the measurement model.

First I tested for invariance in the factor structure, by constraining the factor loadings to be equal for both groups. Next I tested for invariance at the indicator level, by constraining the intercepts to be equal for both groups.

To test for the structural model I first allowed a free estimation of the structural coefficients in both the public and the private sector groups. Then equality constraints on structure weights were added. In the next step I tested the structural invariance for each individual structural path. Finally, I tested the invariance for each of the three dependent variables, by constraining their intercepts to be equal for both groups.

## **Testing mediation with SEM and regression analysis**

To test the mediating effect of work-family conflict and job satisfaction I decomposed the effects associated with each path to job satisfaction and turnover by applying the path multiplication rule (Garson, 2006). This rule utilizes the path coefficients to decompose correlations in the model into direct and indirect effects, corresponding, of course, to direct and indirect paths reflected in the arrows in the model. However, although SEM provides some insight into mediation, by allowing one to decompose the total effects in a model, the AMOS software does not provide enough detail for a complete assessment of mediation. I complemented the SEM analysis with Baron and Kenny's (1986) four step approach, in which several regression analyses are conducted and significance of the coefficients is examined at each step. The first condition states that the exogenous variable must affect the possible mediating variable. The second condition asserts that the mediator variable must affect the endogenous variable. The third condition states that, if the first two conditions are met and one then controls for the mediating variable, the effect between the exogenous and endogenous variables must be dramatically reduced with ideal mediation. The purpose of these three conditions is to establish that zero-order relationships among the variables exist. If one or more of these relationships are nonsignificant, researchers usually conclude that mediation is not possible or likely. Assuming there are significant relationships from condition 1 through 3, one proceeds to condition 4. In the condition 4 model, some form of mediation is supported if the effect of the mediator variable remains significant after controlling for the exogenous variable. If the exogenous variable is no longer significant when the mediator variable is controlled, the finding supports full mediation. If the exogenous variable is still significant (i.e., both the exogenous and the

mediator variables significantly predict the endogenous variable), the finding supports partial mediation. I used Preacher & Leonardelli's (2006) interactive calculation program to apply the Sobel test and determine whether the mediating effect was significant.

To summarize, the present chapter presents the methods used in the current study, and comprises three main sections. The first section describes the data set and the sample used in the study, along with the dependent and independent variables, the second section summarizes the research questions and hypotheses, and the third section introduces the analytic tools used to test these hypotheses.

## CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The main analytical approach of the present dissertation consisted of structural equation modeling (SEM), t-test statistics, and multiple regression analyses. These analyses are preceded by descriptive statistics, initial simple correlation analyses and an examination of factor structures and reliabilities for all scales. Discussion of the implications of these findings is dealt with more fully in Chapter V.

### I. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

This section compares the demographic data between the samples representing the public and the private sectors. The data were obtained from a sample of employees (N = 2,660), drawn from both the public (N = 717) and the private sector (N= 1943). The public sector organizations were female-dominated (63.2%), and characterized by high education levels (i.e., 29.7% had a 4 year college and 25.4% had a postgraduate degree); the mean age for this group was 43. The private sector organizations employed about the same proportion of men and women (48.8 vs. 51.2%, respectively), and were characterized by lower education levels (21.3% had a college degree and only 8% had a postgraduate degree); the mean age for the private sector group was 41. Most of the public sector employees were married (61.5%), 34% were single, and 4.5% were living with a partner. Of the private sector employees, 55.2% were married, 37.9% were single, and 6.9% were living with a partner.

Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among study variables are provided separately for the public and the private sector (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

**Table 4.1** Means and standard deviations for the public and the private sectors.

Variable	Public sector			Private sector		
	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
Dependent Care Benefits (DCBf)	1.250	0.276	717	1.195	0.256	1943
Flexible work arrangements (FWA)	1.332	0.267	717	1.401	0.283	1943
Work-family Culture (Culture)	2.104	0.641	717	2.021	0.654	1943
Supervisor support (Supervisor)	2.021	0.671	717	1.962	0.685	1943
Coworker support (Coworker)	3.445	0.612	717	3.402	0.645	1943
Job autonomy (Autonomy)	2.026	0.696	717	2.049	0.741	1943
Growth opportunities (Growth)	2.013	0.774	717	1.757	0.755	1943
Work-family Conflict (WFC)	1.998	0.672	717	1.982	0.703	1943
Job satisfaction (JSf)	2.473	0.610	717	2.312	0.668	1943
Turnover intention (TI)	1.400	0.689	717	1.572	0.775	1943

**Table 4.2** Correlations for all study variables. Correlations from the top right portion of the table are the correlations for the private sector sample, and the correlations from the bottom left portion of the table are for the public sector sample. \*p <.05 \*\*p <.01 \*\*\*p<.001.

Variable	DCBf	FWA	Culture	Supervisor	Coworker	Autonomy	Growth	WFC	JSf	TI
Dependent Care Benefits (DCBf)	1	0.207***	0.056**	0.071***	0.071***	0.072***	0.081***	-0.014	0.088***	-0.109***
Flexible work arrangements (FWA)	0.276***	1	0.289***	0.260***	0.205***	0.367***	0.257***	-0.151***	0.272***	-0.156***
Work-family Culture (Culture)	0.025	0.077*	1	0.413***	0.372***	0.249***	0.189***	-0.286***	0.376***	-0.264***
Supervisor support (Supervisor)	0.03*	0.082**	0.291***	1	0.469***	0.294***	0.254***	-0.274***	0.435***	-0.239***
Coworker support (Coworker)	0.039	0.003	0.315***	0.454***	1	0.292***	0.298***	-0.26***	0.475***	-0.303***
Job autonomy (Autonomy)	0.102**	0.304***	0.139***	0.182***	0.191***	1	0.373***	-0.1***	0.308***	-0.191***
Growth opportunities (Growth)	-0.02	0.015	0.217***	0.256***	0.254***	0.358***	1	-0.065**	0.349***	-0.21***
Work-family Conflict (WFC)	-0.067*	0.129***	0.203***	-0.215***	-0.137***	-0.118***	0.009	1	-0.295***	0.194***
Job satisfaction (JSf)	0.13***	0.128***	0.318***	0.37***	0.387***	0.295***	0.248***	-0.22***	1	-0.455***
Turnover intention (TI)	-0.066*	-0.013	0.146***	-0.121**	-0.21***	-0.121***	-0.143***	0.056	-0.361***	1

## Structural Equation Modeling

The structural equation modeling followed a two-stage analysis, in which the measurement model was first validated using confirmatory factor analysis. The structural model was tested to estimate the fit of the hypothesized model to the data. The measurement model, which specifies and tests the relationships between the observed measures and their underlying constructs, provides a confirmatory assessment of construct validity. The structural model tests the causal relationships among the latent constructs, as posited by the theory (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). To further identify significant differences between the

two sectors of employment, multiple-group analysis was performed for both the measurement and the structural model.

### **Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA)**

Each construct in the theoretical model (Figure 3.1) and its respective scale item measurements (i.e., indicator variables) were analyzed separately to determine the reliability of the measurements. Given that the chi-square statistic is biased against large sample sizes, it is typically recommended that several different fit indices should be reported (i.e., including absolute, parsimonious, and incremental fit indices; Kline, 1998; Mueller & Hancock, 2001), and that decisions about the adequacy of model fit should be based upon multiple statistics. The two CFA measurements employed for the analysis are the *factor loadings* and the *squared multiple correlations*. The factor loadings represent the direct effects of the scale items on the measurement of the construct (Bollen, 1989, p.230), and need to have a critical ratio above 1.96 to be significant at the 0.05 level (Garson, 2006). The squared multiple correlation is the measure of each item in the scale when it is regressed on the remaining items in the same scale. Specifically, it is the percent of variance explained in that variable.

#### Dependent Variables

*Work-family Conflict.* The six item scale of work-family conflict produced an alpha of 0.87. The model produced a chi-square with 5 degrees of freedom of 0.87, a CFI of 0.995, and an RMSEA of 0.046. The results suggest that the constructs fit the data well.

*Job satisfaction.* The 2 item scale of job satisfaction produced an alpha of .67. However, CFA could not be run for job satisfaction, because the scale consisted of only two items.

## Independent Variables

### 1). Formal Support.

The two formal support dimensions, dependent care benefits and flexible work arrangements, produced an alpha of .75 and .65, respectively.

*Dependent care benefits.* The CFA results of the 5 items in the Dependent care benefits scale produced a chi-square with 5 degrees of freedom of 203.72 ( $p = .000$ ), a CFI of .942, and an RMSEA of .122.

*Flexible work arrangements.* The initial FWA scale consisted of 8 items. The CFA analysis for this model did not produce a good fit to the data. The chi-square for the 20 degrees of freedom was 279.54 ( $p < .05$ ), the CFI .911, and RMSEA .070. The squared multiple correlations for two of the items were low (qbp34  $r^2 = .021$  and qeb31a  $r^2 = .015$ ), especially compared to the other variables. It is preferable to have items with high squared multiple correlations, which would mean they explain a larger portion of variance and have less unexplained error. Therefore, the two items were removed from the analysis and the CFA was conducted again. The alpha for the adjusted scale with 6 items was .67 and the construct produced a chi-square with 9 degrees of freedom of 119.47 ( $p < .05$ ), a CFI of .959 and an RMSEA of .068. Therefore, the 6-item measure of FWA was deemed to fit the data adequately.

### 2. Informal Support

Four aspects of informal organizational support were assessed: supportive work-family culture, supervisor support, coworker support, and working hours culture.



*Supportive work-family culture.* The 4 items in the supportive culture scale produced an alpha of .71. The model had a chi-square with 2 degrees of freedom of 2.41 ( $p = .300$ ), a CFI of 1.00, and an RMSEA of .009. The results suggest that this construct fits the data well.

*Supervisor support.* The 5-item measure of supervisor support produced an alpha of .87. The model had a chi-square with 5 degrees of freedom of 105.73 ( $p < .05$ ), a CFI of .984 and an RMSEA of .087. While the CFI is good, the RMSEA was above the 0.06 cutoff. The high level of RMSEA suggests that error exists in the model. The examination of the factor loadings showed that all were significant. Also, the squared multiple correlations were all above .45. Thus, the modification indices were examined for possible problems. They showed some covariance between items, but because the improvement for each of these was very small (smaller than .05), I decided to accept the initial model.

*Coworker support.* The three-item measure of coworker support produced an alpha of .75. CFA could not be run for coworker support because the scale only consisted of three items.

*Work-hours culture.* The three-item measure of coworker support produced an alpha of .67. CFA could not be run for work-hours culture because the scale only consisted of three items.

### 3. Work characteristics

*Job autonomy.* The three-item measure of job autonomy produced an alpha of .60. CFA could not be run for job autonomy because the scale only consisted of three items.

*Intrinsic rewards.* The three-item measure of intrinsic rewards produced an alpha of .64. CFA could not be run for job autonomy because the scale only consisted of three items.

While both work characteristics scales were below the .70 cut-off, they were deemed close enough for inclusion in the model. The CFA results for all scales are illustrated in Table 4.3. This table contains several different indications of model fit including Chi-square and its associated degrees of freedom, the comparative fit index (CFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) index.

In summary, CFA was used to determine the construct validity (i.e., the extent to which items designed to measure a particular factor actually do so). Testing the validity of the measurement model before evaluating the structural model allowed us to distinguish rejections of the proposed model because of problems stemming from measurement inadequacies from problems related to the actual proposed theory.

**Table 4.3** Reliability coefficients and CFA fit indices.

<b>Scale</b>	<b># of Items</b>	<b>Alpha</b>	<b>Chi-square</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>RMSEA</b>
Work-family conflict	6	0.87	0.87	5	0.995	0.046
Job satisfaction	2	0.67	N/A			
Dependent care benefits	5	0.75	203.72	5	0.942	0.122
Flexible work arrangements	6	0.67	119.47	9	0.959	0.068
Work-family culture	4	0.71	2.41	2	1	0.009
Supervisor support	5	0.87	105.73	5	0.984	0.087
Work-hours culture	3	0.67	N/A			
Coworker support	3	0.75	N/A			
Job autonomy	3	0.6	N/A			
Growth opportunities	3	0.64	N/A			

### **The Hypothesized SEM Model**

Following Garson's (2006) recommendation, I conducted the initial analysis of the hypothesized model for each group separately. Separate testing allowed us to determine how consistent the model results are. However, it did not test for significant differences in the model's parameters between the two sectors. This was further performed through multigroup modeling.

Maximum likelihood estimation was performed and model fit was tested using the joint criteria of CFI > 0.90 and RMSEA < 0.06. If the initial hypothesized model did not fit satisfactorily, new models were developed as a refinement of the hypothesized model based on analysis results from the Lagrange Multiplier (LM) test. The Lagrange Multiplier (LM) determined whether any of the fixed parameters should be freed by allowing the specific error coefficients to covary, and whether any cross-loading items should be dropped, in order to ensure that the items only loaded on one factor. Any decision to drop items and to add error covariances to the model was supported by theory. The modified models were, then, tested again; the final model is presented in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4** Model fit and model comparison.

	Public			Private		
	$\lambda^2$ (df)	CFI	RMSEA	$\lambda^2$ (df)	CFI	RMSEA
Model 1: Theoretical model	307.09(32)	0.756	0.11	611.55(32)	0.862	0.097
Model 2: drop Work-hours culture	87.29(23)	0.93	0.062	111.59(23)	0.976	0.045
Model 3: drop FS ->TI & WC-> TI	88.28(25)	0.931	0.059	112.34(25)	0.976	0.042

The initial comparative fit indices for the private sector sample indicated an unacceptable data-model fit. The Chi-square (611.55, df = 32) was statistically significant ( $p < .000$ ), the CFI (.862) was below the accepted level of good model fit of .900 (Bentler, 1992), and the RMSEA (.097) was way above the criteria of fitness evaluation ( $> .060$ ). Because the squared multiple correlation for the work-hours culture scale was really low (.000), the model was rerun without this scale. The resulting model gained significant goodness of fit: the chi-square was 111.59 (df = 23), CFI = .976, and RMSEA = .045. The examination of the regression weights revealed a number of non-significant paths: formal support to turnover intentions ( $p = .423$ ), work characteristics to turnover intentions ( $p = .456$ ), work-family conflict to turnover intentions ( $p = .427$ ), and formal support to job

satisfaction ( $p = .224$ ). Then, the non-significant paths from formal support and work characteristics to turnover intentions were dropped and the model rerun. The new model produced a chi-square value with 25 degrees of freedom of 112.34 ( $\lambda^2/df = 4.49$ ), a CFI of .976, and an RMSEA of .042. The regression weights showed that the paths from work-family conflict to turnover intentions ( $p = .582$ ) and from formal support to job satisfaction ( $p = .247$ ) were not significant. However, for theoretical reasons, we decided to keep them in the model.

The initial comparative fit indices for the public sector sample indicated an unacceptable data-model fit. The Chi-square (307.09,  $df = 32$ ) was statistically significant ( $p < .000$ ), the CFI (.756) was below the accepted level of good model fit of .900 (Bentler, 1992), and the RMSEA (.110) was above the .060 criteria of fitness evaluation. The squared multiple correlations for the work-hours culture scale was really low (.006), thus the model was rerun without this scale. The resulting model gained significant goodness of fit: the chi-square was 87.29 ( $df = 23$ ),  $\chi^2/df = 3.15$ , CFI = .930, and RMSEA = .062. The examination of the regression weights revealed a number of non-significant paths: work characteristics to work-family conflict ( $p = .291$ ), formal support to job satisfaction ( $p = .484$ ), work characteristics to turnover intentions ( $p = .526$ ), formal support to turnover intentions ( $p = .325$ ), informal support to turnover intentions ( $p = .263$ ), work-family conflict to turnover intentions (.390), and work-family conflict to job satisfaction ( $p = .093$ ). Consistent with the private sector model, the paths from formal support and work characteristics to turnover intentions were dropped and the model rerun. The new model produced a chi-square value with 25 degrees of freedom of 88.28, a CFI of .931, and an RMSEA of .059.

Although in both models there still were a number of non-significant paths, I decided that the models should not be altered further prior to conducting multiple groups SEM. This decision was based on the need to directly compare and retain the same model among the two sectors. Therefore, given that the two models provided a good fit to the data, this third hypothesized model was retained. If our objective had been to maximize fit, then eliminating the non-significant structural paths would have been the next stage. However, our objectives were to explore the relative contribution of each character dimension to the outcome variables and determine whether these contributions differed significantly by sector rather to produce a model that fits both groups.

#### Testing Invariance Across Groups: Comparative Model Testing

The recommended process for comparison between groups is a multi-group SEM model comparison. The process to perform this type of statistical analysis follows the steps laid out by Byrne (2001), and will be discussed below.

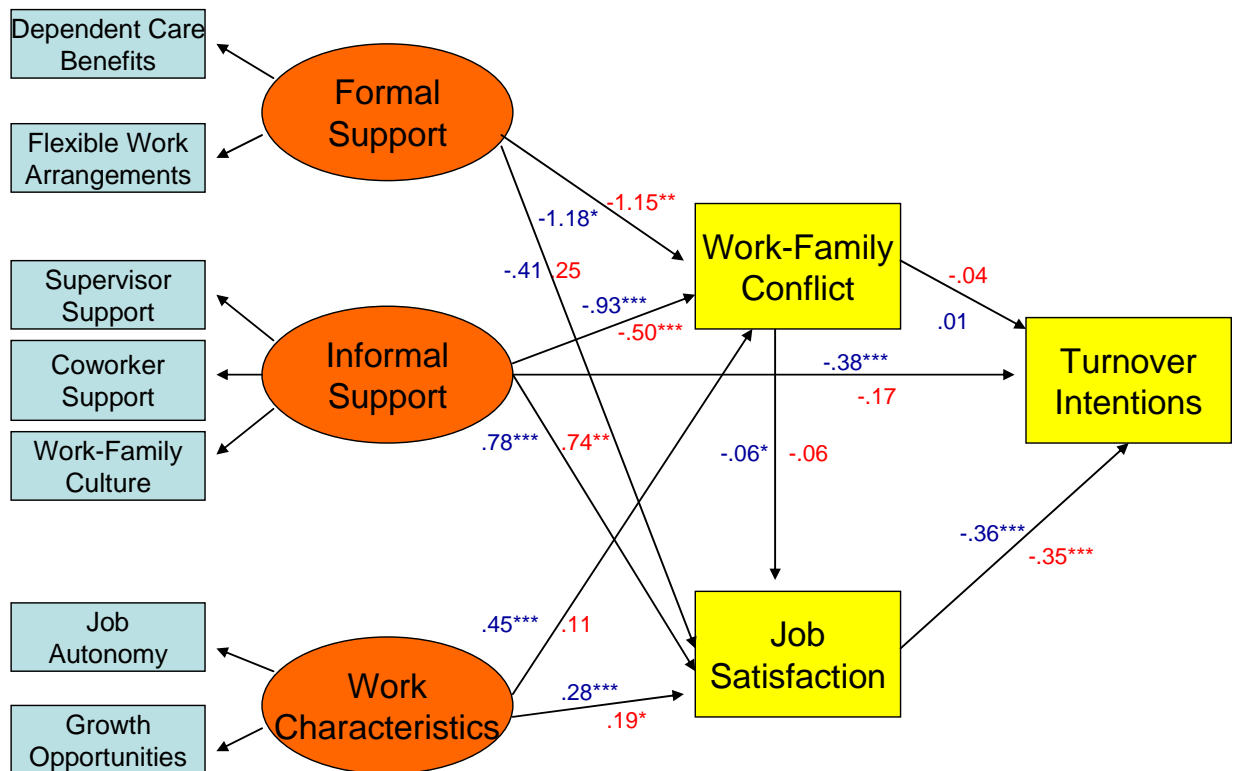
To test whether there was a significant structural difference between the public and the private sector samples, multigroup SEM was conducted using Amos version 6.0. The general procedure is to test for measurement invariance between the unconstrained model for both groups combined (the baseline model), then for a model where certain parameters are constrained to be equal between groups (Garson, 2006). In testing for multigroup invariance it is best to follow a logically organized strategy. Garson (2006) recommends starting with the measurement model and then later testing the structural arrows linking factors.

To evaluate model improvement, I examined the difference in  $\lambda^2$  ( $\Delta\lambda^2$ ) between two nested models (Bollen, 1989; Byrne, 1998). Because the chi-square difference tests could be influenced by the large sample sizes (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1989), I also considered Cheung

and Rensvold's (2002) suggestion that a difference of larger than .01 in the CFI values would indicate a meaningful change in the model fit for testing measurement invariance.

The Baseline SEM Model

The first step in the multi-group SEM comparison procedure is to determine a baseline model. Determining a baseline model is termed as identifying the model in SEM terminology and refers to a model incorporating the reliable scales and their respective items measuring each construct in the model determined by the CFA, plus the significant paths hypothesized between the constructs. The creation of the baseline model involved testing all of the hypothesized relationships in the theoretical model (Figure 4.1) using the entire "pooled" sample (i.e., both the public and the private sector samples).



**Figure 4.1.** Final Baseline Model with unstandardized coefficients. Red = Public Sector, Blue = Private Sector. \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001.

At this point in the data analysis, it is important to note Hayduk's (1987) recommendation that paths in SEM models should be driven by theory, not by data. This means that the hypothesized relationships already delineated above are the only relationships being tested. Researchers can make the mistake of adding hypothesis based on the modification indices provided by SEM analysis.

The baseline model was evaluated based on its goodness-of-fit indices to determine if the model was a good representation of the hypothesized relationships (Hu & Bentler, 1995). The model showed an acceptable fit. The model produced a chi-square value ( $df = 50$ ) of 200.65 ( $\text{chi-square}/df = 4.01$ ), a CFI of .967, and an RMSEA value of .034. The examination of the regression weights showed a number of non-significant paths: from formal support to job satisfaction ( $p = .440$ ), from work characteristics to work-family conflict ( $p = .276$ ), from work-family conflict to turnover intentions ( $p = .275$ ), from work-family conflict to job satisfaction ( $p = .099$ ), and from informal support to turnover intentions ( $p = .098$ ). Since the model had a good enough fit to proceed with further analysis, and because of theoretical reasons, I decided to keep all these paths in the model.

## **II. Hypotheses Testing for the Measurement Model**

In order to answer the first research question, which assesses the importance given to each of the constructs in the baseline model between the two groups, a comparison of the constructs and their intercepts was made. I first tested for differences between the constructs using the t-test for difference of means, and then for invariant intercepts, using the multiple-group SEM testing.

The t-test for difference of means (Table 4.5) showed significant differences between the two sectors in employees' perceptions of formal support, informal support, and work

characteristics. An additional step was taken for each of these significantly different constructs to identify which of the indicator variables (i.e., scale items) was driving the difference. This analysis applied the multiple-group SEM modeling to compare the significant differences between the indicator variables of each construct in the two sectors.

**Table 4.5.** T-test of the differences in means of latent variables (i.e., scales). a) Equal variance assumed.

<b>Latent Variable (Scale)</b>	<b>T-Value(a)</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Formal support	-0.044	2646	0.965
Informal support	3.385	2646	0.001
Work characteristics	4.095	2646	0.001

To test sector differences between the indicator variables, intercepts were set equal between the two sectors and their equality was tested by a nested likelihood ratio chi-square test. All the other parameters were freely estimated. The results of this procedure are shown in Table 4.6 and indicate that 5 of the 7 indicators are indeed significantly different between the two multi-group models.

**Table 4.6** Multiple-group Analysis: Indicator Variables.

<b>Model</b>	<b>Comp.</b>	$\lambda^2$	<b>df</b>	$\Delta\lambda^2$	<b><math>\Delta</math>df</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>Sig. (p)</b>
Unconstrained (Model1)	NA	200.65	50	N/A	N/A	0.97	N/A
Constrained- all factor loadings (Model 2)	1	204.37	54	3.72	4	0.97	ns
Constrained- all indicators	2	360.88	57	160.23	7	0.93	p < .001
Indicators	2						
1. Dependent Care Benefits	2	225.26	55	20.89	1	0.96	p < .001
2. Flexible work arrangements	2	237.97	55	33.6	1	0.96	p < .001
3. Culture	2	212.91	55	8.54	1	0.97	p < .005
4. Supervisor support	2	208.28	55	3.91	1	0.97	p < .05
5. Coworker support	2	206.86	55	2.49	1	0.97	ns
6. Job autonomy	2	208.24	56	3.87	2	0.97	ns
7. Growth opportunities	2	274.47	57	70.1	2	0.95	p < .001

Hypothesis 1a predicted higher levels of formal support in the public than in the private sector. The results of the t-test did not confirm this hypothesis (public sector mean = 15.59, private sector mean = 15.6, p>0.05). To identify which of the indicator variables account for this difference, I conducted a multiple-group invariance testing.



Hypothesis 1b, predicting that public sector organizations will provide significantly more dependent care benefits than the private sector, was confirmed. Public sector organizations provide significantly more dependent care benefits than the private sector (public sector  $\beta$  weight = .325, private sector regression weight = .229). The multiple-group invariance testing showed a significant difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) in the provision of dependent care benefits between the two sectors. This result is in line with the institutional theory perspective, which suggests that public sector organizations, as a result of being more visible and more female-dominated, are more likely to adopt family-friendly policies. As the public sector employs a large number of females, the higher levels of dependent care benefits in the public sector are very important for the public sector employees and for potential new employees. They may enable employees to find high quality dependent care, thus allowing them to focus on their jobs.

Hypothesis 1c, which predicted that public sector organizations will provide more flexible work arrangements than private sector organizations, was not supported. In fact, it seems that private sector organizations provide significantly more flexible work arrangements ( $p < 0.001$ ) than public sector organizations (public sector mean = 1.33, private sector mean = 1.40). This finding is encouraging from the viewpoint of private sector organizations, but provides reasons to question the conventional wisdom according to which formal supports are provided more in the public than in the private sector. According to some authors, many women self-select into the public sector because of its better family-friendly benefits, and thus they enter the public sector expecting high levels of supports, both in terms of dependent care benefits and flexible scheduling. One important practical implication to consider in this context is that if people choose an organization because of support

expectations and these expectations are not actually met after employment, this may lead to a perceived violation of the psychological contract (i.e., the “belief [that] individuals hold about promises made, accepted and relied on between themselves and [their organization]”); Rousseau, 1995, p. 9). This, in turn, may have negative effects on job satisfaction and turnover.

Hypothesis 2a, which predicted that informal work-family support will be higher in the female-dominated public sector than in the male-dominated private sector, was confirmed (public sector mean = 33.67, private sector mean = 32.95,  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding has important practical implications, since it shows that the female-dominated public sector has developed a more positive culture toward supporting their employees manage work and family responsibilities. As a result, although some of the formal supports, such as the flexible scheduling, may lag behind those in the private sector, perceived support from supervisors and coworkers, as well as less concern that use of these benefits would affect negatively their career, may create public sector employees higher levels of perceived organizational support.

The next step was to identify which of the indicator variables (i.e., scale items) was driving the difference between the two sectors in this significantly different construct.

Hypothesis 2b, which predicted higher levels of supervisor support for work-family in the public than in the private sector, has also been confirmed ( $p < 0.05$ ). Public sector employees ( $M = 2.10$ ) perceived their supervisors as more supportive with respect to work-family requirements than their private sector counterparts ( $M = 2.02$ ). Higher levels of supervisor support confirm the importance of this informal form of support for the female-dominated public sector. It suggests that public sector supervisors are more familiar with work-family issues and more open to deal with them, possibly because they have been

confronted more frequently with such issues. As a result, higher levels of supervisor support may increase public sector employees' use of formal supports, without the fear of losing their job or jeopardizing their career opportunities. Because it may encourage or discourage employees from using formal support practices, supervisor support is a key for employees to successfully manage the integration of work with family life (Anderson, 2002).

Hypothesis 2c, predicting higher levels of coworker support for work-family issues in the public than in the private sector, has not been confirmed. The results showed no significant sector based differences in employees' perception of coworker support for work-family issues (public sector  $M = 3.44$ , private sector  $M = 3.40$ ).

As Hypothesis 2d predicted, public sector employees experienced the work-family culture as more positive than the private sector employees. The analysis showed significant differences ( $M = 3.08$ , respectively  $2.98$ ;  $p < 0.005$ ) between the perceived work-family cultures in the two sectors.

Hypothesis 2e, predicting a more supportive work-hours culture in the public than in the private sector, was not tested. Work-hours culture had a very small squared multiple correlation value and was dropped from the baseline model.

Hypothesis 3a, predicting more positive work characteristics in the public than in the private sector, was confirmed ( $p < 0.001$ ) The t-test showed significant sectoral differences ( $M = 19.14$  for public and  $18.47$  for private sector;  $p < .001$ ) in the work characteristics scale. The multigroup analysis determined that only one of the work characteristics indicators, the growth opportunities, differed significantly between the two sectors.

Hypothesis 3b, stating that growth opportunities would be significantly higher in the public than in the private sector, was confirmed. The difference between the level of growth

opportunities in the public ( $M = 2.02$ ) and in the private sector ( $M = 1.76$ ) was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). This finding may raise skepticism about the assertion that private sector organizations are more likely to offer growth opportunities. In reality, as public organizations appear more likely to display good organizational citizenship by instituting employment practices that treat workers holistically and equitably (Kalleberg et al., 2006), they adopt practices that provide increased opportunities for growth and self-actualization (Appelbaum et al., 2000).

Hypothesis 3c, predicting higher levels of job autonomy in the public than in the private sector, was not confirmed. The differences between the two sectors were not significant. Both public and private sector employees perceived job autonomy as being about the same ( $M = 2.03$  for the public, and  $M = 2.05$  for the private sector).

### **III. Hypotheses Testing for the Structural Model**

From the ML estimate results of the model, standardized and unstandardized pathway coefficients and their associated t-scores (a t-score of 1.96 or greater was considered to be significant at the 0.05 level) were examined to draw conclusions about specific model relations (e.g., direct and indirect effects) for the purposes of answering research question two. Path coefficients represented the strength of the relationships among latent factors (see Table 4.7). The higher a path coefficient is the stronger effect the casual factor has on the dependent variable.

The SEM analysis allowed me to determine the direction and the amplitude of the effect of formal support, informal support, and work characteristics on our outcomes of interest. To further identify how the individual indicator variables (i.e., scale items) influenced the outcome of interest, I also conducted hierarchical multiple regression analysis.

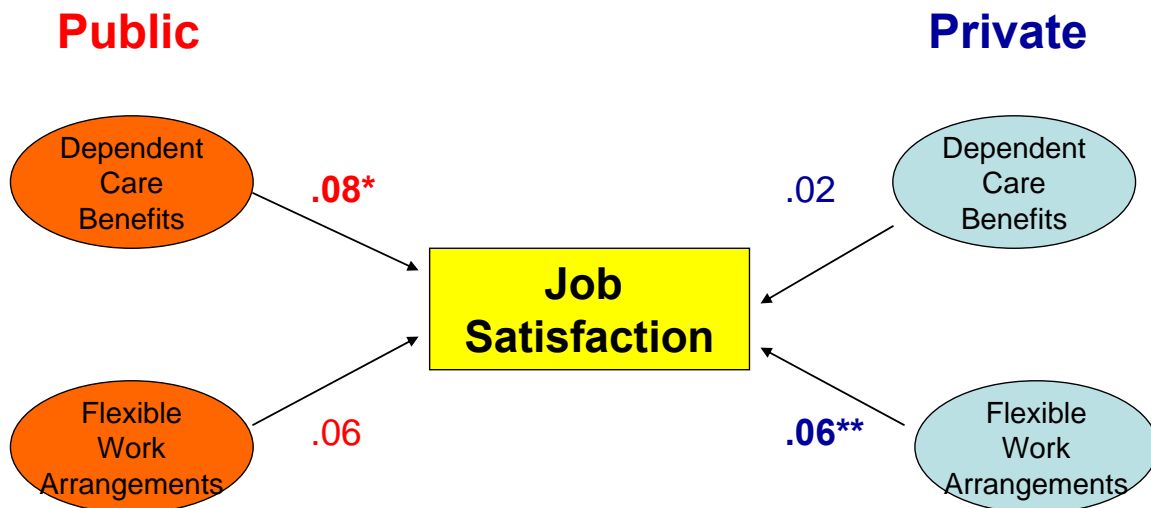
**Table 4.7** Unstandardized / Standardized Path Coefficients (p-value). A) Critical ratio (CR) in AMOS is the equivalent of the t-test; B) Hypothesized relationship was not tested in the final identified SEM. \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001.

Path	Public			Private		
	Unstandardized	Standardized	C.R.(a)	Unstandardized	Standardized	C.R.(a)
WFC <- FS	-1.153	-0.154	**	-1.183	-0.099	*
WFC <- IS	-0.498	-0.297	***	-0.931	-0.581	***
WFC <- WC	0.106	0.081	0.276	0.452	0.307	***
JSf <- FS	0.25	0.037	0.441	-0.414	-0.036	0.247
JSf <- IS	0.743	0.489	***	0.776	0.51	***
Jsf <- WC	0.189	0.16	*	0.282	0.201	***
JSf <- WFC	-0.055	-0.061	0.099	-0.058	-0.061	*
TI <-FS (b)						
TI <- IS	-0.173	-0.101	0.098	-0.381	-0.216	***
TI <- WC (b)						
TI <- WFC	-0.041	-0.04	0.275	0.014	0.013	0.582
TI <- JSf	-0.351	-0.31	***	-0.359	-0.309	***

Hypotheses 4-14 tested the effects of formal support, informal support, and work characteristics on work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Most of the hypothesized relationships were supported based on the structural modeling results.

Hypothesis 4a predicted that formal support is positively related to job satisfaction in both sectors. This hypothesis was not supported. Intriguingly, the relationship between formal support and job satisfaction for the private sector was in the opposite direction. However, this path was not significant. The regression analysis allowed us to identify the effects the two forms of formal support have on job satisfaction (Figure 4.2). The hypotheses predicting a significant positive effect of dependent care benefits (Hypothesis 4b) and flexible work arrangements (Hypothesis 4c) on job satisfaction were partially supported. Specifically, work-schedule flexibility increased job satisfaction in the private ( $\beta = .059$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) but not in the public sector ( $\beta = .061$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), whereas availability of dependent care

benefits increased job satisfaction only in the public sector ( $\beta = .077$ ,  $p < 0.05$  for public and  $\beta = .016$ ,  $p > 0.05$  in private sector).

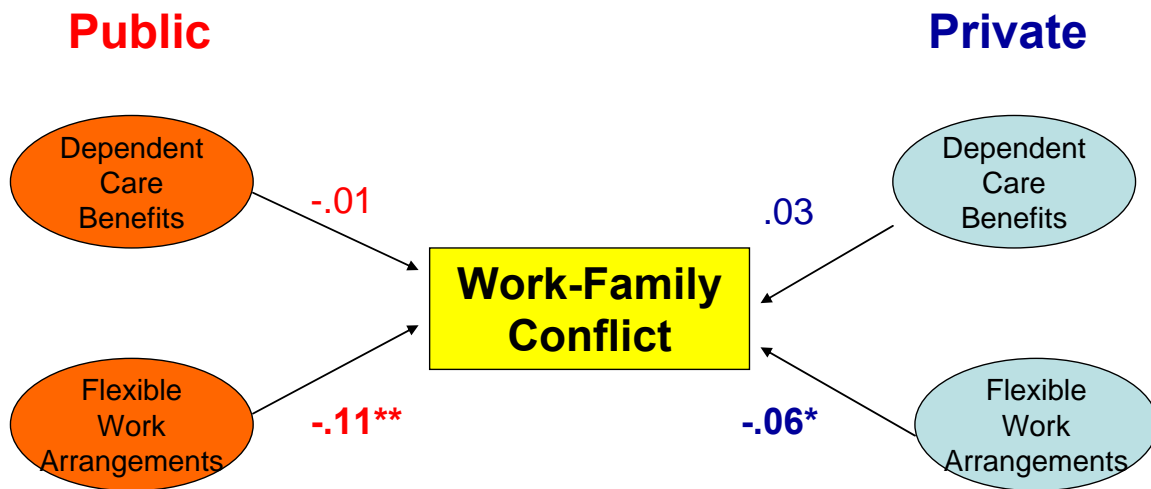


**Figure 4.2.** The relationship between Formal Support and Job Satisfaction. Red = Public Sector, Blue = Private Sector. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Hypothesis 5, predicting that formal support will reduce turnover intentions, was not significant and it was dropped from the baseline model. Thus, although perception of formal support is correlated with turnover intentions, there is evidence that this effect is mediated.

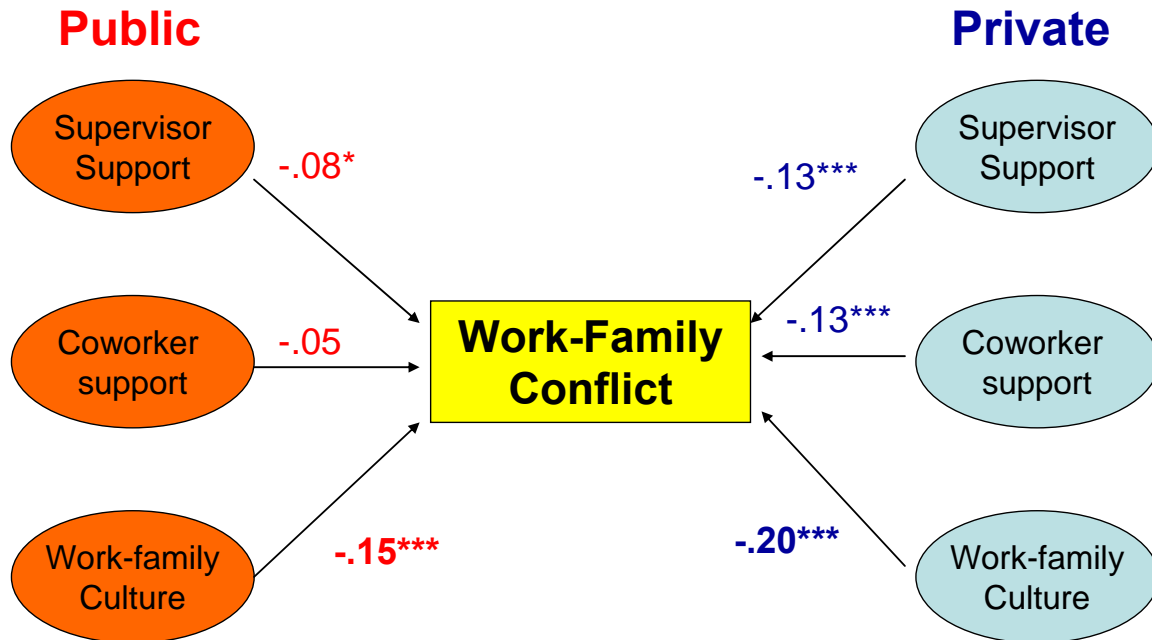
Hypothesis 6a predicted that formal support is negatively related to work–family conflict (WFC) in both sectors. The path estimates shown in Table 4.7 are consistent with this prediction. The relationship between formal support and WFC was in the hypothesized direction. However, this path was stronger for the public ( $-.154$ ,  $p < .005$ ) than for the private sector ( $-.099$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The multiple regression findings (Figure 4.3) confirmed Hypothesis 6c, indicating that flexible-time benefits were associated with reduced work-family conflict in both the public and the private sectors ( $\beta = -.115$ ,  $p < 0.01$  in public and  $\beta = -.058$ ,  $p < 0.05$

in private). Contrary to our expectations (Hypothesis 6b), dependent care benefits did not have a significant impact on work-family conflict.



**Figure 4.3.** The relationship between Formal Support and Work-Family Conflict. Red = Public Sector, Blue = Private Sector. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

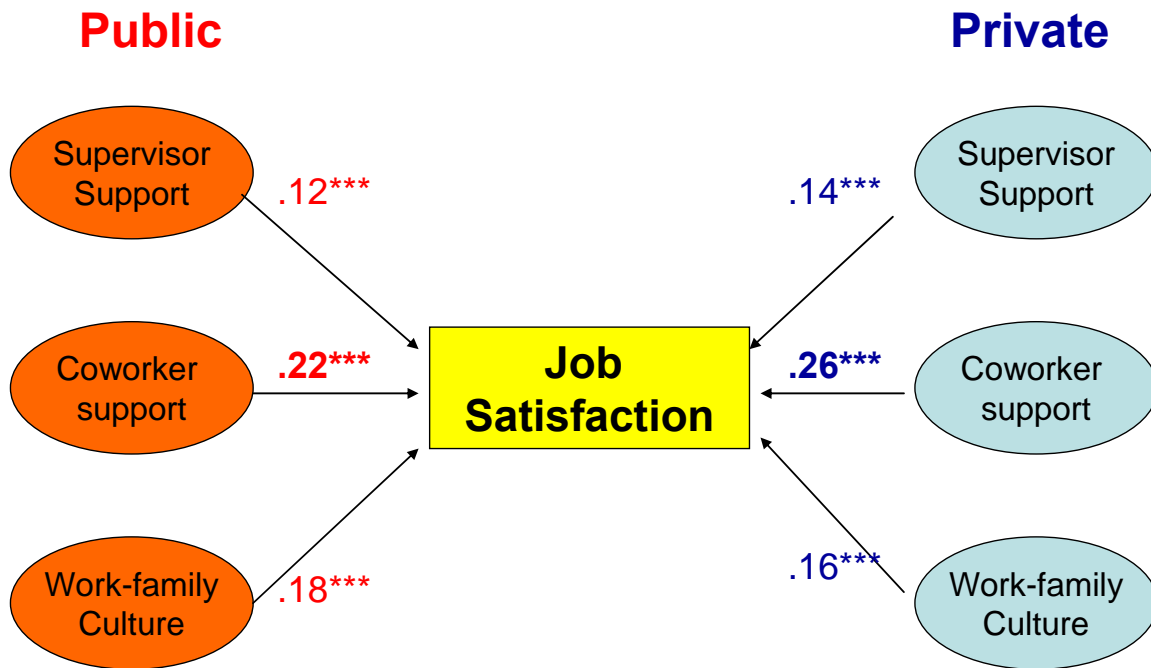
Hypothesis 7a, which contends that informal support is negatively related to work-family conflict (WFC), was strongly supported for both sectors ( $p < .001$ ). This result confirmed the assertion that organizations with higher levels of informal support would be confronted with lower levels of WFC. The multiple regression findings (Figure 4.4) confirmed that supervisor support ( $\beta = -.085$ ,  $p < 0.05$  for public and  $\beta = -.126$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for private) and a supportive work-family culture ( $\beta = -.152$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for public and  $\beta = -.165$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for private) have a strong impact on employees' ability to balance work and family responsibilities in both sectors (Hypotheses 8a and 10a). Coworker support, however, reduces significantly work-family conflict only in the private sector ( $\beta = -.055$ ,  $p > 0.05$ , for public, and  $\beta = -.132$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , for private), partially confirming Hypothesis 9a.



**Figure 4.4.** The relationship between Informal Support and Work-Family Conflict. Red = Public Sector, Blue = Private Sector. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

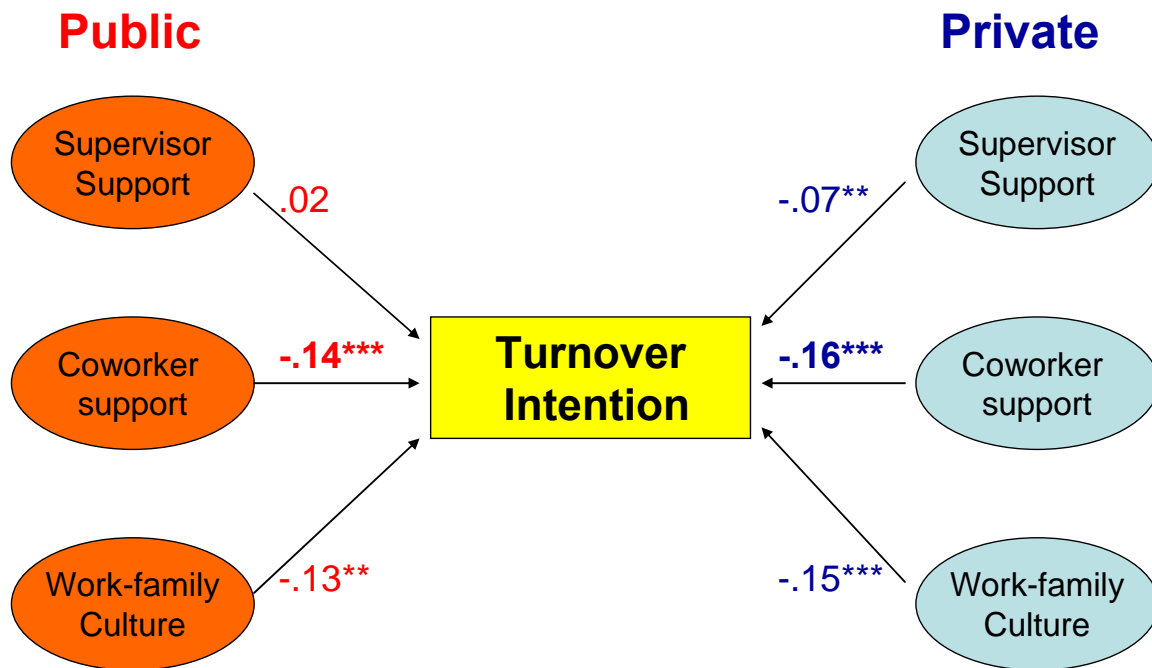
Hypothesis 7b, which predicted a positive relationship between informal support and job satisfaction, was strongly supported for both sectors ( $p < .001$ ). This suggests that employees who believe the organization offers informal support to help deal with work-family balance issues were more likely to have higher levels of job satisfaction. The regression analysis confirmed Hypotheses 8-10b, showing significant relationships between supervisor support, coworker support, culture, and job satisfaction (Figure 4.5). The analysis revealed that coworker support is the most important informal support variable in both sectors ( $\beta = .222$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for public and  $\beta = .260$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for private), followed by a supportive culture ( $\beta = .178$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for public and  $\beta = .165$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for private) and supervisor support ( $\beta = .120$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for public and  $\beta = .142$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for private).





**Figure 4.5.** The relationship between Informal Support and Job Satisfaction. Red = Public Sector, Blue = Private Sector. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Hypothesis 7c was only partially supported. As predicted, informal support was found to be negatively associated with turnover intentions. However, perceived informal support had a strong significant direct effect on turnover intentions only in the private sector ( $p < .001$ ). Many turnover models suggest that job satisfaction mediate relationships with turnover (see Hom & Griffeth, 1995, for a review). Indeed, decomposing the effects associated with each path to turnover intentions indicates that the indirect paths have an important impact on turnover intentions for both sectors. Among the three informal support scales (Figure 4.6), coworker support and work-family culture were significantly related to turnover intentions in both sectors ( $\beta = -.145$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for public and  $\beta = -.164$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for private, respectively  $\beta = -.127$ ,  $p < 0.01$  for public and  $\beta = -.154$ ,  $p < 0.001$  for private), confirming Hypotheses 9c and 10c, whereas supervisor support affected turnover intentions only in the private sector ( $\beta = -.069$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , partially confirming Hypothesis 8c).

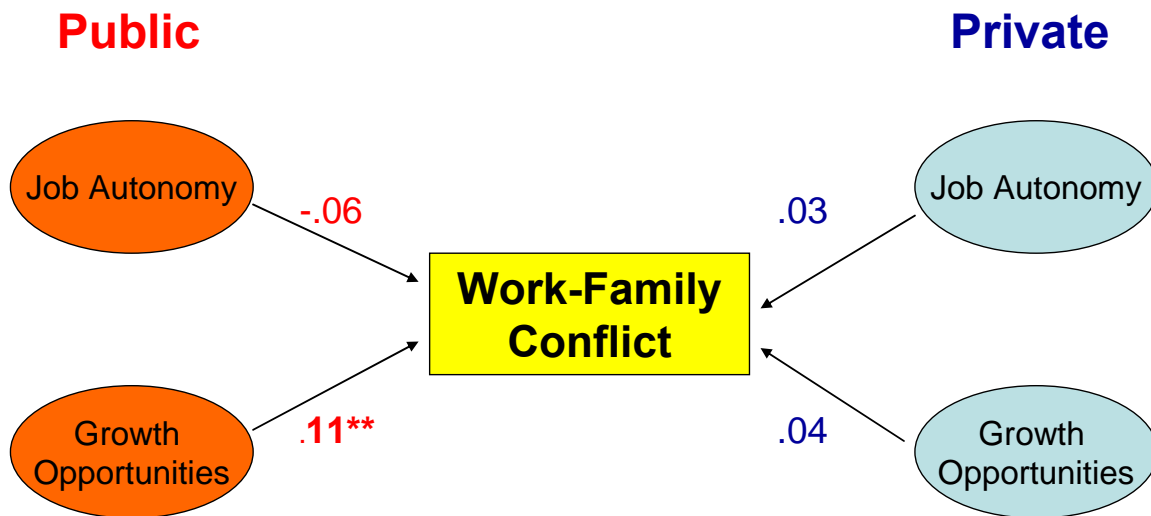


**Figure 4.6.** The relationship between Informal Support and Turnover Intention. Red = Public Sector, Blue = Private Sector. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The work-hours culture scale showed a very low squared multiple correlation for both sectors (0.06 for public and 0.00 for private), and it was dropped from the baseline model. Therefore, Hypothesis 11, predicting the effect of work-hours culture on work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, was not tested.

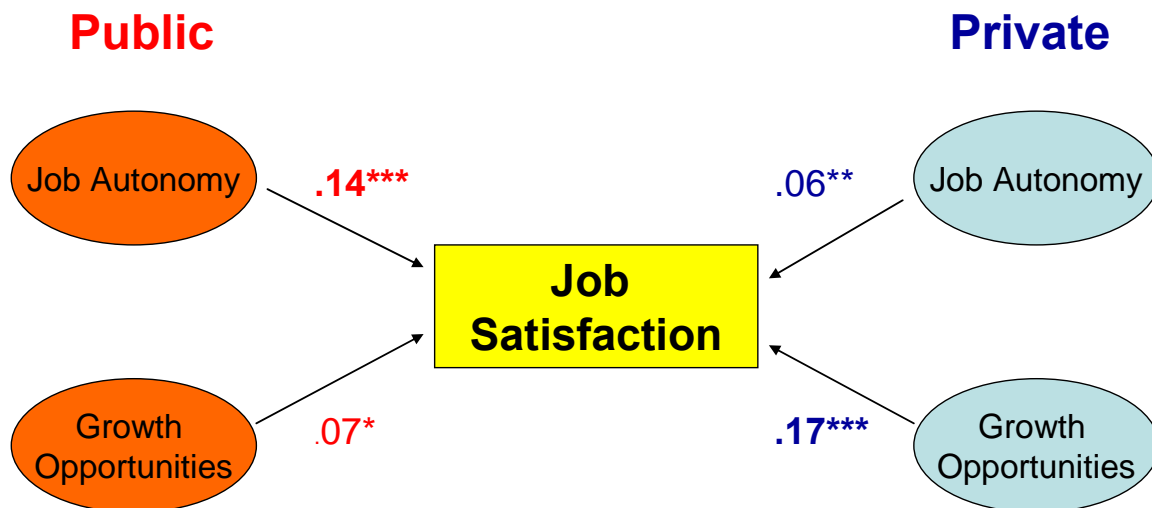
Hypothesis 12a predicted that work characteristics are negatively related to WFC in both sectors. This hypothesis was not confirmed. First, the results show that the relationship between these two variables is in the opposite direction, suggesting that increased autonomy and learning opportunities actually increased the level of WFC in both sectors. Second, the positive relationship between work characteristics and WFC was found significant ( $.307, p < .001$ ) only in the private sector. The regression analyses (Figure 4.7) revealed that growth opportunities had a positive effect on work-family conflict only in the public sector ( $\beta = .108,$

$p < 0.01$  for the public and  $\beta = .045$ ,  $p > 0.05$  for the private sector), partially confirming Hypothesis 14a. Job autonomy seems to slightly increase work-family conflict in the private sector ( $\beta = .031$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and to decrease it in the public sector ( $\beta = -.062$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), partially confirming Hypothesis 13a.



**Figure 4.7.** The relationship between Work Characteristics and Work-Family Conflict. Red = Public Sector, Blue = Private Sector. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

As Hypothesis 12b predicted, work characteristics were also found to be a significant predictor of job satisfaction in both sectors ( $p < .05$  in the public and  $p < 0.001$  in the private sector). Growth opportunities increase job satisfaction in both sectors (Hypothesis 14b); however, they appear to be more important for job satisfaction in the private ( $\beta = .166$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) than in the public sector ( $\beta = .071$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) (Figure 4.8). This result confirmed the assertion that employees working for organizations that offer more job autonomy and opportunities for ability development would be more satisfied.



**Figure 4.8.** The relationship between Work Characteristics and Job Satisfaction. Red = Public Sector, Blue = Private Sector. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Hypothesis 12c, which predicted a significant influence of work characteristics on turnover intentions, was not significant and it was not included in the baseline model.

Hypotheses 13 and 14c, which predicted the effect of the two elements of work characteristics (i.e., job autonomy and growth opportunities) on turnover intentions were not tested either.

Although not hypothesized, the study examined the direct effects of work–family conflict on job satisfaction and turnover intentions, as well as the effect of job satisfaction on turnover intentions. The results show that work-family conflict decreases job satisfaction, but this influence is significant only in the private sector ( $p < .05$ ). Job satisfaction reduces significantly ( $p < .001$ ) turnover intentions in both sectors. The influence of work-family conflict on turnover intentions differs between the two sectors. Work-family conflict leads to increased turnover intentions only in private sector (.013, versus -.040 in the public sector). However, the paths from work-family conflict to turnover intentions for both sectors were not significant.

#### IV. Mediation Analysis

This study examined the direct effects of formal and informal supports on work–family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Beside the direct effects depicted in Fig. 3.1, several indirect relationships (i.e., mediations) were also estimated.

To test the mediating effect of work-family conflict and job satisfaction I decomposed the effects associated with each path to job satisfaction and turnover by applying the path multiplication rule (Garson, 2006). However, since SEM does not provide enough detail for a complete assessment of mediation, I complemented the SEM analysis with Baron and Kenny’s (1986) approach, in which several regression analyses are conducted and significance of the coefficients is examined at each step. To determine whether the mediating effect was significant, I used Preacher & Leonardelli’s (2006) interactive calculation program.

Several statistically significant findings regarding the indirect impact of formal support, informal support and work characteristics on job satisfaction and turnover intentions were found (Table 4.8).

**Table 4.8.** Mediation Analyses Results. FS = Formal Support; IS = Informal Support; WC = Work Characteristics. \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Mediator	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable					
		FS (Sobel t)		IS (Sobel t)		WC (Sobel t)	
		Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
<b>WFC</b>	Job Sf	2.57***	3.97***	3.37***	7.8***	1.77	3.61***
	Turnover Intention	-1.18	-3.72***	-0.7	-5.18*	-1.0	-3.39***
<b>Job Sf</b>	Turnover Intention	-4.39***	-8.91***	-6.71***	-12.84***	-7.03**	-12.72***

Confirming Hypothesis 15a, work-family conflict mediated the relationship between formal support and job satisfaction in both sectors ( $p < 0.001$ ). However, the unstandardized

indirect effects were very small compared to the direct effects in both public (0.063/0.250) and private (0.069/-0.414) sectors.

Confirming Hypothesis 15b, the association between informal support and job satisfaction was partially mediated by experiences of work-family conflict in both sectors ( $p < 0.001$ ). Again, the indirect effects was very small compared to the direct effects (public = 0.027/0.743, private = 0.054/0.776).

Work-family conflict also acted as a partial mediator in the relationship between work characteristics and job satisfaction in the private sector only, partially confirming Hypothesis 15c (for public  $p > 0.05$ , and for private  $p < 0.001$ ). Intriguingly, while the direct relationship between work characteristics and job satisfaction was positive, the indirect relationship was negative. Hence, job autonomy and growth opportunities increase work-family conflict, which in turn reduces job satisfaction. However, the indirect effects were smaller compared to the direct effects (public = -0.006/0.189, private = -0.026/0.282).

The mediation analysis also revealed that work-family conflict acted as a partial mediator in the relationship between formal support and turnover intentions in both sectors, and between informal support, work characteristics, and turnover intentions in the private sector only. However, as shown below, the indirect effect of work-family conflict on turnover intentions was much smaller than its direct effects.

Hypothesis 16a, which predicted that work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between formal support and turnover intentions, was supported ( $p < 0.001$ ). However, the indirect effect is small in both sectors: the unstandardized indirect effects for public and private sectors were 0.047 and -0.017, respectively. The direct effect was not

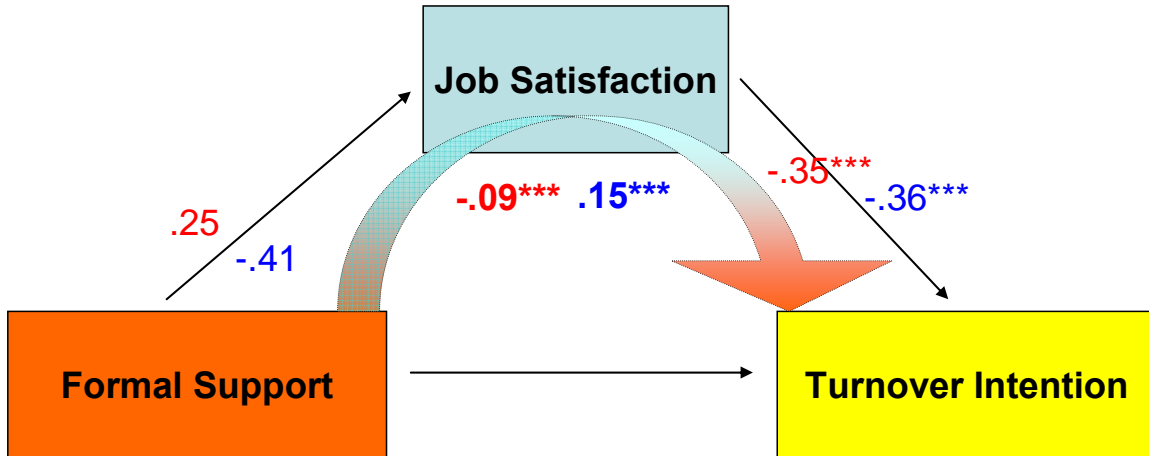
tested in the baseline model, since the modification indices showed non-significant values for this path, suggesting dropping it from the initially hypothesized model.

Hypothesis 16b was partially supported. Work-family conflict partially mediated the relationship between informal support and turnover intentions in the private sector ( $p < 0.001$ ); the mediator effect was small (unstandardized indirect/direct effects were 0.020/0.173, for public sector, and -0.013/-0.381, for private sector).

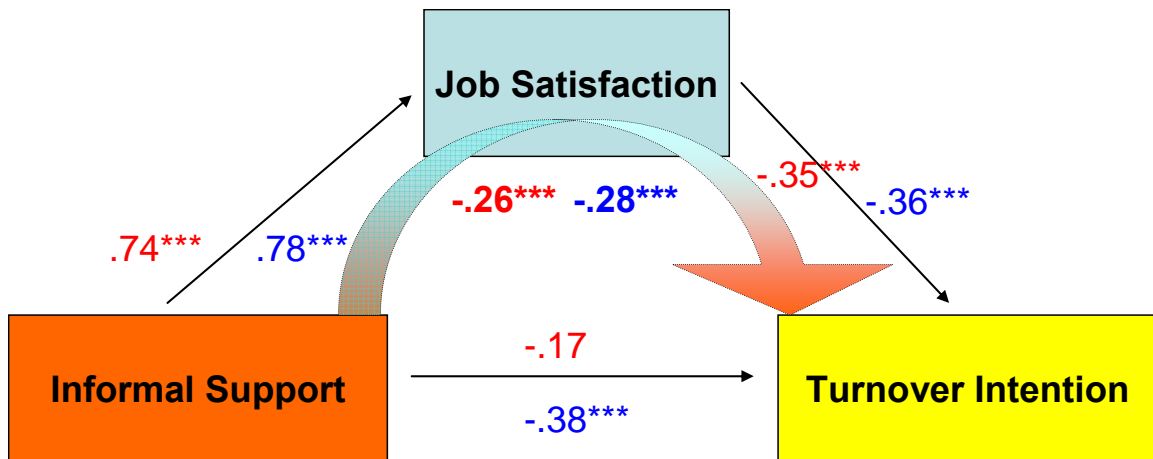
Hypothesis 16c was also partially supported. Work characteristics partially mediated the impact of work characteristics on turnover intentions only in the private sector ( $p < 0.001$ ); unstandardized indirect effects for public and private sectors were -0.004 and 0.006, respectively. Similar to hypothesis 16a above, the direct effect was not tested in the baseline model, because the modification indices showed non-significant values for this path.

Most importantly, as presented below, all three predictor variables influenced turnover intentions via job satisfaction. First, Hypothesis 17a was supported, as job satisfaction acted as a mediator in the relationship between formal support and turnover intentions (Figure 4.9); unstandardized indirect effects were statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) between public (-0.088) and private (0.149) sectors.

Second, Hypothesis 17b was also confirmed, as the association between informal support and turnover intentions was fully mediated in the public sector and partially mediated in the private sector by job satisfaction ( $p < 0.001$ ) (Figure 4.10). Hence, informal support resulted in increased job satisfaction, leading to decreased turnover intentions. At the same time, informal support was also directly linked to turnover intentions. It is worth noting that in the public sector the mediated effect was stronger than the direct effect (unstandardized indirect/ direct effects were -0.261/-0.173, for public, and -0.279/-0.381, for private).



**Figure 4.9.** The mediator effect of Job Satisfaction in the relationship between Formal Support and Turnover Intention. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

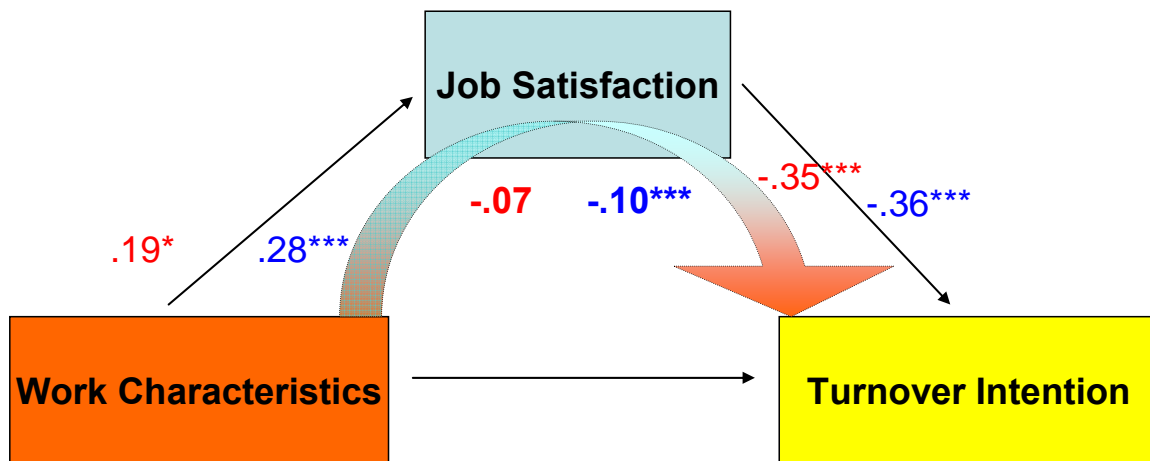


**Figure 4.10.** The mediator effect of Job Satisfaction in the relationship between Informal Support and Turnover Intention. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Third, confirming Hypothesis 17c, job satisfaction also acted as a mediator (full mediator in the public and partial mediator in the private sector;  $p < 0.001$  in both) in the relationship between work characteristics and turnover intentions (Figure 4.11); unstandardized indirect effects for public and private sectors were -0.066 and -0.101,



respectively. Again, the direct effect was not tested in the baseline model, since the modification indices showed non-significant values for this path, suggesting dropping it from the initially hypothesized model. However, in this initial model, the indirect effect was higher than the direct effect- unstandardized indirect/direct effects were -0.70/-0.56, for public sector, and -0.82/-0.69, for private sector.



**Figure 4.11.** The mediator effect of Job Satisfaction in the relationship between Work Characteristics and Turnover Intention. \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The findings confirming Hypotheses 17 (b and c) have important implications for both public and private sector managers, which need to be aware that informal support and work characteristics may not directly reduce turnover intentions. Rather, they increase job satisfaction, probably by signaling employees about the extent to which the organization values and cares about them as individuals, which then reduces turnover intentions.

The last step was to test our fourth research question and determine whether there were significant sector based differences in the hypothesized relationships identified in the baseline model and in the levels of work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover

intentions. This comparison was done by setting the parameters (i.e., the hypothesized paths) and the three intercepts (dependent variables) to be equal in both groups.

To test for structural invariance, I first allowed a free estimation of the structural coefficients in both the public and the private models. Relaxing all equality on the structural coefficients gave a chi-square statistic of 208.24 (df = 56), and a CFI of 0.97. To test whether the structural coefficients between the constructs in the public sample were similar to those for the private sector sample, constraints on structure weights were added. The more constraint is added, the worse the fit and the higher the chi-square statistics. The chi-square difference ( $\Delta\lambda^2 = 18.3$ ,  $\Delta df = 10$ ) was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), showing that some causal links in the structural model differed significantly between the two samples.

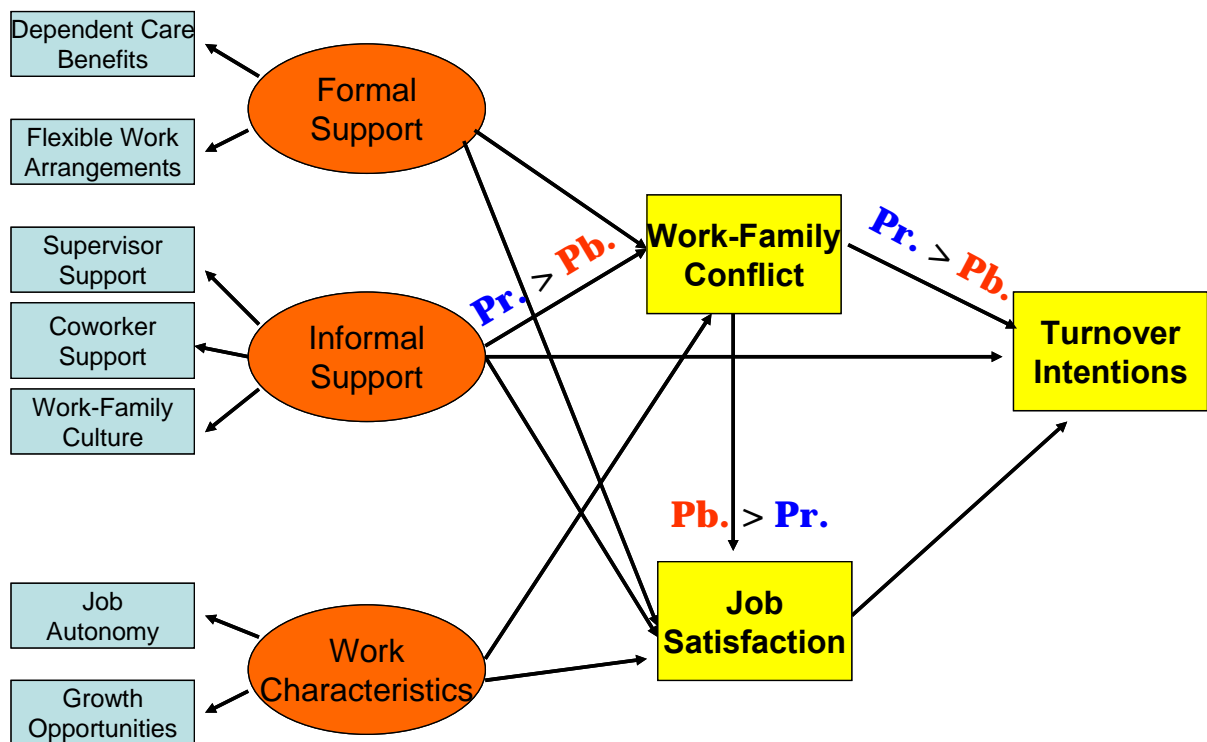
Next, the structural invariance for each individual structural path was tested to identify which of the links caused the structural difference. Table 4.9 summarizes the results of the multigroup SEM analysis of the structural paths.

**Table 4.9.** Multiple-Group Analysis: Structural Paths. All factor loadings and the intercepts for coworker support and job autonomy were constrained equal.

Model	$\lambda^2$	df	$\Delta\lambda^2$	$\Delta df$	CFI	Sig. (p)
Baseline (a)	208.24	56	N/A	N/A	0.97	N/A
Constrained- all paths	226.53	66	18.3	10	0.96	p < .05
Structural weight by path						
1. WFC <- FS	208.24	57	0	1	0.97	ns
2. WFC <- IS	214.25	58	6.01	2	0.96	p < .05
3. WFC <- WC	214.1	58	5.86	2	0.97	ns
4. JSf <- FS	215.4	59	7.16	3	0.97	ns
5. JSf <- IS	215.52	60	7.38	4	0.97	ns
6. JSf <- WC	215.54	61	7.3	5	0.97	ns
7. TI <- IS	217.66	62	9.42	6	0.97	ns
8. JSf <- WFC	217.66	63	9.42	7	0.97	ns
9. TI <- JSf	220.48	64	12.24	8	0.97	ns
10. TI <- WFC	225.86	65	17.62	9	0.96	p < .05

Significant differences in the chi-square and CFI values have been found in two of the ten individual paths: informal support to work-family conflict and work-family conflict to

turnover intentions (Figure 4.12). The degree of influence of informal support on work-family conflict is significantly different between the two sectors ( $p < 0.05$ ). Informal support has a higher impact on work-family conflict in the private (unstandardized weight = -0.93) than in the public sector (unstandardized weight = -0.50). The impact of work-family conflict on turnover intentions also shows statistical difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the two sectors. This relationship reveals interesting results. While in the private sector work-family conflict increases turnover intentions (unstandardized weight = .01), it reduces turnover intentions in the public sector (unstandardized weight = -.04). However, the relationship between work-family conflict and turnover intentions is not statistically significant for either of the two sectors.



**Figure 4.12.** Statistically significant sector-related differences.

The next part of the data analysis allowed to test hypotheses 18-20, investigating differences in the dependent variables (i.e., work-family conflict, job satisfaction, turnover intentions) as a result of the sector of employment. The multiple-group invariance testing results (Table 4.10) showed significant sector based differences only between the levels of job satisfaction.

**Table 4.10.** Multiple-group Analysis: Dependent Variables.

<b>Model</b>	$\lambda^2$	<b>df</b>	$\Delta\lambda^2$	<b><math>\Delta</math>df</b>	<b>CFI</b>	<b>Sig. (p)</b>
Unconstrained	220.48	64	N/A	N/A	0.97	N/A
Constrained- dependent variables						
1. Work-family conflict	221.3	65	0.82	1	0.97	ns
2. Job satisfaction	261.82	66	41.34	2	0.96	p <.001
3. Turnover intentions	222.18	66	1.7	2	0.97	ns

Hypothesis 18 predicted lower levels of work-family conflict in the public than in the private sector. The analysis showed that the perceptions of work-family conflict experienced by the public and the private sector employees are about the same (public M = 2.00, private M = 1.98). Thus hypothesis 18 was not confirmed.

Hypothesis 19, which predicted higher levels of job satisfaction in the public than in the private sector, was confirmed (Figure 4.12). Public sector employees appear to be more satisfied (M = 2.47) than their private sector counterparts (M = 2.31).

Finally, hypothesis 20, predicting lower levels of turnover intention in the public than in the private sector, was not supported. Although the public sector employees (M = 1.40) expressed their intention to leave less than their private sector counterparts (M = 1.57), the difference between the two sectors was not statistically significant.

## V. Summary of Results

In summary, the results of this study indicate both similarities and differences between the public and the private sectors in the provision of formal support, informal support, and work characteristics and their influence on work-family conflict, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. The study determined which support variables prevailed in each sector and how those variables affected, both directly and indirectly, our outcomes of interest in the two sectors. The results of the hypotheses tested in this study are summarized below (see also Appendix 1).

The first research question investigated whether the formal and informal organizational supports, as well as the job and work context characteristics, vary according to public vs. private sector of employment. As expected, informal support and positive work characteristics are provided more in the public than in the private sector. However, provision of formal support seems to be about the same in the two sectors.

The second research question investigated the direct effect of formal and informal support, as well as job and work context characteristics, on work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. The results show that while formal support reduces work-family conflict in both sectors, it does not affect significantly job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Overall, in the private sector, the informal support was significantly related to all the outcome variables, whereas in the public sector the informal support was related to work-family conflict and job satisfaction, but not to turnover intentions. Contrary to our expectations, work characteristics do not affect turnover intentions, and they only affect work-family conflict in the private sector, but not in the public sector. Positive work

characteristics significantly increase job satisfaction in the private sector and, unexpectedly, they also increase work-family conflict in this sector.

The third research question investigated the mediator effect of work-family conflict and job satisfaction on the relationships between formal support, informal support, work characteristics, and turnover intentions. The present results show that work-family conflict acted as a mediator in the relationship between job satisfaction and formal and informal support in both sectors, and between job satisfaction and work characteristics in the private sector. Work-family conflict also mediated the relationships between turnover intentions and formal support in both sectors, and between turnover intentions and informal support, in the private sector only. However, all these indirect effects were generally small. Job satisfaction, on the other hand, showed a strong indirect effect (in some cases even stronger than the direct effect) in the relationships between formal support/informal support/work characteristics and turnover intentions.

Finally, the fourth research question explored sector based differences in the levels of work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, as well as in the pattern of relationships between these three dependent variables and the independent variables. The findings suggest higher levels of job satisfaction in the public sector, but no differences in work-family conflict and turnover intentions between the two sectors. Sector based differences were also identified in the relationships between informal support and work-family conflict, and between work-family conflict and turnover intentions. These findings are discussed in fuller detail in Chapter V.

## CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results of the study and the implications for researchers and managers. It is divided into four sections. The first section discusses the findings concerning the research questions and hypotheses outlined in Chapter II; explanations for unanticipated findings are also theoretically explored. The second section summarizes the contribution to the literature of the present research and addresses the practical implications for both public and private sectors. The third section discusses the limitations of the present study. Finally, the fourth section outlines directions for future research.

Given the high number of hypotheses, independent discussion of each would make this section difficult to follow. Therefore, I organized the discussion of the results around the four major research questions addressed by the present study.

### **Research Question 1:**

The first research question sought to compare the provision of formal support, informal support, and work characteristics between the public and the private sectors. Overall, the findings concerning sector-based differences in the provision of these practices confirmed our hypotheses. Based on the institutional theory perspective, I hypothesized that formal support (with both dependent care benefits and flexible work arrangements) would be higher in the public than in the private sector. Surprisingly, however, the results showed no differences in the provision of formal support between the public and the private sectors. While the public sector offers more dependent care benefits, it provides lower levels of flexibility than the private sector. Previous studies (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995) have shown that public organizations are generally larger and as a result more likely to adopt family-friendly support practices. Rationales advanced to explain size differences

include visibility, economies of scale, and the presence of a specialized personnel department (Den Dulk, 2001). On the one hand, given the fact that public sector organizations tend to be larger than the private sector organizations (Kalleberg, Knoke, Marsden, & Spaeth, 1996), it is reasonable to expect that this may make them more likely to adopt more 'generous' work-family arrangements, such as dependent care benefits. There are, of course, a lot of smaller public sector organizations, such as small city governments, which are not pressured to adopt family-friendly policies by their state governments or other superior instances. However, these smaller organizations may see the support policies attractive and implement them as a result (because of their small size they may do so informally). Such a diffusion interpretation is implied by institutional theories stressing mimicry and isomorphism (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995). As for the finding concerning the provision of flexible work arrangements, because public sector organizations are more likely to be characterized by formal personnel policies and/or a bureaucratic workplace, it might be more difficult for them to respond to individual requests regarding working times (Glass & Estes, 1997); in addition, flexibility in the public sector can also be limited by legislative control.

Of particular importance is the finding that the public sector is overall characterized by higher levels of informal support. Public sector employees experienced higher levels of work-family culture (i.e., fewer negative career consequences related to the use of family-friendly policies and benefits) and stronger supervisor support than their private sector counterparts. In line with the institutional theory (Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995), some of these differences may be attributed to the higher number of female employees in the public than in the private sector. In the female-dominated public sector there may be a longer tradition of using family-friendly policies, which may have led to a more supportive work-



family culture in these organizations. The higher levels of work-family culture in the public sector are in line with the Thompson et al. (1999) statement that women in the public sector have often used work-family benefits which have had minor harmful effects on their career development. An alternative explanation, however, would suggest that women in the public sector may have fewer opportunities for career advancement and/or they may value less their career development perspectives (Mauno et al., 2005b). Tradition and predominance of women may also partly explain why the public sector employees perceived their supervisors as more supportive in regard to family issues than private sector employees did. Since women use (or at least are expected to use) family-friendly benefits more often than men, supervisors and HR managers in the female-dominated public sector have been confronted with work-family issues more frequently and for a longer period of time than those in the private sector.

In contradiction to our expectations, coworker support was perceived about the same in both sectors. One possible explanation for this finding is that coworkers may be the most directly affected by an individual's use of formal supports, such as flexible working hours and telecommuting. To address urgent matters that appear on a daily basis, coworkers may have to cover for employees who are telecommuting or working flexible hours. While it would be reasonable to expect higher levels of coworker support in the public sector, reductions in human resources and insufficient cross-training within the core job (Kalleberg et al., 2006) may reduce public sector employees' availability to cover for those using flexible scheduling. Alternatively, more women in the public sector may use up vacation and other benefits offered by the organization, which might, in turn, affect more often other employees' resources to take up their responsibilities.

As expected, public sector organizations provided more work characteristics/HR practices than the private sector organizations. However, in contrast to previous studies, I found no sector-related differences in job autonomy. Most of the previous research (Norris, 2004) showed that people working in the private sector were far more likely to report that their job allowed them independence and autonomy than their public sector counterparts. The results of this study did not confirm this relationship. Our findings, however, are consistent with findings by Emmert & Taher (1992), which showed that professional public employees did not differ from national norms on job autonomy.

Consistent with our prediction, practices offering the opportunity for learning and development were more often found in the public sector. Learning and growth opportunities are compatible with humanistic work orientations, which are expected to be more common in public organizations (Kalleberg, 2006).

In sum, most of these findings support the idea that employees' perceptions about the formal and informal work-family support, as well as work characteristics, vary by sector of employment. Specifically, public sector employees reported more dependent care benefits ( $M = 1.25$  for public and  $1.19$  for private, difference statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ ), while private sector employees reported more flexible work arrangements ( $M = 1.33$  for public and  $1.40$  for private, difference statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ ). Also, informal support was experienced as more positive in the public than in the private sector ( $M = 33.67$  for public and  $32.95$  for private, difference statistically significant at  $p < 0.001$ ). Finally, public sector employees perceived more growth opportunities than their private sector counterparts ( $M = 19.14$  for public and  $18.47$  for private sector; difference statistically significant at  $p < .001$ ). These results have important implications for managers and employees from both sectors.

According to some authors and popular belief, many women self-select into the public sector because of its better family-friendly benefits, and thus they expect high levels of support, both formal and informal. As the public sector employs a large number of women, the higher levels of dependent care benefits in the public sector may be very important for current and prospective public sector employees. They may enable employees to find high quality dependent care, thus allowing them to focus on their jobs. Although flexible work arrangements seem to lag behind those in the private sector, higher levels of perceived support from supervisors, as well as less concern that use of formal support would affect negatively their career, may result in higher overall levels of perceived organizational support in public sector employees.

### **Research Question 2**

This research question examined the direct effects of formal support, informal support, and work characteristics, on work–family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, and explored sector-based differences in these relationships.

### **Work-Family Conflict**

Role theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) suggests that the resources provided within one role enable employees to be more available to people and demands in the other roles, to become more competent in the other roles, and to experience greater satisfaction in the other roles. Formal and informal support, along with work characteristics, are important work-family resources provided by organizations. Since they facilitate work-family integration, the availability of resources is critical. Based on these arguments, it was hypothesized that these three organizational resources – formal support, informal support, and work characteristics– would reduce work-family conflict in both sectors.

The results of this study indicate that while there were no overall differences between the levels of work-family conflict in the two sectors, differences were identified in the factors affecting work-family conflict experienced by public and private sector employees. Our findings confirm previous research suggesting that the formal availability of family-friendly benefits reduces significantly work-family conflict (standardized  $\beta = -0.154$ ;  $p < 0.005$ , for the public, and  $-0.099$ ;  $p < 0.05$  for the private sector). Consistent with most of the formal support literature, flexible-time benefits reduced work-family conflict (Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Hammer et al., 1997) in both the public and the private sectors, whereas dependent care benefits did not affect work-family conflict (T.D.Allen, 2001; Hammer et al., 2005). The differences in how flexible-time and dependent care benefits relate to work-family conflict suggest the theoretical importance of distinguishing between policies that benefit employees in general versus those that benefit a narrower subset of employees. Roehling et al. (2001) even suggest that it may be a misnomer to call flexible-time policies “family-friendly.”

Consistent with our prediction and previous studies (Allen, 2001; Behnson, 2002; Campbell Clark, 2001; Kossek et al., 2001; Mauno et al., 2005a; Thompson et al., 2005), informal support demonstrated strong effects on work-family conflict (standardized  $\beta = -0.297$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , for the public, and  $-0.581$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , for the private sector). This finding was valid for both sectors. The findings suggest that supervisor support and a supportive work-family culture are critical for employees from both sectors to successfully manage their work and family responsibilities. The result pertaining to the relationship between supervisor support and work-family conflict provides empirical support for that of Thomas & Ganster (1995). Employees need to know that their supervisors support their efforts to integrate work and family. They also need to know that taking advantage of the formal work-family support

provided by their organizations will not negatively affect their career advancement opportunities. Coworker support, however, reduces significantly work-family conflict in the private, but not in the public sector.

It is important to note that, while the level of informal support was higher in the public than in the private sector, the relationship between informal support and work-family conflict was much stronger for the private than for the public sector. This difference may be attributed to a longer tradition of using formal supports, which may have led to a more supportive work-family environment in the female-dominated public sector. It might be that, based on previous experience, public sector employees already feel “safe” to use the formal support policies and thus informal support is not perceived as being critical.

Contrary to our expectations, work characteristics increased work-family conflict in both sectors. However, this relationship was significant only in the private sector. Further analysis revealed that, although both job autonomy and growth opportunities were positively associated with work-family conflict, the growth opportunities were the ones driving this unexpected relationship. A possible explanation for the positive effect of growth opportunities on work-family conflict may be that they require employees (or lead them to desire voluntarily) to spend extra time and effort at work, thus reducing their available resources for fulfilling their family responsibilities. An alternative explanation may be that learning opportunities increase employees’ chances to receive new responsibilities, either in the same position or by being promoted, which again diminishes their availability to their families.

In summary, the formal and informal support confirmed their key role in reducing work-family conflict in organizations, while work characteristics showed an unexpected

positive effect. In addition, sector based differences were revealed in the impact of informal supports on work-family conflict.

### **Job Satisfaction**

Social exchange theory (Eisenberger et al., 1990; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002) holds that organizational treatments that demonstrate caring about employee well-being are likely to induce higher levels of job satisfaction among employees. Formal and informal support, as well as work characteristics, are important channels that organizations rely on in treating their employees. Based on these arguments, it was hypothesized that these three channels would have a positive impact on job satisfaction.

Based on the social exchange theory, I expected formal support to increase job satisfaction. However, the results did not confirm our hypothesis. The regression analysis allowed us to identify the specific effects the two forms of formal support have on job satisfaction. Specifically, employees with schedule flexibility reported higher levels of job satisfaction in the private but not in the public sector, whereas availability of dependent care benefits increased slightly job satisfaction only for public sector employees. A possible explanation for this finding is that private sector employees may earn more and thus they can more easily afford child care. Alternatively, this difference may be explained by the predominance of women in the public sector. Women need and use dependent care benefits more frequently than men do and they may be satisfied with their provision even though they do not need them. However, the dependent care benefits are available to all employees, which might make private sector employees to perceive the value of the exchange as lower than the more individualized flexible work arrangements.

Consistent with our prediction and previous studies (Thompson et al., 2005), all three forms of informal support demonstrated significant effects on job satisfaction in both sectors. Our results show that informal support is the most important predictor of job satisfaction in both sectors, highlighting the importance of informal work practices for both public and private organizations (standardized  $\beta = 0.489$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , for the public, and  $0.51$ ;  $p < 0.001$  for the private sector) .

In contrast with our expectation and previous studies (Ducharme & Martin, 2000), coworker support was found as the most important informal support variable in both sectors, followed by a supportive culture and supervisor support. The effects of coworker support on job satisfaction have been examined only in a few studies (Ducharme & Martin, 2000; Jones & Butler, 1980), and most of them showed a weaker role of coworkers compared to supervisors: thus, the strong effects I found in both sectors represent a particularly important contribution of this study. Researchers have long recognized that organizations are an important source of material and socio-emotional support for employees. Starting with the Hawthorne studies of the 1930s and continuing with Chester Barnard's informal organization theory, research has illustrated that organizations are also an important source of socio-emotional resources for employees. However, an examination of the work-family support literature shows that the role of coworkers and their interpersonal relationships has not been well addressed. This may be a critical oversight since relationships are an essential component of the social system that organizations represent. The social system of an organization is comprised of employees interacting with each other, and the present study identified the key role of employees' interactions with one another on their perceptions of organization's work-family support culture. The present findings suggest that the social

system and the social capital (“the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit”- Nahapiet & Ghosal, 1998, p.243), along with the relationships they are built around, play an essential role in managing organizational processes.

Researchers and practitioners alike have suggested that a supportive work-family culture, supportive supervisors and coworkers are more important than family-friendly benefits. A supportive culture influences who will feel comfortable using the programs, and will also influence employees’ general attitudes toward the organization (Thompson, 2005; Allen, 2001; Anderson et al., 2002). In addition, employees need to know that their supervisors support them in their efforts to manage work and family responsibilities (Anderson et al., 2002).

In line with our prediction and with the social exchange theory, work characteristics significantly increased job satisfaction in both the public and the private sectors (standardized  $\beta = 0.16$ ;  $p < 0.05$ , for the public, and  $0.201$ ;  $p < 0.001$  for the private sector). This finding suggests that organizations that provide employees with opportunities to extend their potential and build up their capabilities, which help meet employees’ needs for personal growth, are likely to be viewed as supportive and caring about employees’ well-being and increase the satisfaction with their jobs. It is interesting to note that in the public sector job autonomy is the one with a stronger impact on job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.142$ ;  $p < 0.001$ , for the public, and  $0.063$ ;  $p < 0.001$  for the private sector), whereas in the private sector growth opportunities have a stronger influence on job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.71$ ;  $p < 0.05$ , for the public, and  $0.166$ ;  $p < 0.001$  for the private sector).



In summary, the results showed that availability of formal support had no relationship with job satisfaction, whereas perceptions of informal support and positive work characteristics did.

### **Turnover Intentions**

Consistent with the social exchange theory, I predicted that employees who benefited the most from formal and informal support, as well as work characteristics, would reciprocate with lower levels of turnover intentions. Contrary to our expectations, the three independent variables did not have the expected direct impact on turnover intentions.

Our prediction that formal support will directly reduce turnover intentions was not supported. These results also contradict previous research. For instance, Grover & Crooker (1995) found that employees were more attached to organizations that offered work-family support policies, regardless of the extent to which they benefited themselves. In our study, perception of formal support is positively correlated with turnover intentions, but this effect is mediated, as discussed in the Mediation section below.

Consistent with our prediction, informal support had a significant direct effect on employees' turnover intentions. Employees were less likely to leave the organization if they perceived it as supportive. Among the three informal support scales, coworker support and work-family culture were significantly related to turnover intentions in both sectors, whereas supervisor support affected turnover intentions only in the private sector. Coworker support produced strong negative associations with turnover intentions in both sectors. Contrary to our expectation and previous studies (Brough & Frame, 2004), the relationship between supervisor support and turnover intentions was weaker as compared to the same associations with coworker support. A possible explanation is that coworkers are the ones more directly

affected by other employees' use of formal organizational support. In the absence of formal support policies or even when formal policies exist, employees may need to negotiate for "favors" to accommodate their family demands with coworkers who receive no additional resources for doing so. As coworkers are an important source of both affective and instrumental support (Ducharme & Martin, 2002), coworker support becomes a critical factor for employees' decision to stay or leave the organization, especially in today's team centered organizations. Coworkers may provide socio-emotional support and facilitate an employee's access to the formal support policies provided by the organization. This research, in line with Ducharme & Martin's (2000) findings, suggests the need to better appreciate the structure of interactions between workgroup members in order to create work teams with a suitable mix of skills and abilities, which would better allow employees to cover up for those utilizing flexible work arrangements. Specifically, this study suggests that systematic efforts to develop and promote coworker support will enhance worker positive affect and may ultimately improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions.

In addition, supervisor support was associated with turnover intentions only in the private sector. A possible explanation for this finding is that many private sector supervisors are less familiar with handling work-family issues and/or less inclined to allow family issues to interfere with work responsibilities. As a result, employees with supportive supervisors may decide to continue working for the organization, whereas those with unsupportive supervisors may need to leave. In addition, positive supervisor support in the public sector may be more controlled by formal public sector rules and actually instilled in the organizational culture.

The work characteristics did not have a significant direct influence on turnover intentions. Out of the two work characteristics variables, only growth opportunities reduced

significantly turnover intentions, and only in the private sector. However, the magnitude of this impact was small ( $\beta = -0.94$ ). This result is consistent with the findings of Batt & Valcour (2003), who found no relationship between job autonomy and career-development opportunities and employees' intention to leave. An important contribution of our study is identification of the indirect effect (i.e., through job satisfaction) of work characteristics on turnover intentions. This finding suggests that managers need to be aware that work characteristics may not reduce directly turnover intentions. Rather they increase job satisfaction, probably by signaling employees about the extent to which the organization values and cares about them as individuals, which in turn reduces turnover intentions.

An important predictor of turnover intentions for both sectors was job satisfaction. This finding confirms previous research showing that lower levels of job satisfaction increase turnover intentions (O'Leary-Kelly & Griffin, 1995). In addition, as it will be discussed later, job satisfaction was an important mediator in the relationships between the formal and informal factors and turnover intentions.

In summary, our findings suggest that it is not enough to merely adopt family-friendly policies. Employees' intentions to leave the organization are more strongly tied to the perceived tolerance and support of their coworkers and supervisors than to workplace policies. Thus, informal support is crucial to whether the formal policies will lead to a loyal workforce.

### **Research Question 3**

With a few exceptions (Mauno et al., 2005a; Dikkers et al., 2005; Peeters et al., 2003), very little empirical research has examined the underlying processes by which work-family conflict and job satisfaction affect turnover intentions. To address this issue, the

present study also investigated the mediator effect of work-family conflict and job satisfaction. It was hypothesized that a) work-family conflict would mediate the relationships between formal support/informal support/ work characteristics and job satisfaction and b) work-family conflict and job satisfaction would mediate the relationships between the same predictor variables and turnover intentions.

### **The Mediator role of Work-Family Conflict**

The results indicated that some of the relationships between formal support/informal support/work characteristics and job satisfaction were mediated by work-family conflict. Specifically, I found that work-family conflict mediated the relationships between formal and informal support and job satisfaction in both sectors. That is, formal and informal supports are associated with reduced work-family conflict, which in turn increases employees' job satisfaction. These findings confirm previous research (Peeters, Montgomery, & Schaufeli, 2003) showing that work-family conflict partially mediated the association between a supportive work-family culture and job satisfaction. Thomas & Ganster (1995) have also showed that supervisor support (one of the most important determinants of informal support) reduced work-family conflict, which in turn was associated with increased job satisfaction. However, the mediating effects on job satisfaction of the three predictor variables were much smaller than the direct effects.

Work-family conflict also acted as a mediator in the relationship between work characteristics and job satisfaction in the private (but not in the public) sector. Interestingly, while work characteristics had a direct positive effect on job satisfaction, the mediated effect was negative. That is, work characteristics increased work-family conflict, which further reduced job satisfaction. A possible explanation for the direct effect is that work

characteristics that offer employees opportunities to use their skills, and to make decisions that affect their work routines, indicate organization's intention to establish a social exchange relationship with its employees. This may positively influence employee's perception of the organization as caring, and thus may lead to increased job satisfaction and decreased turnover intentions. Work characteristics such as job autonomy and growth opportunities provide resources that may create positive effects in the form of motivation, new skills or attitudes, but at the same time they may also require additional time and energy commitment from employees, thus reducing their available resource for family responsibilities, and increasing work-family conflict.

The results of this study also show a significant, but small mediating effect of work-family conflict in the relationships between formal support/informal support/work characteristics and turnover intentions in the private sector. Specifically, the three resources reduced work-family conflict, which in turn reduced turnover intentions.

### **The Mediator role of Job Satisfaction**

The present study demonstrated the role of job satisfaction as an important link between formal support/informal support/work characteristics and turnover intentions. Specifically, I found that job satisfaction mediated the relationships between formal support/informal support/work characteristics and turnover intentions in both sectors. That is, formal and informal support, as well as work characteristics, are associated with increased job satisfaction, which in turn decreases employees' intention to leave the organization. These findings highlight the importance of developing strategies to enhance employees' satisfaction with their jobs.

In summary, as our findings and previous research suggest, organizations need to be aware that support practices and work characteristics may not affect directly job satisfaction and turnover. Rather, as suggested by Wayne et al. (1997), these practices serve as signals to employees about the extent to which the organization values and cares about them as individuals, which then influences satisfaction and turnover intentions (Hom & Griffeth, 1995). The present study extends previous research by showing both direct and indirect relationships between individual perceptions of support and withdrawal intentions. By providing evidence that most of these effects are strongly mediated by job satisfaction, the present research shows that job satisfaction plays an important role in the turnover process by mediating more distal antecedents.

### **General Conclusions and Implications**

This study focused on three types of support factors (i.e., formal support, informal support, work characteristics) affecting work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. It also addressed the influence of sector of employment on these relationships and outcomes. Therefore, the implications to be discussed in this section are applicable to both the public and the private sector environments as opposed to previous studies that either studied public or private sector employees.

On the whole, the findings of this study suggest both similarities and differences between public and private sector organizations with respect to the constructs measured. However, there is a strong similarity between the two sectors in the way the predictor variables affect the outcomes of work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intention.

The findings of this study support the idea of social exchange between employees and their employers related to work-family issues. According to the social exchange theory, employees and their organizations (the organizational as a whole, supervisors, and coworkers) engage in social exchange transactions over time. Employees expect that, in return for their hard work and commitment, the organizations will recognize their work-family demands and would help them better manage these demands by offering formal support, informal support, and positive work characteristics. Our findings suggest how important is for organizations to care about their employees as human beings by assisting them in maintaining good work and family relationships. Therefore, both public and private organizations seeking to help their employees manage work and family responsibilities will benefit from knowing employees' perceptions of formal support, informal support, and work characteristics, along with their specific impact on employees' work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. In addition, this information may help those interested in family-supportive jobs to decide which sector to choose.

Consistent with the institutional theory, the results confirm that public sector employees enjoy higher levels of informal support and HR practices than their private sector counterparts. However, contrary to our expectations and the institutional theory, there were no significant differences in the provision of formal supports between the two sectors. These results have important implications for organizations.

A number of authors (Nielsen, Simonsen & Verner, 2004; Martino-Golden, 2005) talk about a segregation of the labor market into a family-friendly (i.e., public) and a non-family-friendly (private) sector, arguing that women self-select into sectors depending on institutional constraints and preferences for family-friendly working conditions. Martino-

Golden (2005) argues that many women in the U.S. choose to work for the federal government because they perceive it to be more family-friendly than other alternatives. They even move from the private sector after becoming mothers to benefit from the family-friendly advantages provided by the federal government. However, most of these findings are based on interviews with a small number of employees working in the public sector. Our study, which has the advantage of including a large number of female employees working in both sectors of the economy, did not support this belief. Our results showed no significant differences between the two sectors in availability of formal work-family supports. Moreover, it showed that private sector organizations are actually the ones providing their employees more schedule flexibility.

Provision of formal work-family support that helps employees achieve work-family balance is likely to demonstrate to employees that the organization cares about them as human beings who have family needs, and thus, reduce work-family conflict and increase job satisfaction. In terms of formal support, results suggest that flexible work arrangements may be more effective than dependent care benefits in helping employees manage their work and life demands. This does not mean that offering dependent care benefits is not beneficial. They were found to influence turnover intentions in the private sector and job satisfaction in the public sector. These findings present practical implications for organizations and their managers. In offering these various benefits, organizations want to know if they are actually effective. In an effort to help their employees better manage their work and family responsibilities, many organizations may want to adopt family-friendly practice, but they may be concerned by the high cost of doing so. Our study suggests that such organizations may focus on providing flexible work arrangements: they are not as expensive to implement



as the dependent care benefits, but they have a higher impact on reducing work-family conflict.

Even more important than the provision of family-friendly policies is the implementation of those policies. In particular, this study revealed the critical role of informal support, such as coworker support, supervisor support, and a supportive work-family culture, on a number of important individual outcomes, such as work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Support from coworkers and supervisors, as well as a supportive work-family culture contribute the most to reduced work-family conflict and turnover intentions, as well as increased job satisfaction. As Uhl-Bien et al. (2000) suggested, such interpersonal relationships developed through interactions among organizational members are instrumental in creating social capital in organizations, which plays an essential role in realizing the value of human capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

By taking a systemic approach and including the coworkers in the measure of informal support, this study moves the informal support research beyond the traditional employee-organization dyad. It demonstrates that employee's coworkers are the most important informal factors to their perceptions of job satisfaction and to their turnover intentions in both sectors, and the second most important to perceptions of work-family conflict in the private sector. This is an important contribution because previous research has either neglected or has showed a smaller influence of coworkers on these individual and organizational outcomes. Managers need to be aware that employees' perceptions about their exchange relationships with the organizations are highly influenced by their coworkers, especially in today's team-intensive organizations. Therefore, their efforts to help employees

should not only consider formal support and supervisory relationships, but relational factors as well.

Given the importance of informal support, new organization-based measures are called for to increase supervisor and coworker support, and the supportive work-family culture. Supervisors and coworkers should be encouraged and trained to support their subordinates' and colleagues' family obligations. They should create a work-family culture in which employees do not fear that they will be penalized for experiencing work-family conflict. Both supervisors and coworkers need to receive reasonable support in their attempts to address work-family life issues. Coworkers should be cross-trained to be able to take over other employees' responsibilities, when needed, and rewarded for it. As our results showed that the role of informal support in balancing work and family responsibilities is more important in the private than in the public sector, these efforts should be even more extensive in private organization.

Surprisingly, our results showed that work characteristics increase work-family conflict, especially in the private sector. This may indicate that job autonomy and growth opportunities, instead of providing resources to help employees reduce work-family conflict, actually utilize these resources. For example, taking advantage of growth opportunities offered by the organization may impede participation in family activities, regardless of employees' flexibility to determine how and when to do their jobs. Although the findings of this study do not support the theoretical proposition that employees will be better able to use the resources provided by work characteristics to manage their work and family demands, they strongly suggest that the two work characteristics increase job satisfaction and indirectly reduce turnover intentions in both sectors. The influence of work characteristics has

important implications for organizations. Managers need to be aware that these characteristics may actually increase work-family conflict. In addition, managers from both sectors need to consider that job autonomy and growth opportunities may not reduce directly turnover intentions. Rather they increase job satisfaction, probably by signaling employees about the extent to which the organization values and cares about them as individuals, which then reduces turnover intentions.

The present study examined formal support, informal support, and work characteristics as antecedents of work-family conflict, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. More importantly, it compared the results of two sectors of employment, namely the public and the private sector. Overall this study has provided support for several unique relationships, and thus makes important contributions to the literature.

First, this study provides for the first time information about the availability and the effects of formal work-family supports separately for the public and the private sector. By identifying the prevalence of certain types of support policies in the two sectors, it extends the knowledge about formal support in the public and private sectors. Second, this is the first study that provides information about the informal work-family support in the public sector in the U.S., and identifies the specific components of informal supports that work best for each sector. Third, the present study also identifies the effect of work characteristics on work-family conflict and job satisfaction, a relationship that has not been examined in this context. Finally, it further reveals sector-based similarities and differences in the level of work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, and identifies which of the independent variables (formal and informal support, and work characteristics) are better predictors of these outcomes of interest in the public and in the private sectors.

## **Limitations**

The data for this study were collected from a nationally representative sample, allowing us to be more confident in the generalizability of our findings. However, several limitations to the present study should be considered.

The first limitation is the use of cross-sectional data. This implies that cause and effect relations can not be inferred from the findings reported here. Future research that uses a longitudinal methodology may be better suited to determine the causal status of the relationships examined in this study. A second limitation is the self-report single source data. According to Thomas & Ganster (1995), this is a common problem in work-family conflict research because the key constructs are often based on perceptions and thus depend on self-reported data, which can raise concerns about common method variance. Therefore, additional sources of information would reduce the concerns over common method variance. A third potential issue is that of unmeasured variables. A number of additional variables might affect the relationships observed in this study. I would have liked to test whether some micro-level processes mediate the relationship between the three types of support and employee satisfaction and turnover intentions. For example, do beneficial policies lead to employee feelings of obligation, as predicted by social exchange theories? The fourth limitation concerns the fact that some of the measures used in this study were not ideal, as, for example, there is only a general category of public sector employees. A more detailed classification including federal versus state and government employees would be more appropriate. A fifth limitation is the relatively low but acceptable alpha reliabilities of some of our measures (cf. Eaton, 2003). This might have affected their relationships (or lack of relationships) with some of the other variables. In addition, one of our dependent variables,

turnover intention, was measured by a single item, which might have attenuated some of the relationships.

### **Future Research**

There are several key implications that deserve the attention of future research as a result of the findings and limitations of this study. The present study found only partial support (i.e., support in one, but not both sectors) for several key direct hypotheses. For example, the effects of availability of two types of formal support (i.e., dependent care benefits and flexible work arrangements) on work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions were only partially supported. Future research may benefit from investigating the actual use of these benefits, rather than their simple provision.

Future research may examine the role gender plays in the work-family conflict process. Men and women may perceive and react differently to the different types of work-family support. An examination of gender differences would provide useful information especially for public sector organizations, which are female-dominated.

Future research might also examine the effect of the three predictors on organizational commitment. The survey used in this study does not include appropriate items for testing commitment. However, previous research in the private sector has shown that formal and informal support increased organizational commitment, which in turn decreased turnover intentions. A multidimensional measure of organizational commitment, using Allen & Meyer's (1990) three forms of commitment (i.e., affective, continuance, and normative) would provide a better understanding of the relationships between formal support, informal support, work characteristics, and our outcomes of interest. It may also help explain and

differentiate the terms of the social exchange relationship between organizations and their employees in the two sectors.

Another direction for future research is to study the antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict through longitudinal data. As Shore & Shore (1995) suggest, employees' history of treatment by the organization will likely influence their attitudes and behaviors. This implies that when supportive practices are adopted by an organization, the benefits in terms of influencing job satisfaction and turnover intentions may not occur immediately if an employee's history with the organization has indicated a lack of support. Longitudinal research would improve our understanding by investigating whether the effects of formal and informal support on individual and work outcomes would diminish or strengthen over time.

To conclude, although the crucial impact of work-family issues on employees and organizations has been recognized and investigated in a growing amount of research, very few studies have explored sector of employment differences, and most of these studies have been conducted outside the United States. The present research addressed this issue and provided several unique findings. Compared to the private sector, the public sector offers more dependent care benefits and less flexible scheduling, higher levels of informal support, and more growth opportunities. However, no sector-based differences in formal support were found. This research reveals the key role of informal support for all three dependent variables included in this study: work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Perceived career consequences are critical for work-family conflict and turnover intentions, and coworker support has a very strong influence on employees' job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Overall, the impact of informal support on work-family conflict is

stronger in the private than in the public sector. This study extends previous work showing that formal support is related to work-family conflict by showing an empirical relationship between individual perceptions of formal support and experienced work-family conflict. Furthermore, the present study also provides evidence that the relationships between formal support/informal support/work characteristics and turnover intentions are mediated by job satisfaction, suggesting that job satisfaction plays an important role in the turnover process as mediator of more distal antecedents. Finally, the present study shows that public sector employees experience higher levels of job satisfaction than their private sector counterparts.

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## APPENDIX

## Appendix 1. Hypothesis Testing: Summary of Results.

<b>Research Questions &amp; Hypotheses</b>	<b>Hypothesis Confirmation</b>
<b>Research Question 1:</b>	
<b>Do formal and informal organizational supports, the job, and work context characteristics, vary in public vs private sectors?</b>	
<i>H1a: Formal work-family support will be higher in the female-dominated public sector than in the private sector</i>	No
<i>H1b: Public sector organizations provide more dependent care benefits than private sector organizations</i>	Yes
<i>H1c: Public sector organizations provide more flexible work arrangements than private sector organizations</i>	No
<i>H2a: Informal work-family support will be higher in the female-dominated public sector than in the private sector</i>	Yes
<i>H2b: Perceptions of supervisor support for work-family issues will be higher in the public than in the private sector</i>	Yes
<i>H2c: Perceptions of coworker support for work-family issues will be higher in the public than in the private sector</i>	No
<i>H2d: Perceptions of a supportive work-family culture will be higher in the public than in the private sector</i>	Yes
<i>H2e: Perceptions of a supportive working-hours culture will be higher in the public than in the private sector</i>	N/A*
<i>H3a: Public sector organizations will be more likely to provide positive work characteristics than private sector organizations</i>	Yes
<i>H3b: Public sector organizations will be more likely to provide growth opportunities than private sector organizations</i>	Yes
<i>H3c: Public sector organizations will be less likely to provide high levels of autonomy than private sector organizations</i>	No
<b>Research Question 2:</b>	
<b>What is the the impact of formal and informal support, along with job and work context characteristics, on work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions?</b>	
<i>H4a: Provision of formal support will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors</i>	No
<i>H4b: Provision of dependent care benefits will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors</i>	Partially
<i>H4c: Provision of flexible work arrangements will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors</i>	Partially
<i>H5a: Provision of formal support will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors</i>	N/A*
<i>H5b: Provision of dependent care benefits will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors</i>	N/A*
<i>H5c: Provision of flexible work arrangements will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors</i>	N/A*
<i>H6a: Provision of formal support will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H6b: Provision of dependent care benefits will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors</i>	No
<i>H6c: Provision of flexible work arrangements will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H7a: Provision of informal support will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H7b: Provision of informal support will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H7c: Provision of in formal support will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors</i>	Partially
<i>H8a: Provision of supervisor support will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H8b: Provision of supervisor support will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors</i>	Partially
<i>H8c: Provision of supervisor support will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors</i>	Partially
<i>H9a: Provision of coworker support will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H9b: Provision of coworker support will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H9c: Provision of coworker support will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H10a: Work-family culture will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H10b: Work-family culture will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H10c: Work-family culture will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H11a: Work-hours culture will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors</i>	N/A*
<i>H11b: Work-family culture will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors</i>	N/A*
<i>H11c: Work-family culture will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors</i>	N/A*

**Appendix 1. (Continued).**

<b>Research Questions &amp; Hypotheses</b>	<b>Hypothesis Confirmation</b>
<b>Research Question 2 Cont'd:</b>	
<i>H12a: Work characteristics will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors</i>	No
<i>H12b: Work characteristics will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H12c: Work characteristics will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors</i>	N/A*
<i>H13a: Job autonomy will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors</i>	Partially
<i>H13b: Job autonomy will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H13c: Job autonomy will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors</i>	N/A*
<i>H14a: Growth opportunities will be negatively associated with work-family conflict in both sectors</i>	Partially
<i>H14b: Growth opportunities will be positively associated with job satisfaction in both sectors</i>	Yes
<i>H14c: Growth opportunities will be negatively associated with turnover intentions in both sectors</i>	N/A*
<b>Research Question 3:</b>	
<b>What is the mediator effect of work-family conflict and job satisfaction on the relationships between formal support/informal support/work characteristics and turnover intentions?</b>	
<i>H 15a: Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between formal support and job satisfaction</i>	Yes
<i>H 15b: Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between informal support and job satisfaction</i>	Yes
<i>H 15c: Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between work characteristic and job satisfaction</i>	Partially
<i>H 16a: Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between formal support, and turnover intentions</i>	Yes
<i>H 16b: Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between informal support and turnover intentions</i>	Partially
<i>H 16c: Work-family conflict will mediate the relationship between work characteristics and turnover intentions</i>	Partially
<i>H 17a: Job satisfaction will mediate the relationship between formal support and turnover intentions</i>	Yes
<i>H 17b: Job satisfaction will mediate the relationship between informal support and turnover intentions</i>	Yes
<i>H 17c: Job satisfaction will mediate the relationship between work characteristics and turnover intentions</i>	Yes
<b>Research Question 4:</b>	
<b>Are there sector-based differences in the levels of work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions, as well as in the pattern of the relationships between the independent and these three dependent variables?</b>	
<i>H18: Work-family conflict will be lower in the public than in the private sector</i>	No
<i>H19: Job satisfaction will be higher in the public than in the private sector</i>	Yes
<i>H20: Turnover intentions will be lower in the public than in the private sector</i>	No

\* hypothesis not tested due to path dropping in SEM analyses (see Results section for details).